

## The shed: Loading a rotary



### Desired outcomes

At the end of this module, you will:

- Understand the speed of the rotary and the number of cows that you can expect to go around twice.
- Know to put the cups on the cows as soon as possible and how to encourage cow flow.

### Introduction to the rotary

There are two types of rotary sheds. The internal rotary is shaped like a doughnut, with the Milk Harvesters working on the inside, while the external rotary has the Milk Harvesters positioned on the outside.

The internal rotary is rare, with the external rotary being the most common type of rotary shed.

Most rotaries need two people to operate them. The two roles are known as 'cups on' and 'cups off'. This role also determines on which side of the rotary each person should stand.

## Speed of the rotary

The rotary speed can be adjusted and changes with the stage of lactation.

A rule of thumb for maximum efficiency is for 10-20% of the cows to go around twice. So, on a 50-bail rotary, that would be 5-10 cows.

If the rotary is set to accommodate the slower milkers, the majority of the cows will be over-milked. This can cause teat and udder issues and is generally considered inefficient.

If the rotary is set too fast, on the other hand, too many cows go around twice and the number of cows milked per hour is low.

The Milk Harvester must be able to comfortably keep up.

Each farm will have its own policy, but the 10-20% rule is a guide to getting maximum efficiency.

## The control panel: an overview

Every rotary shed has a control panel.

It lets you control the speed of the rotary platform, as well as forwards and reverse. It has an emergency stop and also allows you to control the backing gate.



*Fig. 1: The control panel allows you to control the basic functions of the rotary platform, and has an emergency stop*

As mentioned above, when you're working in a rotary shed, each farm will have its own policy on the speed of the platform, and the 10-20% rule is a good guide to getting maximum efficiency. But it is also important that you can keep up with cupping the cows.



*Fig. 2: The control panel also lets you control the backing gate*

## Loading the platform

Unlike in a herringbone shed, the cow flow onto the rotary is continuous.

The rotary keeps moving as cows step forwards into an empty bale.

If the cows don't step into the bail and you have gaps, you can stop the rotary until the cows start loading again. But it is probably better just to keep the platform moving and accept the gaps.

Reversing back to fill the empty bails wastes time, and there is a risk that you could injure or even kill a cow that is getting off. Don't be obsessed with filling every bail. Accept the gap and cup the next cow as soon as it loads.

The cows load right next to the worker in the 'cups on' role, so a key part of this job is to encourage cow flow. You can do this by being calm and unhurried and not raising your voice. Cows don't like loud noises or shouting, and can understand your tone of voice. Sometimes all it takes is to step back.

The cows will become fearful and hesitant about going into the shed if they see you in the yard. So try to stay in the shed as much as possible. Initially, it will take patience and calm but the rewards of a good cow flow last all season.