

**Paul Egglestone: "My lifestyle has improved because the extra cow numbers justified another member of staff. This means that the staff and me get more time off."**

plus followers and does contract jobs for three other farms including Ray's.

Paul is chairman of Vale Farmers, a buying group with 20 members which buys inputs such as feed, fertiliser, fuel, and organises services such as vets, banking and insurance.

He says he now has a bee in his bonnet about the potential benefits of co-operating and feeding cows. "Every farm on a TMR system has a tractor and feeder which are used two hours and then parked up for the rest of the day. There must be opportunities for squeezing more out of this kit," he adds.



The new milking parlour in a purpose built shed has cut milking time dramatically.

## Giving up milking—hard decision but no regrets

For Ray Hewson giving up milking dairy cows was one of the hardest decisions he has made in his life—but one he now has no regrets about.

"It is the personal things like cows and people that make the decision difficult," explains Ray.

"I had a friend who had worked for me for 25 years and it was very hard to let him go. Fortunately he has found work on a neighbouring farm and we are still friends.

"Seeing the cows go was very hard and I have missed them. But I have kept three or four cows as a

keepsake which is crackers really. However, I have no regrets—at the time this was the right decision.

"The involvement with rearing heifers is brilliant and it still gives me an interest in Paul's herd."

However, he says in the future he will gradually pass ownership of his cows in the herd over to Paul.

"I am not working a 12 to 14 hour day any more but still have something to get up for in the morning—without this I would go mad. If I need any help with jobs

like worming then Paul will come along and help. If I want a week-end off he will keep an eye on the farm for me."


This extra leisure time has given Ray the opportunity to follow his passion for football and cricket more closely with more time to watch Notts County and Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club. He can now attend the whole of a four-day county cricket match and still get all the jobs done on the farm.

"I also have more time to go and watch my son play cricket for the local village team," he says.

Since starting farming full time Ray always had an ambition to visit Australia and New Zealand. This was achieved in November 2004 when he and his wife Vivienne had a six-week trip.

"I asked Paul and he said 'go for it'," says Ray. "I arranged day-to-day cover and Paul kept an eye on things and was there to sort any problems."

In fact Paul positively encourages Ray to take time off and travel—which he is doing. In February next year Ray and Vivienne are planning a four-week trip to South Africa.



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