

Student 6. Mind Your Behaviour.

Explanation of the management practice:

Reducing a large herd of 800 cows to two smaller herds of 400 gives the cows a lot more space because they would be in separate paddocks and don't interfere with other herds. Having to milk the herds of 400 at separate times reduces the time the cows spend in the shed or concrete yard, which gives the cows more time in the paddock feeding, increasing milk volume and increased profits for the farmers.

Social position and herd size.

Reducing a large herd of 800 cows to two smaller herds of 400 is better than having cows in one large herd and cows not being able to establish their social position in the herd. **Having two herds allows all the cows to find their social position in the herd** [1]. There are some interruptions from the arrival of cows that have calved or cows new to the farm and fewer opportunities to upset the social order. Having two herds of 400 cows allows cows to make clear their position in the hierarchal. For example, upon entering the milk shed the second most dominant cow go first with most dominant cow following.

Justification of herd size.

With the comfort of the cows in their chosen hierarchal social order stress levels drop and milk production is increased [2]. Smaller herd means less time in the milking shed and less time standing on the concrete yard which means they graze more therefore increased milk production. In a large herd is could cause heaps of confusion.