

# Milking 300 a lot in any language

## French girl learns the Australian way

By SIMONE SMITH

JENNIFER Le Roux couldn't believe what she had achieved. The 22 year-old had milked 300 cows, by herself, in three hours.

At her farm in Brittany in France, she would have milked 54 cows in two hours.

Miss Le Roux has been living and working with Glen and Roma Britnell at Woolsthorpe since February and plans to stay for up to six months.

"It is good for young people to go somewhere," she said.

"Now I can say, 'I milked 300 cows alone'.

"You discover a new country, new landscape, new people and improve your English."

Studying for a degree that would enable her to sell and advise farmers on stock feed, Miss Le Roux hopes her experience in Australia will help her when applying for jobs in France.

As part of her study, she worked for French animal health and nutrition business Vitalac for a year, but said it was hard in France for women to secure a job in agriculture.

"People think a man is better for agriculture," she said.

"I want to show people I am ready and I can help people."

Responsible for the herd five days a week, Miss Le Roux has been involved in farm decisions and has learnt about pasture management.

Brittany, in western France, has 15,876 dairy farms and 722,200 dairy cows that produce 7.4 million litres of milk a year, 36 per cent of France's milk production.

Miss Le Roux said the average herd size was 50 head, and her parents milked 54 cows, mostly Montbeliarde and Holsteins with some Normandy.

Montbeliardes were chosen for their milk and beef yield and the entire herd averages 6500 litres/cow/year.

"It's economic. We don't want to push cows — food is expensive," she said.

French farmers have been battling "very dry" conditions and Miss Le Roux said her family farm had been no exception.

Rain is needed to plant maize to feed the herd when it is housed in the winter.

The Le Roux family try to feed their herd as much home-grown fodder from their 60ha farm, but have to buy in concentrates and straw for winter.

The dry conditions have pushed up the price of feed.

Working among the green paddocks of the wet Western



**Practical experience:** French agriculture student Jennifer Le Roux works on a dairy farm at Woolsthorpe.

District, Miss Le Roux said she would like to be able to "push the rain" across to France.

A world away from her home, Miss Le Roux said Australia's dairying system might be different to France but all dairy farmers faced the same issues.

Drought and feed prices are

obvious, but French farmers are also concerned by the price of milk and the lack of price transparency in the industry's manufacturing and retail sections.

Building respect for farmers, as people who feed a growing world, is also an issue that res-

onates in both countries, according to Miss Le Roux.

She intends to establish a blog about dairy farming, in several languages, as a way to help farmers across the globe communicate about the common issues faced as primary producers.

"I will tell people when I go back that farmers in Australia are good," she said.

"They have the same problems, (it's just that) the dairies are so big and they have a grass system.

"I will try to explain the price of milk in the industries."

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