



Media Release

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Takaka dairy factory re-instated

In only 99 days, the Takaka Dairy Factory, destroyed by fire on June 21, is planned to be reinstated. The sheer speed with which Fonterra responded to the disaster speaks volumes of the company's commitment to this dairy community at the top of the South Island. It also marks the ability of the New Zealand steel construction sector to deliver to a tough deadline.

By the time the Nelson Fire Service extinguished the blaze, there was not much of the \$80-million complex left standing. Only the Dryer Tower remained.

With the new milking season about to begin, Fonterra faced the prospect of carting over the Takaka Hills to Nelson or Blenheim at a cost of around \$20,000 a day. It was decided that at least some of the processing capacity of the plant should be immediately replaced, to reduce the volume that would have to be hauled.

On June 29, Ebert Construction was engaged to fast-track the project. The following day, OSA Silvester Clark Limited started work on the engineering design.

"We understood the urgency," says John Silvester. "You can't say No to the cows! The milk was coming, ready or not! The priority was the Evaporator Hall and the type of building had to be designed with speed in mind." On June 30, John Jones Steel Limited was contracted to fill the order for structural steel.

Ebert's Kelvin Hale checked with Reegan Lawton of Steel Pencil Limited to see if the company could commit staff to do the shop drawings. "We committed and straight away began working virtually 24/7 with OSA to achieve optimal efficiency."

Only six days after starting, OSA Silvester Clark issued the engineering drawing for the Evaporator Hall. Two days later, Steel Pencil provided the shop drawings to John Jones Steel Limited, Timaru.

In just another 12 days, John Jones delivered to the site the first load of fabricated steel and began erecting the Evaporator Hall. All 16 of the 530UB82 columns were standing by July 27, braced and ready for concrete panels to be fitted. Inside this building were three levels of plant decking.

The Dry Store was constructed with UB steel portals and DHS steel purlins. The Dry Tower needed a new steel plate roof and its walls had to be re-clad with EPS panel. Various other buildings adjoin, accommodating pump gear, powder bins, offices and services.

With a total fabrication of 130 tonnes, John Jones Steel was able to supply all the steel from its Timaru branch. Managing Director Frank Van Schaijik said fabricators in the South Island tend to hold substantial steel stocks; the critical factor was the need to respond speedily to minimise the plant's downtime.

A spokesman for Fonterra, Dave Packer, commended the urgency that had been shown by all concerned. "From engineering design and documentation to shop drawings, fabrication and construction, this has been a superhuman effort. The sheer speed achieved by dedicated teamwork enabled us to make a firm decision that the milk powder processing plant of Takaka be reinstated."

Production is planned to commence early October. The plant has a capacity to process approximately 500 m³/day of milk.

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The day after the fire on June 21



Making good progress four weeks later



The Takaka Dairy Plant, close to being reinstated