

STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATIONS AT SILVER FERN FARMS

Silver Fern Farms is one of New Zealand's largest meat exporters, operating multiple processing sites across the country, but one of their key sites' communications system was no longer keeping pace with their operational needs.

They partnered with Tait Communications and local dealer Outback Communications for the first implementation of a Tait OpenTrunk system. The project deployed 85 Tait radios across the site and has delivered consistent coverage for 300-400 daily calls with powerful new features including a dedicated emergency channel, private 1:1 call options and a call-all function.

The system has already proven its worth, improving efficiency during emergency drills and delivering more streamlined day-to-day operations.

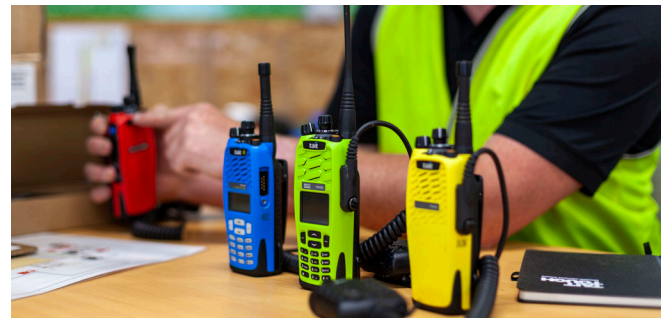
THE CHALLENGE A MUCH-NEEDED UPGRADE

At each Silver Fern Farms processing site, hundreds of staff rely on clear communication to maintain smooth operations and protect worker safety.

At one site in particular, the existing radio system was no longer meeting operational needs. Coverage was patchy and inconsistent, and staff couldn't always trust that messages were getting through. Day-to-day frustrations compounded these risks with staff often following up on communications by phone and relying on site-wide announcements to be passed along by word-of-mouth.

Ethan Vincent, Lead Engineer on the site, identified many of these issues and took the lead on finding a sustainable solution. For Ethan and his team, the stakes were high.

"We were relying on a patchwork of equipment, and we couldn't always trust that messages were getting through," Ethan explained.



CHOOSING A PARTNER

When Silver Fern Farms began exploring options, they turned to Outback Communications, a long-time Tait dealer, to help assess requirements and recommend a solution. Matt Alexander, a director at Outback Communications, immediately identified the limitations of the existing DMR Tier 2 repeater system for the site's requirements.

For dealer Matt Alexander, the challenge was clear: "The site needed more than just new radios. They needed a complete solution that could handle the workload, deliver consistent coverage, and be easy for staff to adopt. That's where the Tait OpenTrunk system stood out."

THE SOLUTION

TAIT OPENTRUNK

Tait OpenTrunk is a DMR Tier 3 trunked system designed for small and medium sized organizations looking for a balance of features, performance and affordability. The key benefits of this system for Silver Fern Farms included:

- › Dedicated Emergency Response Team channel with reliable override
- › 1:1 private calling, reducing the need to split communications between radios and phones
- › Call-all functionality for site-wide comms
- › Future-proof set up with a clear upgrade path if advanced features are required in the future
- › No separate server required, as the node controller is hosted directly on the base station, making Tier 3 trunking a viable option for this scale of project

To support the system, a mix of TP9310, TP9361, and TM9355 radios were deployed across the site, all chosen to suit various roles and requirements within the facility.

IMPLEMENTING THE FIRST LIVE DEPLOYMENT OF TAIT OPENTRUNK

Outback Communications handled the full implementation process, working directly with Ethan's team to ensure the system was tailored to operational requirements. Tait's technical experts provided design input, testing support, and assurance that the system would deliver the performance they need.

"Working with both Tait and Outback gave us the best of both worlds," said Ethan. "We had the hands-on knowledge from Matt and his team, and the wider expertise and backing from Tait."

Despite the constraints of working in a live production environment, the system was installed with minimal disruption. Staff training and handovers were handled locally to ensure teams could get started immediately.

THE RESULTS

SAFER, MORE EFFICIENT OPERATIONS

Within weeks of the system going live, the site reported significant improvements in Emergency Response Teams (ERT) confidence, simpler daily communications, improved coverage, even in heavily insulated areas, and improved call quality.

The biggest impact has been confidence. Site leaders know that communication won't be a weak link in their operations and staff feel reassured that their safety and coordination needs are supported.

“ Now I know if we send a message, it gets through. That reliability takes pressure off everyone.

— Ethan Vincent, *Lead Engineer*

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

While this project covers just one site, it demonstrates how Tait OpenTrunk brings enterprise-grade communications to organizations that previously considered Tier 3 trunking out of reach.

The new system has given Silver Fern Farms a strong foundation at this site, addressing their immediate needs while creating room for future growth and integration. For Outback Communications, the partnership continues with ongoing support and maintenance, ensuring the system keeps pace with operational demands.

As Matt put it: "This isn't just about installing radios and walking away. It's about building a long-term solution that gives the client confidence now and in the future."

For Tait, the project highlights the value of combining global expertise with trusted local partnerships. By working together, the team delivered a tailored, resilient solution for one of New Zealand's most important industries.

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