

Extended Lactation Farm Systems Project – NARF (Dargaville)

This project compares the impact on productivity, profitability, people and the environment on three farms:

1. **Baseline Farm** – Spring calving, twice-a-day milking, 3.0 cows/ha
2. **Extended Lactation TAD Farm** – 50% herd calving each year, full season twice-a-day milking, 3.0 cows/ha
3. **Extended Lactation OAD Farm** – 50% herd calving each year, full season once-a-day milking, 3.0 cows/ha

This project is funded by DairyNZ.

Update 9 th July 2026	Baseline Farm	EL TAD Farm	EL OAD Farm
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	2,289	2,042	2,099
Pasture Growth (kg DM/ha/d, last 2 weeks)*	19	21	19
Current Rotation Length (days)	77	55	58
Cows in milk/Total Cows	0/81	40/81	40/81
Average Body Condition Score	5.1 Dries	5.1 Dries 4.3 Milkers	5.2 Dries 4.4 Milkers
SCC ('000)	-	77	138
Litres/cow/day	-	11.4	10.4
Kg MS/cow/day	-	1.32	1.27
Kg MS/cow, season to date	-	24	21
Kg MS/ha, season to date	-	71	62
Supplement offered (kgDM/c/d)	Dries 3.3 PKE Dries 1.7 bale	Milkers 4.5 PKE Milkers 0 bale Dries 1.7 PKE Dries 1.6 bale	Milkers 4.5 PKE Milkers 0 bale Dries 1.7 PKE Dries 1.6 bale
Purch Supp Fed, season to date (kg DM/c)	PKE 124 Baleage 21	PKE 130 Baleage 50	PKE 129 Baleage 50
Managers Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	4	6	6
Rainfall (last two weeks)	37 mm		

*Pasture growth rates are calculated using platometer readings in conjunction with Halter estimates

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Cool wet soils have kept pasture growth lower than normal, and less than 50% of this time last year. Italian ryegrass is dominating growth now, with kikuyu very slow.
- Pasture covers are behind target on the two EL farms so we are lengthening the rotation on these by keeping dry cows off pasture every second day. They have good levels of supplement and clean rubber matting to lie on so will do well in the barn.
- All farms are now on 70-day rotations and will follow the Spring Rotation Planner to gradually speed up to 25 days at mid-September, our expected balance date.
- Calving begins this week and cow condition is on target with less than 10% of each herd below 5.0
- The extended lactation milking cows are still producing well, but lower pasture utilisation in the wet weather means we have had to increase supplement to top up intakes.
- Nitrogen continues behind the cows at 80 kg/ha urea. Some struggling paddocks are receiving a lighter top-up dose mid rotation.