

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, MPI – PSGF & NDDT

Update 17 th September 2026	Baseline Farm	EL TAD Farm	EL OAD Farm
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	2,619	2,688	2,613
Pasture Growth (kg DM/ha/d, last 2 weeks)*	47	49	47
Rotation Length last 10 days (days)	28	32	29
Cows into vat/Total Cows	75/79	75/82	77/81
Average Body Condition Score (EL = Extended Lactation, NC = New Calvers)	4.63 NC Cows	4.89 EL Cows 4.59 NC Cows	5.03 EL Cows 4.69 NC Cows
SCC last 10 days ('000)	148	148	156
Litres/cow/day (average of farm)	23.6	16.5	13.0
Kg MS/cow/day	2.18	1.70	1.37
Kg MS/ha/day	5.85	4.63	3.67
Kg MS/cow, season to date	85	119	92
Kg MS/ha, season to date	250	352	272
Supplement offered (kgDM/c/d)	Nil	Nil	Nil
Purch Supp Fed, season to date (kg DM/c)	PKE 280 Baleage 61	PKE 362 Baleage 128	PKE 343 Baleage 125
Managers Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	2	2	2
Rainfall (last two weeks)	26 mm		

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

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- We have closed up around 15% of each farm for silage, planning on cutting and baling this next week if the weather allows. Pasture assessments in Halter are significantly underestimating our longer paddocks so we continue to plate meter the farm each week and adjust the readings in Halter.
- Feeding of supplement stopped two weeks ago on all farms. Cows on the Baseline Farm have continued to milk well. Milk production on the extended lactation farms has dropped a bit over the last two weeks – herd testing next week will confirm whether this is primarily the EL cows and/or fresh calvers.
- Cow condition is holding up better than normal for the newly calved cows this season, maybe the result of better than average weather conditions. The EL cows are averaging 5.0 condition score now and lifting.
- Nitrogen will continue behind the cows at 60 kg/ha urea to maximise pasture surplus for harvesting.
- Mating starts on 2 October. Cycling rates appear to be on target