

## Future Dairy Farm Systems Project – NARF (Dargaville)

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

1. **Baseline (Current) Farm** – Kikuyu & ryegrass based pastures with up to 190 kg N/ha/annum, 3.1 cows/ha
2. **Alternative Pasture Farm** – Tall fescue & cocksfoot based pastures, up to 190 kg N/ha, 3.1 cows/ha
3. **Low Emissions Farm** – Kikuyu & ryegrass based pastures, designed to reduce methane emissions by 25% and nitrous oxide by 50%, no nitrogen applied, 2.3 cows/ha

*This project is funded by DairyNZ, MPI (Sustainable Food & Fibre Futures) and Hine Rangī Trust.*

Update 19 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	Baseline Farm	Alternative Pasture Farm	Low Emissions Farm
Average Pasture Cover with silage paddocks	2,069	2,003	2,102
% farm out for turnips	9%	12%	9%
Pasture Growth (kg DM/ha/d, last 2 weeks) *	58	44	44
Rotation Length (days, last 10 days)	31	31	32
Cows in Milk/Total Cows	80/80	82/82	64/64
SCC (000's)	78	120	187
Production/cow/day (kg MS/cow)	1.63	1.43	1.44
Production/ha/day (kg MS/ha)	4.68	4.20	3.37
Production/cow, season to date (kg MS/cow)	303	289	297
Production/ha, season to date (kg MS/ha)	899	852	693
Supplement Offered Milkers (kg DM/cow/day)	PKE 3.4	PKE 3.3	PKE 2.1
Purchased Supp Fed, season to date (kg DM/c)	PKE 573 Purch bale 24	PKE 491	PKE 278
Homegrown Silage Fed to date (kg DM/cow)	19	23	135
Homegrown Silage on hand (kg DM/cow)	287	315	254
Average Body Condition Score (Milkers)	3.96	3.87	3.86
Nitrogen to date – 2025/26 Season (kg N/ha)	170	164	0
Managers Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	5	6	4
Rainfall (last two weeks)	58		

\*Pasture growth rates are calculated using uncalibrated platometer readings

### CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Rain has certainly boosted pasture growth and focus has moved to maintaining quality, by dropping out paddocks that are above our target pre-grazing covers. We expect kikuyu to grow around 100kgDM/ha/day so have proactively sped up the rotation by dropping these paddocks out. We will make silage, which will likely be used for dry cows in winter.
- Turnip crops are recovering from a poor start and we have begun feeding turnips on all farms. PKE feeding will drop out as a result. We estimate turnip intakes at around 3-5kgDM/c/d depending on yield on each paddock.
- We will continue to monitor milk production and BCS closely as we prepare for approximately one-third of cows to milk through the winter in the transition to our Extended Lactation trial beginning on 1<sup>st</sup> June. Our focus on these carryover cows will be on maximising daily milk production rather than BCS. They will be mated to calve in spring 2027 so have plenty of lactation ahead of them.