

Future Dairy Farm Systems Project – NARF (Dargaville)

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

The NARF farm has been significantly affected with flood damage from cyclone Gabrielle. Below is commentary on the flood impact and management we have taken to minimise the impact on the farms and the study.

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Approximately 30% of the NARF farm is still out of the round at present due to pasture death from flooding
- Regrassing is well underway and seedlings are beginning to emerge
- Army caterpillar population has exploded and the whole farm is covered in adult caterpillars. We are in the process of spraying all paddocks by working around grazing withholding periods.
- One month on from the flood has seen the kikuyu paddocks recover well. Our normal kikuyu mulching and Italian rye undersowing programme will now begin, which is 2 weeks later than usual.
- We will spread the mulching programme over 6 weeks with the aim to finish mulching in early May. Italians will be drilled after mulching on all kikuyu paddocks.
- The trial farm structure and data collection has been disbanded until late April to allow time for pastures to be resown and recover.
- All cows are in one herd on once-a-day milking, rotating around the three farmlets. Cow condition has fallen slightly to 4.06 and mulching will lower pasture covers so culls will be offloaded in the next 10 days. Supplement feeding continues at 2.5kgPKE/c/d and 6-7kgDM/c/d silage.
- Milk production has been holding at around 1.02 kg MS/cow/day.
- We aim to have herds back on their respective farmlets by 1 May to set up for the trial recommencing on 1 June.

For photos and further commentary of the NARF farm see our facebook page – search NDDT.