

Supplement Use in a Variable Climate Project – NARF (Dargaville)

This project compares three farms with different supplement use on production, profit and environmental impact. The three farm systems are:

1. **Pasture Only Farm** - No imported supplement - 2.7 cows/ha
2. **PKE Only Farm** – PKE used to fill feed gaps within milk FEI limits – 3.1 cows/ha
3. **PKE Plus Farm** - PKE used until milk FEI limit and then other supplements added – 3.1 cows/ha

This project is funded by DairyNZ, MPI (Sustainable Farming Fund) and Hine Rangi Trust.

8 th October 2020	Pasture Only Farm	PKE Only Farm	PKE Plus Farm
Farm Area (ha)	28	28	28
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	2293	2224	2200
Pasture Growth (kg DM/ha/day)	54		
Rotation Length (days)	27	29	29
Cows in milk/total cows	77/77	88/88	88/88
Production/cow/day (kg MS)	2.09	2.08	2.18
Production/ha/day (kg MS)	5.64	6.51	6.86
Production - Season to date (kg MS/ha)	307	396	434
Supplement Fed (kg DM/cow/day)	0	2.6 PKE	1.7 PKE 2.6 Soya Hull
Supplement Fed - Season to date (kg DM/cow)	181 Silage	282PKE	275 PKE 123 DDG/SH
Average Body Condition Score	Milkers 4.1	Milkers 4.04	Milkers 4.2
Proportion cows under BCS 4.0	5%	13%	2%
Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	6	6	5
Nitrogen – Season to Date (kg N/ha)	116	112	114
Milk FEI	A	B	B/C
Rainfall (mm last 2 weeks)	17mm		

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Growth is finally increasing but we desperately need more rain
- Pasture Only herd has bounced back from 4 weeks OAD milking to over 2kgMS/c/d on pasture!
- Both PKE herds still battling FEI despite only feeding 10-15% of diet as PKE
- We will be watching residuals closely and dropping supplement out if growth takes off
- Fescue pastures have been challenging to manage. Cows have been leaving stalky high residuals despite pdks on 20 day rotation. They will be mulched behind cows and go onto 15 day rotation to try and keep palatability
- Mating has just started
- Sustain will continue if we get rain to try and create surplus for silage.

For more information including past updates and field day handouts, go to www.nddt.nz

The Northland Dairy Development Trust thanks our sponsors:

Farm Source & Fonterra / Ballance Agri-Nutrients / Avoca Lime / GEA-FIL / Cashmanager RURAL online