

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

This project compares three farms with different supplement use on production, profit and environmental impact. Each farm is 28 ha. 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.

11 th February 2021	Pasture Only Farm	PKE Only Farm	PKE Plus Farm
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	1884	1881	1814
Pasture Growth (kg DM/ha/d, last 2 weeks)	18		
Rotation Length (days)	35	33	32
Production/cow/day (kg MS)	0.99	1.25	1.53
Production/ha/day (kg MS)	2.72	3.90	4.70
Production - Season to date (kg MS/ha)	789	990	1,066
Supplement Fed (kg DM/cow/day)	2.2 Silage	2.6 PKE 1.9 Silage	3.7 PKE 1.6 DDG 2.0 Silage
Supplement Fed - Season to date (kg DM/cow)	283 Silage	476 PKE 128 Silage	474 PKE 225 DDG/SH 125 Silage
Average Body Condition Score	4.0	4.0	4.0
Proportion cows under BCS 4.0	21%	17%	19%
Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	3	5	4
Nitrogen – Season to Date (kg N/ha)	174	172	168
Milk FEI	A	B/C	B
Rainfall (mm last 2 weeks)	3 mm		

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- A dry fortnight has seen pasture growth and cover drop on all farms. A few showers has the kikuyu still green but other pasture species are struggling
- The Pasture Only and PKE Only cows continue on once-a-day milking (OAD). PKE Plus cows will continue on twice-a-day milking
- Pregnancy diagnosis has been done with empty rates of 7% for the Pasture Only cows, 13% for the PKE Only cows and 7% for the PKE Plus cows
- Only 3 weeks of baleage feeding remains for the Pasture Only cows. With the possibility of rain coming next week the committee decided not to cull empties, at the moment...
- PKE supplemented farms continue feeding as much PKE as milk FEI will allow. Baleage continues to be fed on all farms and DDG feeding continues on the PKE Plus farm
- Zinc supplementation continues despite facial eczema spore counts continuing to be very low

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

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