

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.

| 2nd December 2020 | Pasture Only Farm | PKE Only Farm | PKE Plus Farm |
|---|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Farm Area (ha) | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha) | 2411 | 2245 | 2250 |
| Pasture Growth (kg DM/ha/d, last 2 weeks) | 64 | | |
| Rotation Length (days) | 27 | 27 | 26 |
| Cows in milk/total cows | 77/77 | 87/87 | 86/86 |
| Production/cow/day (kg MS) | 1.55 | 1.48 | 1.55 |
| Production/ha/day (kg MS) | 4.25 | 4.60 | 4.77 |
| Production - Season to date (kg MS/ha) | 560 | 683 | 738 |
| Supplement Fed (kg DM/cow/day) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Supplement Fed - Season to date (kg DM/cow) | 181 Silage | 310 PKE | 293 PKE 147 DDG/SH |
| Average Body Condition Score | 4.1 | 4.0 | 4.1 |
| Proportion cows under BCS 4.0 | 12% | 12% | 8% |
| Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High) | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| Nitrogen – Season to Date (kg N/ha) | 174 | 172 | 168 |
| Milk FEI | A | A | A |
| Rainfall (mm last 2 weeks) | 22 mm | | |

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Dry conditions are once again slowing pasture growth. Pre-graze pasture covers are dropping fast so a few of the paddocks which were locked up for silage will now be grazed
- With no significant rain on the forecast, the rotation length will be lengthened to around 32 days to keep pre-graze pasture covers in a better zone and push the feed wedge a bit further forward into summer
- Milk production has been holding up pretty well despite no supplementation. Pasture quality remains relatively good for this time of year due to pastures being well under control. Fescue paddocks have high levels of clover
- Both supplemented farms will restart feeding PKE at around 3 kg/cow/day. The Pasture Only farm only has made 64 bales of silage and 50 of these are to be saved up for winter, so there are very few options available if it stays dry, a decent rain in the next week would be very useful

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

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