

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.

22nd April 2021	Pasture Only Farm	PKE Only Farm	PKE Plus Farm
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	1941	2020	1928
Pasture Growth (kg DM/ha/d, last 2 weeks)	32		
Rotation Length (days)	38	39	39
Production/cow/day (kg MS)	0.61	0.93	1.05
Cows in Milk/Peak Cows	62/78	77/88	86/88
Production/ha/day (kg MS)	1.35	2.56	3.21
Production - Season to date (kg MS/ha)	931	1220	1347
Supplement Fed (kg DM/cow/day)	1.6 Silage	4.1 PKE 1.3 Silage	3.7 PKE 5.0 Silage
Supplement Fed - Season to date (kg DM/cow)	365 Home Grown Silage	711 PKE 260 HG Silage	725 PKE 288 DDG/SH 325 Silage
Average Body Condition Score	4.0	4.3	4.1
Proportion cows under BCS 4.0	26%	3%	9%
Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	6	4	3
Nitrogen – Season to Date (kg N/ha)	174	172	168
Milk FEI	A	A/B	A/B
Rainfall (mm last 2 weeks)	70 mm		

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Kikuyu is rocketing away now with good rain in the last week and we expect pasture covers to rise rapidly from now on. Mulching and undersowing programme is over halfway through.
- Two herds have lost weight despite the cows being fully fed and leaving feed behind. This is common in autumn where the high fibre diets make cows feel full but are lacking in ME.
- The Pasture Only herd will be dried off tomorrow but fed like milkers over the next month in order to achieve BCS gain
- The PKE Plus herd will go OAD to try and halt weight loss. All culls will stay milking as we have plenty of feed available on this farm
- The PKE Only herd will continue milking OAD which has held their weight well. Any low producers in both PKE herds will be dried off and follow the herd so we don't waste supplement on them.
- All herds will have Cepravin administered to cows with clinical mastitis this season, or with SCC over 200,000 at the last herd test. All other cows and R2yr will get teat seal.
- 60kg/ha Sustain will be applied to existing fescue pastures. They have performed very well through their first summer.
- **For more information including past updates and field day handouts, go to www.nddt.nz**