

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.

24 th September 2020	Pasture Only Farm	PKE Only Farm	PKE Plus Farm
Farm Area (ha)	28	28	28
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	2203	2087	2074
Pasture Growth (kg DM/ha/day)	39		
Rotation Length (days)	35	27	32
Cows in milk/total cows	75/77	86/88	88/88
Production/cow/day (kg MS)	1.90	2.02	2.20
Production/ha/day (kg MS)	4.90	6.12	6.85
Production - Season to date (kg MS/ha)	230	305	337
Supplement Fed (kg DM/cow/day)	1.7 silage	2.6 PKE	2.8 PKE 3.1 Soya Hull
Supplement Fed - Season to date (kg DM/cow)	167 Silage	246 PKE	245 PKE 87 DDG/SH
Average Body Condition Score	Milkers 4.0	Milkers 4.1	Milkers 4.2
Proportion cows under BCS 4.0	31%	19%	11%
Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	4	7	2
Nitrogen – Season to Date (kg N/ha)	105	100	99
Milk FEI	A	B/C	B/C
Rainfall (mm last 2 weeks)	10 mm		

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Growth has remained flat at 35– 43 kg DM/ha/day since the beginning of July. Warm rain is needed
- The dry weather has resulted in great pasture utilisation and kept feed intakes ok though.
- Aiming for a 28 day rotation from now on for all farms. This is 130 m²/cow on the Pasture Only farm and 114 m²/cow on the supplemented farms.
- The Pasture Only herd has been back on twice-a-day milking for 2 weeks, after spending 4 weeks on once-a-day (OAD). Milk production has bounced nicely. Any 3.5 condition score cows will go back on OAD.
- We have been struggling with milk FEI on the two supplemented farms. Three kg PKE/cow/day has been too much, whereas normally we can feed up to 4 kg at this time of year. This is easier on the PKE Plus farm which has been receiving Soya Bean Hulls.
- All set for mating which starts late next week. Nitrogen continues behind the cows. ProGibb has stopped.

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

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