

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

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25 th March 2021	Pasture Only Farm	PKE Only Farm	PKE Plus Farm
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	1951	2051	1910
Pasture Growth (kg DM/ha/d, last 2 weeks)	17		
Rotation Length (days)	32	35	32
Production/cow/day (kg MS)	0.87	1.14	1.33
Cows in Milk/Peak Cows	69/78	88/88	86/88
Production/ha/day (kg MS)	2.15	3.58	4.08
Production - Season to date (kg MS/ha)	886	1141	1247
Supplement Fed (kg DM/cow/day)	1.6 Silage	4.6 PKE 3.1 Silage	4.7 PKE 1.6 DDG 3.2 Silage
Supplement Fed - Season to date (kg DM/cow)	339 Home Grown Silage	617 PKE 228 HG Silage	624 PKE 286 DDG/SH 225 Silage
Average Body Condition Score	3.9	4.1	4.2
Proportion cows under BCS 4.0	25%	6%	3%
Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	6	4	3
Nitrogen – Season to Date (kg N/ha)	174	172	168
Milk FEI	A	B	A/B
Rainfall (mm last 2 weeks)	0 mm		

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Continued dry weather is dropping growth rates and putting pressure on
- Pasture Only cows have lost condition so the last of the culls are going immediately. This will hopefully prevent further weight loss. If pasture levels do not increase then cows below BCS 4.0 will be dried off in two weeks time.
- PKE Only cows have gained weight slightly but are about to run out of silage so we will cull empties at that point. We are feeding as much PKE as FEI allows
- PKE Plus cows are milking well and holding their weight. DDG is running out and local baleage is cheaper per MJME so we will change to baleage plus PKE in the next week or so.
- Drilling of new pasture has started, we will be slug baiting at 10kg/ha, and adding DAP down the spout at 90kg/ha to provide readily available P to the seedling.
- Kikuyu mulching has also begun and we are undersowing mulched paddocks with treated Italian seed at 15kg/ha each week.

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