

## 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

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11 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	Pasture Only Farm	PKE Only Farm	PKE Plus Farm
Farm Area (ha)	28	28	28
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	1601	1543	1527
Pasture Growth (kg DM/ha/day)	9		
Rotation Length (days)	30	31	28
Cows in milk/cows calved	63/77	73/89	79/89
Production/cow/day (kg MS)	0.84	0.98	1.17
Production/ha/day (kg MS)	2.04	2.52	3.30
Production/ha season to date (kg MS)	748	1,052	1,134
Supplement Fed (kg DM/cow/day)	3.3 Silage	1.9 PKE 4.0 Silage	3.4 PKE 1.9 Silage 2.8 DDG
Supplement Fed 19/20 season (kg DM/cow)	359 Silage	803 PKE 151 Silage	810 PKE 116 DDG 225 Silage
Average Body Condition Score	3.86	3.94	4.04
Empty Rate	6%	6%	7%
Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	7	8	5
Nitrogen – Season to Date (kg N/ha)	139	140	142
Milk FEI	A	B/C	B
Rainfall (mm last 2 weeks)	16 mm		

### CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Just in time some rain arrived over the last week and kicked the kikuyu and paspalum into life. Cows are starting to eat fresh kikuyu leaf and we expect this to increase as the autumn rains continue.
- BCS is holding in the PKE Plus herd despite increasing DDG and holding other feeds the same.
- BSC has dropped slightly in the other two herds. 33% of the Pasture Only herd and 27% of the PKE Only Herd are now below BCS 3.5.
- Looking at kikuyu growth ahead of us we are confident that the autumn growth has begun. Thanks to the rationing we have been doing we have 10-14 days of baleage left on the Pasture Only and PKE Only herds so will keep all cows milking for now in the hope that we have good pasture levels when the baleage runs out. We will then gradually dry cows off on BCS relative to calving date through until winter.

- The PKE Plus herd will keep feeding baleage and PKE and will slowly drop the DDG down as pasture cover improves.
- Facial eczema spores are expected to rise now we have had some rain so we are starting zinc treatment.
- 10% of each farmlet will be sprayed out now and regrassed into alternative species in the next month. These will mostly be fescue, clover, and some cocksfoot on the lighter soils.
- Kikuyu mulching and sowing of Italian ryegrass will begin later in the month when we have higher pasture growth and covers.

***For more information including past updates and field day handouts, go to [www.nddt.nz](http://www.nddt.nz)***

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