

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.

12 th February 2019	Pasture Only Farm	PKE Only Farm	PKE Plus Farm
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	2111	2014	1978
Pasture Growth (kg DM/ha/day)	21	19	17
Rotation Length (days)	31	28	31
Production per cow (kgMS/cow/day)	1.14	1.23	1.44
Production per ha to date (kgMS/ha)	802	938	952
Supplement Fed (kg DM/cow/day)	3.5-7 Silage	1.5PKE 3.5-7 Silage	2.1 PKE 2.1 DDG 3.5 Silage
Supplement Fed to Date (kg DM/cow)	264	525	580
Average Body Condition Score	4.0	4.0	4.0
Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	1	5	1
Nitrogen – Season to Date (kg N/ha)	140	138	140
Milk FEI	A	C	B
Rainfall (last 2 weeks)	>4 mm		

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Pasture covers and growth rates have all dropped quickly as the hot dry weather continues
- Production per cow has also dropped on the Grass Only and PKE Only farms, but cow condition has held at 4.0 average for all three herds
- Grass silage is being fed on all farms and PKE on both PKE farms. DDG is also going into the PKE Plus herd. Residuals are being watched closely and it is possible that more silage will need to be fed or cows culled if there is no significant rain in the next 2 weeks
- The PKE Only herd has dropped PKE down from 3.0 to 1.5kgPKE per cow to reduce FEI below the grading threshold. Silage has increased accordingly.
- All farms have at least 6 weeks of grass silage on hand at current feeding rates
- Facial eczema treatment and cricket baiting are all beginning in the next fortnight

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

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