

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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15 th July 2020	Pasture Only Farm	PKE Only Farm	PKE Plus Farm
Farm Area (ha)	28	28	28
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	2439	2570	2765
Pasture Growth (kg DM/ha/day)	37		
Rotation Length (days)	56	60	67
Cows in milk/cows calved	29/78	25/89	31/89
Production/cow/day (kg MS)	-	-	-
Production/ha/day (kg MS)	-	-	-
Production/ha – (kg MS)	-	-	-
Supplement Fed (kg DM/cow/day)	0 silage	0 PKE	0 PKE
Supplement Fed 20/21 season (kg DM/cow)	90 Silage	98 PKE	107 PKE
Average Body Condition Score	Dries 5.0 Milkers 4.7	Dries 5.1 Milkers 5.1	Dries 5.0 Milkers 5.0
Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	3	3	2
Nitrogen – Season to Date (kg N/ha)	30	27	23
Milk FEI	-	-	-
Rainfall (mm last 2 weeks)	82 mm		

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Pasture growth has kept up with demand with average pasture covers staying steady.
- Rotation length has got a bit fast on the Pasture Only and PKE Only farms when compared to the spring rotation plan. This is somewhat due to the faster calving. Pre-graze covers are almost too high (>4,000 kg DM/ha according to the plate-meter) so we don't want to feed supplement to slow the rotation down, yet.
- Dry cows are getting 40 m²/cow/day and milkers 80 m²/cow/day. This equates to around 8 kg and 16 kg DM/cow/day respectively.
- No supplement has been fed on any of the farms in the last fortnight due to the good pasture covers and relatively good pasture utilisation. However, from now on we will start feeding the milkers some supplement when they are 'stood off'.
- Spreading 80 kg urea/ha behind the cows. The Pasture Only farm has a lower average pasture cover and shows a hole in the wedge in three weeks time. An additional dose of nitrogen will be applied to around 5 paddocks to help cover this looming deficit.
- Some of the new grass paddocks will get their first graze in the next week if conditions are dry enough, followed by a dose of nitrogen. Other new grass paddocks are still a few weeks off grazing.

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

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