

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.

16th August 2018	Pasture Only Farm	PKE Only Farm	PKE Plus Farm
Pasture Growth Rate (kg DM/ha/day)	44	45	42
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	2390	2540	2558
Rotation Length (days)	56	49	54
Pasture Demand (kg DM/ha/day)	34	45	43
Production per cow (kgMS/cow/day)	1.66	1.89	1.88
Production per ha to date (kgMS/ha)	73	76	82
Cows Calved	61	72	69
Dry Cows	15	15	18
Supplement Fed (kg DM/cow/day, milkers)	4.8 (Baleage)	3.1 (PKE)	3.3 (PKE)
Supplement Fed to Date (kg DM/cow)	182	190	186
Average Body Condition Score	4.0	4.1	4.0
Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	4	1	1
Nitrogen - Season to Date (kg N/ha)	50	58	66
Rainfall (last 2 weeks)	33		

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Relatively dry conditions through late July/early August and generous nitrogen applications have helped hold the pasture covers up. However, paddocks that were pugged while it was wet in June are coming back into the round now and are much softer than what has been grazed to date.
- The spring rotation plan has us on a 50 day rotation at the moment. The plan is to be on 25 days by mid-September.
- Milkers on the Pasture Only farm are getting around 80 sq m/day, which will gradually increase up to 145 sq m/day by mid-September. Milkers on the other two farms are getting 75 sq m/day which will gradually increase to 130 sq m/day.
- Milkers on all farms are getting supplement to keep residuals at around 1500 kg DM/ha. If pasture utilisation remains reasonable then supplement use will decrease as the area allocated increases.
- Ammo 36 continues immediately in front of, or behind cows at 100 kg/ha.

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

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