

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.

21st November 2018	Pasture Only Farm	PKE Only Farm	PKE Plus Farm
Pasture Growth Rate (kg DM/ha/day)	50	54	50
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	2222	2229	2269
Rotation Length (days)	31	29	30
Pasture Demand (kg DM/ha/day)	46	54	51
Production per cow (kgMS/cow/day)	1.48	1.74	1.71
Production per ha to date (kgMS/ha)	488	571	579
Supplement Fed (kg DM/cow/day, milkers)	0	3.2 PKE	3.1 PKE, 0.6 DDG
Supplement Fed to Date (kg DM/cow)	253 baleage	336 PKE	343 PKE & DDG
Average Body Condition Score	4.0	4.1	4.1
Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	4	4	2
Nitrogen - Season to Date (kg N/ha)	128	129	129
Rainfall (last 2 weeks)	28		

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Pasture cover has lifted slightly in the last fortnight, helped by a bit of rain and having silage paddocks back in the rotation. More rain is forecast which builds confidence. Rotation length remains at 30 days.
- PKE is being fed at around 3.2 kg/cow/day on both PKE farms. This has lifted milk FEI into the B zone for both these farms. The PKE Plus farm residuals were low so DDG was introduced at 0.6 kg DM/cow/day. Residuals are rising again so this will be stopped. It is likely that the PKE feeding level will also be dropped back due to an anticipated rise in the grazing residuals due to rising pre-graze pasture covers.
- Nitrogen continues around rain events.

‘Farm Systems for Profit’ field day at Tomarata Hall - 4th December 2018. Guest speakers Dr Chris Burke – Cow Fertility Studies, Dr Jane Kay – Profitable Production. Followed by a visit to Neville & Ainsley Porteous farm. 10am start, all welcome, BBQ lunch provided.

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

The Northland Dairy Development Trust thanks our sponsors:

Farm Source & Fonterra / Ballance Agri-Nutrients / Avoca Lime / GEA-FIL / Cashmanager RURAL online