

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.

23 rd April 2020	Pasture Only Farm	PKE Only Farm	PKE Plus Farm
Farm Area (ha)	28	28	28
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	1604	1617	1575
Pasture Growth (kg DM/ha/day)	30		
Rotation Length (days)	27	27	25
Cows in milk/cows calved	50/77	37/89	74/89
Production/cow/day (kg MS)	0.81	0.89	0.94
Production/ha/day (kg MS)	1.46	1.19	2.46
Production/ha season to date (kg MS)	811	1,119	1,248
Supplement Fed (kg DM/cow/day)	Nil	Milk 2.7 PKE Dries 3.0 PKE	4.3 PKE 1.1 DDG
Supplement Fed 19/20 season (kg DM/cow)	404 Silage	895 PKE 181 Silage	957 PKE 194 DDG 263 Silage
Average Body Condition Score	4.1 (Milkers)	4.3 (Milkers)	4.3
Empty Rate	6%	6%	7%
Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	4	5	5
Nitrogen – Season to Date (kg N/ha)	139	140	142
Milk FEI	A	A/B	B
Rainfall (mm last 2 weeks)	28 mm		

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Having 10% of each farm out for re-grassing and all kikuyu paddocks getting mulched (behind the cows) is keeping a lid on pasture covers. This is despite pasture growth rates lifting
- Comfortable with cow condition at the moment. Not planning to dry any more cows off for the next 2 weeks, other than a few low producing cows
- Rotation will be lengthened to 35 days to assist building cover
- Dry cows continue to follow milkers on highest kikuyu residuals to help clean-up prior to mulching
- Mulching with Italian ryegrass being either broadcast before the mulcher or drilled after the mulcher will continue. Slug bait is going on behind the mulcher
- Seedlings are coming through on the first of the mulched and seeded paddocks (mulched 4 weeks ago). These paddocks will get a light graze as soon as seedlings don't pull out to keep the kikuyu from smothering them
- Heifers are coming home next week. A bit behind target weight due to the drought. Will get PKE for a few weeks to help build condition

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

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