

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.

29 th August 2019	Pasture Only Farm	PKE Only Farm	PKE Plus Farm
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	2106	2093	2099
Pasture Growth (kg DM/ha/day)	38	33	36
Rotation Length (days)	36	37	37
Cows in Milk	73	77	80
Dry Cows	4	11	8
Production/cow/day (kg MS)	1.46	1.98	1.99
Production/ha/day (kg MS)	3.25	4.80	5.22
Production/ha season to date (kg MS)	111	133	155
Supplement Fed (kg DM/cow/day)	3.7 Baleage	4.6 PKE	4.3 PKE
Supplement Fed 19/20 season (kg DM/cow)	108 Baleage	304 PKE	352 PKE & Baleage
Average Body Condition Score (Milkers)	3.85	4.16	4.16
Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	4	2	3
Nitrogen – Season to Date (kg N/ha)	58	58	53
Milk FEI	A	A	A
Rainfall (last 2 weeks)	56 mm		

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Pasture cover is getting low on all farms. We need pasture growth rates >40 kg DM/day to maintain demand. To increase our chances we are getting the chopper in to spread Ammo over the whole farm, other than paddocks that have already been done in the last two weeks.
- Cow condition and production has been dropping fast on the Pasture Only farm due to low pasture covers and wet conditions leading to poor utilisation. We only have two more weeks of silage available at the present feeding rate. Around 15% of the herd is already on once-a-day milking (OAD) but to be safe the whole herd will go on OAD to preserve cow condition until pasture supply comes right.
- Cow condition and production are going OK on both PKE farms. Milk FEI is near the top of the A band but we think we can get away with increasing PKE feeding to 5 kg DM/cow/day on the PKE plus farm if we also supplement them with silage. PKE Only cows will continue at their current feeding level.
- Pasture allowance will stay at 90 m²/cow on all farms.
- Mating plans are being finalised.

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

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