

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 January 2020	Pasture Only Farm	PKE Only Farm	PKE Plus Farm
Farm Area (ha)	28	28	28
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	1718	1705	1698
Pasture Growth (kg DM/ha/day)	8		
Rotation Length (days)	31	33	30
Cows in milk/cows calved	68/77	87/89	88/89
Production/cow/day (kg MS)	1.14	1.25	1.35
Production/ha/day (kg MS)	2.78	3.88	4.24
Production/ha season to date (kg MS)	656	924	971
Supplement Fed (kg DM/cow/day)	3.8 Silage	2.6 PKE 3.0 Silage	2.6 PKE 1.5 DDG 3.0 Silage
Supplement Fed 19/20 season (kg DM/cow)	213 Silage	712 PKE 34 Silage	703 PKE 43 DDG 114 Silage
Average Body Condition Score	4.0	4.0	4.1
6 week in-calf rate	71%	76%	76%
Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	5	4	3
Nitrogen – Season to Date (kg N/ha)	139	140	142
Milk FEI	A	B	B
Rainfall (mm last 2 weeks)	0 mm		

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Pasture growth has pretty much come to a standstill. Kikuyu areas are contributing a bit, non-kikuyu areas seem to be going backwards. To date pre-graze covers and residuals have been OK, however cows are now going into around 2200 kg DM/ha and this will continue to drop.
- Milk FEI tipped into the red 10 days ago on the PKE only farm. PKE feeding was cut back from 3.1 to 2.6 kg DM/cow. Silage feeding has since started and we will try to edge back up to 3 kg DM/cow PKE, closely monitoring the FEI.
- In response to the dry and a slight drop in cow condition, we decided to move to once-a-day milking (OAD) on the Pasture Only and PKE Only farms. There is a risk some cows may dry themselves off, however best we transition to OAD now while cows are milking reasonably well and we have some pasture on hand.

- The second PD will occur next week. Dry cows from the Pasture Only and PKE Only farms are booked in to go to the works as soon as possible. We plan to milk them while waiting for works space, however if feed supply continues to tighten then these can go off the milking platform.
- The PKE Plus farm will continue on twice-a-day milking and culls will continue to be milked. This dry period provides interesting conditions to compare the three farms.

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

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