



Dairying in a Variable Climate Project – run at NARF (Dargaville)

A new project run by the Northland Dairy Development Trust (NDDT) kicked off on the 1st July. This project is centred around a farm systems trial run at the Northland Agricultural Research Farm (NARF). It investigates the differences in management strategies, production, profit and environmental impact between three farm systems that have different supplement use. 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 Rangī Trust.

2nd August 2018	Pasture Only Farm	PKE Only Farm	PKE Plus Farm
Pasture Growth Rate (kg DM/ha/day)	34	32	34
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	2540	2334	2455
Rotation Length (days)	73	69	62
Pasture Demand (kg DM/ha/day)	33	36	36
Production per cow (kgMS/cow/day)	1.89	1.74	1.83
Production per ha to date (kgMS/ha)	29	29	24
Cows Calved	52	60	57
Dry Cows	24	27	31
Supplement Fed (kg DM/cow/day, milkers)	2 (Baleage)	3 (PKE)	3.2 (PKE)
Supplement Fed to Date (kg DM/cow)	143	150	139
Average Body Condition Score	4.4	4.3	4.3
Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	3	3	3
Nitrogen - Season to Date (kg N/ha)	NA	NA	NA
Rainfall (last 2 weeks)	NA		

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- Pasture covers remain in a good state, helped along by keeping nitrogen applications up and relatively dry conditions.
- New grass paddocks have been grazed while soil conditions have been good. These will be re-grazed when conditions are right which may be prior to them being at the head of the wedge.
- Milkers on the Pasture Only Farm continue to get around 80 sq m/day and around 70 sq m/day on the other farms.
- Baleage is going to the Pasture Only cows and PKE to the other farms as required to fill feed gaps.
- Ammo 36 being spread just 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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