

Macalister Demonstration Farm

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NEWSLETTER 79

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Extension projects at the MDF are funded by Dairy Australia, Sustainability Victoria and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, with support from GippsDairy.



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Welcome to Matt Harms

We are delighted to now have the assistance of Matt Harms in a consulting role for the MDF. Matt has now had a number of visits to the farm getting to know our Farm Managers Lee and Sheree Smith, the cows, systems, the farm and also about where the farm has come from under the expert guidance of Frank Tyndall.

Some of you will know Matt well as he has been a consultant with On Farm Consulting with John Mulvany operating throughout Gippsland. Previously Matt managed the Murray Goulburn Field Services Team in Leongatha for seven years. The board and management team are very happy to have secured Matt's help with driving farm profitability and are excited about his future input.

Thank you to Frank Tyndall

Many of you will know just how passionate Frank Tyndall is about the challenges and potential of growing grass. However some of you may not know that he is equally passionate about the profitability of the MDF which he has worked on for the last 7 years in his role as our farm's consultant. Initially under support from Dairy Australia, Frank came to the farm during a period of low returns and through continually focussing on increasing pasture harvested has significantly increased this measure and farm profitability.

Frank is always determined to do the basics very well with feeding, and keeping it simple has been one of his key drivers. The development of the MDF Farm Tracker Project has allowed better interpretation of the performance of many farms within the MDF and beyond. Although it can be used as a benchmarking tool the emphasis has always been on using the data to help explain within farm change and govern management decisions on individual farms.

I have personally gained a lot from brisk walks with Frank around the farm and hope to have many more as we are very fortunate that Frank will continue to assist us in many areas but the overall farm performance will be driven by Matt Harms.

The MDF will always be indebted to Frank; his hard work, dedication and true passion for the farm which will continue to have a huge impact into the future.

Mark Humphris
MDF Chairman

A look at dry cow options leading into winter and what the MDF will be doing

With the winter approaching and fodder very short for most people, let's just have a quick look at some of the options that exist for feeding dry cows and the cost of these. The likelihood is that growing grass and being able to graze it will be an option but equally hay is short and getting more expensive by the day.

So what do the different options cost?

100% agistment	100% bought dry cow hay (8MJ)	50% energy from hay, 50% from boosted grass
\$10/head/week (generally \$8-\$10)	\$70/roll, 20% wastage	\$70/roll, 20% wastage
Freight \$20/head	12kg DM/day required to cover wastage	6kg DM/day required
Total cost \$80/head per 6 weeks (2.0c/MJ)	\$70/roll = 24.5c/kg DM	\$1.47/cow/day
	\$2.94/cow/day	Boosted grass \$700/t urea, 10% wastage, 10:1 response May application
	Total cost over 6 weeks \$123.50/cow (3.26c/MJ)	16.9c/kg DM, 3kg DM/d
		\$0.50/day
And the bonus with this that extra feed is growing at home at 1.0 c/MJ	Worst diet, no condition gain, and low intake	Total grass+ hay = \$1.97/cow/day or \$82.74/cow per 6 weeks (2.2c/MJ)
	25 cows per roll/day	50 cows/roll

Just to "flip it around"

"If hay costs me \$70/roll, how much can I pay for agistment to be the same expense?"

When fed 100% hay, \$17.25/cow/week agistment plus freight (\$10 each way) is the equivalent to feeding all hay/no grass to dries. Or, when fed 50% hay 50% grass, \$10.45/week agistment plus freight.

Alternatively...if I can get agistment for \$10/head/week plus freight, how much can I pay for hay to be no worse off if we feed 50% grass/50% hay?

The answer...\$67/bale.

So what will the MDF do for the dry cows this winter?

Like most farms, it will involve consideration of a number of options. These options include sending some dries off on good agistment (should it be available) for as many cows as possible. There will be some cows that remain on the farm and will be fed a break of grass and minimal hay, and the empties and culls will be sold prior to, or around the time of dry off, to minimise the numbers requiring feeding. There will be a good review of the number of animals on hand to calve and what the desired numbers (or required numbers!) are for 2013/14.

So...keep this quiet: agistment even at \$10/head/week if you are short of fodder and need to grow a wedge of milker feed is quite good value compared to the alternatives!

Matt Harms



AGRICULTURAL CONSULTANTS
"People, Pastures And Profit"

Yellow Rag Bit

Maria Rose Dairy Advisor, DPI Maffra

Starting the next milk production season in good shape

If you haven't already worked out how you are going to feed your dairy herd adequately so that you have a good start to milk production next season, you should probably start giving it immediate serious thought.

With odds favouring warmer and drier days than average predicted for May through to July on top of the already drier than normal milking season to date, being well prepared through adequate feed planning and budgeting is paramount. It is even more important to know now exactly how much feed you actually have on hand and what supplements you may require to make up the remainder of this season's feed budget leading up and into the next.

Sourcing these supplementary feeds from outside the farm is going to be a bigger challenge than usual this season given shortages in key supplementary feed stuffs such as hay and grain are already apparent.

Four key things to get your thinking started or to tick off against if you've already started are;

Take stock - Do a feed budget so you know what you have on hand now and what supplementary feed you need to purchase between now and at least the end of August, taking account what additional feed might grow on the farm (pasture and winter crops).

Think outside the box - Inquire about what other feeds other than the usual grains might be available from now on. Consider applying effluent and re use water to pasture and or crops strategically. Think about reducing stock numbers if sourcing an adequate amount of supplements for current numbers is difficult.

Weigh up the options - Taking into account a balanced feed ration (energy, protein and fibre for each feedstuff), calculate and compare the various total cost options. Factory field officers, grain field officers, agronomists and agricultural consultants can help you with the specific information to work this out.

Share the load – It's not only important to keep your cattle in good shape for next season, but also yourself and your family; share your thinking with neighbours friends and trusted service providers (including rural counsellors) to minimise stress. Attending a dairy farmer discussion group can certainly help.

For further information contact Maria Rose DEPI on 0438 282 205 or maria.rose@dpi.vic.gov.au,



MDF HEALTH AND SAFETY FIELD DAY

The Macalister Demonstration Farm held a Health & Safety field day on Tuesday 14th May. The field day was held as a follow up to the key note address by Sue Brumby, Director of the National Centre for Farmer Health, at the MDF AGM in October 2012. Whilst numbers attending were a little down the presentations were of excellent quality and provided invaluable information to all who were present.

The day was concluded with a tasty BBQ provided by the Heyfield Lions Club.

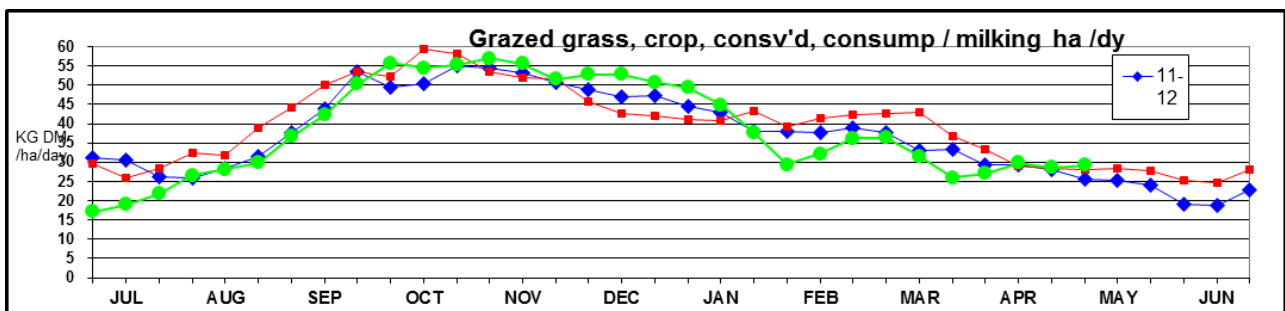
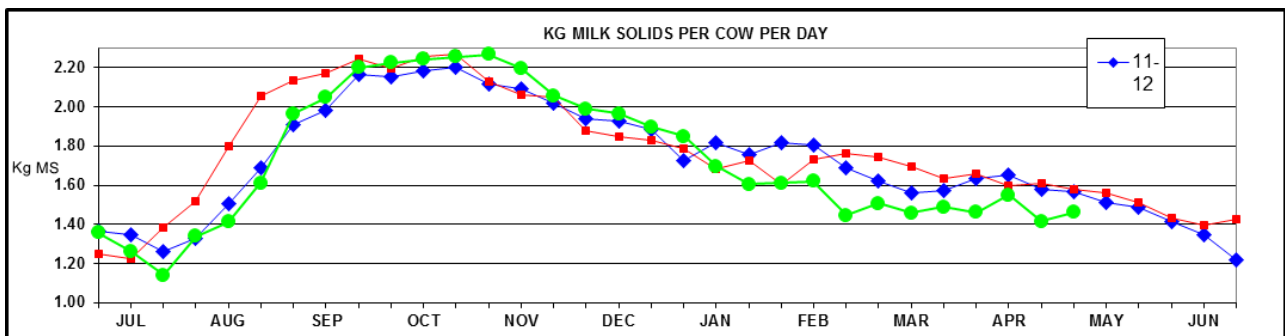
A big thank you to all presenters and the Heyfield Lions Club for making this day possible.

If you receive your Newsletter via email follow the links below to see a snapshot of presentations held on the day:

- [Jacquie Cotton, National Centre for Farmer Health – Health assessments / farmer health](#)
- [Lauren Clyne, Maffra Vet Centre – Zoonoses](#)
- [Jane Rhodes, DPI Vic – Chemical standards](#)
- [Paul Hurst, Dasco Daviesway – Handling chemicals in the Dairy](#)
- [Rob Gibbs, Code One Emergency – Protecting your farm](#)

Otherwise type the following address into your browser to access the links from the Macalister Demonstration Farm website: http://www.macalisterdemonstrationfarm.com/?page_id=2000

Macalister Demonstration Farm Performance Graphs for week ending 10th May 2013



WEEKLY FEEDING PERFORMANCE	Last Year	Last week	This week	Units
Week to date:	11-May	3-May	10-May	
Milker graze area	73	73	73	ha
Milker nos	262	275	251	head
Stocking rate	3.6	3.8	3.4	cows/ha
Grazing allocation 1/	45	40	40	th of graze area
Average graze rest time	35	35	29	days
mm irrigation/hectare/day	0.5	3.0	3.0	mm water/ha/day
Element Nitrogen	1.0	0.6	0.6	kg element/ha/day
Element Phosphorus	0.04	0.00	0.00	kg element/ha/day
Element Potassium	0.15	0.00	0.00	kg element/ha/day
Renovation	\$0.19	\$0.19	\$0.19	\$/ha/day
Topping	\$0.30	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$/ha/day
Estm'd pasture consmp'n (incl cons'vd forage)	25	29	29	kg DM/ha/dy
Pasture consum'd per cow	7.1	7.6	8.6	kg DM/cow/dy
Daily spend / milking ha	\$2.65	\$3.15	\$3.15	\$/ha/day
Estm'd pasture price	\$105	\$111	\$107	\$/T DM
Conc (incl additives)supp fed/cow	7.1	5.3	5.3	kg DM/cow/dy
Hay/silage supp fed/cow	0.0	0.0	0.5	kg DM/cow/dy
PKE supp fed/cow	1.6	1.8	0.8	kg DM/cow/dy
Estim'd supp waste	3%	4%	4%	%
Conc (incl additives)supp avg price	\$338	\$422	\$422	\$/T DM
Purch hay/silage supp avg price	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$/T DM
PKE supp price	\$263	\$339	\$339	\$/T DM
Total feed intake/cow	15.5	14.5	14.9	kg DM/cow/dy
Estm'd body cond't'n change	0.22	0.00	0.00	kg LWT/cow/dy
Litres/cow	18.8	16.6	17.2	l/cow/day
Fat test	4.25%	4.55%	4.72%	%
Protein test	3.94%	3.90%	3.96%	%
Fat per cow	0.800	0.757	0.811	kg/cow/dy
Protein per cow	0.741	0.648	0.682	kg/cow/dy
MS per cow	1.54	1.41	1.49	kg/cow/dy
Anticipated final milk price (less levies)	\$6.47	\$5.84	\$5.94	\$/kg MS
Anticipated final milk price (/litre)	\$0.530	\$0.493	\$0.515	\$/per litre
Fat return per cow	\$3.15	\$2.75	\$3.00	\$/cow/dy
Protein return per cow	\$7.31	\$5.88	\$6.31	\$/cow/dy
Volume charge per cow	\$0.49	\$0.43	\$0.45	\$/cow/dy
Milk income/cow	\$9.98	\$8.20	\$8.87	\$/cow/dy
All feed cost/cow	\$3.56	\$3.70	\$3.52	\$/cow/dy
Margin over all Feed/cow	\$6.41	\$4.49	\$5.35	\$/cow/dy
MOAF /ha /day	\$23.02	\$16.92	\$18.31	\$/ha/day
Farm MOAF per DAY	\$1,681	\$1,235	\$1,336	\$/day
MOAF per month	\$51,261	\$37,668	\$40,763	\$/month
Energy density of diet	12.4	11.9	12.0	MJ ME/kg DM
Crude protein % of diet	18.4%	22.9%	23.1%	% CP
NDF Fibre level of diet	30.3%	33.1%	31.8%	% NDF
FCE kg MS per tonne DM food	98	95	98	
Tonne feed /day	4.1	4.1	3.7	tonne DM /day
Milk Return /tonne feed	\$633	\$556	\$605	\$/tonne DM
Average Price of feed	\$226	\$252	\$240	\$/tonne DM
Margin /tonne feed	\$407	\$305	\$365	\$/tonne DM
BMCC	141	143	102	

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