

Macalister Demonstration Farm

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NEWSLETTER 17

Monday, April 20th, 2009



Extension projects at the MDF are funded by Dairy Australia and the Gardiner Foundation with support from GippsDairy.

Farm Walk

Each week the Monday Farm Walk will take on a theme to highlight some of the activities at the farm as well as looking at the general performance of the farm.

Next Monday (April 27th 2009) we will focus on which **species of trees have grown well in the flood irrigation tree belts**

Watch for farm walk topics for the following Monday in the MDF report each week in the Gippsland Times.

Meet at 11am each Monday – call Frank first on 0409 940 782 to check in.

Second Tuesday Session @ MDF – May

Sub-surface Drip Irrigation for Dairy Pastures Project – End of Season Update

Latest growth rate comparisons with flood and fixed sprinkler sites, updated establishment costings, practical installation and operational advice for those contemplating a sub-surface drip irrigation system.

Tues 12th May 10.30am - 12.00pm

LUNCH PROVIDED RSVP: Neil 0400 806 246 or 51 411 712

Yellow Rag Bit

Jason McAinch Dairy Advisor DPI Maffra

Drying off cows is an expensive business, not only because we have to feed an animal that is not producing an income, but it's also the time when we drench, pour-on and needle. This can add up to thousands of dollars. So now is the time to be thinking about your dry-off strategy.

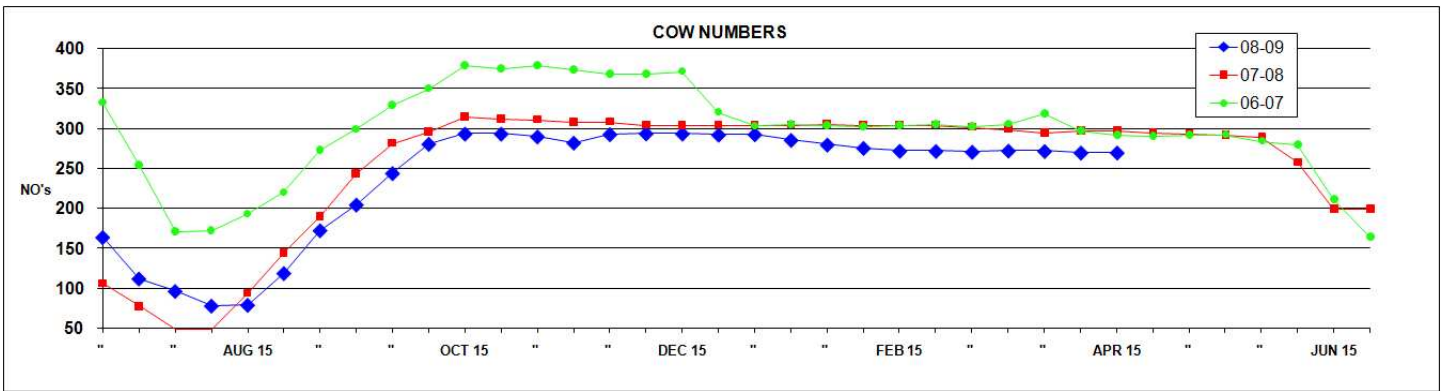
You have only one chance a year to have an impact with some of these treatments so you need to make it count.

Consider the things below, not what give away the treatment company has, because the right decision may mean you can afford to buy a better drill, golf club or fridge.

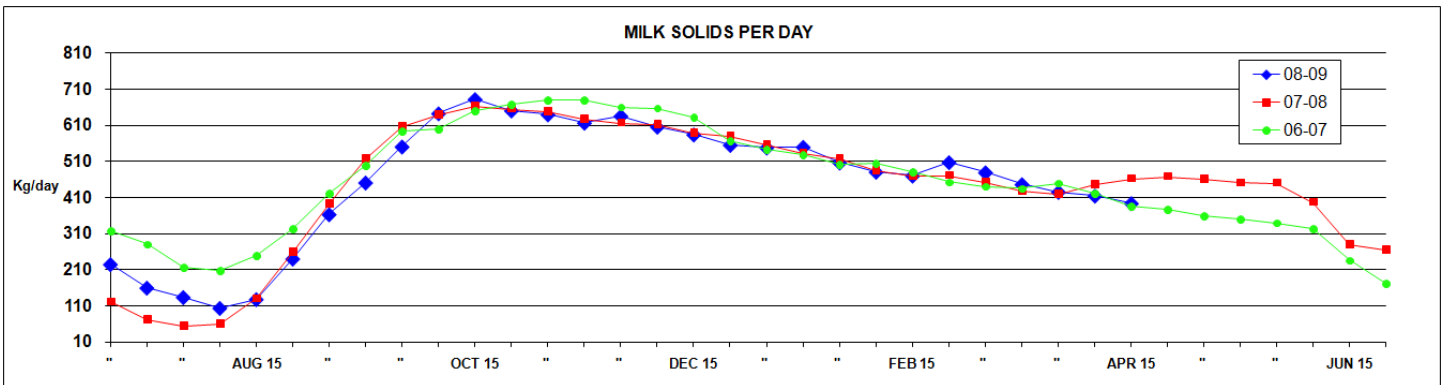
1. Does the treatment target the problem?
2. When is the optimum time to apply the treatment to maximise its effect on the cow?
3. Does the treatment enhance the new born calf's immunity?
4. Is the treatment application easy and does not lead to OH&S issues or elevated animal stress?
5. Does the treatment lead to impacts on other parts of the business? i.e. Long acting dry cow treatments effects the sale of colostrum.
6. Are there multiple treatments and does this fit in with my workforce?
7. Can I employ someone with skills to assist at this time to ensure correct procedures are followed?
8. Price of the treatment.

Think about what types of drenches, pour-on and injections you are going to use and discuss this with your vet to maximise your returns from the investment.

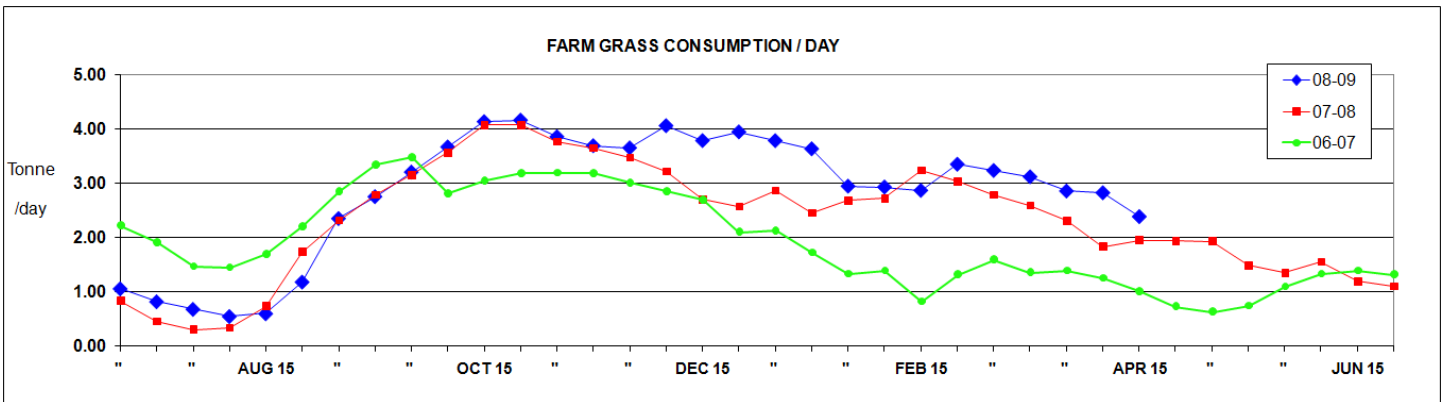
Macalister Demonstration Farm Production and Feeding Profitability



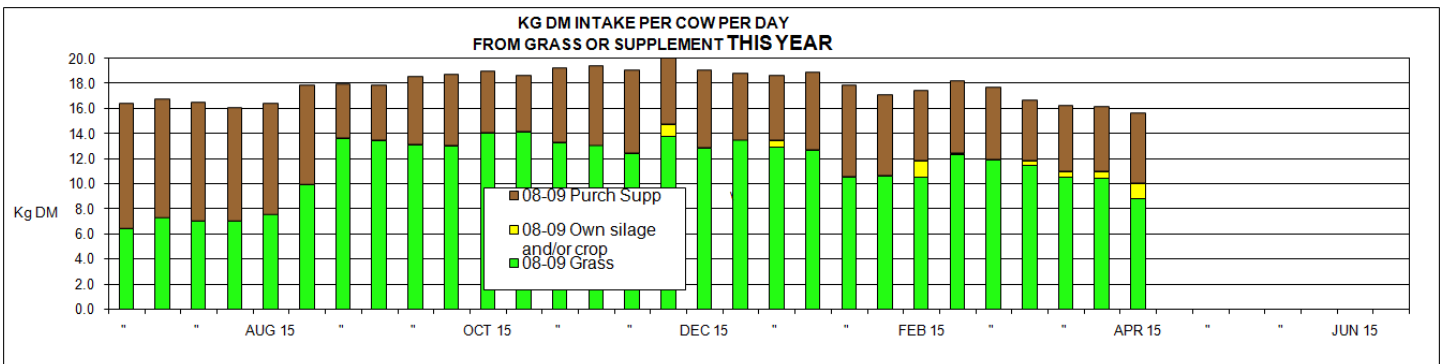
The Macalister Demonstration Farm is milking 270 cows, compared to 298 this time last year. The cow numbers have been stable for the last few months, for both years.



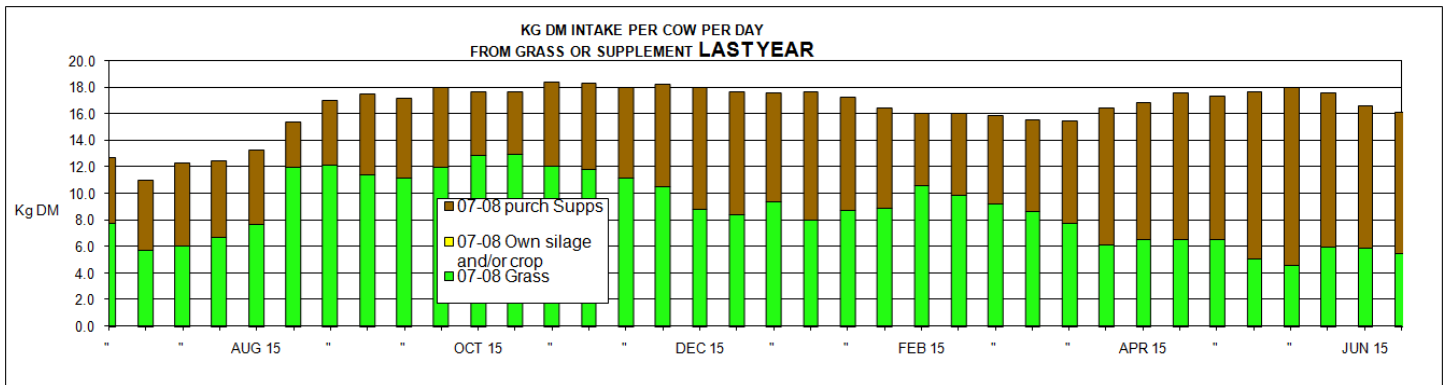
However, whole farm milk production per day has now fallen below this time last year. This time last year there was significant rise in total production. At the time we attributed it to a better diet balance.



The amount of grass consumption from the farm is higher this year.



The graph above shows how much grass and supplements were eaten per cow, this year and the next one, last year. The graphs show that currently this year, each cow is getting 8.8 kg of grass, eating a total 15.9 kilogram of dry matter. At the same time last year each cow was getting 6.5 kg of grass, eating a total 16.8 kilogram of dry matter. Last year milk production per cow was held with a lot more supplement.



WEEKLY FEEDING PERFORMANCE	MDF Last month	MDF Last week	
To date:	28-Mar-09	18-Apr-09	
Milker graze area	72	67	Hectare
Milker nos	273	270	Head
Stocking rate	3.8	4.0	cows/hectare
Grazing allocation 1/	35	35	th of graze area
Average graze rest time	32	34	Days
Element N/hectare/day	1.2	1.2	kg element/ha/day
mm irrigation/hectare/day	4.5	2.7	mm water/ha/day
Estm'd pasture consmp'n (incl cons'vd forage)	38	36	kg DM/ha/dy
Pasture consum'd per cow	10.1	8.9	kg DM/cow/dy
Estm'd pasture price	\$135	\$129	\$/T DM
Purch feed per cow	6.5	7.1	kg DM/cow/dy
Average price purch feed	\$317	\$317	kg DM/cow/dy
Litres/cow	19.2	17.1	l/cow/day
Fat test	4.62%	4.79%	%
Protein test	3.61%	3.73%	%
Fat per cow	0.89	0.82	kg/cow/dy
Protein per cow	0.69	0.64	kg/cow/dy
MS per cow	1.58	1.46	kg/cow/dy
Anticipated final milk price (less levies)	\$3.36	\$4.17	\$/kg MS
Fat return per cow	\$2.02	\$2.26	\$
Protein return per cow	\$3.89	\$4.34	\$
Volume charge per cow	\$0.50	\$0.45	\$
Milk income/cow	\$5.31	\$6.09	\$/cow/dy
All feed cost/cow	\$3.42	\$3.37	\$/cow/dy
MOAF /ha /day	\$7.17	\$10.96	\$/ha/day
MOAF /cow /day	\$1.89	\$2.72	\$/cow/day

New projects at the MDF

The Board has approved four new projects at the MDF:

Heritage Seeds Annual Ryegrass Trial – Field testing of new varieties against current market varieties. This trial includes comparison with popular perennial ryegrass varieties sown at the same time. Field day scheduled for later in 2009.

Cropmark Seeds Annual, Italian and Perennial Ryegrass Trial – Field testing of new varieties against current market varieties. Field day scheduled for later in 2009.

Murray Goulburn FarmC@re Project – The MDF will be one of twenty farms participating in the pilot phase of this project that will assist dairy farmers to minimise risk factors and reduce the pressures of an on-farm audit. Key risk areas will be people (employment and OH&S), food safety and environment (nutrient & effluent management). The project aims to improve the efficiency and effectiveness by which dairy farm businesses can demonstrate compliance with regulations and legislation. Field day scheduled for later in 2009.

Incitec Pivot Easy N Demonstration – Field demonstration of the application of liquid Nitrogen fertilizer, Easy N, through the fixed spray system. Field day scheduled for later in 2009 or early 2010.

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