

Macalister Demonstration Farm

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NEWSLETTER 23

Monday August 31st 2009



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

Irrigation Farm Walk

A new automatic weather station has been installed at the Macalister Demonstration Farm to help farmers better schedule their irrigation. The DPI farm walk will include a visit to the weather station and discussion on how to access and use the information to get the best return from irrigation water.

Macalister Demonstration Farm

10.30-12.00pm Thursday September 3rd 2009

Morning tea from 10:00 am onwards - For more information contact Brendan Stary DPI Maffra 5147 0840

Understanding the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme – What will it cost dairy farmers?

The field day includes an explanation of the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme and how it works. Using the MDF as a case study, on- and off-farm carbon emissions have been calculated and an assessment made of the financial impact on the farm under the current rules. Lots of opportunity for questions.

Lunch provided

Macalister Demonstration Farm

10.30-12.30pm Tuesday September 22nd 2009

RSVP for catering to Neil Baker 5141 1712 or neilbaker@aapt.net.au

Yellow Rag Bit

Jason McAinch Dairy Advisor DPI Maffra

Every day has more jobs to do than there is time to do them! When you are busy, you seem to have less time to plan, but, this is when you need to spend time carefully planning. How many times have you said to yourself "ah, I should have done that while I was there..." Managing your time is critical to the success of your business.

Some strategies on using your time efficiently are:

1. Write down jobs – carry pencil and pad
2. At the end of the day/week prioritise the jobs for the next day/week – focus on the jobs with highest priority for the time invested (80/20 rule).
3. Make time to relax and eat regularly – this helps the brain to work better
4. Give yourself a pat on the back (reward) from time to time on a job well done.

Heard the saying "the difference between a great farmer and an average farmer - is about two weeks"?

Adaptive Forage Planning Discussion Days

DPI, as part of a larger project, is comparing a range of potential crops to help manage seasonal variability in the future. This is a day for interested farmers and service providers to examine cereal and pea crops and discuss their potential for both dairy farmers and forage producers.

Wednesday 9 September

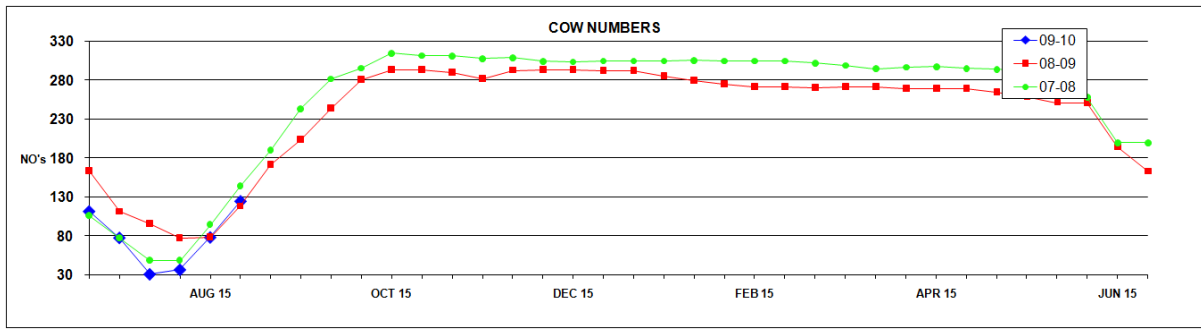
10.15am-12.15pm at Brad and Jim Missen's runoff block, Rosedale-Flynns Creek Rd, Flynn

1.30pm-3.30pm at Andrew Neumann's farm, north of CFA shed at intersection of Stratford-Bengworden and Ramahyuck Rds

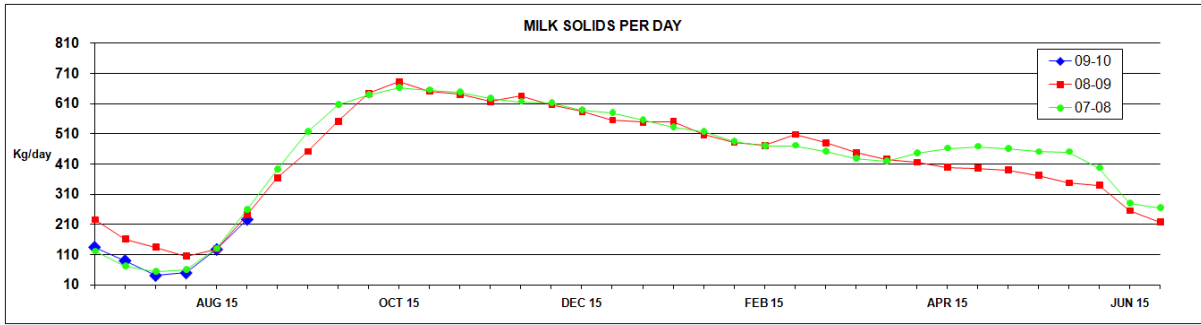
Thursday 10 September

10.15am-1pm at Wayne Bowden's Farm, South Gippsland Hwy, Yarram. (about 200m west of Greenmount Rd)

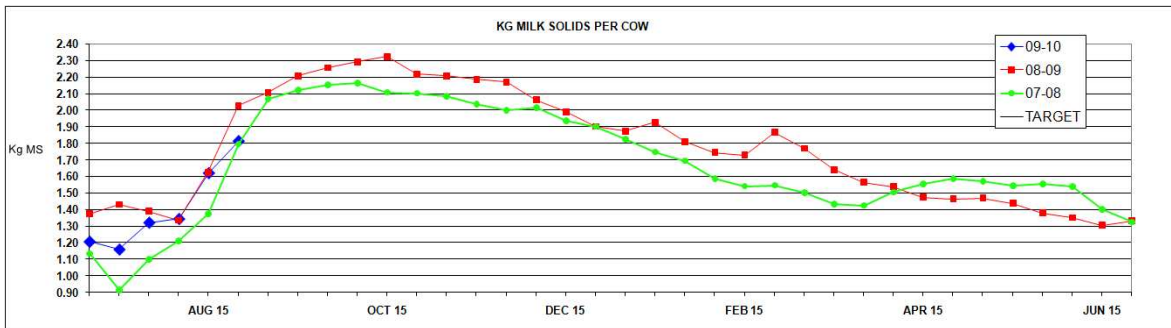
Macalister Demonstration Farm Profitability Project



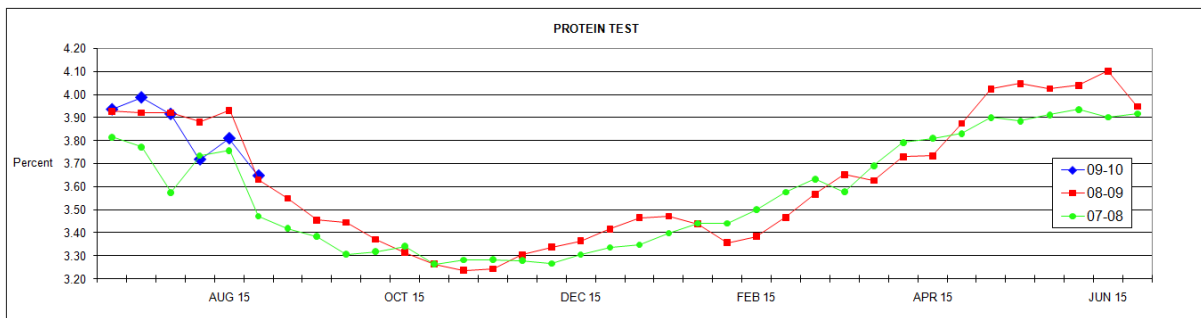
As the cows calve, the cow numbers are climbing, slightly faster than the same time last year. We peaked at 290 last year but plan to peak at 280 cows this year.



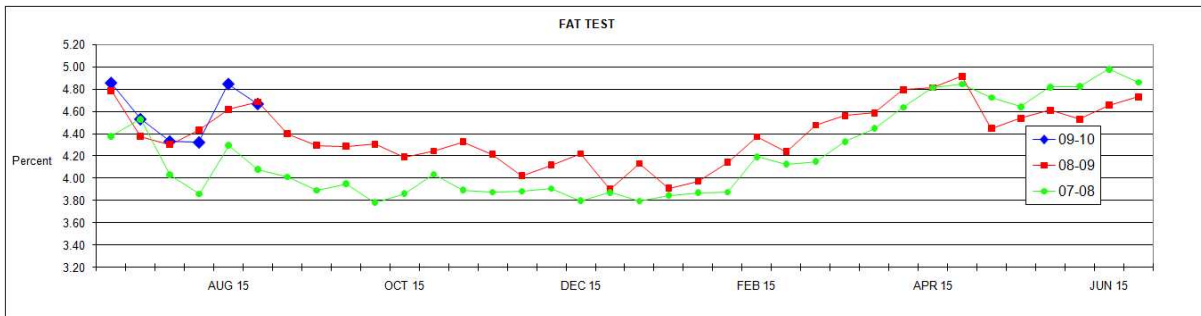
Total milk solids per day is just below last year, climbing on much the same curve as last year.



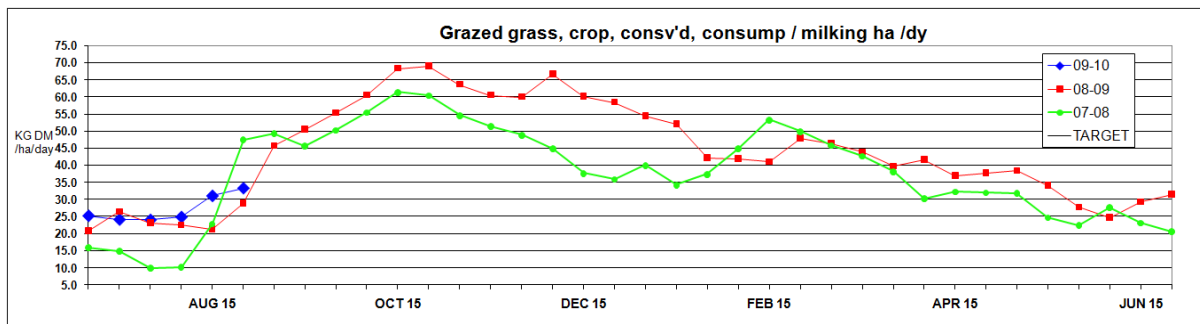
Slightly more cows with slightly less total milk, means milk solids per cow is behind last year.



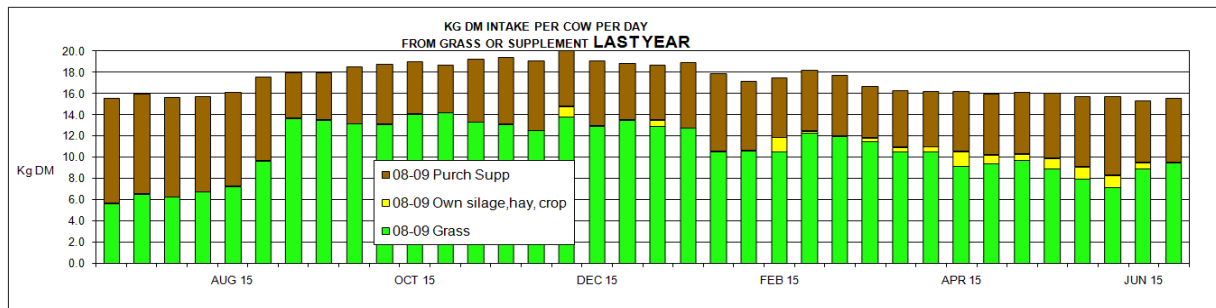
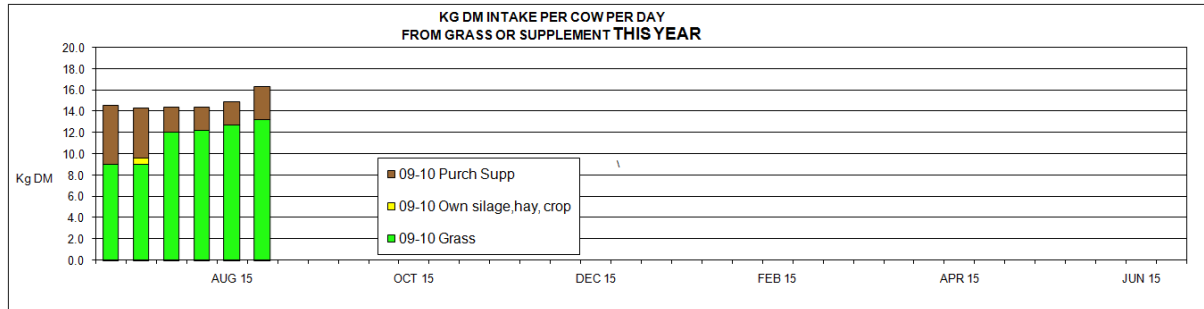
Protein test is falling, as it typically does at this stage of the lactation, and is similar to last year.



Fat test has a recent high point but is now falling.



Grass consumption has travelled through winter at much the same rate as last year, holding around 25 kg DM per hectare per day. Some paddocks got irrigated but some did get a bit dry. Nitrogen was used throughout at about 0.9 kg N per day. This growth has allowed us to carry all the cows at home, albeit feeding 4 kg PKE per dry cow per day. Currently grass consumption is higher than last year.



The two charts above show two differences between this year and last. Firstly, each cow is eating about 1 kg DM less per day than last year, probably explaining why they are behind in milk production per day. However, they are now getting 12.8 kg DM grass per cow per day, compared to 9.7 kg last year. This is partly because grass consumption per hectare is higher, and partly because we are carrying fewer cows. There are less dry cows so the milkers are getting more of the farm.

We recently discussed a grass per day per milker target and thought we would have a go at 16 kg DM grass per cow per day. Grass per cow is very important all the time but even more so this year when milk price is low.

The factors affecting grass per cow are:

1. **Stocking rate** per hectare. Stocking rate is a decision, keeping in mind that for any additional cow, you need to add the costs of her milking, her health, her mating, her 0.25 replacement, and 2 tonne of extra food that does not produce any milk but only keeps her alive.
2. **Grass consumption** per hectare. The grass growing will be achieved with appropriate water, fertiliser and grazing rest time and residue.
3. **Setting the cow up** to eat a lot. This involves calving the cow down in high body condition score, transitioning her diet from dry to milking well, ensuring no health problems occur, and then offering her the feed, both the quantity and quality, to allow her appetite to develop.

The other "16" target, that is 16 tonne of DM per hectare for the year, is still in place.

Spring Sessions @ the MDF

Every Wednesday from 30th September to 11th of November 2009

11am – 12.30pm

BBQ lunch provided by Irwin Stockfeeds

Macalister Demonstration Farm

Boggy Creek Rd, Riverslea

Week 1 September 30th - **Summer Crops** - Janice Dowe (DPI), Rachael Hopkinson (MG), Peter Norwood (Daly's)

Week 2 October 7th - **Mating - Back 2 Basics** - Mark Humphris, MVC

Week 3 October 14th - **Grain or not to grain - that is the question** - Jason McAinch DPI, guest speaker DA TBC

Week 4 October 21st - **Fertiliser - how much is just enough? Calcium ain't calcium - the role of Lime & Gypsum**
- Cameron Gourley & Bree Walshe DPI

Week 5 October 29th - **MDF AGM** (note it's a Thursday)

Week 6 November 4th - **The Good Life**

Week 7 November 11th - **What have you changed?** Panel discussion

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