

# Macalister Demonstration Farm

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## NEWSLETTER 32

Monday March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2010



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### MID Tracker Project - Discovery Day for Dairy Farmers

Twenty MID farmers are providing the Tracker Project with information about farm inputs and production to track their farm performance over the season. Come and see what the project is all about and have a look at how the participating farmers can use this extra information to improve performance

**Macalister Demonstration Farm on Tuesday April 13<sup>th</sup> 10.30am-12pm**

Lunch provided

More information call Frank Tyndall on 0409 940 782

### Yellow Rag Bit

Bree Walshe, Dairy Advisor, DPI Maffra

Recently the East Gippsland YDDP group hosted a night on *Employees and Employers Rights and Responsibilities* presented by Karen Baum from The People in Dairy (DA) and Colin Wright (Phillipsons Accounting). Did you know that *as of the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2010*, the federal industrial laws have changed? There are only 2 systems that affect the dairy industry: All employers in Victoria are “**national system employers**” and there is only 1 federal award called the “**Pastoral Award 2010**”.

#### The following are some key points from the night:

- The federal industrial laws have stated 10 minimum standards called the **National Employment Standards (NES)** – apply to all employees regardless of whether they are covered by an award or a workplace agreement. The **NES** are:
  1. maximum weekly hours of work
  2. requests for flexible working agreements
  3. parental leave
  4. annual leave
  5. personal/carer’s leave and compassionate leave
  6. community service leave
  7. long service leave
  8. public holidays
  9. notice of termination and redundancy pay
  10. Fair Work Information Statement
- **Minimum hours** of work for part time employees– the award specifies that the employer must roster the employee for a minimum of 3 hours on any shift. For a casual employee on each occasion the casual attends work they are entitled to a minimum payment of 3 hours.
- Under the award ‘**ordinary hours**’ for full time employees are 152 hours worked over a four week period, this also applies to ‘casual’ employees.
- **Flexibility** – every modern Award must include a ‘flexibility term’ which enables employers and employees to agree to vary some of the award terms and conditions – this is called an “**Individual Flexibility Agreement**” (IFA) and must be agreed to by both parties.
- **Minimum** entitlements must be met by any Individual Flexibility Agreement. These are: minimum wages, maximum hours of work, various forms of leave.

This is just a brief snapshot of the information presented. For clarification of the above points I strongly recommend you visit the [www.thepeopleindairy.org.au](http://www.thepeopleindairy.org.au) website where all of the details of how and what changes affect your dairy business are located. Alternatively, you can contact the VFF or your accountant.

*While every attempt has been made to ensure the information above is correct, it is the readers’ responsibility to ensure their legal obligations are met. This information is supplied as information and DPI does not take responsibility for any errors.*

## Macalister Demonstration Farm Profitability Project & MID Tracker Project

The MID Tracker is a project conducted by the Macalister Demonstration Farm, funded by GippsDairy, to analyse and report frequently on the **feeding productivity and profitability for twenty dairy farmers** in the Macalister Irrigation District (MID). A range of feeding levels is represented in the group.

Data will be collected from each farmer **every ten days for one year**. Each farmer then gets an individual report every ten days, using the same analysis method and report format (graphs and tables) as the regular MDF reports.

The project has now been operating for a couple of months. The participants are coming to grips with the data input. This is the first public report of the group results. All the public reports will be anonymous. The group will be meeting on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March at the MDF to discuss the reports.

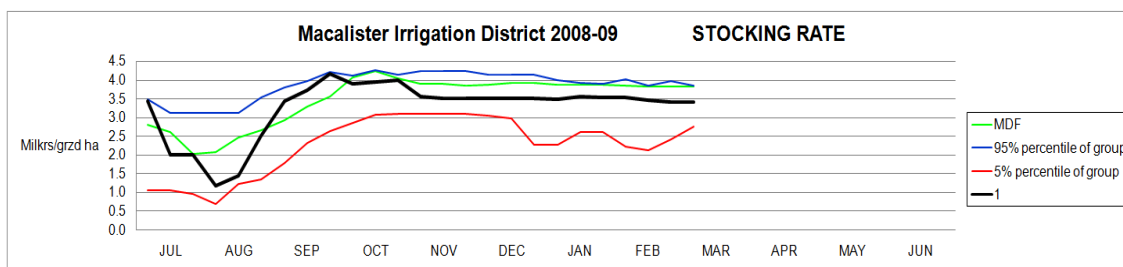
### This analysis and reporting method assumes feeding is likely to be more profitable if:

- Prices of inputs (feed) are lower. This is more likely if more pasture is in the diet. The level of pasture in each cow's diet depends on stocking rate and pasture consumption per hectare.
- The price of the output (milk) is higher. The milk price structure in this Tracker project is set the same for all farms.
- Feed is converted efficiently into milk. A major driver of feed efficiency is total intake per cow. Total intake and milk solids per cow, are more likely to be greater if some concentrate supplements are fed.

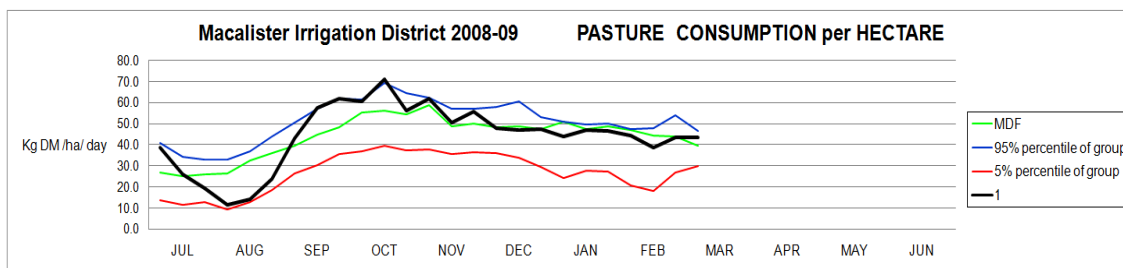
Therefore the **following indicators are reported in table and graph format:**

- Pasture consumption per hectare per day.
- Stocking rate.
- Pasture consumption per cow per day.
- Total feed intake per cow per day.
- Milk solids per cow per day.

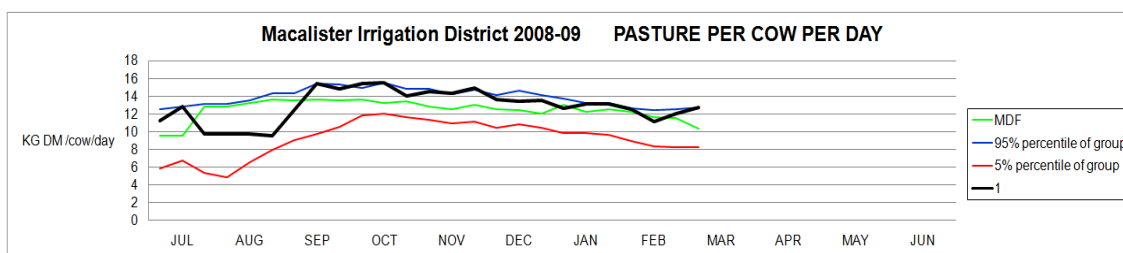
The following graphs show the group results up to March 10<sup>th</sup> showing the upper and lower 5% range for this group of farmers, the MDF, and, in this case, Farm No 1.



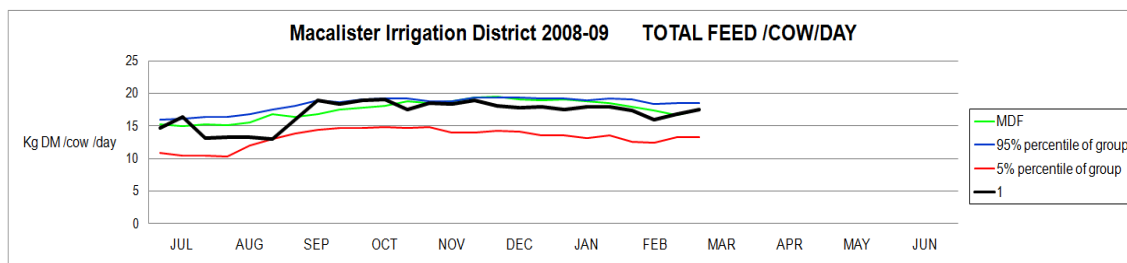
The blue line is the highest 5% stocking rate of the group of twenty; the red line the lowest 5%. The green line is the MDF's stocking rate, and the black line is Farm number 1's stocking rate. The MDF stocking rate is currently near the highest of the group; Farm 1 is midway.



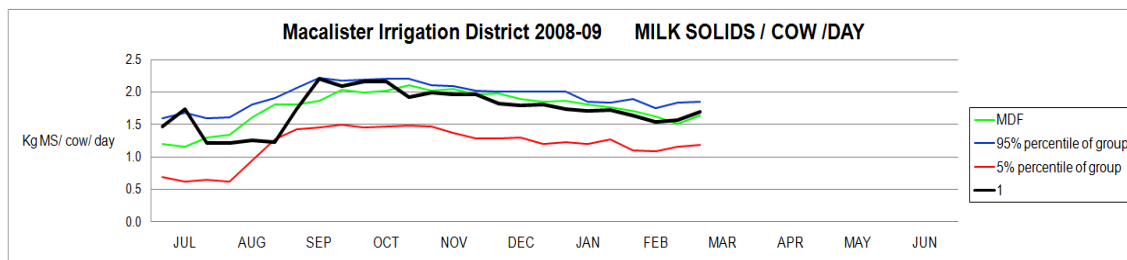
Farm 1's pasture consumption per hectare was low in August but has rallied well, now close to the top and above the MDF, which only rarely has been at the top of pasture consumption within the group. Currently some farmers are achieving near 50 kg DM per hectare per day and others are achieving 30 kg DM per hectare per day.



For much of the season Farm 1 has pasture consumption per cow right near the top, whereas the MDF has been sitting around, or just above, midway.



Both Farm 1 and the MDF have added supplements to keep the cows well fed (above) and the milk solids per cow reflects the feeding level (below).



The table below contains the figures for the ten day period ending on March 10th. The margins calculated in the bottom two lines have assumed all the same prices for milk, pasture and supplements. The Tracker project will later use individually calculated, and more accurate, pasture and supplement prices. All the farms have been ranked and ordered with the higher margin farms (giving the per hectare margin more weight) closer to the left end of the table. Farm 1, featured in the graphs, shows as a relatively high performer. The MDF is currently in the middle, its margin being affected by low pasture consumption per hectare and pasture per cow (see other reports for an explanation of this). There is a lot of data to study but generally the higher margin farms have higher pasture consumption per hectare, higher pasture consumption per cow, higher total feed per cow, and higher MS per cow. All as expected I suppose.

FARM	81	31	1	89	70	156	MDF	99	71	145	6	13	37	167	Units
Ten day to date:	10-Mar	10-Mar	10-Mar	10-Mar	10-Mar	10-Mar	10-Mar	10-Mar	10-Mar	10-Mar	10-Mar	10-Mar	10-Mar	10-Mar	
Grazing allocation 1/	30	27	30	30	32	31	30	30	30	35	29	20	45	31	'th' of graze area
Average graze rest time	27	27	31	30	30	27	30	30	30	33	29	21	33	31	days
Element N/hectare/day	1.7	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.0	1.1	1.8	1.2	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	kg element/ha/day
Irrigation water applied	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	1.0	0.0	2.2	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	mm water/ha/day
Pasture consumption (incl conserved)	46	44	43	50	41	38	39	37	36	33	42	30	29	32	kg DM/ha/dy
Stocking rate	3.7	3.7	3.4	3.8	3.7	3.0	3.8	4.0	3.8	2.8	3.7	2.6	3.2	2.8	cows/ha
Pasture consumed/cow	12.3	11.8	12.7	10.6	11.2	12.7	10.3	9.2	9.6	11.7	11.5	11.7	9.0	11.5	kg DM/cow/dy
Concentrate supplement fed/cow	5.6	4.7	5.0	2.5	5.9	5.9	5.9	4.5	4.5	4.9	1.4	4.1	4.1	3.8	kg DM/cow/dy
Hay/silage supplement fed/cow	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	kg DM/cow/dy
PKE supplement fed/cow	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	kg DM/cow/dy
Total feed intake/cow	18.6	16.4	17.5	15.6	18.0	18.5	17.5	15.1	14.4	16.5	12.8	15.7	13.4	15.1	kg DM/cow/dy

FARM	81	31	1	89	70	156	MDF	99	71	145	6	13	37	167	Units
Estimated body condition change	0.3	0	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0.2	kg LWT/cow /dy
Litres/cow	23.0	20.6	21.7	17.9	22.1	25.1	20.6	17.4	17.4	19.9	13.8	20.1	15.1	16.0	l/cow/dy
MS per cow	1.84	1.61	1.70	1.41	1.64	1.88	1.64	1.43	1.37	1.67	1.14	1.52	1.20	1.29	kg/cow/dy
Milk income per cow	\$8.46	\$7.41	\$7.81	\$6.47	\$7.53	\$8.67	\$7.55	\$6.60	\$6.31	\$7.68	\$5.22	\$6.98	\$5.50	\$5.94	\$/cow/dy
MOAF/cow	\$5.92	\$5.35	\$5.62	\$5.04	\$5.22	\$6.24	\$4.97	\$4.43	\$4.46	\$5.58	\$4.02	\$5.09	\$3.72	\$4.13	\$/cow/dy
MOAF/ha	\$21.91	\$19.83	\$19.16	\$19.21	\$19.09	\$18.80	\$18.96	\$17.55	\$16.89	\$15.87	\$14.81	\$13.24	\$12.03	\$11.60	\$/ha/dy

The farmers in this Tracker project, with their individual graphs each ten days can keep track of these indicators. They might change some level of input, up or down, to achieve a change of performance indicator, as they travel through the season.

A lot more information and analysis, including cumulative pasture consumption, cumulative pasture per cow, and cumulative margins, will be presented in this MDF newsletter as the project continues.

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