

Macalister Demonstration Farm

PO Box 87, MAFFRA, VIC 3860

Ph. (03) 5145 1650 Fax (03) 5145 1650

Email: mdf@wideband.net.au Web: <http://mdf.mistro.ag/>

NEWSLETTER 34

Monday May 3rd 2010



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

Tweak or leap – What do I do with a low performing irrigation paddock?

Join a discussion at the MDF with Gavan Lamb, DPI Maffra, about the future of the bike shift paddocks and how we might improve their performance. Do we tweak them to make them perform better or leap into a new system? This discussion follows a process that can be used on any farm to make the best decision about what to do with a low performing irrigation paddock.

Macalister Demonstration Farm on Tuesday May 11th 10.30am-12.30pm

Lunch provided

More information call Neil Baker on 0400 806 246

Yellow Rag Bit

Bree Walshe, Dairy Advisor DPI Maffra

Have you remembered.....

As the end of the year is fast approaching (way too fast), there are plenty of jobs that need doing. They're the jobs that have probably been put in the 'too hard' or 'I'll do it later when I have the chance' basket. Here are some friendly reminders of what you might find in that basket:

- **Financials**
 - ⇒ What's your current financial position?
 - ⇒ Are there any tax implications that you need to deal with.
 - ⇒ Start to prepare this basket so you can act and make decisions by mid June.
- **Irrigation**
 - ⇒ Do you want to sneak one last irrigation in off the channel, before closing on the 15th May?
 - ⇒ Once the irrigation season comes to a halt, take the opportunity to clean out the delvas and drains – spray the weeds & undergo general maintenance
- **Effluent**
 - ⇒ The usually neglected pond of nutrients, how full is it?
 - ⇒ You need to empty as much of the liquid you can before winter, especially for those that shandy channel water with it – time is ticking a fortnight to go until the wheels are offline.
- **The Spring cows**
 - ⇒ How is their body condition, do they need a few extra kilo's on their backs before dry off and calving? It is far more efficient to gain weight during lactation than when the cows are dry!
 - ⇒ Do you need to drench / vaccinate your cows? Refer to article in HNGC May edition
- **The rising 2 year olds**
 - ⇒ How are they looking – gaining weight, in good body condition, growing well?
 - ⇒ There is still time to put a bit more cover on their backs before calving
- **Feed on hand**
 - ⇒ Do you know how much silage, hay you have available / left?
 - ⇒ Do you know how much feed you will need?
- **The calf pens**
 - ⇒ Clean them out and spray with disinfectant – ready for next season
- Have you filled in your **Milking the Weather newsletter subscription** reply paid postcard – if not now is the time to do it, before the June edition
- **Finally**
 - ⇒ Find time for some well earned R&R

For more information or questions please call your accountant, nutritionist, trusted advisor, travel agent or a member of the Dairy team at Maffra DPI on 5147 0800.

Macalister Demonstration Farm Profitability Project

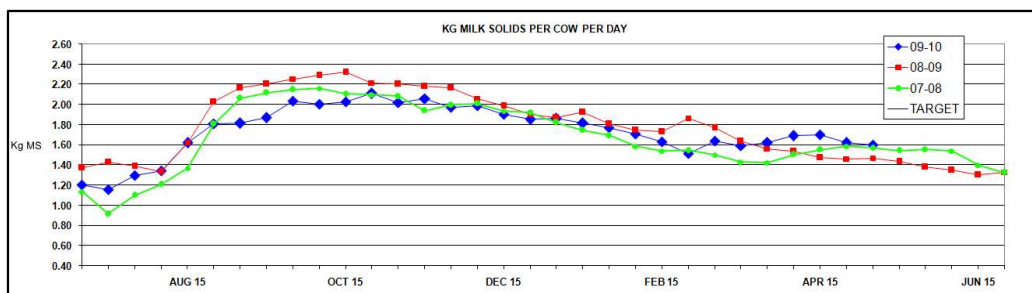
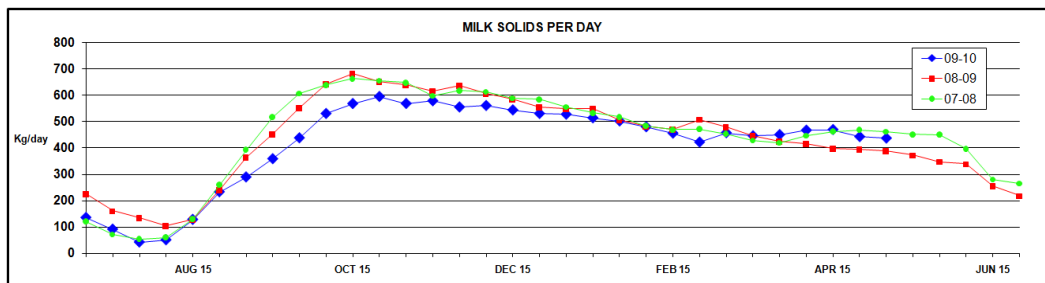
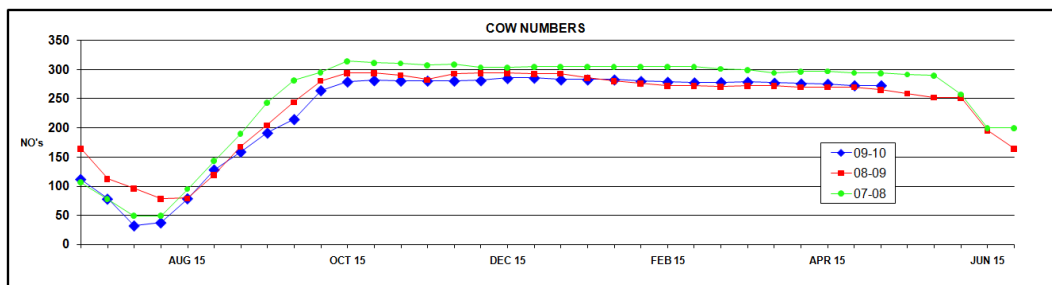
We've all seen cow production fall over Summer when they seem to be taking in the same amount of pasture as early and late in the season. Monthly feed tests at the MDF as part of the Incitec Pivot nitrogen application trial give us an insight as to why this happens. The average figures are relatively reliable because:

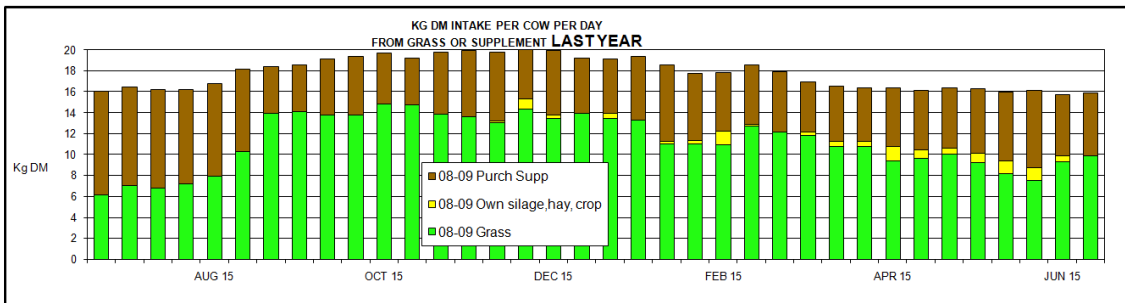
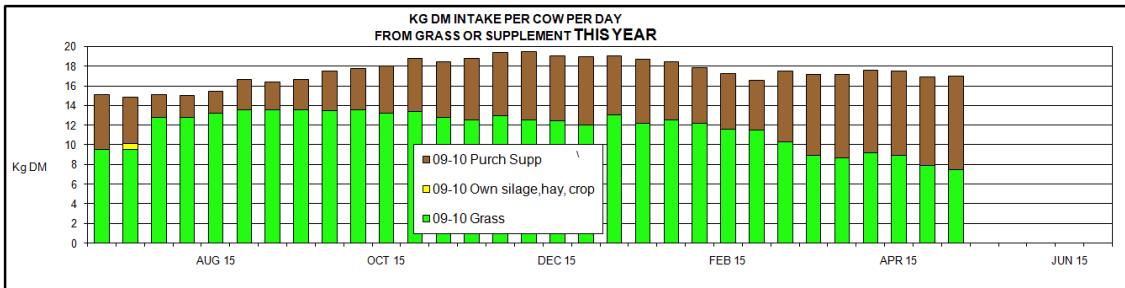
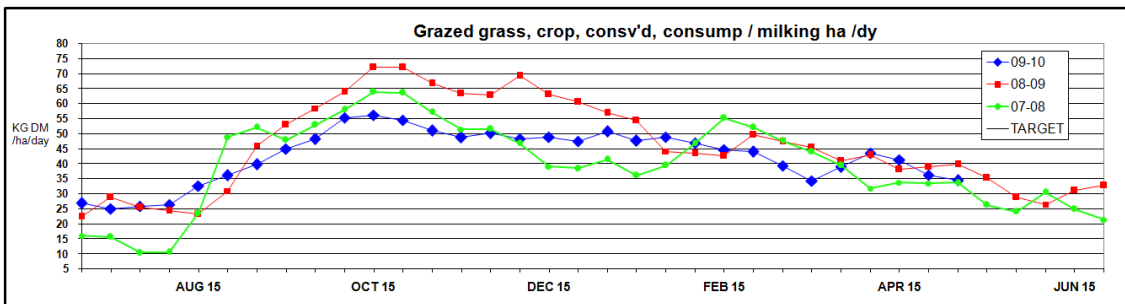
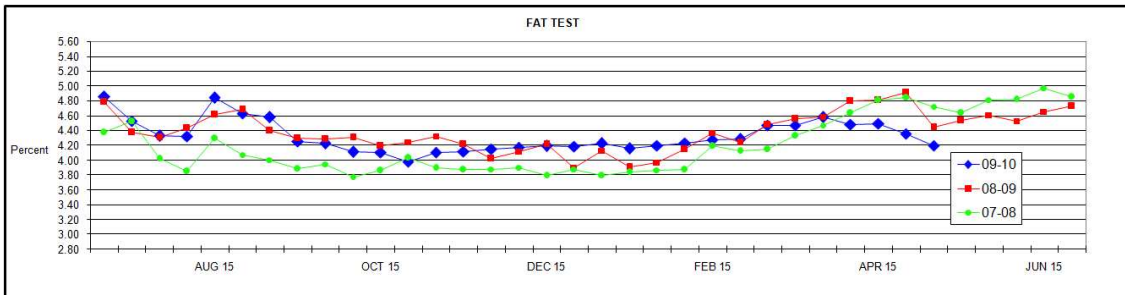
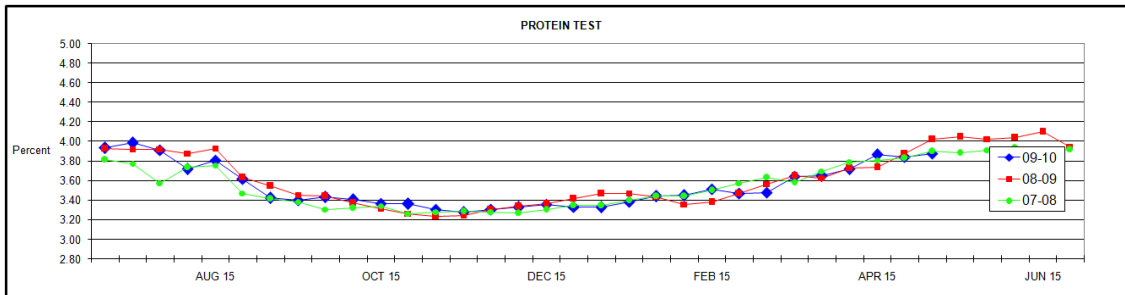
- The plots contain ryegrass only.
- The plots are mown to a constant residue, and only above residue grass is sampled.
- 12 tests are done, on the same day.

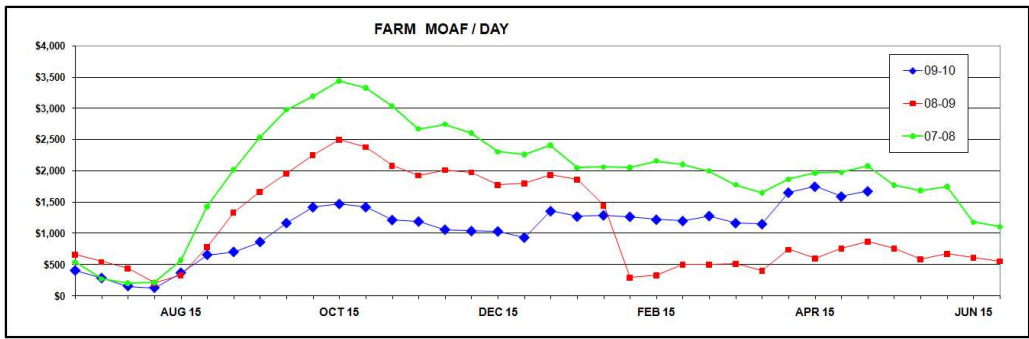
PLOT	JANUARY 11TH				APRIL 15 TH			
	Dry Matter	Megajoules Energy	Crude protein %	NDF Fibre %	Dry Matter	Megajoules Energy	Crude protein %	NDF Fibre %
1	19.8	11.6	22.8	42.1	18.0	12.0	24.8	45.3
2	18.6	11.3	20.9	43.8	17.5	11.8	23.7	47.1
3	17.8	11.3	21.2	46.1	17.3	12.1	24.7	46.1
4	18.5	11.5	21.9	44.2	18.0	12.0	23.4	44.6
5	18.8	11.5	21.5	45.4	18.1	12.3	24.2	43.4
6	20.6	11.0	20.2	47.3	17.6	12.4	25.1	42.7
7	17.8	11.2	21.4	47.4	17.8	11.9	23.0	46.9
8	20.1	11.2	21.6	47.1	17.3	12.2	24.4	44.1
9	20.0	11.2	22.1	47.2	17.5	12.0	23.1	45.8
10	19.5	11.3	22.0	45.7	16.9	12.0	25.3	46.4
11	19.5	11.4	21.7	44.1	18.4	12.1	23.2	44.5
12	19.6	11.4	22.8	45.5	16.9	12.4	25.6	43.1
Average	19.2	11.3	21.7	45.5	17.6	12.1	24.2	45.0

Ryegrass grown in April is significantly higher in energy than January ryegrass, a bit higher in protein, but has much the same fibre.

The following are the current MDF feeding performance and margin graphs.







Sub-surface drip irrigation - End of second season update

After two seasons of operation we are now in a better position to evaluate the performance of the sub-surface drip irrigation system. Pasture production and water use efficiency will be compared to flood irrigation and fixed spray irrigation.

Macalister Demonstration Farm on Tuesday May 25th 10.30am-12.00pm

Lunch provided

More information call Neil Baker on 0400 806 246

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

SENDER:



Macalister Demonstration Farm
PO Box 87 **MAFFRA** VIC 3860