

Macalister Demonstration Farm

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NEWSLETTER 45

Monday January 31st 2011



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

BLOODY WEEDS EVERYWHERE!

Join a discussion about managing weeds in a paddock walk field day with **Rachael Hopkinson (Murray Goulburn), Bree Walshe (DPI) and Frank Tyndall (MDF)**
What are these weeds that are everywhere? How did it come to this? Can I manage so it doesn't happen again?
What's the best way to deal with the problem I've got now?

Date: Tuesday 8th February 2011 Time: 10am – 12pm

(Note: Not Feb 14th as previously advertised)

Venue: Macalister Demonstration Farm, Boggy Creek Rd, Riverslea

BBQ lunch will be provided

Yellow Rag Bit

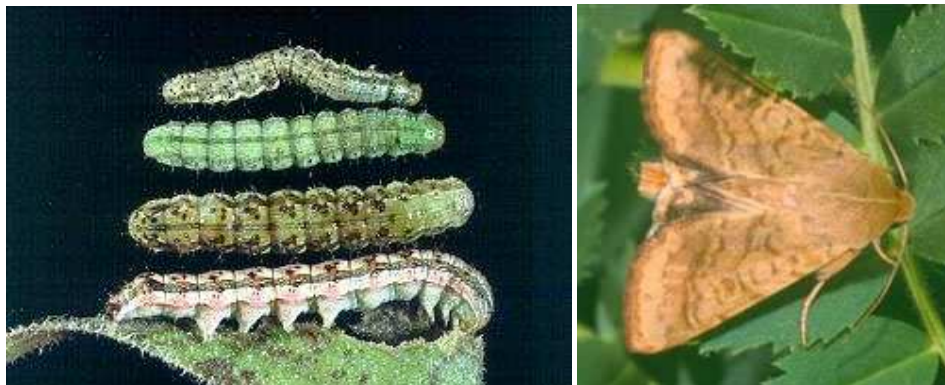
Bree Walshe, Dairy Advisor DPI Maffra

Observations around the MID

Pest damage in Maize

Watch out for the **Heliothis** or corn earworm (*Helicoverpa armigera*) in maize crops this season. There are two stages to this pest – moth (small and grey) and caterpillar. The caterpillars are up to 50 millimetres in length and can vary in colour from yellow to almost black - often with a broad pale stripe along each side. Eggs tend to be laid anywhere on the top two thirds of the plant. Heliothis are a more serious pest during tasselling and silking. The damage to the silks reduces pollination and grain-set. Six to eight larvae per tassel before silk emergence may warrant control. Chemical control should only be aimed at small caterpillars (up to five millimetres), as heliothis has developed resistance to a wide range of chemicals.

The caterpillar has been sighted in several crops in the MID already and can significantly reduce the quality and tonnage of the crop. Be vigilant if you have planted maize this year and check your foliage extensively for chew marks, caterpillars and little grey moths. For treatment and management options please contact your trusted agronomist or chemical supplier.



Facial Eczema

I know last edition's yellow rag concentrated on Facial Eczema, but remain on alert, spore counting has begun, with mixed levels reported. The warm overnight temperatures and humidity we have experienced lately are favourable fungus conditions.

Water

- Irrigators have solid water allocations this season, so keep the water up to your pastures and crops. Remember that moisture and soil temperature are the two key drivers for leaf appearance, therefore affecting your growth rate. Ensuring your pasture is not water stressed can help you maintain feed quality to your milkers and young stock.
- Don't under-estimate the effects of heat on your cows' milk production, both in terms of water requirement (200L + / cow/day) and her ability to access shade to keep cool.

Youngstock

- Don't forget about the heifers that you weaned back in Spring – are they up to date with their worming and vaccinations? Do they have adequate quality feed to support growth and development?
- If you are an autumn calver, are the heifers you plan to join in a couple of months going to reach their growth targets? If you act on any observations now, you have time to increase their weight, and hopefully increase conception rates.

If you have further questions or queries please contact your trusted agronomist, veterinarian, nutritionist, consultant, milk supply officer or your local member of the Dairy Services branch at Maffra DPI on 5147 0800.

Heliothis information was gathered from the <http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/> website

Macalister Demonstration Farm Profitability Project

The Tracker gathers a mountain of data about feeding performance and profitability. This article tries to make sense of a comparison between the ten days to January 20th **this year** (2011) and the same period **last year** (2010).

The first two tables show a lot of detail, the range of inputs and feeding performances and profitabilities, from all the farms. The ranking is based on Margin Over All Feed (MOAF), with the MOAF **per hectare** given more weight. Keep in mind that the farmers contributing their data need to estimate some of the inputs, particularly the daily pasture growing inputs. And because of the complexity of feeding profitability, a fully meaningful comparison of years and farms is not really possible. This is only a guide to what is happening in the district.

THIS YEAR															
20-Jan 2011															
RANK-based on margins	1st	2nd	3rd	4 th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12 th	13th	14th	15th
FARM NUMBER	59	67	MDF	18	66	39	33	87	89	77	99	78	21	17	34
Stocking rate Cows/ha	5.0	3.7	4.1	3.5	3.4	3.9	3.5	3.9	3.5	3.7	3.5	4.0	3.0	3.1	2.6
Grazing rest time Days	30	27	30	24	30	30	30	27	28	30	30	20	30	29	28
Kg N element/ha/dy	0.0	1.2	1.4	1.0	0.3	1.0	1.0	0.2	1.0	1.1	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Irrigation water Mm/ha/dy	0.0	0.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	1.5	0.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	2.0
Grass consmpt'n Kg DM/ha/dy	44	37	40	36	37	44	40	40	39	34	38	38	30	33	24
Grass /cow Kg DM/cow/dy	8.9	9.9	9.9	10.2	10.9	11.4	11.5	10.3	11.0	9.3	10.7	9.7	10.1	10.6	9.1
Daily spend /ha \$/ha/dy	\$0.08	\$2.10	\$3.22	\$3.62	\$2.50	\$3.59	\$3.68	\$1.04	\$3.55	\$4.12	\$3.77	\$0.00	\$1.13	\$2.94	\$2.13
Pasture price \$/tonne DM	\$2	\$57	\$81	\$101	\$68	\$81	\$92	\$26	\$91	\$121	\$100	\$0	\$37	\$88	\$89
Supplements Kg DM/cow/dy	4.3	7.2	7.1	6.7	5.5	5.3	5.4	2.7	4.6	10.4	4.5	2.5	5.0	5.1	6.9
Purch feed price \$/tonne DM	\$400	\$272	\$340	\$331	\$417	\$367	\$384	\$383	\$278	\$417	\$291		\$351	\$379	\$294
Tot DM Intake Kg DM/cow/dy	13.0	16.7	16.7	16.9	16.3	16.5	16.7	12.9	15.3	19.2	15.1	12.0	14.9	15.6	15.4
Body Cond'n Chnge Kg LWY/cow/dy	0.00	0.10	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.10	0.00	0.20	0.20	0.00
Litres (incl calf) l/cow/dy	15.5	22.3	22.8	22.8	23.4	21.6	24.0	15.9	18.8	26.8	20.0	12.3	16.7	20.4	19.7
Milk Solids/cow Kg MS/cow/dy	1.41	1.62	1.69	1.78	1.71	1.57	1.71	1.23	1.43	1.93	1.44	0.91	1.33	1.41	1.41
Milk price \$/kg MS	\$4.81	\$4.85	\$4.88	\$4.86	\$4.84	\$4.73	\$4.73	\$4.74	\$4.76	\$4.82	\$4.70	\$4.64	\$4.80	\$4.75	\$4.82
Milk income/cow \$/cow/dy	\$6.78	\$7.87	\$8.23	\$8.66	\$8.30	\$7.41	\$8.09	\$5.82	\$6.82	\$9.30	\$6.76	\$4.23	\$6.40	\$6.71	\$6.81
All feed cost/cow \$/cow/dy	\$1.74	\$2.24	\$3.10	\$3.26	\$3.05	\$2.67	\$3.13	\$1.30	\$2.13	\$4.91	\$2.38	\$0.52	\$2.12	\$2.73	\$2.85
Margin over all Feed/cow \$/cow/dy	\$5.04	\$5.63	\$5.13	\$5.41	\$5.25	\$4.75	\$4.96	\$4.51	\$4.69	\$4.39	\$4.37	\$3.71	\$4.28	\$3.98	\$3.96
MOAF /ha \$/ha/dy	\$25.19	\$20.92	\$20.81	\$18.97	\$17.60	\$18.52	\$17.25	\$17.45	\$16.64	\$16.07	\$15.35	\$14.75	\$12.85	\$12.45	\$10.42

LAST YEAR	20-Jan 2010														
RANK-based on margins	1st	2nd	3rd	4 th	5th	6th	7th	8th	10th	11th	12th	13 th	14th	16th	18th
FARM NUMBER	67	18	33	MDF	39	3	21	17	77	51	49	2	89	78	87
Stocking rate Cows/ha	4.0	3.6	3.6	3.9	3.8	3.3	2.8	3.4	3.8	3.7	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.0	3.9
Grazing rest time Days	30	30	28	29	27	32	30	22	30	27	27	25	28	30	26
Kg N element Kg element/ha/dy	1.2	1.5	0.6	1.8	1.3	1.0	0.0	1.6	1.7	0.2	1.0	1.6	1.0		0.5
Irrigation water Mm/ha/dy	5.0	5.0	3.0	5.0	6.0	5.0	0.0	4.6	5.0	6.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0
Grass consmpt'n KgDM/ha/dy	40	47	47	48	48	45	34	44	44	45	27	35	35	30	35
Grass /cow KgDM/cow/dy	10.1	12.8	13.1	12.3	12.7	13.5	12.1	13.1	11.7	12.3	8.4	10.8	10.3	10.2	9.0
Daily spend /ha \$/ha/dy	\$6.04	\$6.10	\$3.89	\$5.84	\$5.38	\$5.23	\$0.00	\$4.71	\$7.05	\$5.17	\$5.78	\$4.77	\$4.85	\$2.59	\$4.13
Pasture price \$/tonne DM	\$151	\$130	\$83	\$123	\$112	\$116	\$0	\$107	\$160	\$114	\$211	\$138	\$139	\$85	\$116
Supplements Kg DM/cow/dy	7.4	4.9	5.0	6.8	5.4	4.5	4.1	4.9	8.1	6.8	10.8	4.5	6.3	4.1	3.6
Purch feed price \$/tonne DM	\$219	\$286	\$322	\$287	\$328	\$283	\$348	\$317	\$325	\$379	\$304	\$293	\$278	\$344	\$253
Tot DM Intake Kg DM/cow/dy	17.3	17.6	17.9	18.8	18.0	17.8	16.0	17.8	19.2	18.9	18.8	15.2	15.9	14.1	12.5
Body Cond'n Chnge Kg LWY/cow/dy	0.10	0.10	0.20	0.30	0.10	0.20	0.10	0.20	0.21	0.30	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.00
Litres (incl calf) l/cow/dy	22.0	22.4	23.9	24.1	23.7	25.1	19.1	23.8	25.8	25.6	27.7	19.9	17.6	16.9	14.3
Milk Solids/cow KgMS/cow/dy	1.70	1.80	1.70	1.81	1.76	1.71	1.50	1.71	1.95	1.78	1.99	1.55	1.36	1.29	1.05
Milk price \$/kg MS	\$4.50	\$4.33	\$4.36	\$4.37	\$4.33	\$4.42	\$4.36	\$4.35	\$4.25	\$4.29	\$4.25	\$4.31	\$4.28	\$4.18	\$4.25
Milk income/cow \$/cow/dy	\$7.66	\$7.81	\$7.44	\$7.93	\$7.63	\$7.58	\$6.55	\$7.44	\$8.30	\$7.63	\$8.46	\$6.68	\$5.83	\$5.38	\$4.47
All feed cost/cow \$/cow/dy	\$3.15	\$3.06	\$2.69	\$3.45	\$3.06	\$2.84	\$1.41	\$2.94	\$4.50	\$3.96	\$4.59	\$2.81	\$2.86	\$2.27	\$1.97
Margin over all Feed/cow \$/cow/dy	\$4.51	\$4.75	\$4.75	\$4.48	\$4.57	\$4.74	\$5.14	\$4.50	\$3.80	\$3.67	\$3.86	\$3.87	\$2.97	\$3.11	\$2.50
MOAF /ha \$/ha/dy	\$17.87	\$17.32	\$16.94	\$17.37	\$17.15	\$15.86	\$14.40	\$15.16	\$14.35	\$13.56	\$12.58	\$12.38	\$10.06	\$9.27	\$9.80

The following two tables show the averages of the group, comparing last year with this year, and discussing what might be happening.. This first table are the actual averages

ACTUAL			
Indicator	20-Jan 2010 AVERAGE	20-Jan 2011 AVERAGE	Discussion
Stocking rate Cows/ha	3.50	3.62	Slightly higher stocking rate this year.
Grazing rest time Days	28	28	Same grazing rotation.
Kg N element Kg element/ha/dy	1.0	0.7	Less nitrogen use this year.
Irrigation water Mm/ha/dy	4.3	1.5	Very much less water use this year.
Grass consmpt'n KgDM/ha/dy	40.2	36.9	3.4 kg DM per hectare per day less grass grown this year. Possibly because less N is being used or maybe not enough water is being applied, or plenty of other reasons.
Grass /cow KgDM/cow/dy	11.5	10.2	With the stocking rate per hectare a bit higher, and less grass being consumed per hectare, the grass per cow is down 1.3 kg DM per cow.
Daily spend /ha \$/ha/dy	\$4.77	\$2.50	The expenditure on growing pasture is lower this year because of less inputs and lower N price.
Pasture price \$/tonne DM	\$119	\$69	Although there is less pasture, pasture is very much cheaper this year.
Supplements Kg DM/cow/dy	5.8	5.6	Even though grass intake is down by 1.3 kg, 0.2 kg less supplement is being fed.
Purch feed price \$/tonne DM	\$304	\$350	Purchased feed is more expensive this year, a bit surprising. Maybe because no PKE is being used and I think fancier and more expensive mixes are being used.
Tot DM Intake Kg DM/cow/dy	17.1	15.5	Total dry matter intake per cow down by 1.6 kg per cow per day. This is a significant amount.
Body Cond'n Chnge Kg LWY/cow/dy	0.13	0.06	The farmers on average are reporting that less body condition is going on.
Litres (incl calf) l/cow/dy	22.1	20.2	Milk production per cow per day down by 1.9 litres.
Milk Solids/cow KgMS/cow/dy	1.65	1.51	And down by 0.14 kg milk solids per cow per day.

Indicator	20-Jan 2010	20-Jan 2011	Discussion
	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	
Milk price \$/kg MS	\$4.32	\$4.78	This year's milk price is higher than last year's.
Milk income/cow \$/cow/dy	\$0.32	\$0.36	
All feed cost/cow \$/cow/dy	\$7.11	\$7.20	Although milk per cow is down, the higher milk price has lifted the milk income per cow a bit higher this year.
Margin over all Feed/cow \$/cow/dy	\$3.13	\$2.65	Cows are eating less feed, and with the pasture price down as well, it costs less to feed each cow.
MOAF /ha \$/ha/dy	\$3.98	\$4.55	When it's all combined, a higher margin per cow this year.
Stocking rate Cows/ha	\$13.94	\$16.49	And higher margin per hectare, helped by the slightly more cows carried per hectare.

HOWEVER, the different prices each year can confuse the comparison. So, the next table shows the averages, but with the prices of pasture, purchased feed, and milk equalised to this year's prices.

PRICES EQUALISED			
Indicator	20-Jan 2010	20-Jan 2011	Discussion
	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	
Stocking rate Cows/ha	3.50	3.62	
Grazing rest time Days	28	28	
Kg N element Kg element/ha/dy	1.0	0.7	
Irrigation water Mm/ha/dy	4.3	1.5	
Grass consmpt'n KgDM/ha/dy	40.2	36.9	
Grass /cow KgDM/cow/dy	11.5	10.2	
Daily spend /ha \$/ha/dy	\$2.50	\$2.50	
Pasture price \$/tonne DM	\$69	\$69	Both years' pasture prices have been set to this year's price.
Supplements Kg DM/cow/dy	5.8	5.6	
Purch feed price \$/tonne DM	\$350	\$350	Purchased feed price has been set to this year price.
Tot DM Intake Kg DM/cow/dy	17.1	15.5	
Body Cond'n Chnge Kg LWY/cow/dy	0.13	0.06	
Litres (incl calf) l/cow/dy	22.1	20.2	
Milk Solids/cow KgMS/cow/dy	1.65	1.51	
Milk price \$/kg MS	\$4.78	\$4.78	Milk price is set the same as this year's price.
Milk income/cow \$/cow/dy	\$0.36	\$0.36	
All feed cost/cow \$/cow/dy	\$7.87	\$7.20	
Margin over all Feed/cow \$/cow/dy	\$2.82	\$2.65	
MOAF /ha \$/ha/dy	\$5.05	\$4.55	Now, with prices equalised, this year's margin per cow is lower than last year
Stocking rate Cows/ha	\$17.68	\$16.49	With prices equalised, this year's margin per hectare is lower than last year.

The conclusion, once prices are equalised:

- **Two differences between the years are lower total intake per cow, and lower grass intake per cow.**
- Lower total intake per cow means less efficient use of food because a lower proportion of the feed is lost to cow maintenance.
- Grass consumption per cow needs to be kept high because it's one way to keep the total intake up, and grass is relatively cheap.
- Grass consumption per hectare, delivered by good management and a high level of grass growing inputs, associated with an appropriate stocking rate, delivers a high amount of cheaper grass per cow.

Frank Tyndall 0409 940 782

Focus Farm Field Day

Wayne & Dana Saunders - Nordens Lane, Maffra

11.00am – 2.00pm Wednesday February 17th 2011

All dairy farmers and people interested in the dairy industry are welcome to attend - Come for a cuppa at 10.30am

This field day is an opportunity to see the farm and hear about the way it is being operated. There is a strong focus on understanding operating costs, maximising home-grown feed consumption, and reducing fixed costs. This is achieved by close monitoring of finances, production and family issues. The family gets back-up from their Support Group made up of farmers and agribusiness people.

- **The year that was – overview by Wayne & Dana**
- **Farm performance over the past twelve months**
 - **Review of key production drivers: Irrigation, Pasture and Fertilizer**
- **Strategies to reduce carbon emissions including dairy energy efficiency**
- **Focus Farm objectives – Are we on track?**
- **Farm Walk to see the cows, pastures and irrigation.**

NOTE: Lunch, tea and coffee provided.

The Focus Farm Project is an initiative of GippsDairy and is funded by the Geoffrey Gardiner Foundation, Dairy Australia and GippsDairy. For more information call Neil Baker on 51 411 712, or John Gallienne 0407 863 493.

SENDER:



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



Young Dairy Development Program
"Developing Dairy Communities"

YDDP East Cippisland in conjunction with UDV DC 5 would like to invite you to:

Victorian Flood Relief Give back to those that gave to you during the 2007 MID floods and Black Saturday fires

What: Fencing Assistance to northern Vic Dairy farmers

When: **Wednesday 9th February** 12.30pm departs MID
Thursday 10th February 10pm returns to MID

Where: Blaze Aid base – currently at Bridgewater, but may change by our date

How: Mini bus – pick up locations and times will be confirmed closer to the event, with interested parties

What I need to bring: sturdy footwear, gloves, fencing equipment, water bottle, hat, sunscreen, insect repellent and snacks. Refer below to the Blaze Aid website for more information.

What is supplied: transportation, lunch, dinner and accommodation (basic shared), bring your own pillow & sleeping bag

We need a minimum of 15 volunteers to make a bus trip worthwhile, if we get an overwhelming response we will look at hiring a coach. Please do not RSVP unless you can commit to come overnight!

For more information and to secure your place on the bus please RSVP by **Monday 7th February** with either:

Bree on 0408 519 013 or **Kylie on 0428 889 337/0356 243 900**

To check out the great work **Blaze Aid** does, as well as for more detailed information on what we will be doing visit their website on <http://www.blazeaid.com/Volunteering.html>



www.yddp.org.au

Proudly supported by Dairy Australia, Forterra Australia, Forterra Supply Company, Warrnambool Cheese & Butter Factory Co Ltd
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