

Macalister Demonstration Farm

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NEWSLETTER 8

Monday, SEP 15th, 2008



Funded by
Dairy Australia
and your
Regional
Development
Program



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

Notice of Annual Field Day

The Macalister Demonstration Farm's Annual Field Day will be held at the farm, commencing at **10.30 am on Thursday 16th October, 2008** (immediately after the AGM, 10 am)

Field Day Program

- Analysis of MDF's physical and financial performance in 2007/8, and targets for 2008/9, Frank Tyndall
- Subsurface Drip Irrigation Project, Gavan Lamb.
- Effluent Project, Nola Anderson.
- Bob Pitman Memorial Award and official tree planting.
- Light luncheon – provided by MDF.

All are welcome to both the AGM and the Annual Field Day

**Sustainability
Fund** Managed by
Sustainability Victoria



SUB SURFACE DRIP IRRIGATION PROJECT

Steering committee

The Macalister Demonstration Farm is installing 7 ha of sub-surface drip irrigation. This form of irrigation is very expensive to install but may have a place in irrigated dairying in the future. Funding has been sourced from Sustainability Victoria. A project co-coordinator will be employed to oversee the project and extend the findings to the farming community (see advert below). The MDF is inviting members of the community to be part of a sub-surface drip irrigation **steering committee**. The voluntary committee would meet 4 times a year over two years. Interested people please contact the Secretary, Macalister Demonstration Farm, PO Box 87, Maffra 3860, phone 51451650 or email on mdf@wideband.net.au

Spring Sessions @ the MDF

Wednesdays from 24th Sept to 5th Nov

11am – 12.30pm

BBQ lunch provided

At Macalister Demonstration Farm

Week 1: Sep 24th

Fertiliser Decisions, Cameron Gourley (DPI)

Week 2: Oct 1st

Pre-mating management, Mark Humphris (Maffra Vet Centre)

Week 3: Oct 8th

Making Top Quality Silage, Frank Mickan (DPI)

Week 5: Oct 22nd

Weaned Calf Management, Mark Humphris (MVC)

Week 6: Oct 29th

Grazing & Feeding Cows during Seed heading, Frank Tyndall

Week 7: Nov 5th

Irrigation Budgeting, Gavan Lamb (DPI)

ALL WELCOME to one or all sessions

For further information please call DPI Maffra 5147 0800

Project Coordinator for Macalister Demonstration Farm

- ✓ Senior Appointment
- ✓ Flexible working conditions
- ✓ Attractive remuneration

The Macalister Demonstration Farm is a valuable resource for the demonstration and extension of dairying best practices in Gippsland. The MDF Board wishes to appoint a Project Coordinator to drive a range of demonstration projects and be responsible for extension activities. This position will be part time requiring the applicant to work 4 days per week (0.8 FTE). Reporting to the MDF Board and GippsDairy Executive Officer, the appointee will be responsible for managing demonstration projects and extension activities at the Macalister Demonstration Farm, requiring a strong focus on project management, tracking and reporting and liaising with project managers, collaborators and funders.

To be successful the applicant must be able to demonstrate:

- excellent skills in project development and management
- proven track record in the preparation of funding submissions
- outstanding oral and written communication skills
- passion for the Gippsland dairy industry
- knowledge of dairy industry issues at the farm level
- A tertiary qualification and/or the equivalent experience in agricultural science, extension or another appropriate discipline.

A very attractive remuneration is available and negotiable depending on experience and capabilities. To discuss further or request a position description, please contact Dr Danielle Auldist on 56 243 902 or 0400 50 39 38.

Applications must be received by GippsDairy by Friday the 19th of September.

Yellow Rag Bit

Jason McAinch Dairy Advisor DPI Maffra

In the last edition of the newsletter, fully feeding cows was discussed. This edition will discuss protein as part of a balanced and energy dense diet. After calving, a cow requires 16-18% crude protein in the diet. Some signs the diet is not balanced for protein are:

1. Too little protein

- cows will tend to put on weight, milk yield and milk protein decrease.
- there may be cracked grain with starch still intact in their manure as the microbes have not been able to use the starch energy.
- energy is wasted, as the microbes in the rumen do not have enough building blocks to build more bacteria to process the cows diet into milk.

2. Too much protein – can occur in a high spring pasture diet.

- energy is wasted, as the cow uses energy to convert ammonia in the liver
- there may be the smell of ammonia/urea in their urine which you can identify in the dairy.
- there has been an issue as urine scalding can be seen in the pasture.

If you identify these issues on your farm, the solutions are many and varied and can be expensive, so discuss with your animal nutritionist or DPI Dairy advisor to get the best solution for your whole business.

RF (BOB) PITMAN AWARD

With the passing of Bob Pitman last October, the MDF board will recognise his outstanding contribution to the farm, by planting a tree in his honour at the Annual Field Day. We will also establish an award in Bob's name to recognise others in our farming community that make an outstanding contribution, who have gone above and beyond the call of duty, to better the industry. We seek nominations for this award. The recipient of this award should have one if not all of the following attributes:

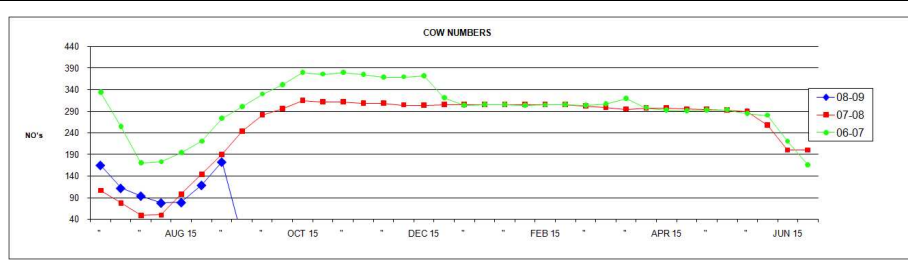
- ❖ Commitment to the betterment of the dairy industry in the Macalister Irrigation District via one/all of the following :
Production, Technology, Extension, Environmental awareness or mentorship.
- ❖ Served on Boards or committees which support the dairy industry.
- ❖ Served with integrity, humility and altruism.

The award is open to public nomination but ultimately decided by the MDF Board.

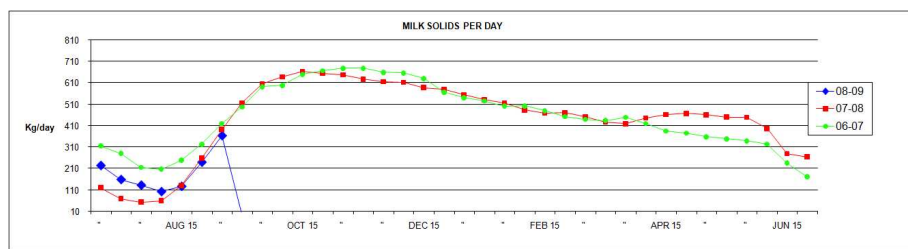
Nominations can be mailed to: The Secretary, Macalister Demonstration Farm, PO Box 87, Maffra 3860 and will close on Monday the 22nd September, 2008. The winner shall be announced at our AGM and Annual Field Day on the 16th October, 2008 starting at 10.00am.

MDF PERFORMANCE GRAPHS

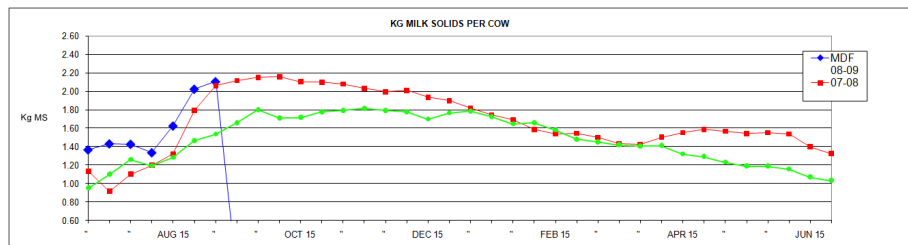
For all graphs below, the last blue dot represents the first ten day period this month, September 2008.



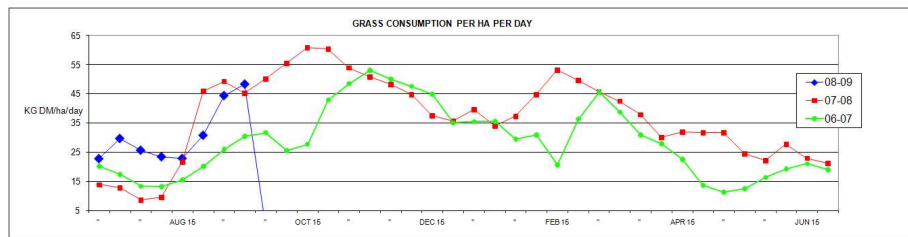
Cow numbers were higher during July, due to milking empties through and milking late calvers for longer. The Spring calving pattern is a little behind last year.



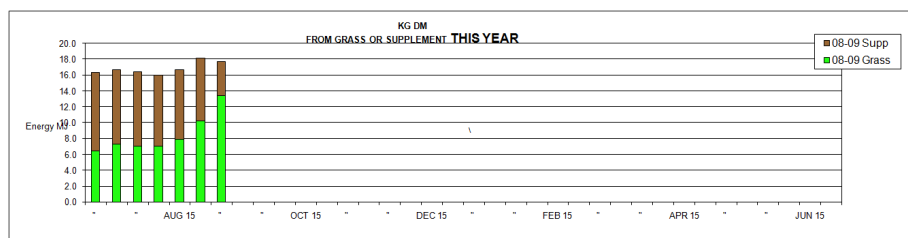
Daily milk production in July was higher than last year but, for August and the first ten days of September, it has been close to the same as last year.



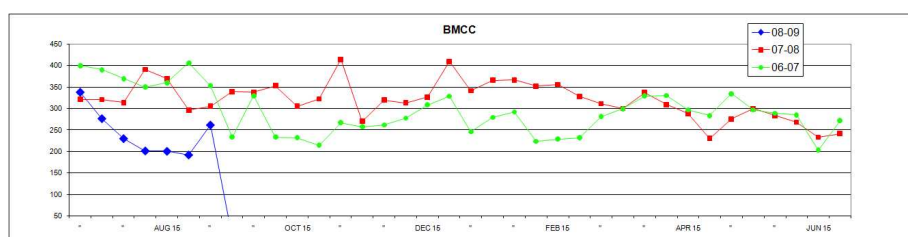
Milk production per cow has been a fair bit higher than last year for July and August, but we are only slightly higher now in early September. The cows are calving at score 4.75, about half a score lighter than last year, but they have transitioned from dry to milking far better, with very little milk fever.



Grass consumption per hectare (early Sep) has got to 47 kg DM/ha per day, about the same as last year. During July & August, grass consumption was much higher than the previous year. We have cut 8 hectares of silage recently. We are keen to avoid the Nov to Jan grass crash of the last two years.



Grass consumption per cow (the green in the graph) has now got to 13.5 kg DM. Supplements (the brown) are 4.3 kg DM, for a total of 17.8. Hopefully we can get the cows to eat 20 kg, 17 grass, and 3 supplements, soon.



Bulk Milk Cell count has kicked up recently from record lows (for us). One thing we did do at drying off was teat seal all cows and, three weeks before calving, the first calf heifers.

Macalister Demonstration Farm survey

Please reply

The Macalister Demonstration Farm wants to evaluate the awareness and value of its Dairy Australia extension project. We would greatly appreciate if you could place a few circles and ticks, and any comments, below. Fold this sheet three ways, tape it, with MDF reply paid address on outside, and post. No stamp needed. Thanks so much.

Name (optional): _____

How have you connected with the MDF? (Circle your answer)

Attended field day	No	Yes	How many times?
Attended short course	No	Yes	How many times?
Attended one day seminar	No	Yes	How many times?
Attended Mon morning walk	No	Yes	How many times?
Had 1 to 1 help with feed budget	No	Yes	
Attended with discussion group	No	Yes	How many times?
Read reports (Newspaper, email, newsletter)	Never	Sometimes	Often
Visited website	Never	Sometimes	Often
Attended talk by MDF staff	Never	Sometimes	Often
Talked about it with others	Never	Sometimes	Often
Herd test reports	Never	Sometimes	Often
Other (Please describe)			

Which MDF reports do you read?

Gippsland Times (MDF Update)	Never	Sometimes	Always
Weekly Times table	Never	Sometimes	Always
HICO Farmer Magazine article	Never	Sometimes	Always
AusdairyL email (MDF Update)	Never	Sometimes	Always
MDF Newsletter	Never	Sometimes	Always

Which bits do you like most? (Tick)

Tables of farm finances	Don't like	OK	Like a lot
Feeding-milk production figures and analysis			
Graphs			
Description of happenings, reasons for doing things			
Info such as growth rates, soil temps, soil moisture			
Other (Please describe)			

Any comments at all?

Have there been particular issues that have interested you?