

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 9

Monday, OCT 6th, 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

Spring Sessions continue @ the MDF

Wednesdays 11am – 12.30pm

BBQ lunch provided

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

Yellow Rag Bit

Jason McAinch, Dairy Advisor, DPI, Maffra.

As it is now close to mid October, the "normal" MID herd is at peak cow numbers and approaching peak milk production. As a result it is a perfect time to review (or calculate) the feed budget. In the next few months, opportunities may arise in purchasing / contracting feed, i.e. fodder, grain, irrigation water, agistment, summer crops or even nitrogen (urea).

How big is your feed shortfall?

Is the feed short fall in energy, fibre or protein?

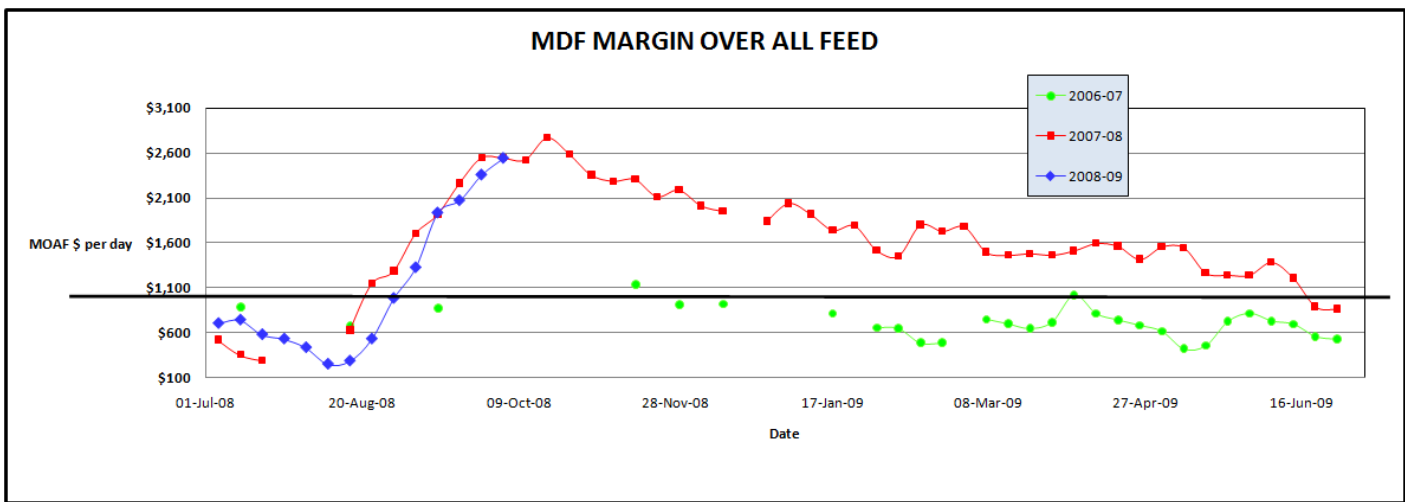
Which of these opportunities meets your needs?

What is the strategy going to be to fill this feed gap? Purchase as you need the feed or contract/ purchase 75% of your needs now and sleep better each night.

A Feed Budget can be a relatively simple and blunt tool, which can give you a lot of control over your feed planning and purchasing.

Matching your feed budget, the biggest of the business expenses, to the financial budget allows you to monitor the business's health.

Contact your nutritionist, consultant or DPI Dairy advisor to assist you with your feed budget if you are unsure.



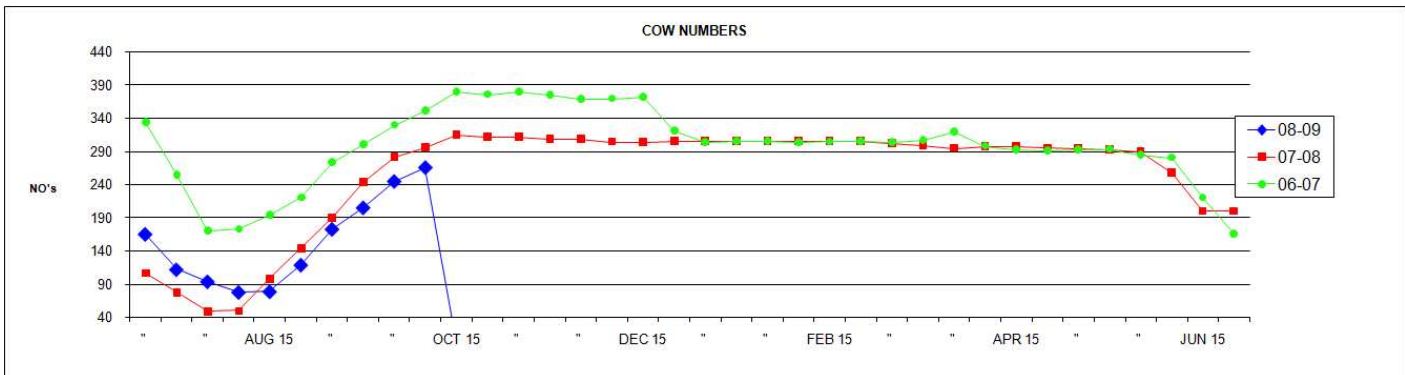
The graph above shows the Margin over All Feed for the Macalister Demonstration Farm over three years. The Margin over All Feed is the daily difference between milk income and all feed costs (purchased feed and pasture growing costs). Some dots are missing, especially in 06-07 when the margin wasn't being calculated all the time.

Feeding is the major expenditure on any dairy farm. It is where profits can be made or lost. All the non-feed expenses (herd, shed, replacements, overheads, labour, and depreciation) for the MDF are represented by the horizontal black line in the graph, averaging \$1,000 per day. More profit could be made if the black line could be lowered. However it should not be lowered without care. For example, a certain amount has to be spent to keep cows healthy, milking plant clean, labour well paid and retained, etc. etc.

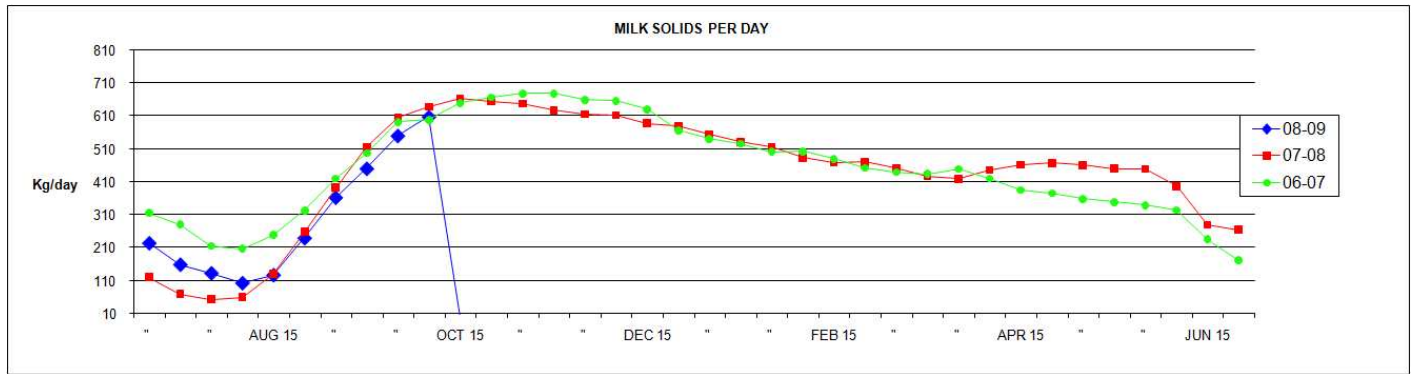
The green circular dots represent the drought year of 2006-07. A loss of \$200,000 was made because only at a couple of stages did the dots rise above the black line.

The red squares represent 2007-08, when a profit of \$257,000 was made. The feed margin was significantly above the black line, most of the time. For the MDF, the feed margin cannot be above the black line all the time, because in winter not enough cows are milked. (See the cow number graph below).

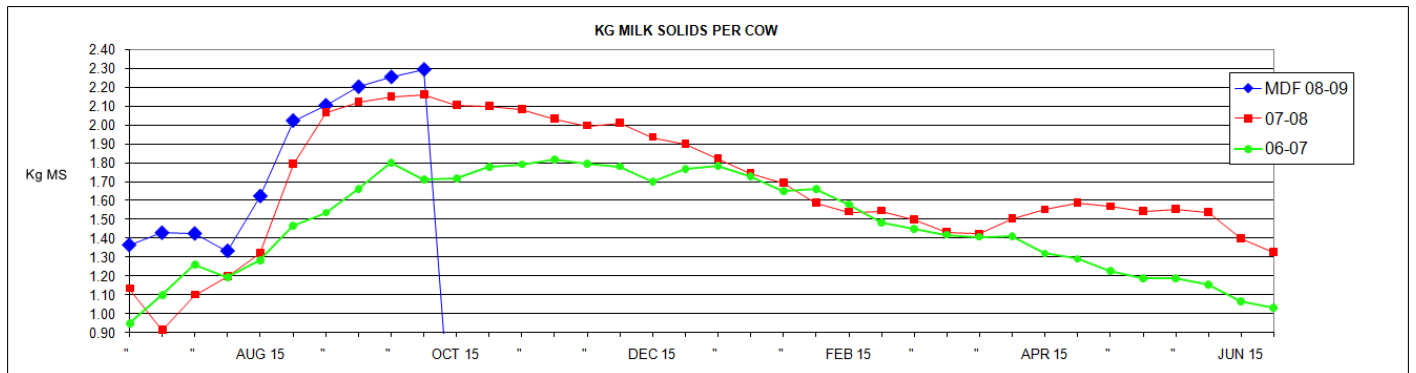
The blue diamonds in the graph above represent the start to this season, 2008-09. During the recent winter, the feed margin was below the black line, but, at times in winter, it was better than the 2007-08. In early August this year, the feed margin dipped to its lowest while the lowest number of cows was milked. It is now climbing strongly as the cows calve and start lifting in milk production per cow (see graphs below). The aim is \$400,000 profit this year, so obviously the margin has to climb much higher than last year and stay there for longer.



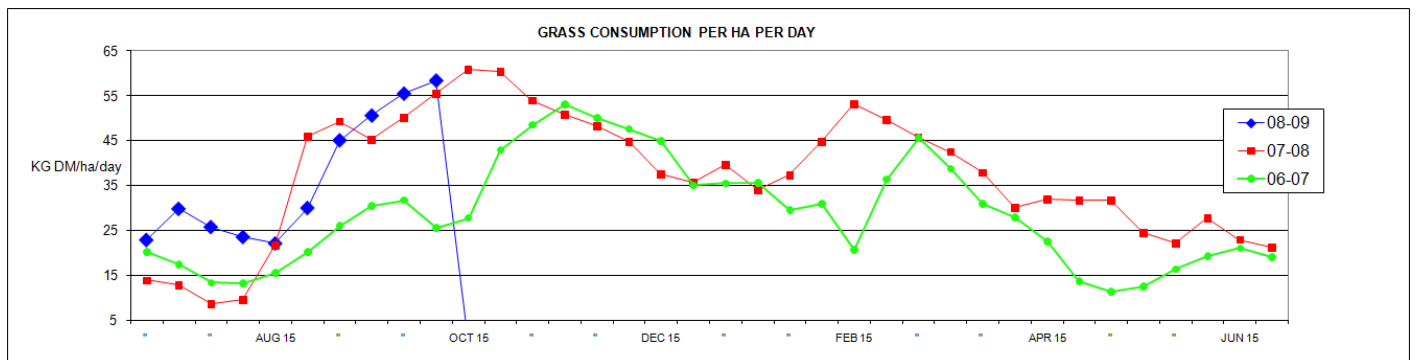
A bit behind with cows numbers this year, compared to last year, but it will catch up soon.



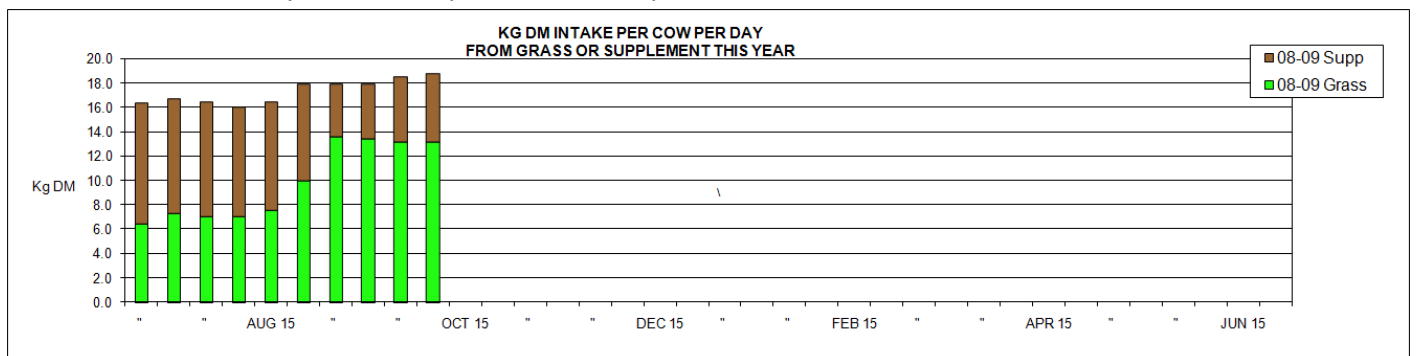
Total milk production each day was higher in winter, a bit behind in September because cow numbers lower, but now catching up with last year.



Milk production per cow has been higher all the time this season, just hitting 2.3 kg MS now. The cow calved about half a score less this year, but they transitioned from dry to milking very well and now eating 18.5 kg DM (see below).



Except for late August, grass consumption has been higher all the time this season compared to last. We aim to consume 16 tonne this year, so each paddock each day needs to deliver.



The green bar represents grass, brown purchased feed. The cows are still increasing intake but from purchased feed. The amount of grass per cow has fallen, partly because of the climbing stocking rate. Frank Tyndall, MDF Project Manager 0409 940 782 ftyndall@ozemail.com.au

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

SENDER:

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