

Macalister Demonstration Farm

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Macalister Demonstration Farm Update 357 (Week ending July 27th , 2013)

The Macalister Demonstration Farm (MDF) is currently milking 108 cows with a total grazing area of 73 hectares and with now at least 23ha set aside for dry cow grazing. The milkers are in the final stages of lactation with another 20 dried off on 27th July taking numbers down to 88. There are 142 dries and 67 R2 heifers being run on the milking area and being fed 3kg/day pellets in the dairy, 4kg almond hulls and around 1ha pasture. A load of cereal and pasture hay mix has been purchased but has not yet arrived. This will be fed to the dries to give them some rumen stretch and help preserve cover heading towards calving.

The daily allocation to milkers is around 0.6ha/24 hours. The total daily allocation of pasture to dries and milkers in total is around 1.6ha/24hours allowing for night sacrifice, so around 1/45 of the farm is being grazed per 24 hours. Growth on milking area several weeks post-grazing is good, with growth rates improving over the past week to ten days.

The feed inputs remain the same, at 4kg/cow/day as fed PKE blend, one bale Lucerne hay and 6kg as fed pellets.

Milk production per cow is holding at 12.5 litres. Production is now at 1 kg MS/cow/day. Milk components have suddenly reverted to “normal” with a 4.0% fat and 3.9% protein. This has only taken place in the past week, with nothing changing in the diet other than indirectly more Lucerne hay with fewer milkers in the herd. There has been no sign of acidosis in the herd.

BMCC is holding at around 150,000 or less, a great result for late lactation stale cows.

Daily pasture consumption from the grazing area is around 360 kg DM/ ha/day with the pasture consumption per cow at 3 kg DM per cow per day. Due to the low level of production and the same inputs, the extra energy must be going to body condition, and this is seen as a good thing. The cows are rated as body condition score 4.75, with the dries in a BCS 4.75-5.

The milk price is \$6.01/kg milk solids or 47.48c/litre.

Gross milk income per cow per day is now up slightly to \$5.94/cow/day. Supplementary feed cost /cow/day (fodder and concentrates) is at \$5.00 per cow per day, leaving an Income Over Supplementary Feed Cost (IOSFC)/cow of only \$0.90 or 2 net litres per cow or \$101/day for the farm. The only reason that cows are still milking is that it is costing \$1.66/cow/day to feed them as dry cows for no return. They will keep milking until their individual dry off dates.

Cows continue to be dried off reasonably aggressively as the end of lactation approaches.

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