

Macalister Demonstration Farm

Projects on the farm are funded by Genetics Australia with support provided by GippsDairy

Macalister Demonstration Farm Update (Week ending October 11th, 2013)

The MDF is currently milking 252 cows with 244 in the vat. There are still 11 late dry cows, and these are cleaning up odd areas around the farm. There are 26 springers and these are receiving a strip of grass, 3kg lead feed, 100g/cow/day MagC and ad lib oaten hay. This hay is being sourced on an as-needs basis to get the farm through.

The daily allocation to milkers is now at 2.52.7ha/24 hours and therefore the round length for milkers is at 28 days over the full farm area, but with around 11ha cut for silage on 8th October, the actual round length is 23 days. Residuals are back down to around 1500kg/ha but some pastures with high Prairie Grass content are more like 1600kg residuals. There will be some pre-topping of pastures commencing in the next week or two to maintain quality and high pasture intakes, but as pasture quality declines later into November this will be done after grazing.

The cows are now being fed 6kg/cow/day as fed Pasture Gold pellets (12.8MJ) and grass at a cost of \$375/t or 41.7c/kgDM. There is Magnesium and Rumensin included.

Milk production per cow has dropped slightly to 27 litres and solids are at 2.06 kg MS/cow/day. Milk components are at a 4.2% fat and 3.43% protein. The targeted solids peak is 2.2kgMS/cow/day but it is more likely to be 2.1kgMS/cow/day due to the long calving period. BMCC is around 180,000 and is falling following high levels of mastitis during late September.

Daily pasture consumption from the grazing area is at 3150 kg DM /day with the milkers consuming 12.5kg DM per cow per day. This equates to a harvest of 1210kg/ha/24 hours and a total pasture demand of 46kg/ha/day (the total amount of pasture required to be harvested for milkers, springers and dries). The growth rate in the last two weeks has been 47-60kg/ha/day depending on the paddock and with the consumption less than the pasture growth rate a surplus for silage is building. The first cut was on 8th October and it is expected that there will be a further harvest in about 3 weeks. Following that, there will be more milkers in the herd and consumption will better match growth rate.

The milk price on the components is \$5.29/kg milk solids or 40.15c/litre.

Gross milk income per cow per day is \$10.84 /cow/day. Supplementary feed cost \$2.30/cow/day (concentrates), leaving an Income Over Supplementary Feed Cost (IOSFC) of \$8.54/cow/day or 21.3 net litres/cow/day, or \$2645/day for the farm. Now that irrigation has started, I am including the daily cost of irrigated pasture in the calculation. This pasture cost for the MDF has been put at \$140/t (14c/kgDM). Therefore the daily net margin after supplements and pasture is \$6.79/cow or \$22.70/ha.

Nitrogen will follow milkers at 1kgN/ha/24 hours, as urea. Silage paddocks may receive a light blend of NPKS after harvest.

There is likely to be an Open Day to meet Becky Horsham the manager and hear about the plans for the farm this season at the end of November. Stay tuned for details.

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