

## **Macalister Demonstration Farm**

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

### **Macalister Demonstration Farm Update 373 (Week ending March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014)**

The MDF is milking 271 cows with 267 in the vat. The past month has still been plagued with breakdowns - the pump for the fixed sprays is still out of action, and a vacuum pump breakdown this week added to the woes. Despite the dry conditions on the fixed spray area of the farm, this area has surprisingly grown at 13kg/ha/day with no irrigation for a month! There will be some over-sowing with biannual ryegrass while the area is under low growth conditions. Other than a quick grazing on some paddocks to clean up available pasture, the area is out of the round.

The daily allocation to milkers remains at 2.7ha/24 hours, with the round length for milkers at 27 days over the full farm. There has been some rust development on ryegrass, and this is believed to be from higher than ideal residuals and some waterlogging on some paddocks resulting in slightly reduced growth in patches. This will hopefully be remedied this rotation.

The cows are being fed 6kg/cow/day as fed Pasture Optimiser pellets (12.8MJ) with elevated Zinc for Facial Eczema, 1.5 bales vetch hay at a cost of \$375/t or 32.4/kgDM and grass (estimated 7.5kgDM/cow/day). The Vetch is being reduced and had the entire milking area been available, there would be no need for the hay at present. It is hoped that over the next two weeks the hay can be reduced further.

Milk production per cow has dropped to 19.1 litres and solids are only slightly down, at 1.57 kg MS/cow/day. Milk components are very pleasing, at a 4.45% fat and 3.75% protein, with the protein continuing to rise. BMCC continues to be an issue, hovering around 250,000 and threatening to put the farm into Premium 2.

Daily pasture consumption from the grazing area is now at 2032 kg DM /day with the milkers consuming 7.5kg DM per cow per day. On 73ha in the rotation, this equates to a growth rate of 28kgDM/ha/24 hours to hold cover. The overall farm pasture cover remains at 1800-1900kg/ha, quite pleasing given the 13ha not being irrigated and only contributing a little to the overall cover. Growth rate on the irrigation area has been around 30-35kg/ha/day over the last two weeks. This is expected to increase with the improved growing conditions.

Watering has been at 12 day intervals on the flood and the Sub-surface drip has been applying 12mm/48 hours. This will push out now to around 15 days on the flood area.

The milk price on the components is \$6.54/kg milk solids or 53.6 c/litre. Gross milk income per cow per day is \$10.24 /cow/day, down only slightly on two weeks ago, due to the lower litres, but helped by the significantly higher protein test.

Supplementary feed cost is \$3.10/cow/day (concentrates and Vetch) which is slightly lower, leaving an Income Over Supplementary Feed Cost (IOSFC) of \$7.14/cow/day or 13.3 net litres/cow/day, or \$1906/day for the farm. With pasture consumed calculated at 14c/kgDM, the daily net margin after supplements and pasture is \$6.09/cow, slightly higher than a fortnight ago, due to reduced vetch and slightly higher pasture intake with very little change in production.

Nitrogen is following milkers at 1.1kgN/ha/24 hours, as 70kg/ha urea.

Resowing on the fixed spray area is expected to begin in the next week or two and will be as direct drilling biannual (possibly Crusader or Knight) at 20kg/ha, followed by a grazing just

prior to drilling or just after but prior to seedling germination. This worked well last year. Other full resows will take place in the next few weeks, but not until the fixed spray area is back up and running. These paddocks will be sprayed at a kill rate of Roundup, with a light cultivation and sown to permanent at 35kg/ha.

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