

Macalister Demonstration Farm

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Macalister Demonstration Farm Update 374 (Week ending March 28th, 2014)

The MDF is milking 272 cows with 270 in the vat. The fixed sprays pump is finally operational and the area is being watered and starting to show excellent pasture growth. Two paddocks (3.4ha) in this area have been drilled with Crusader at 20kg/ha to thicken up the pasture base, as this worked very successfully last year. A further 6.8ha has been sprayed at knockdown rate and will be resown with permanent ryegrass (One50) at 25kg/ha this week.

The daily allocation to milkers remains at 2.8ha/24 hours, with the round length for milkers at 26 days over the full farm, but actually 20 days with the resows out. The resows under the fixed sprays will be back in rotation quickly and so actual round length is more like 22 days. This is too short, and the impact will be closely monitored, depending on the resows and how quickly they are available for grazing. The aim will be to have round length at 30 days, and therefore an allocation of 2ha/24 hours, with hay and/or silage as required.

The cows are being fed 6kg/cow/day as fed Pasture Optimiser pellets (12.8MJ), one bale vetch hay at a cost of \$275/t or 32.4c/kgDM and grass (estimated 7.7kgDM/cow/day).

Milk production per cow has dropped further to 18.2 litres and solids are only slightly down, at 1.51kg MS/cow/day. Milk components are further increasing, to a 4.5% fat and 3.8% protein. BMCC continues to be an issue, now putting the farm into Premium 2.

Daily pasture consumption from the grazing area is at 2100 kg DM /day slightly up on last fortnight, with the milkers consuming 7.7kg DM per cow per day.

Watering has been at 15 day interval on the flood and the Sub-surface drip has been applying 12mm/48 hours.

The milk price on the components is \$6.54/kg milk solids or 54 c/litre. Gross milk income per cow per day is \$9.88 /cow/day, down slightly more on two weeks ago, due to the lower litres.

Supplementary feed cost is \$2.80/cow/day (concentrates and Vetch) which is slightly lower, leaving an Income Over Supplementary Feed Cost (IOSFC) of \$7.08/cow/day or 13 net litres/cow/day, or \$1911/day for the farm, similar to a fortnight ago. With pasture consumed calculated at 14c/kgDM, the daily net margin after supplements and pasture is \$6.00/cow.

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

There has been some observed yellowing of ryegrass, possibly due to waterlogging and/or high residuals in some areas of some paddocks. This is being closely monitored.

Some cows are being closely monitored for culling based on the last herd test results. Final decisions will be made once the recheck is completed on the pregnancy tests. The farm is under pressure for replacements and so heavy culling is not an option, and only limited culling will take place.

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