

Macalister Demonstration Farm

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Macalister Demonstration Farm Update 377 (Week ending May 30th, 2014)

What's been going on at the MDF?

A herd fertility analysis report was compiled for the farm by the Maffra Vet Centre and the results will be a useful tool for the farm management team for the season ahead. The KPI for a seasonal calving herd in relation to fertility is the 6-week in calf rate and the 21 week empty rate. In 2012, the MDF was on par with most herds in the district. In 2013, there was considerable improvement in the 6-week in-calf rate (67% up from 56%) with the target 75% plus. The 21 week empty rate was not significantly higher than in 2012 (15% versus 13%), but is likely to reflect the poor performance of aged cows which made up a higher proportion of the herd in 2013. The target 21 week empty rate is less than 10%.

Some other parameters achieved this season was a calving to conception days of 86 days in 2013 compared to 101 days in 2012; a first service to AI conception rate of 37% (same as 2012); an overall conception to AI of 40% (38% in 2012) against a target of >60%.

Inter-heat intervals are the time between heats as indicated by inseminations. They are used as an indicator of heat detection quality and death of embryos. In 2012 there was a high level of embryonic deaths- potentially linked to BVDV issues diagnosed this season (refer to article last month).

The 21 day submission rate in 2013 was lower than that of 2012 for early calved mature cows, but was above 91%, which is in line with the highest performing herds according to InCalf. The group of cows where the submission rate fell were those calved less than 30 days prior to mating start date. As the mating start date in 2013 was brought forward by one week, it would be not unexpected to see less cycling cows in this period.

There have been some healthy improvements in 2013, but still plenty of room to move to achieve industry targets. As this is a passion of Becky, I'm sure we will see continued improvement in 2014.

Production issues:

Production has certainly motored along as the herd approaches dry off date. There has been a continued review of low producers and these are dried off according to production. There are 140 cows due to be dried off on 18th June, and these will go on agistment, with early and late calvers remaining on the farm. With the low producers dropped out, there are 249 cows and total production has lifted over the past week, to 15.9 litres/1.36kgMS or a total farm production of 339kgMS/day. Due to the increase in production, the margin per cow and per ha has lifted slightly- pleasing under a high milk price regime!

Silage and vetch continues to be fed, with silage levels being increased slightly to slow round length down, with the rotation out to 40 days. The resows are about to have their first grazing, after a very slow start due to the wet conditions in late March. They will then be sprayed for broadleaf weeds (mainly chickweed) to allow the pasture to thicken.

There was a light watering on the fixed sprays delivering 12mm just prior to the cut off of irrigation, to moisten the lighter soil type in this area of the farm. There may be a watering from the reuse dam on some areas of the farm if conditions remain dry.

Dry cows are cleaning up waste areas and rough pasture, and will be grazed along the roadside when the permit comes through.

And a look at production, inputs and margins:

<u>Production</u>			
Cow numbers			249 in herd and vat
Litres and solids/cow/day			15.9/1.36kgMS
Fat & Protein %			4.6%/4.0%
BMCC			240,000
<u>Grazing and Feeding (kg dry matter per cow)</u>			
Concentrates (Pellets/Grain/Additive) kg DM @	43.6	c/kg DM	5.4
Vetch hay kgDM@	32.4	c/kgDM	2.0
Silage kgDM@	15	c/kgDM	2.0
Pasture (kg DM) /cow/day			5.25
Pasture demand (kgDM/ha/day)			18
Area in rotation (ha)			73
Rotation length milkers (days)			40
Grazing Area (ha per 24 hours)			1.8
<u>Daily Income over Supplementary Feed Costs (IOSFC)</u>			
Milk Price (\$/kg milk solids) and (cents/litre)			\$6.87/60c
**Income/cow			\$9.54
Supplementary Feed Cost/cow			\$3.30
IOSFC/cow			\$6.24
IOSFC/milking ha			\$21.28
Net litres/cow			10.4
Irrigated pasture cost \$/cow/day	14	c/kg DM	No irrigation
Net margin after supplements and irrigated pasture \$/cow/day			\$6.24

Matt Harms, ONFARM Consulting, 0408 311 118 or matt@onfarmconsulting.com.au