

Macalister Demonstration Farm

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

Macalister Demonstration Farm Update 379 (Week ending June 20th, 2014)

What's been going on at the MDF?

Drying off the herd has well and truly commenced, with 146 cows leaving the farm for green pastures to the east of the district on Friday 20th June. These cows are leaving in a condition score 5 and they will be on managed agistment at \$7/head/week, so it is anticipated that they will come back happy, healthy and in at least the same condition.

The remaining cows consist of 107 in the milking herd. There will be 60 rising two year olds arriving back on the farm any day now. The 107 cows still in the herd consists of 35 empties that will remain milking until they are no longer profitable. Most of these will be rejoined in spring and their fate will be determined depending on replacement numbers this year and the number to calve next year. There are around seven cows to be culled for bad udders, repeat mastitis and temperament.

Predicted steady-state numbers for the season ahead will be around 260, but with the 35 empties, it may run a bit higher than this, depending on the timing of their dry off.

Grass cover on the farm is very good, with average cover measured on 16th June at 1770kg/ha. With an expected eat rate over the farm for the next six weeks at 15kg/ha/day (combined rising 2 year old heifers, dries and carryovers) or around 1125kgDM/day, a predicted growth rate of average 20kg/ha/day given the soil moisture levels, pasture condition, pasture cover and weather conditions should be achieved, giving an average cover of 2000DMkg/ha. This is considered close to ideal. The growth rate for the week from 16th-20th June averaged 25kg/ha/day.

The draft budget for 14/15 is being prepared and will be finalised when the opening price is announced. The full year budget for 13/14 will be completed at the same time. The outcome of both will be discussed in subsequent reports through July, but the focus for 14/15 will be:

- a lift in production to around 137,000kgMS or 527kgMS/cow;
- feeding 1.6t as fed grain/pellets and reduced fodder imported, giving a pasture consumption of 13tDM/ha;
- a reduced “cost of making milk”, with focus on cost reduction of key inputs such as concentrates;
- with the ultimate aim that the farm returns a return on capital employed of 8.25% given a final milk price of \$5.95/kgMS (MG weighted average \$6.25/kgMS).

Production issues:

The numbers are changing daily, as others will be experiencing, so it is difficult to get a deadly accurate handle on the actual per cow production, but it is at, or close to 16 litres per cow, with fat 5.2% and protein 4.2% or 1.5kgMS/cow/day. BMCC is high due to the winding down of dry-off cows, and this needs to be closely monitored to prevent the 10 day period blowing out.

The allocation is being shut down to allow cover to build, and the herd is grazing 1ha/24hours. This stocking density will remain as much as possible, to prevent the feed

wedge being eaten in to. When the R2 heifers arrive they will receive 0.5ha/24 hours with hay for gut fill.

An additional 40 round bales of dry cow are being bought to get through the next six weeks and additional oaten hay will arrive for springers.

Urea will be applied behind cows at 80kg/ha.

Body condition will be closely monitored, with the aim of drying off at CS 5.

And a look at production, inputs and margins:

<u>Production</u>			
Cow numbers			107 in herd and 104 vat
Litres and solids/cow/day			16/1.5kgMS
Fat & Protein %			5.2%/4.2%
BMCC			300,000
<u>Grazing and Feeding (kg dry matter per cow)</u>			
Concentrates (Pellets/Grain/Additive) kg DM @	42.1	c/kg DM	4.5
Oaten hay kgDM@	28.2	c/kgDM	NIL
Silage kgDM@	15	c/kgDM	2.3
Pasture (kg DM) /cow/day			7.25
Pasture demand (kgDM/ha/day)			10.6 before heifers arrive
Area in rotation (ha)			73
Rotation length milkers (days)			70 but 48 when heifers arrive
Grazing Area (ha per 24 hours)			1
<u>Daily Income over Supplementary Feed Costs (IOSFC)</u>			
Milk Price (\$/kg milk solids) and (cents/litre)			\$7.09/66.6c
**Income/cow			\$10.66
Supplementary Feed Cost/cow			\$2.21
IOSFC/cow			\$8.45
IOSFC/milking ha			\$12.03
Net litres/cow			12.7
Irrigated pasture cost \$/cow/day	14	c/kg DM	No irrigation
Net margin after supplements and irrigated pasture \$/cow/day			\$8.45

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