

Macalister Demonstration Farm

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

Macalister Demonstration Farm Update 383 (Week ending August 29th, 2014)

What's been going on at the MDF?

Calving is well underway with 154 cows in the herd and rapidly increasing, and 128 in the vat, also rapidly increasing. There are 100 cows in the springer paddock, and a further 36 later dry cows. The milkers are lifting well, with 25.6 litres @ 4.3% fat and 4.0% protein, or 2.12kgMS, although as litres are lifting, the protein is just starting to drop. The target production for the year has 270 cows at a peak production of 2.15kgMS, and so let's hope things continue as they are heading at the moment.

Cows are being allocated ample pasture, with residuals longer than desired. The dries have on occasion been used to clean these up, and the mower used on the odd longer paddock. Allocations will be manipulated to try and get a good residual, through tightening the cows up, and if and when they have eaten their allocation, a second strip fence will be in place to allow a fresh pasture strip to the milkers. The aim is to get a good peak, with plenty of pasture consumed, and not leaving too long a residual over the farm. There is also the option of topping into the next round, with the odd paddock being dropped out for silage should feed be getting away in front of cows.

Pellets were dropped by 1kg around two weeks ago to 5kg and these will drop 1kg further in two ½ kg drops, especially whilst there is ample pasture. This kg will be kept up the sleeve for later in spring should it be required if there is a feed pinch.

Current Income Over Supplementary Feed Cost:

25.6litres x 47c/l (August price on current test) = \$12.03/cow/day
- 5kg x 38.1c/kg = \$1.91/day pellets
= \$10.12/cow/day or 21.5net litres.
= \$1295/day herd.

Supplement cost = \$1.91/cow/day or 4 litres/cow.

This calculation uses current (announced) milk price only and not projected closing price.

The cows are grazing around 1.8ha/24hours or 40 day round on available area (73ha) but with springer allocation, true round length is 35 days. Theoretical pasture harvest is 12.9kg/cow x 154 cows = 1987kgDM/ha/day. On 1.8ha this equals 1100kgDM/ha harvested.

Pasture demand (eat rate) is 2317kgDM total/24 hours or 30 kgDM/ha for springers and milkers, and so the required growth rate to match eat rate is 30 kgDM/ha/day.

Springer management:

100 Springers are receiving a small allocation of pasture (0.3ha), 2kg lead feed pellets, MagC and around 8kgDM oaten hay. Milk fevers have been low, at four instances so far. This compares to a horror run last year. The transition diet and fresh cow management has been excellent this year.

Other:

In order to maintain quality grass in front of milkers, generate a surplus for silage and ensure ample pasture as milker numbers continue to lift, Nitrogen will be applied at 37kgN/ha (80kg/ha urea equivalent) and where required (non-effluent paddocks, wet paddocks and poorer responding paddocks) Potassium (K) would be applied at 25kgK/ha.

Two poor autumn resow paddocks will be sprayed out and resown to Italian ryegrass in the next week. These paddocks will also have spinner cuts done to ensure good drainage. The wet March and April immediately as these paddocks were resown caused a terrible ryegrass strike but fantastic germination of Poa Annua (winter grass), and growth on them through winter has been terrible. After some discussion, it has been decided to resow this spring to help meet the farm pasture consumption target.

Matt Harms
ONFARM Consulting

0408 311 118

matt@onfarmconsulting.com.au

www.onfarmconsulting.com.au

PO Box 697, Leongatha, Vic 3953