

Macalister Demonstration Farm

Projects on the farm are funded by GippsDairy, HICO and Genetics Australia

Macalister Demonstration Farm Update 394 (Week ending January 23rd, 2015)

What's been going on at the MDF?

Pasture quantity has certainly lifted over the past two weeks, with unbelievably kind mid-January growing conditions being experienced. Quality of pasture is certainly better than in the mid-December to early January period, and this is being reflected in the stabilising milk production, lift in protein % and the improved body condition- all what you could hope for!

Feed inputs have also decreased, with silage feeding stopped, and grain remaining at 6.4kg. The transition across to wheat has commenced and the process will be ramped up with around ½ kg wheat going in every few days and a similar reduction in pellets. The decision has been made to go to a 1-1.5kg/cow/day additive pellet with Eskalin, Rumensin, Magnesium, 150g/cow/day limestone, minerals and elevated Zinc for Facial Eczema. While Becky is nervous about the change over, all steps are taken to minimise any risk of acidosis.

The current figures are in the table below. The cows are being fed 6kg pellets at \$385/t and 0.4kg wheat at \$335/t, at a total cost of \$2.38/cow/day. Silage feeding has stopped, as pasture availability has increased considerably.

| | Litres | Solids |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Production | 23.5 | 1.75 |
| Components % | 4.1%, 3.42% | 4.1%, 3.42% |
| Milk price on current test | 43c | \$5.72 |
| Gross milk income less levies | \$10.10 | \$10.10 |
| Minus grain/pellets | \$2.31+\$0.07=\$2.38 | \$2.38 |
| IOSFC (\$/cow/day) | \$7.72 | \$7.72 |
| Minus irrigated grass (\$140/tDM) | \$1.54 | \$1.54 |
| Net IOSFC (\$/cow/day) | \$6.18 | \$6.18 |
| \$/herd/day | | |
| Net production | 18 net litres | 1.35kgMS |
| Supplement cost | 5.5 litres | 0.4kgMS |

The grazing round is currently 22 days, with 3-3.5ha/day being allocated, with signs that this can be tightened slightly where there is high pasture cover to force residuals lower.

Pasture cover has increased over the past two weeks given the good growing conditions, to just below 1800kgDM/ha, a great position to be in, however quality on some paddocks is poor, in part due to summer species, some waterlogging but also due to high residuals last grazing round. Topping will be performed as a priority on the areas when and where required. Dock infestation is severe in some areas and topping then spraying when new growth appears will be done through February and March

Growth rates have averaged 50kgDM/ha on the fixed spray area in the past two weeks, and 40kgDM/ha on the flood areas, leading to the increase in pasture cover. Urea is still being applied at 80kg/ha.

Resowing will commence mid-late February, with pastures to be renovated sprayed mid-February with a knockdown spray, and prepared for a late-Feb or early March resow. More detail will come in subsequent reports as to the varieties and preparation methods being used this season.

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