

## Macalister Demonstration Farm Update 478 (Week ending 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2018)

More than half of the herd has now calved so the season is getting into full swing.

The calculated pasture consumption is 32 Kg DM/ha/ day, which is a jump up on the last period's 23 kg DM/ha/ day. The grass is excellent quality, very leafy, and no sign of rising seed heads.

Some paddocks have excellent soil moisture, some quite dry. Irrigation has just started for the season.

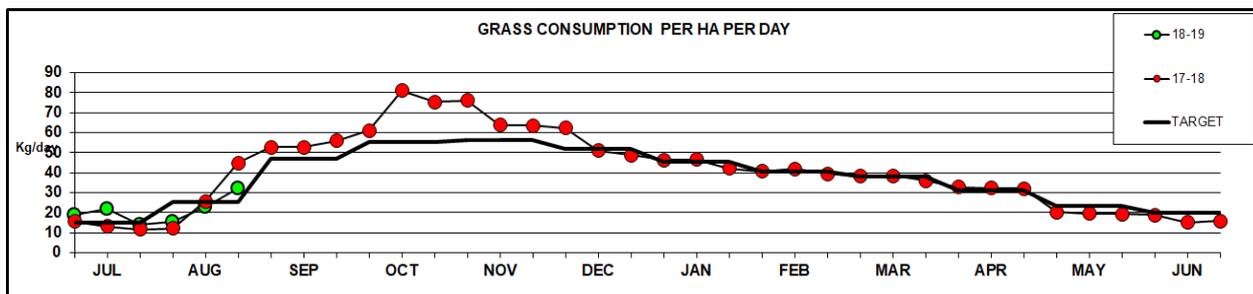
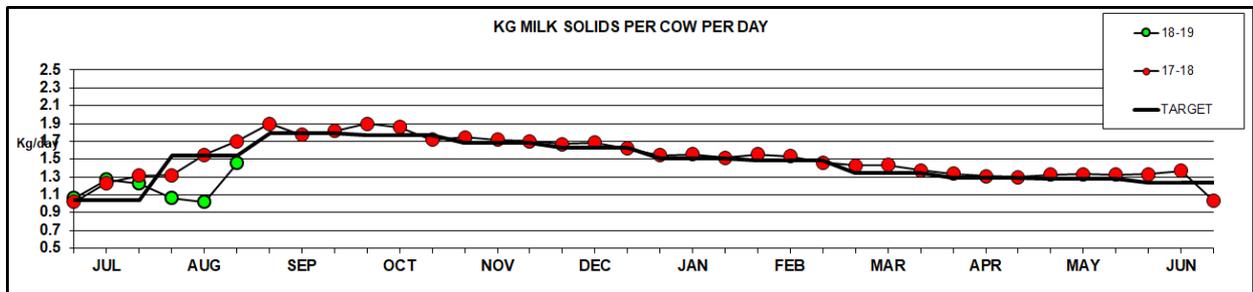
The next break to be grazed is recently re-sown annual ryegrass. It has a huge quantity of 2,800 kg DM/ha and has been rested 52 days, with 2.8 leaves regrown. That is a leaf appearance rate of 19 days which is typical for late August. The grass in this paddock is enjoying the release of nutrient from organic matter when the soil was stirred up at sowing.

In contrast, the paddock after that to be grazed is older perennial ryegrass. It has an available quantity of 1,000 kg DM per hectare, 2.5 leaves, 48 days rested. The poorly grown patches in this paddock are suffering from being grazed short (3 cm height) at the previous grazing. Whilst grazing residue is commonly measured in Kg DM/ha, measuring the quantity of residue is inaccurate, especially using a plate meter, because it picks up bumps and holes in the ground, making the figure meaningless. Residue is best assessed as the "plant's height" because plant height governs its ability to re-grow fast. We should be aiming for 6 cm residue between the clumps to maximise growth.

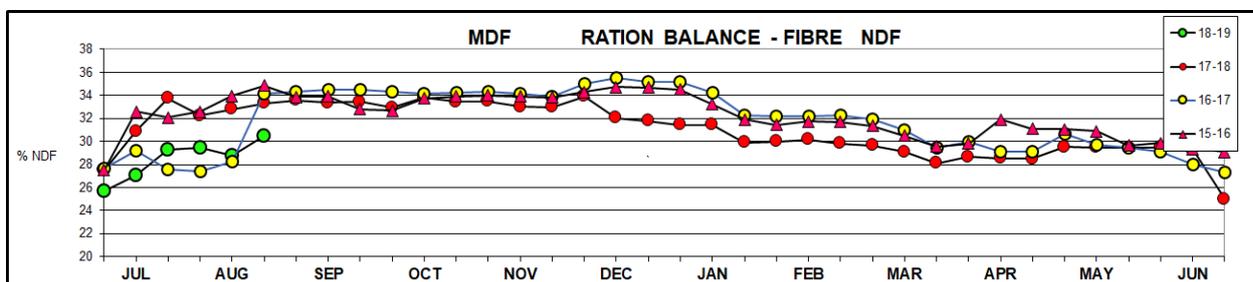
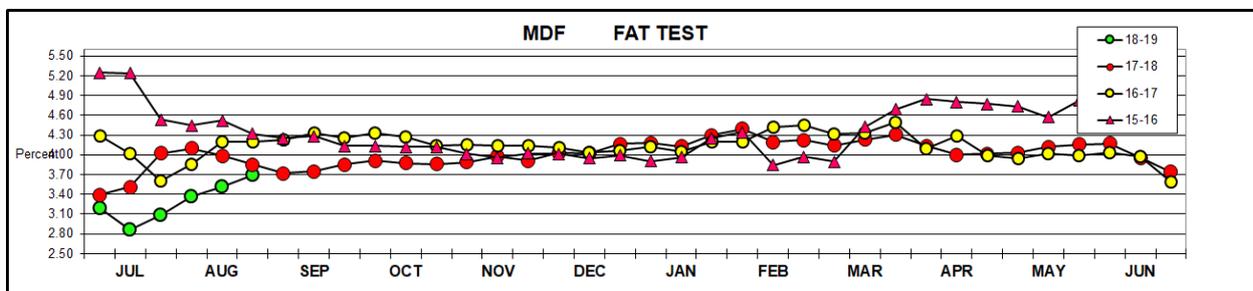
FEED MARGIN PERFORMANCE	TEN DAYS AGO	THIS TEN DAYS	Units
Ten days to date:	20/Aug/18	31/Aug/18	
Milker graze area	51	<b>63</b>	Ha
Milkers	170	<b>217</b>	Head
Stocking rate	3.3	<b>3.4</b>	cows/ha
Average graze rest time	58	<b>58</b>	Days
Estm'd pasture consmp'n (incl cons'vd forage)	23	<b>32</b>	kg DM/ha/day
Pasture consum'd per cow	6.9	<b>9.3</b>	kg DM/cow/day
Pasture growing spend	\$2.03	<b>\$2.03</b>	\$/ha/day
Estm'd pasture price	\$88	<b>\$63</b>	\$/T DM
Conc (incl additives)supp fed/cow	5.0	<b>5.0</b>	kg DM/cow/day
Conc (incl additives)supp avg price	\$422	<b>\$422</b>	\$/T DM
Feed Conversion Efficiency	86	<b>102</b>	kg MS/tonne DM
Total feed intake/cow	11.7	<b>14.1</b>	kg DM/cow/day
NDF Fibre in diet	28.8%	<b>30.5%</b>	% NDF
Litres/cow	14.1	<b>20.0</b>	l/cow/day
Fat test	3.51%	<b>3.69%</b>	%
Protein test	3.72%	<b>3.61%</b>	%
Milk Solids per cow	1.02	<b>1.46</b>	kg/cow/day
Milk price (less levies)/kg MS	\$5.72	<b>\$5.64</b>	\$/kg MS
Milk price (less levies)/litre	\$0.414	<b>\$0.412</b>	\$ per litre
Milk income/cow	\$5.85	<b>\$8.23</b>	\$/cow/day
All feed cost/cow	\$2.70	<b>\$2.68</b>	\$/cow/day
Margin over all Feed/cow	\$3.15	<b>\$5.55</b>	\$/cow/day
MOAF /ha /day	\$10.50	<b>\$19.12</b>	\$/ha/day
Farm MOAF per DAY	\$535	<b>\$1,205</b>	\$/day

The grazing allocation is now set at one 36th of the farm. If that allocation is held, in 36 days (i.e. in early October) the grazing rest time will be 36 days.

The cows are not at all hungry, being offered all they can eat. The only grass being “wasted” is the grass that needs to be wasted to encourage/lift milk production.



Do you think fat test has much to do with NDF fibre in diet?



From Tyran Jones on AusdairyL:

*“Fat test definitely related to diet. We still have about 50% silage (carry over cardboard) in the diet, a bit of grass and 5kg of wheat. Fat test bumping around 5%. More grass in and the fat test drops.*

*Usually, when we drop the silage out late Aug/early Sept, fat crashes to meet the Protein at 3.2 to 3.6%.”*

So, is there more feed margin, the main driver of profit, in feeding a high fibre supplement to maintain a high fat test?

A very complex question which I doubt anyone could answer definitively because of:

- The price and quality of the fibre supplement
- The price paid for milk fat (and volume and milk protein)
- The cow response to the fibre supplement (milk volume produced, milk fat percent, and milk protein percent).

However, I will have a go.

#### **PRICES:**

- Fibre supplements are currently uber expensive. (Even your own silage, because you could sell it easily at a high price). And fibre supplements are poor quality (low in energy and protein) and feeding them is usually very wasteful.
- Milk fat is paid at half the protein price. A litre costs 2.5 cents.

#### **RESPONSE:**

If fibre is fed so that the ration is say, 33% NDF (ie. a bit high):

- Feed costs more
- Intake will be reduced, and milk volume fall. Save 2.5 cents for each litre less.
- Fat test will rise. End up with the same kg of fat at \$4.00
- The protein percent the same. End up with less kg of protein, at \$8.00

If fibre is not fed and the ration is say 29% NDF (ie. a bit low):

- Feed costs less
- Intake might lift, so milk volume rise. Pay 2.5 cents for each litre extra.
- Fat test will fall. End up with the same kg of fat at \$4.00
- The protein percent the same. End up with more kg of protein, at \$8.00.

So, I think do not chase fat test with fibre supplements.

Except, if the fat test is so low, and the ration is way too low in fibre, that cows are digesting very poorly, and even getting sick. If you do move to low NDF, go there very slowly; cows do not cope well with inconsistent diet.

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