Backtrack Dairies – Weekly Summary

Week ending Saturday 23th January 2016

Backtrack Dairies
Two farming systems. One biological (Whakapono) and one conventional (Waiora).

Summary

- High per cow and per ha production maintained at 1.97 kg MS/cow and 6.0 kg/ha on Whakapono while Waiora dropped below these levels to 1.84 kg MS/cow for the first time despite receiving quality feed.
- Another 47 mm rain has meant the irrigation has been turned off including K line with soil moisture levels well above optimum.
- Maintain 24 day round on quality pastures to continue producing at this level for another six weeks
- Whakapono cover corrected to be similar to Waiora around 2900 if you believe plate meter measurements. Residuals on both farms looking around 1700 – 1800 excepting a couple of paddocks on each side which probably means we should have done silage. Would have been still lying on the ground given the last weeks weather.
- Bought in about 150 TonneDM grass as pit silage from neighbours for autumn

Production

Whakapono production is ahead of Waiora in per cow and per ha/day probably due to better quality pasture available overall. Grain/PKE mix maintained at 1kg /cow/day.

Both farms have dropped to per cow levels of 1.97 KgMS and 1.84 KgMS respectively but have done well to stay so high for so long considering the massive covers (if they are accurate) that we have carried through probably because intakes are still high and cows have not be forced into the heavy base in our pastures which will contain a fair amount of dead material even in topped paddocks. This may come back to haunt us as we attempt to extend the round in late Feb/March.

- **Pastures**

Covers on Whakapono have bounced back markedly to 2909 on a 22 day round while Waiora has gained slightly to 2921 on a 24 day round

Growth rates (85 Whakapono / 67 Waiora kgDM/ha/day) appear above demand which makes sense given the weather and look sure to go higher given the heat since the rain stopped topping 29 degrees today. Some paddocks that were topped have seeded again which is annoying so will have to deal with them later when full staff return from holiday.

Whakapono feed wedge appeared to show a looming deficit but doubt whether that will eventuate now.

Both farms seem to be reading 300-400 kgDM/ha higher than normal with the stemmy base holding up the plate meter.

Demand at 3.3 cows x 20 kgDM/cow /day = 66 so should be maintaining cover if not increasing .possibly the high clover content is helping with intakes and production as cows can harvest more of this type of feed using less energy to do it.
Meanwhile Grain/PKE is still going in at 1kg

- **Mating**

Finished first three weeks Friday with submission rates of 84% on Whakapono and 82% on Waiora including culls cycling but not mated for obvious reasons.

Vet checked on Monday allowing a full cycle time of 24 days for some cows and not surprisingly half the cows coming up each day were new ones including October calvers.
Intervention at this point is to metri-check everything not cycled including late calvers (excluding obvious culls) and PG the lot bringing forward cows due to cycle in the next ten days then repeating this 10 days later to catch the remaining cows that haven't cycled by then. PG is cheap at $6/cow and less invasive than other intervention.
Whakapono had 47 non-cyclers out of 475 cows eligible (18 culls and 9 late calvers) to cycle, with one needing a metri-cure for infection so 91% cycled naturally.
Waiora had 85 non-cyclers out of 653 cows eligible, (31 culls and two late calvers) and no metri-cure needed so 87% cycled naturally.
We have seen this trend over the last two seasons with Whakapono being 3 – 4% ahead of Waiora on submission rates and ending up 2% ahead on conception rates after 10 weeks mating.
From here we will carry on with AI for another three weeks (seven weeks total then the last three weeks with Friesian bulls (14 purchased 500kg minimum) which arrived late today.
Detection is myself mostly or our 2IC sitting up on a big tennis umpires chair at Whakapono in the morning and Waiora at night by tail painting and picking out cows for seven weeks.
A bit of a prison sentence really but worthwhile financially and ensures consistency for the trial.
Second round of PG done on Friday December 4th 10 days after the first one and at the end of the 5th week of AI
Whakapono had 9 cows remaining to be mated
Waiora had 26 cows remaining to be mated
Finished six weeks of mating Thursday Dec 10 so will watch returns closely for when we can put bulls out
At present getting around 7 cows per day on Whakapono and 10 on Waiora which also includes the culls which I decided to mate to short gestation Hereford to give me an option to sell as suckler cows to one of our graziers but also to take the pressure off the bulls
Finished Seven weeks of AI last Thursday and not that impressed with returns still coming in at similar numbers as above each day which hopefully are mostly returned from PGs three weeks ago.
Will do one more week of AI to make sure these PG returns are covered and most culls are mated to Hereford so calves are not kept.
Bulls taken out on 10th January so just over ten weeks mating
They will go next week to the works while Jersey bulls taken out of heifers last week are sold to another farmer to use next year as two year olds.

- **Fertiliser**

Finished second round of fert with both spring recommendations including nitrogen and potassium.

Waiora - Pdks >20 Olsen P received 500 kg/ha Serp super

< 20 Olsen P received 600 kg/ha Serp super

+ 20 kg Sulphur gain pure

+ 1 kg Selenium

Sustain urea 50 kg/ha (23 N)

Muriate of Potash 50 kg/ha (25 K)

Pdks > 6 will receive 100 kg/ha KCl

< 6 will receive 150 kg/ha KCl over next two months

Decided to split this application with N to prevent luxury uptake by plant and causing pasture quality and animal health problems.

Spend to date $419 incl next two rounds N+K

Should be two more rounds of Urea or SOA after this in late summer/autumn

Whakapono - a general application over whole farm as we wait for soil tests to recommend different levels of nutrients for each paddock especially Ca/Mg needed as Ca still low and Mg levels too high. All other nutrients are good.

DAP 75 kg/ha

SOA 25 kg/ha

KSO4 25 kg/ha

Sulphur 10 kg/ha

Sel 1kg/ha

N	P	K	S
19	15	12	10

Cost $120/ha

Fertiliser spend to date $205/ha

NB: both farms on same fert budget from now on, aim $600/ha incl. N

Next round of fert on Waiora at 100 kg/ha Sustain Urea /MOP 50:50 mix is being applied now over December includes N (23kg/ha) and K (25kg/ha) again for conventional farm as per last recommendation. Expect three more rounds of N after this.

Next fertiliser for Whakapono is another similar DAP SOA mix similar to the above with 20 units of N while we have started to apply Ca/Mg needs of Whakapono from Neal Kinsey ‘s recommendation including varying rates of Aglime and dolomite depending on individual paddocks needs at 12 m spread but will be all on before Christmas.

Silage paddocks also received extra N and K

Cost of the next application $138 /ha plus the lime dolomite at average of $200 /ha

Total spend to date $543/ha so still have room in budget for more autumn fert.

Waiora will continue with Sustain urea /MOP mix giving 23 units of N and 25 units of K over December so not hugely different then

All fert was applied pre Christmas so will look to next round late Jan/early Feb

- **Irrigation**

7 mm rain this week and cooler temperatures have helped get moisture levels back to normal with irrigators going full time. We cleaned out the sprinklers on the corner arms which were blocked and being robbed when the end gun is on and showing up quite badly in corners.

River was below minimum flow for two days so used stored water

Have 10 days stored water left but can purchase more at current price (8c/m3)

Works out at about $1000 /day for this farm

- **Animal Health**

  Minimal mastitis on both units cell count Waiora 125000 0 cases

  Whakapono 100000 0 cases

  Lameness Waiora 2 cases

  Whakapono 2 cases

  Penicillin mobs Waiora 8 and Whakapono 6 cows

  Includes two culls from each side to go on Monday HCC and lames

- **Management**

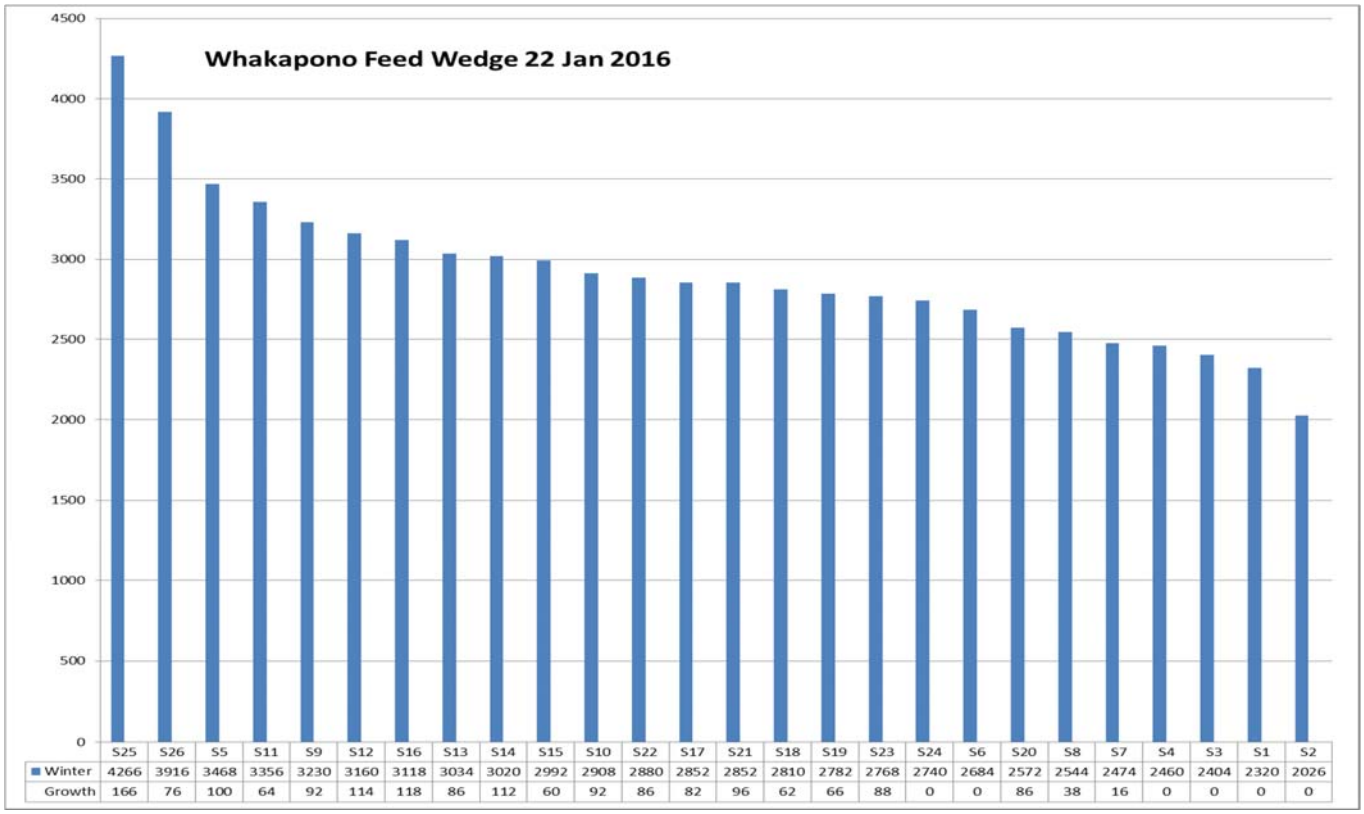
  Continue current management of 24 day round. More attention to grazing residuals and need to control pastures without restricting intakes. This may mean topping after cows in poorer quality pdks (ie: give cows the choice) or mowing in front better quality ones.

  Still 127 heifer calves on farm plus 23 beef calves (stopped feeding them milk)

  Control weeds and start irrigation Kline on Monday and pivots as per moisture meter in four days if no substantial rain – more forecast mid-week.

	10/1/16		17/1/16	
Backtrack Dairies	Whakapono	Waiora	Whakapono	Waiora
Farm grazing ha	155	210	155	210
Cows in Milk	497	661	497	669
Ave. Pasture Cover	2635	2898	2909	2921
Ave. Pasture Growth	50	61	85	67
Area Grazed	7.37	8.10	5.94	8.38
Grazing Interval	21	23	23	24
Pasture Intake (est kgDM/cow)	23	23	24	25
Grass Silage Fed (kgDM/cow)	0	0	0	0
Grain/PKE Fed (kgDM/cow)	1	1	1	1
Total Fed KgDM/cow	24	24	25	26
Milk Solids (Kg/cow/day)	2.03	1.93	1.99	1.87
MS/ha/day	6.46	5.93	6.29	5.80
Nitrogen applied (kg N/ha)	0	0	0	0
Rainfall (mm for week)	11	11	47	41
Irrigation applied	44889	65916	0	1824
Soil Temperature at 9am	17	16	17	16
Soil Moisture (between 65-76%)	71	77		77
Cell count				
Totals To Date				
Milk Solids to factory	146838	198151	146838	206672
Milk Solids inclu calf milk	151941	207475	151941	215996
MS/ha	955	945	955	986
Nitrogen applied (kg N/ha)	79	73	52	73
Supplements Fed (kg/cow)	597	634	597	641
Deaths	10	15	10	16
Culls	31	48	31	48

Feed Wedges



	S25	S26	S5	S11	S9	S12	S16	S13	S14	S15	S10	S22	S17	S21	S18	S19	S23	S24	S6	S20	S8	S7	S4	S3	S1	S2
Winter	4266	3916	3468	3356	3230	3160	3118	3034	3020	2992	2908	2880	2852	2852	2810	2782	2768	2740	2684	2572	2544	2474	2460	2404	2320	2026
Growth	166	76	100	64	92	114	118	86	112	60	92	86	82	96	62	66	88	0	0	86	38	16	0	0	0	0

	N11	N9	N7	N17	N3	N14	N5	N12	N2	N19	N16	N21	N15	N20	N4	N23	N10	N18	N1	N22	N6	N8	N24	N13
Winter	3706	3664	3440	3398	3300	3244	3230	3202	3188	2936	2908	2908	2859	2852	2796	2782	2740	2740	2628	2586	2544	2474	2180	1788
Growth	75	75	114	82	89	82	96	58	112	56	63	93	20	126	0	61	0	49	28	0	0	0	0	0