

Backtrack Dairies – Weekly Summary

Week ending Saturday 26th December 2015

Backtrack Dairies

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

Summary

- Mad rush leading up to Christmas trying to get the last round of fertiliser on and get cows away to works while still doing AI until the 8th week.
- Put bulls out for the last two weeks with still quite a bit of bulling activity evident which is a worry.

- **Production**

Whakapono production is still just ahead of Waiora in per cow and per ha/day probably due to better quality pasture available overall. A lot of pre graze topping on Waiora may mean cows are ingesting poor quality feed. Grain/PKE mix reduced to 2kg with growth rates and residuals appearing to lift although not shown in covers which have remained stable. Herbage analysis from Hills does not show huge differences, (see below) although slightly positive in all factors for Whakapono. This is a pasture sample taken from the next two paddocks in front of cows each month.

Both farms have come off peak now at 2.06kgMS and 1.99kgMS respectively.

Thirty more calves have been weaned and left the farm. There are still 200 calves being fed only milk from sick mob at lower amounts. These will be sold in the coming months if someone comes along with the right money. Good Tui ad.

4mm rain has helped the irrigation which has been on flat out

Have pretty much finished topping on Waiora, but have about 20 ha to do when we return from holidays on Whakapono, which will mean we have mown 66% and 54% of each farm respectively.

- **Pastures**

Covers on Whakapono have maintained at 2458 on a 22 day round while Waiora which had no silage done has remained at 2664 on a 24 day round.

Growth rates (50 Whakapono/53 Waiora kgDM/ha/day) are even on the two farms.

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

Demand at 3.3 cows x 20 kgDM/cow/day = 66 so should be eating into cover but next pasture walk will tell us.

Meanwhile Grain/PKE is helping fill the deficit providing 2 kg per cow per day or 6.6 kgDM/ha/day.

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 so

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 are out now for two weeks over the Christmas/ New Year period to make life easier for all while we are away for a week

- **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 12m 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 receive another application in Feb of 23 units N as Sustain Urea and 25 units of K as MOP only to the paddocks that needed the extra K

Spend to date after the Feb application on Waiora will be \$419 per ha bearing in mind no lime has been applied to address pH since January 2014 (2.0t/ha) and also there is more N to go on in March/April probably as SOA.

- **Irrigation**

4 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 15 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 1 case

Whakapono 100000 1 case

Lameness Waiora 0 cases

Whakapono 0 cases

Penicillin mobs getting smaller with Waiora 8 and Whakapono 2 cows with 8 more cows with bad udders and high cell count culled on 17.12.15.

- **Management**

Continue current management of 24 day round or less with surplus out with 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 before or leaving for silage if good quality.

Weaned 30 calves and sent off farm

Still 200 calves on farm including 50 beef calves

Get next round of fert on before Christmas and have all topping necessary done.

	13/12/15	20/12/15
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Backtrack Dairies	Whakapono	Waiora	Whakapono	Waiora
Farm grazing ha	155	210	155	210
Cows in Milk	495	671	495	671
Ave. Pasture Cover	2505	2687	2458	2664
Ave. Pasture Growth	40	48	50	53
Area Grazed	7.32	8.22	7.62	11.00
Grazing Interval	21	26	20	19
Pasture Intake (est kgDM/cow)	20	23	21	24
Grass Silage Fed (kgDM/cow)	0	0	0	0
Grain/PKE Fed (kgDM/cow)	3	3	2	2
Total Fed KgDM/cow	23	26	23	26
Milk Solids (Kg/cow/day)	2.15	2.00	2.06	1.99
MS/ha/day	6.73	6.15	6.41	6.06
Nitrogen applied (kg N/ha)	0	5	0	7
Rainfall (mm for week)	24	24	4	4
Irrigation applied	33744	51744	41613	52566
Soil Temperature at 9am	15	14	17	15
Soil Moisture (between 65-76%)	69	75	71	75
Totals To Date				
Milk Solids to factory	118535	161836	125493	170750
Milk Solids inclu calf milk	122882	170215	130092	179444
MS/ha	772	772	817	815
Nitrogen applied (kg N/ha)	52	64	52	71
Supplements Fed (kg/cow)	560	597	576	613
Deaths	10	13	10	13
Culls	28	47	28	47

Pasture Quality Summary

	Whakapono	Waiora
Dry Matter %	22.1	22.3
Crude Protein	17.8	13.7
ME MJ/KgDM	12.1	11.8
NDF	38	42

Feed Wedges

