

## **Backtrack Dairies – Weekly Summary**

Week ending Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2016

### **Backtrack Dairies**

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

#### **Summary**

Another week of outstanding growth and quality

Per cow and per ha production holding extremely well with covers on both farms similar at 2800 with Whakapono gaining 150 cover while Waiora remained similar.

Another 19mm rain has meant we could turn off the irrigation for four days including K line and just coast with soil moisture levels above optimum.

#### **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 reduced to 1kg with the increased pre-graze cover and quality seeing production increase.

Both farms have returned to per cow levels of 2.11kgMS and 2.10kgMS respectively which is really pleasing and shows the benefit of topping as cows hit the regrowth of these paddocks. Also the value of the N/K applications is showing through with ryegrass becoming more leafy and clover quite prolific on both farms.

#### **Pastures**

Covers on Whakapono have increased markedly 150 to 2802 on a 22 day round while Waiora has gained 50 to 2852 on a 24 day round

Growth rates (86 Whakapono/ 73 Waiora kgDM/ha/day) have remained above demand but will take the chance to extend the round slightly while still fully feeding cows on grass to maintain high per cow. 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.

Most other cows in the district tend to be doing around 1.8kgMS/cow/day but with 10% more cows so about the same per ha and still feeding 1-2 kg grain or PKE and are quite tight for feed. Both farms seem to be reading 300-400 kgDM/ha higher than normal with the stemmy base holding up the platemeter.

Demand at 3.3 cows x 20 kgDM/cow /day = 66 so are gaining cover which is a good thing going into summer as far as trying to increase the rotation cheaply.

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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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

### **Irrigation**

19 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 12 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 1 cases

Lameness Waiora 0 cases

Whakapono 5 cases

Penicillin mobs getting smaller with Waiora 10 and Whakapono 6 cows

### **Management**

Continue current management of 24 day round or increase round to closer to 30 days as excess feed allows. 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 extending the round if extra pasture cover allows.

Still 200 calves on farm including 50 beef calves

	27/12/15		3/1/16	
<b>Backtrack Dairies</b>	<b>Whakapono</b>	<b>Waiora</b>	<b>Whakapono</b>	<b>Waiora</b>
Farm grazing ha	155	210	155	210
Cows in Milk	495	671	495	670
Ave. Pasture Cover	2668	2798	2802	2852
Ave. Pasture Growth	82	80	86	73
Area Grazed	6.09	7.22	5.75	8.22
Grazing Interval	25	29	27	26
Pasture Intake (est kgDM/cow)	24	16	16	22
Grass Silage Fed (kgDM/cow)	0	0	0	0
Grain/PKE Fed (kgDM/cow)	2	2	1	1
Total Fed KgDM/cow	26	18	17	23
Milk Solids (Kg/cow/day)	2.13	2.06	2.11	2.10
MS/ha/day	6.64	6.28	6.58	6.43
Nitrogen applied (kg N/ha)	0	0	0	0
Rainfall (mm for week)	2	2	12	12
Irrigation applied	32846	58160	15683	19955
Soil Temperature at 9am	18	17	18	16
Soil Moisture (between 65-76%)	63	77	68	75
<b>Totals To Date</b>				
Milk Solids to factory	132695	179989	139829	189437
Milk Solids inclu calf milk	137546	188998	144932	198761
MS/ha	864	859	910	904
Nitrogen applied (kg N/ha)	52	71	52	73
Supplements Fed (kg/cow)	586	623	590	627
Deaths	10	13	10	14
Culls	28	47	28	47

## Feed Wedges

