

Backtrack Dairies – Weekly Summary

Week ending Saturday 5th March 2016

Backtrack Dairies

Two farming systems. One biological (Whakapono) and one conventional (Waiora). Both farms have a stocking rate of 3.3 cows/ha at peak.

Week Ending	27/2/16		5/3/16	
Backtrack Dairies	Whakapono	Waiora	Whakapono	Waiora
Farm grazing ha	155	210	155	210
Peak Cows	506	690	506	690
Stocking Rate (cows in milk/ha)	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1
Cows in Milk	482	657	482	657
Cows in Vat	477	653	474	653
Ave. Pasture Cover	2870	2934	2761	2869
Ave. Pasture Growth	56	47	49	60
Area Grazed	6.70	6.95	6.71	8.93
Grazing Interval	23	30	23	24
Pasture Intake (est kgDM/cow)	25	23	18	18
Grass Silage Fed (kgDM/cow)	0	0	0	0
Grain/PKE Fed (kgDM/cow)	1	1	1	1
Total Fed KgDM/cow	26	24	19	19
Milk Solids (Kg/cow/day)	1.87	1.78	1.83	1.76
MS/ha/day	5.75	5.54	5.60	5.46
Nitrogen applied (kg N/ha)	0	0	0	0
Rainfall (mm for week)	1	1	0	0
Irrigation applied	49208	74408	40186	62525
Soil Temperature at 9am	19	17	17	16
Soil Moisture (between 65-76%)	70	76	68	78
Cell count	110	157	121	125
Mastitis Cases	0	0	1	1
Lameness Cases	2	0	3	0
Totals To Date				
Milk Solids to factory	186070	247917	192147	255947
Milk Solids inclu calf milk	191173	257241	197250	265271
MS/ha	1208	1182	1247	1220
Nitrogen applied (kg N/ha)	100	105	100	105
Supplements Fed (kg/cow)	632	669	646	676
Deaths %	2	2	2	2
Culls %	9	8	9	8

Summary

- High per cow and per ha production has dropped again slightly to 1.83 kg MS/cow and 5.60 kg/ha on Whakapono, while Waiora has maintained at 1.76 kg MS/cow and 5.46 kgMS/ha.
- No rain has meant the irrigation is full on at 5.2mm/ha/day to cope with high temps and NW winds.
- Maintain 24 day round on quality pastures and aim to continue producing at this level for another two weeks before moving to 30 days.
- Whakapono cover dropped 100 to 2761 and similar on Waiora dropping to 2869. This is possibly due to the effect of topping the last of the rougher paddocks bringing residuals into line.
- Most topping finished including newer grass paddocks on both sides where the chicory component had got quite stalky.
- Residuals on both farms starting to look more acceptable around 1700 but are still plating high.
- Final pregnancy test result a bit of a disaster with Whakapono at 14% and Waiora at 15%. Both 5-6% worse than last year. We will try to analyse what went wrong, but have heard some other bad figures around the area so hopefully it is season specific. Lincoln was also 14% after 10 weeks.
- Herd test done which backed up factory data for previous week (summary below).
- Body Condition scoring done with both herds dropping down to 4.35 which is understandable given the way they have been milking and similar trend to Lincoln and around the county (summary below).
- Bought in 150 Tonne DM grass as pit silage at 18 cents/kgDM which will be the last giving us around 500t for both farms to use.
- Starting to feel the effects of two weeks without rain and some very hot days with pasture and milk production slowing. Also less in-shed feeding (no grain) will have contributed to the recent fall in production.

Production

Whakapono production is ahead of Waiora in per cow and per ha/day probably due to better quality pasture available overall. PKE has been maintained at 1kg /cow/day with grain dropped out as considered not economic at new lower milk price.

Whakapono has dropped slightly per cow levels of 1.83 KgMS and Waiora has maintained at 1.76 KgMS.

Irrigation

No rain this week and hot weather means irrigation is full on. The river water is still available with the NW winds.

Have 2 days stored water left but can purchase more at current price (8c/m³). This works out at about \$1000/day for both farms.

Animal Health

	Whakapono	Waiora

Mastitis %	0.21%	0.15%
Lameness %	1.7%	0%
Penicillin Herd %	1.66%	0.61%

There is minimal mastitis on both farms. Lameness issues are reducing on both farms with cows recovering well due to early detection and treatment.

Whakapono does have disadvantage of one herd of 500 cows compared to two herds of 300-350 on Waiora so a lot less time on concrete.

Also Whakapono has longer walks on tracks which the two pivots go over and wet continuously whereas Waioras four pivots don't cross any tracks so stay mostly dry and clean, which could be why there is less footrot there.

Pastures

Covers on Whakapono have dropped to 2761 on a 23 day round, while Waiora has also dropped to 2869 on a 23 day round for the first herd and a 28 day round for the second herd, which makes use of the extra cover on their part of the farm and allows more time for topped paddocks to recover.

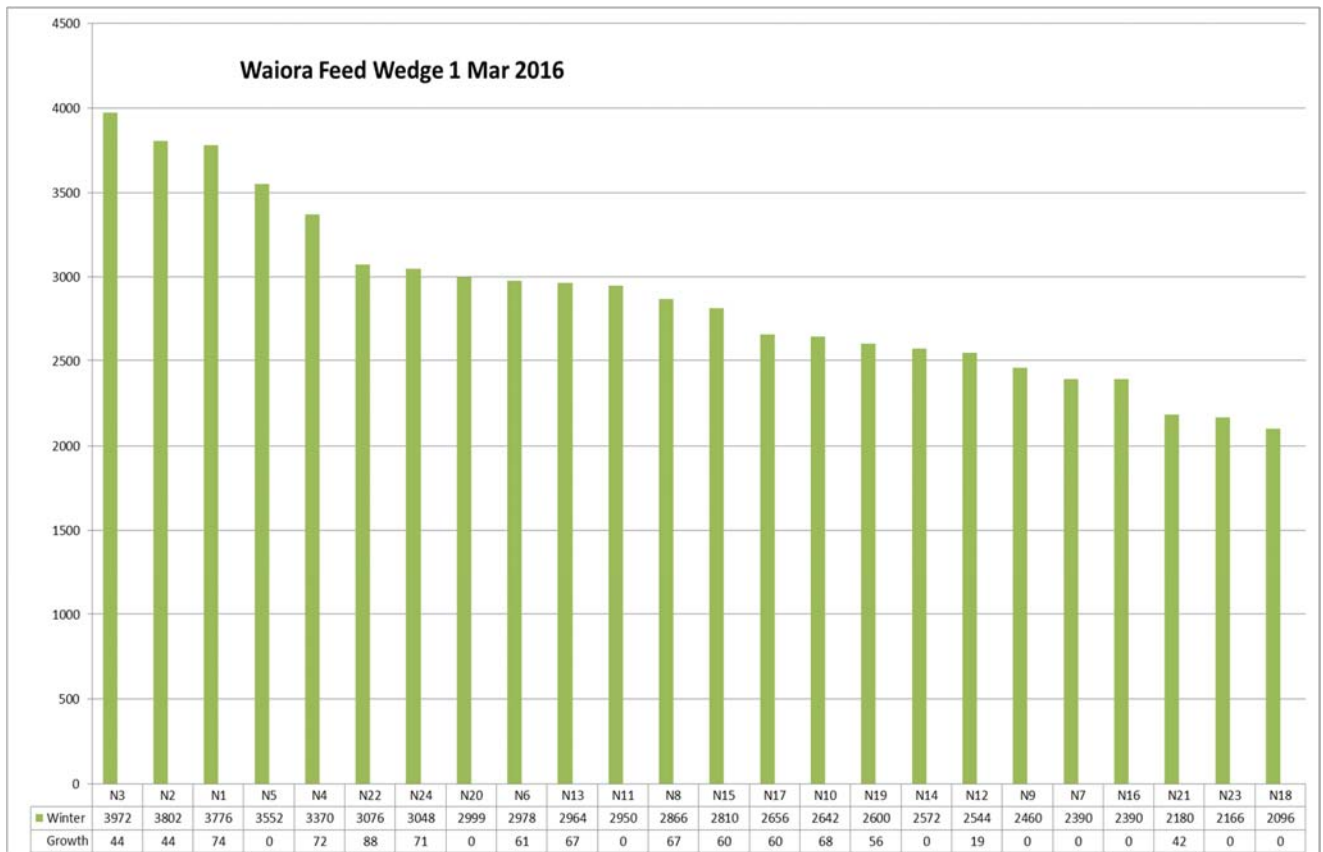
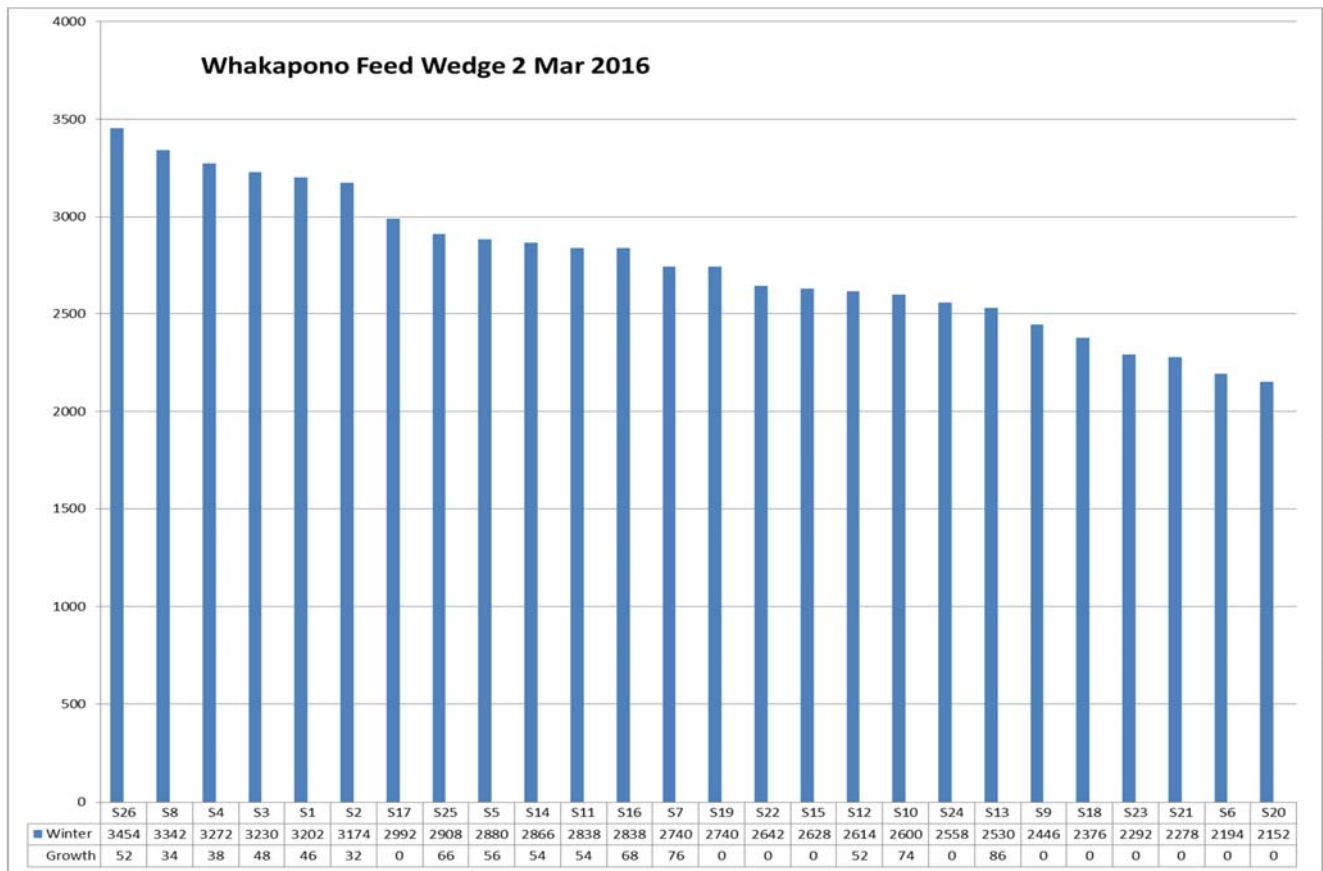
Residuals on Whakapono are starting to look more acceptable around 1600 but still plating at 2000.

Growth rates (49 Whakapono/60 Waiora kgDM/ha/day) have dropped away with some hot temperatures and strong NW winds so ET's high but moisture meters say we are keeping up. Also NW winds means the river is up so we aren't using stored water.

Still reading 300-400 kgDM/ha higher than normal with the stemmy base holding up the plate meter.

Demand at 3.1 cows x 19 kgDM/cow/day = 59 so should be maintaining cover if not decreasing slightly, with PKE in-shed helping to buffer this fed at 1kg/hd/day.

Feed Wedges



Mating

	Whakapono	Waiora
Submission Rate	84%	82%
Non-cyclers	9%	12%
AI length	8 weeks	8 weeks
Mating length	11 weeks	11 weeks
Detection Method	Manager/2IC checking cows every morning and tail paint	Manager/2IC checking cows every afternoon and tail paint

Timeframe of Mating	Dates
Planned Start of Mating	30 th October
Metri-checking & PG 1	23 rd November
PG 2	4 th December
Change to short gestation semen	10 th December
AI Finished	22 nd December
Bulls entered herd	22 nd December
Bulls removed from herd	10 th January
Pregnancy Scanning 1	2 nd February
Pregnancy Scanning 2	3 rd March

Pregnancy Test Results

1 st Scan	Whakapono	Waiora
Total Cows Scanned	493	652
August Calving (first four weeks)	304 (62%)	390 (60%)
September Calving (second four weeks)	105 (21%)	148 (23%)
Rechecks	84 (17%)	114 (17%)

2 nd Scan	Whakapono	Waioira
Total Cows Rechecked	80 (16%)	117 (17%)
Late Oct to Bull	12 (2%)	19 (3%)
No of Cows Empty	68	98
% of cows Empty	14%	15%

So very disappointing results but appear to be quite common around the county and also Lincoln posted a similar result at 14% after 10 weeks. I will check how many of these are culls that I didn't mate until late on purpose, which will make me feel a bit better if they make up some of these MT's.

Good job the beef schedule is good and I have plenty of heifers (300).

Heifers on the three blocks ranged from 4-7% MT which is normal for us.

Fertiliser

Whakapono – Healthy Soils

Month	Fertiliser Product	Application Rate (kg/Ha)	N	P	K	S	Mg	Ca
July	Sulphate Ammonia	150	32			35		
	Mag Sulphate (K)	25				4	4	
October	Sulphur	10				9		
	Sulphate Ammonia	25	6			6		
	Pot Sulphate/KCL	25			12	3		
	DAP	75	14	15				
December	Urea	20	9.2					
	Sulphate Ammonia	50	11			12		
	Pot Sulphate/KCL	52			25	6.8		
	DAP	48	8.6	9.6				
	Sulphur	10				8.6		
	Lime	639						383
Dolomite	1080					119	540	
January	Urea	5	2.3					
	Sulphate Ammonia	64	14			15		
	Pot Sulphate/KCL	5			2.4	0.7		
	DAP	5	0.9	1				
Total to Date Applied			100	26	39	99	123	923

Waioira - Ballance

Month	Fertiliser Product	Application Rate (kg/Ha)	N	P	K	S	Mg	Ca
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July	SustaiN Ammo 30N	100	30	1		13		
October	Muriate of Potash/SustaiN Urea	100	25		22			
November	Serpentine Super/Sulphurgain Pure (Olsen P < 20)	526		22		40.5	16	53
	Serpentine Super/Sulphurgain Pure (Olsen P > 20)	626		15		28.5	11	37
December	Muriate of Potash/SustaiN Urea	100	25		22			
January	Muriate of Potash/SustaiN Urea*	100	25		22			
Total to Date Applied			105	38	67	82	27	90

*Waiora fertiliser going on mostly at 100 kg/ha which is a 50:50 mix of Sustain Urea and MOP with one third of paddocks only receiving 50 kg of Sustain urea if K levels were > 6.

February Application

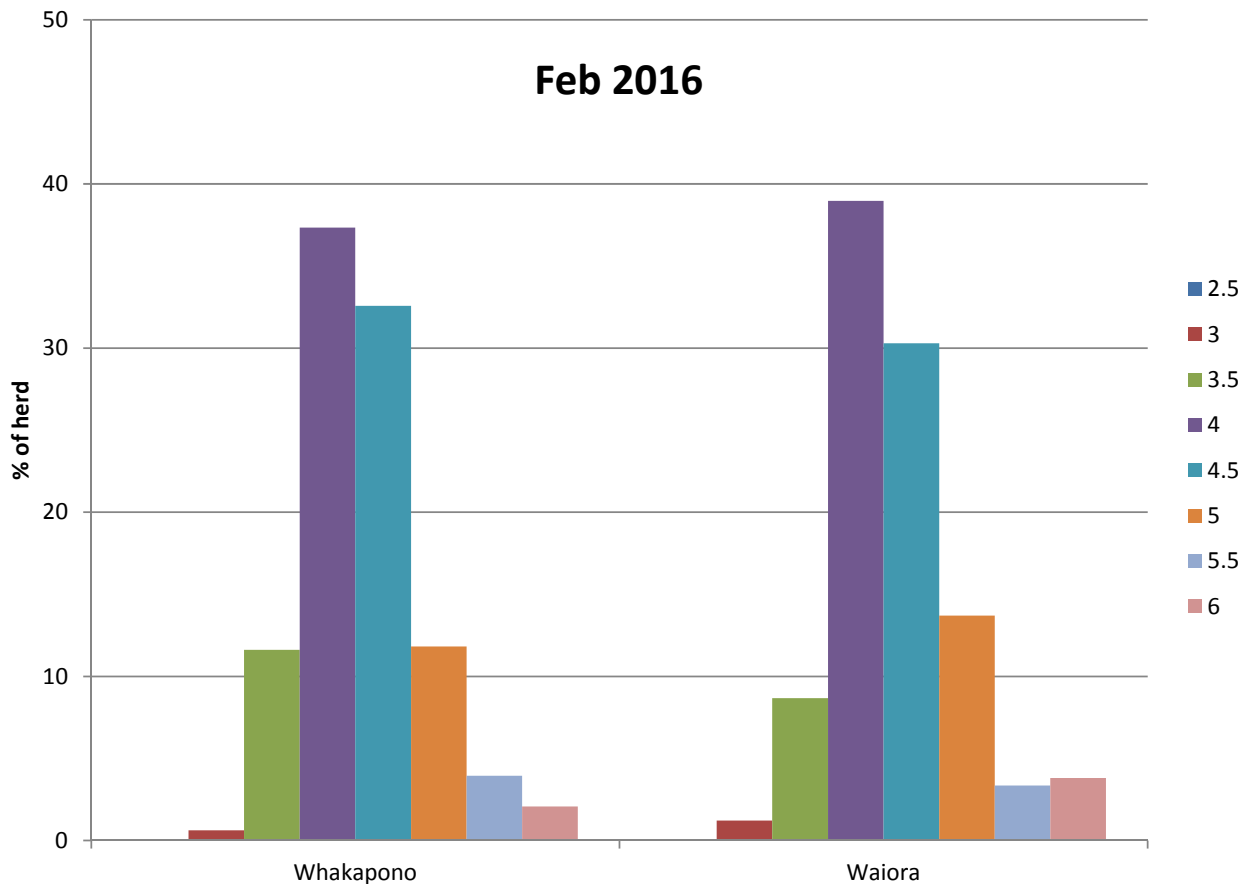
Finished spreading fertiliser on Whakapono so up to 100 kg/ha of N and is almost at budget of \$600/ha. Whakapono has received varying amounts of fertiliser containing light rates of N and S (15 to 20 units).

N to date on Waiora is 105kg/ha is slightly above Whakapono at 100kg/ha.

So far Waiora has spent less than \$500/ha so has more up sleeve for final two applications. Eight paddocks on Waiora with pH below 6.2 have had 2-3 t/ha lime applied while all other paddocks have pH above this after whole farm receiving 2t/ha two years ago.

Cow Condition

Cow condition has declined slightly on both farms with the average at 4.35. There is 13% of Whakapono cows below CS 4.0 and 10% on Waiora below CS 4.0. The industry target is no more than 15% of the herd below CS 4.0 at this time. This means that both farms are still under this target and are in a good position to make calving condition targets. The spread is shown in the graph below.



Herd Test Results

Farm	No. of herds	Herd Size	Milk (L)	Milkfat (%)	Milkfat (kg)	Protein (%)	Protein (kg)	Milk Solids (kg)
Whakapono		473	23.0	5.04	1.16	4.20	.97	2.12
Waiora		626	21	4.63	.97	4.06	.85	1.82
Canterbury	94	648	19.5	4.71	.92	3.92	.77	1.69

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 55 heifer calves on farm plus 30 beef calves.

Control weeds, Californian thistle and gorse on fence lines.

Start irrigation K-line and pivots as per moisture meter.

River water available so maintain moisture levels at upper end of optimum in case of breakdown and to reduce need to use stored water unnecessarily.

Flat line production for next month then look to get round out to 30+ days.

Use preg test and next herd test data to knock out cows that aren't contributing before start feeding silage to get round out.