

Backtrack Dairies – Weekly Summary

Week ending Saturday 12th December 2015

Backtrack Dairies

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

Summary

- **Production**

Whakapono production has gone ahead of Waiora again in per cow and per ha/day probably due to better quality pasture available and the two silage paddocks coming back into the round meaning no baleage had to be fed. Grain PKE mix increased to 2kg has seen production hold quite well

Both farms have come off peak now at 2.14 and 2.08 respectively and calf milk is no longer being taken from tank as 270 calves have now been weaned and left the farm. There are still 230 calves being fed only milk from sick mob at lower amounts. These will be sold in the coming months.

Recent cooler and damp weather has given us the confidence to top more and as our consultant says, it isn't going to grow any more if we don't do it.

Nothing was mown on Whakapono and 10ha post mown on Waiora to try to tidy things up.

- **Pastures**

Covers on Whakapono have maintained at 2592 on a 22 day round while Waiora which had no silage done has remained at 2770 on a 24 day round

Will be doing more pre and post mowing on both farms as the irrigation has caught up with recent rain and cooler weather.

Last chance to tidy things up before Christmas break where not much extra gets done.

Growth rates (51 Whakapono / 56 Waiora kgDM/ha/day) have dropped back on Whakapono with areas topped and silage lagging behind and the effect of the shorter round and dry conditions directly after their mowing knocking back growth.

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 2kg per cow per day or 6.6kgDM/ha/day 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

- **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 is to be applied over December which will include N and K again for conventional farm as per last recommendation.

Next fertiliser for Whakapono will be another similar DAP SOA mix similar to the above with 20 units of N while we confirm what the results of the Ca/Mg needs of Whakapono from Neal Kinsey which will be applied separately in January

Cost of the next application \$138 /ha

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

- **Irrigation**

No rain this week but 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 17 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 3 cases

Whakapono 100000 no cases

Lameness Waiora 2 cases

Whakapono 4 cases

Penicillin mobs getting smaller with Waiora 12 and Whakapono 8 cows with 8 more cows with bad udders and high cell count culled.

More culls are booked to go early December as demand for calf milk reduces.

All calves had final 7: 1 vaccination and monthly white drench

- **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 150 calves and sent off farm which will mean no milk taken from tank

Still 230 calves on farm including 50 beef calves (most will be sold December)

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

Backtrack Dairies	29/11/15		6/12/15	
	Whakapono	Waiora	Whakapono	Waiora
Farm grazing ha	155	210	155	210
Cows in Milk	501	681	496	678
Ave. Pasture Cover	2579	2764	2592	2770
Ave. Pasture Growth	44	68	51	56
Area Grazed	5.29	9.51	6.61	8.31
Grazing Interval	24	22	23	25
Pasture Intake (est kgDM/cow)	16	18	22	19
Grass Silage Fed (kgDM/cow)	0	0	0	0
Grain/PKE Fed (kgDM/cow)	1	1	2	2
Total Fed KgDM/cow	16	18	24	21
Milk Solids (Kg/cow/day)	2.12	2.14	2.14	2.08
MS/ha/day	6.65	6.70	6.65	6.48
Nitrogen applied (kg N/ha)	0	0	0	0
Rainfall (mm for week)	12	12	0	0
Irrigation applied	37251	51729	43108	71090
Soil Temperature at 9am	16	15	16	14
Soil Moisture (between 65-76%)	59	66	65	75
Totals To Date				
Milk Solids to factory	104000	143263	111216	152788
Milk Solids inclu calf milk	107843	151012	115374	160789
MS/ha	679	684	725	729
Nitrogen applied (kg N/ha)	65	59	52	53
Supplements Fed (kg/cow)	522	559	541	578
Deaths	10	13	10	13
Culls	22	37	27	40

Feed Wedges

