

Westland Monitor Farm Project

Weekly Update as at week ending Wednesday 4th September 2019

CO Comment

Cattle with horns can hurt people and other animals, sometimes seriously. Farmers try to protect animals and people by preventing horn growth by removing the horn buds when the calf is one to six weeks old.

It's important to use pain relief as disbudding and dehorning can be painful.

Early disbudding is better for both the calf and the operator. It is best to remove horn buds before six weeks of age. At this age, the horns are still small and have not yet attached to the skull.

Most farmers wait until the calf is at least a week old to disbud, when calves are usually robust, have passed the greatest risk period for scours, and the horn bud is easily felt.

To administer local anaesthetic and apply the hot iron, calves will need to be restrained to disbud safely and accurately. This may be in a purpose designed disbudding crate or in a head bail.

Another option for restraint is sedation, which can only be done by a vet. Sedation results in low stress disbudding for calves and handlers and is ideal when other options for restraint are inadequate.

There are many benefits of using pain relief, including:

- less pain for the calf
- less stress for the calf
- reduced growth check
- reach weaning weight sooner
- faster recovery
- the calf is easier to handle during disbudding.

As a minimum, local anaesthetic should be used in disbudding, which numbs the horn bud for several hours. Using an anti-inflammatory as well will provide longer term pain relief for the calf. The graph below shows the effect of pain relief options.

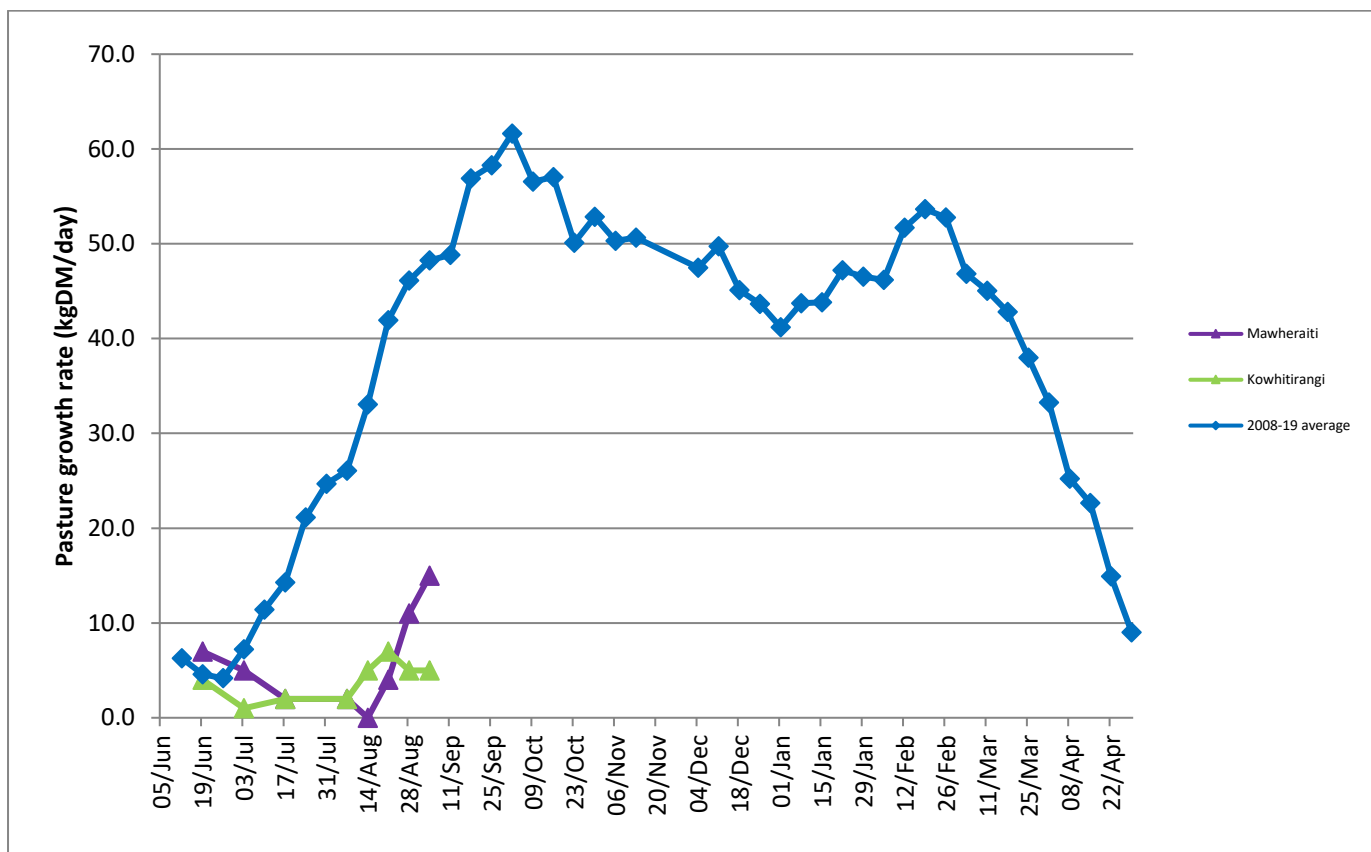
For more information visit <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/animal/calves/disbudding/>

Farm Summary

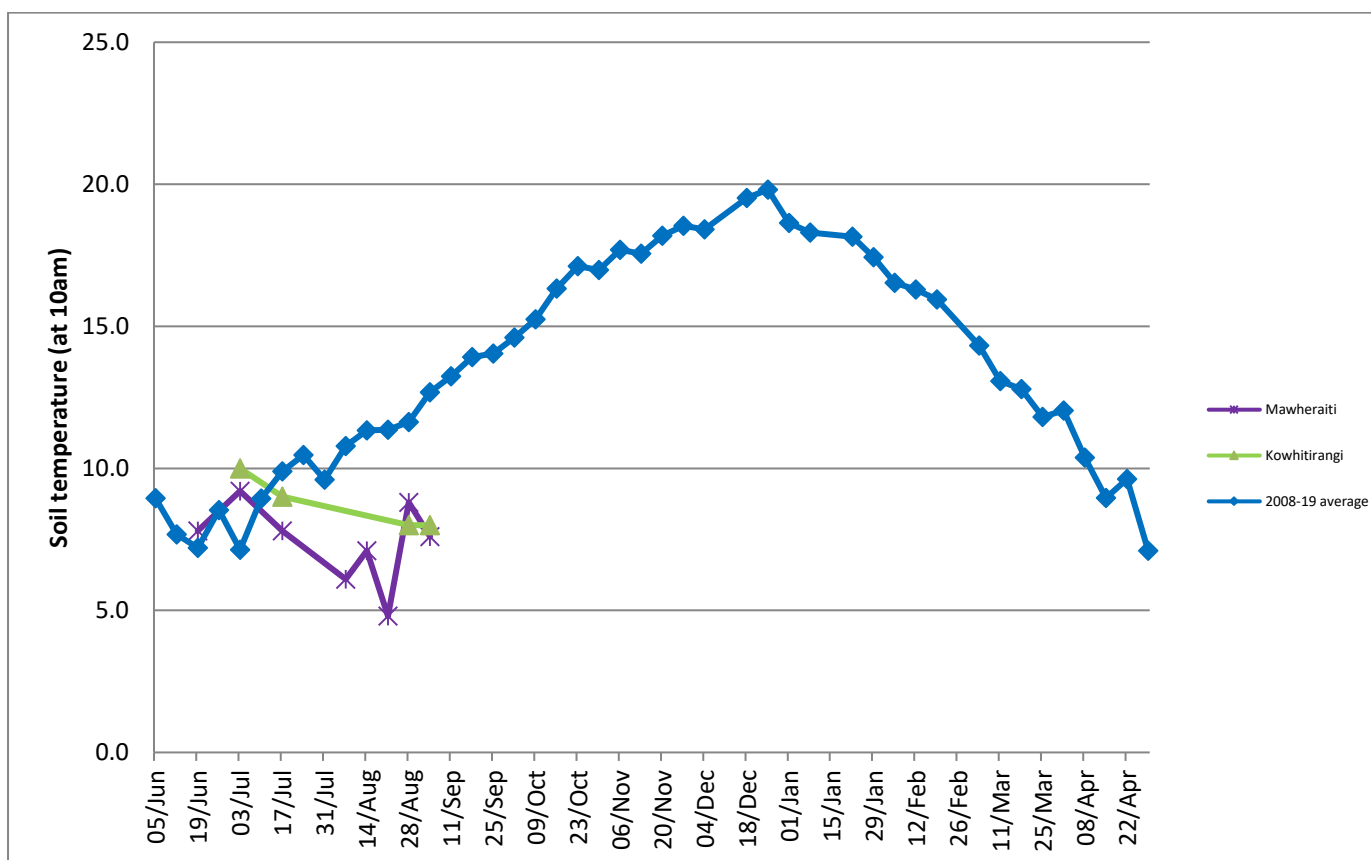
	Mawheraiti	Kowhitirangi
Average cover (kg DM/ha)	2371	1839
APC (3 July)	2401	1864
Rotation length (days)		
Stocking rate		
Percentage in milk	62	82
Milksolids kg/cow	1.48	1.53
Milksolids kg/ha	2.3	2.5
MS/cow (season to date)	14	17
MS/ha (season to date)	33	34
N (kg/ha) year to date	0	37
Current N application rate kg N/ha	-	30
	15 July	17 July
DM%	12.7	14.3
Pasture ME	13.0	12.4
Pasture NDF	38.4	43.1
Pasture CP	30.2	24.3
Target Intake (kg DM/cow/d)		
Supplement (kg/cow/day)	8	4.4
Soil temperature (°C)	7.6	8
Growth Rate (kg DM/day)	15	5
Rainfall	28	22
Conditions for farmwalk	Fine, cold	Overcast, showers

NB: pasture quality data are for 1 sample collected from each farm

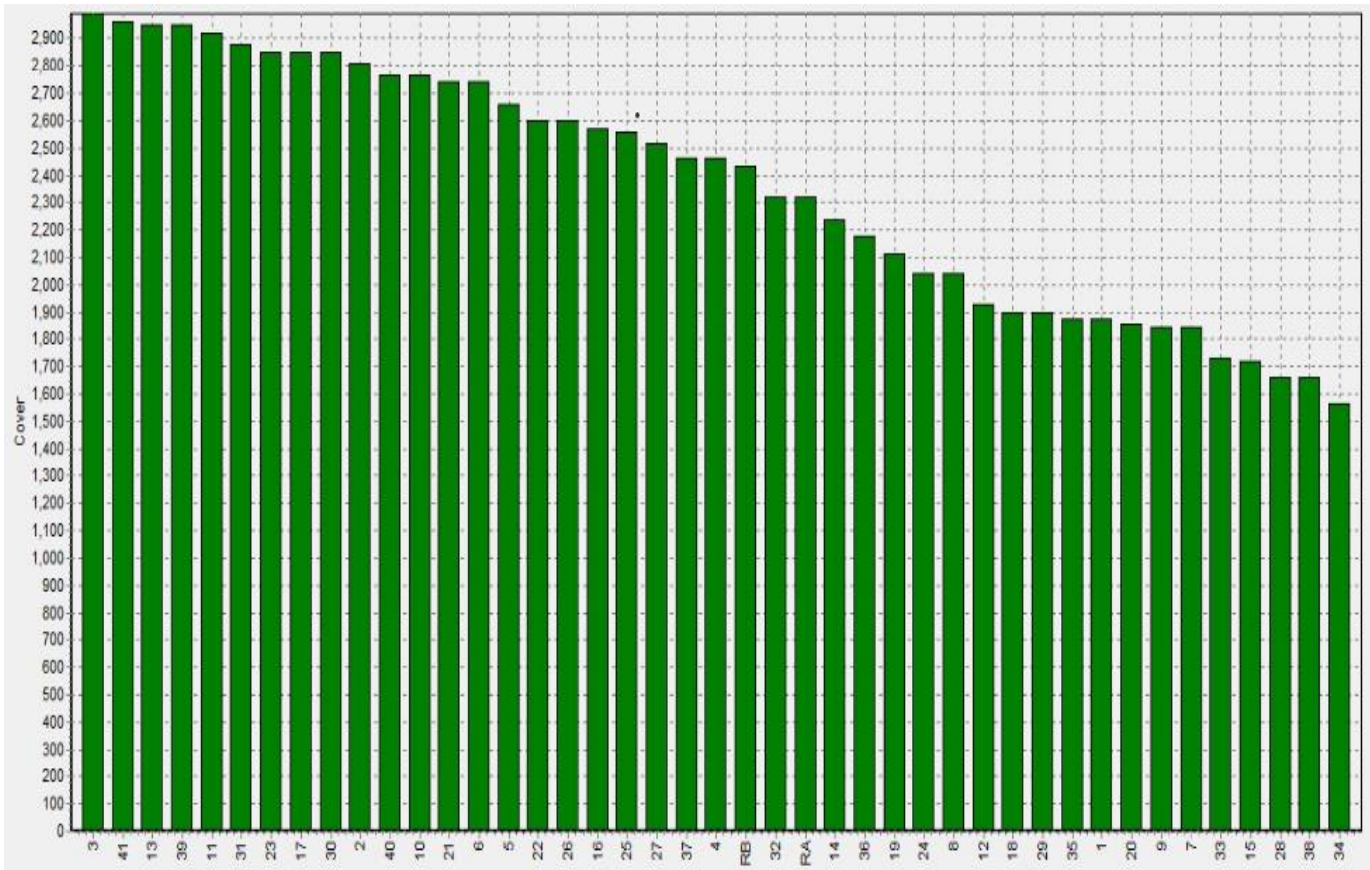
Weekly Pasture Growth Rates



Weekly Soil Temperature



Mawheraiti



Kowhitirangi

