

Westland Monitor Farm Project

Weekly Update as at week ending Wednesday 9 September 2020

CO Comment

Successful weaning based on calf weight and meal intake will help calves develop into healthy heifers. Making sure a heifer is fully prepared before weaning reduces the chance she will need preferential treatment post-weaning.

Before weaning check if the calf is...

- Consuming the desired amount of feed?
- Is its rumen sufficiently developed?
- Meeting its weight-for-age target, based on its breed and/or the rearing system?
- At the minimum age for the rearing system?
- Able to compete within a group?

A calf's rumen development is the most important factor to consider when making the weaning decision. The only way this can be assessed is by measuring the amount of concentrate or pasture they are readily eating, which should be at least 1 kg/day of meal or 2 kg/day of pasture.

Calves should be supplied with clean water and feed for rumen development. Calf meal and high-quality herbage together provide the energy, protein, and volatile fatty acids necessary for rumen development and animal growth.

Just as it takes time to develop the rumen, time is key in transitioning from calf meal to a full pasture diet. Farmer experience indicates that two-week gap between each diet change (e.g. weaning off milk with meal concentrate to full pasture diet) will help transition heifers to a full pasture diet.

New-born calves have high dietary protein requirements, this requirement declines as they age. A higher crude protein intake should lead to higher growth rates. If using calf meal, look for products that contain 20% crude protein for calves on milk and 17% crude protein for weaned calves to meet total dietary requirements.

If relocating weaned calves to a runoff or grazing the following needs to happen for a successful transition.

- Calves fully weaned and off milk for at least two weeks
- Individual calves can compete in the mob
- They meet the minimum weight target
- Are drenched and vaccinated and in good health

Recently weaned calves are at particular risk during relocation as they will be undergoing changes in diet, rumen development, and moving from individual or small group care to larger mob management. The younger the animal, and the more recently they have been weaned, the higher the risk.

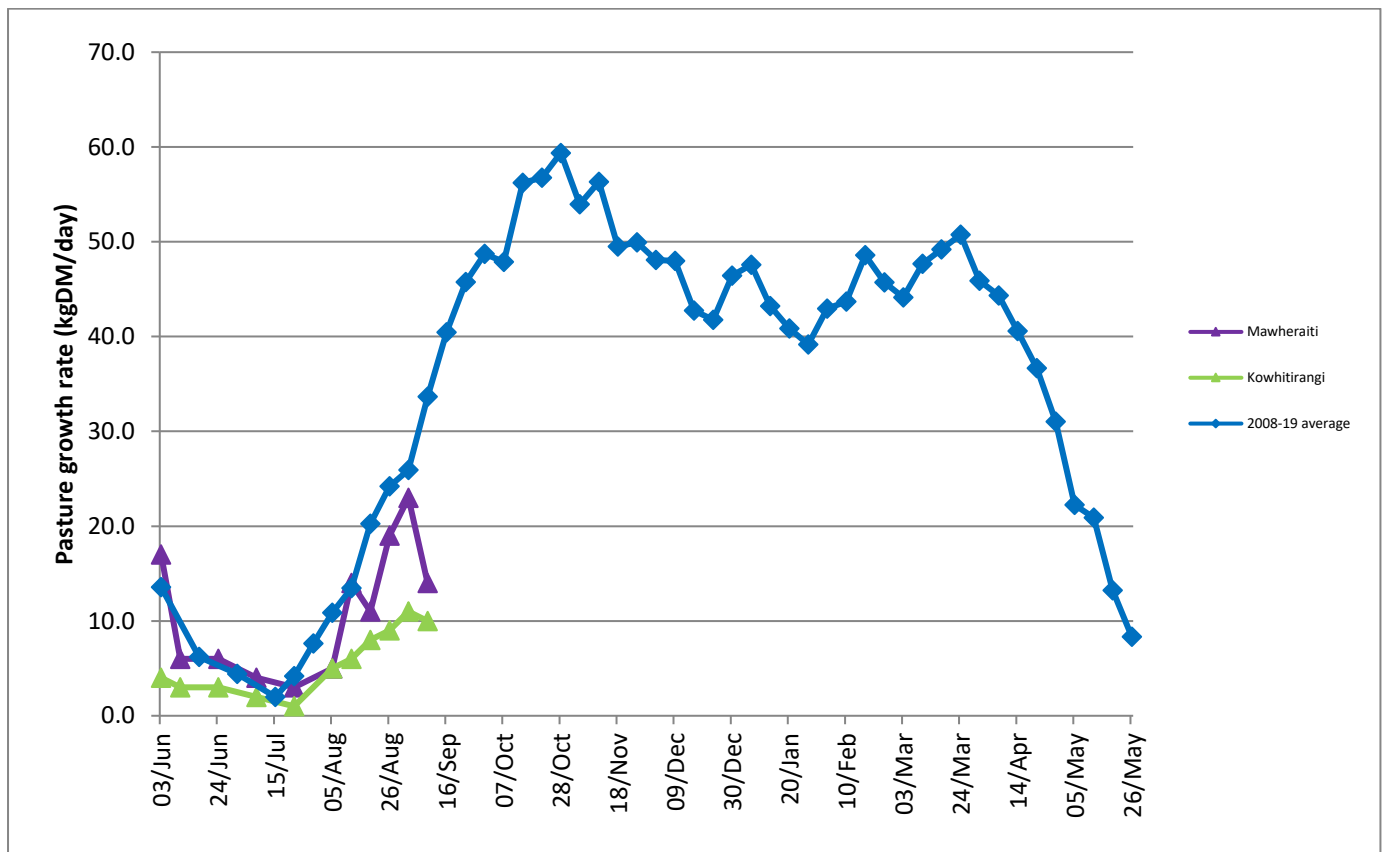
For more information on weaning decisions see <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/media/5788834/heifer-factsheet-82.pdf>

Farm Summary

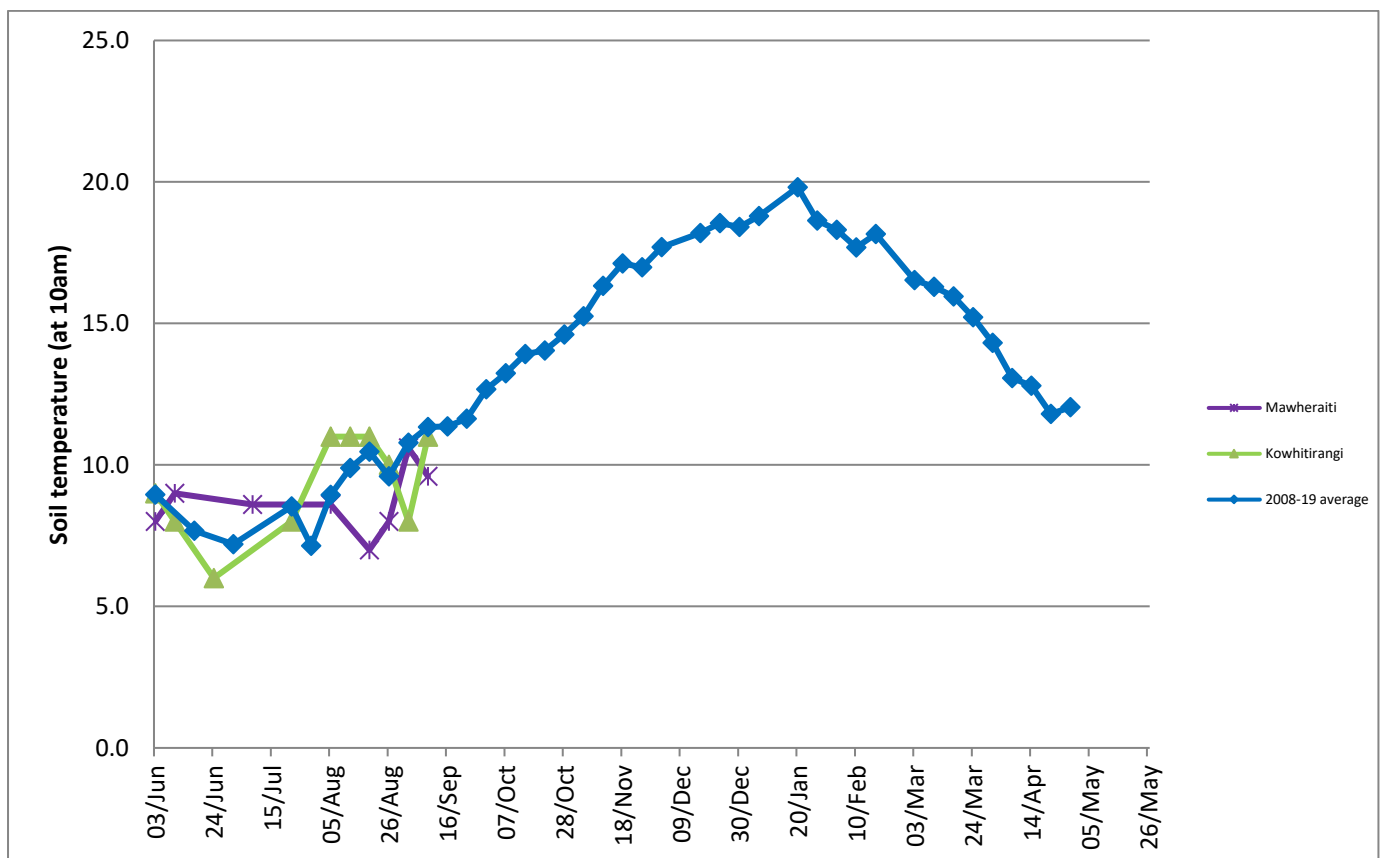
	Mawheraiti	Kowhitirangi
Average cover (kg DM/ha)	2266	1915
APC (19 August)	2320	1942
Rotation length (days)	64	32
Stocking rate		
Percentage in milk	78%	81%
Milksolids kg/cow	1.77	2.21
Milksolids kg/ha	3.2	3.5
MS/cow (season to date)	24	25
MS/ha (season to date)	61	55
N (kg/ha) year to date	35	22
Current N application rate kg N/ha	-	-
	31 Aug	2 Sept
DM%	15	17.3
Pasture ME	12.1	>12.7
Pasture NDF	44.9	42.3
Pasture CP	29.6	25.8
Target Intake (kg DM/cow/d)	19	18
Supplement (kg/cow/day)	6.3	6.0
Soil temperature (°C)	9.6	11.0
Growth Rate (kg DM/day)	14	10
Rainfall	80	42
Conditions for farmwalk	Beautiful sunny day.	Raining, windy and cold, then fine.

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

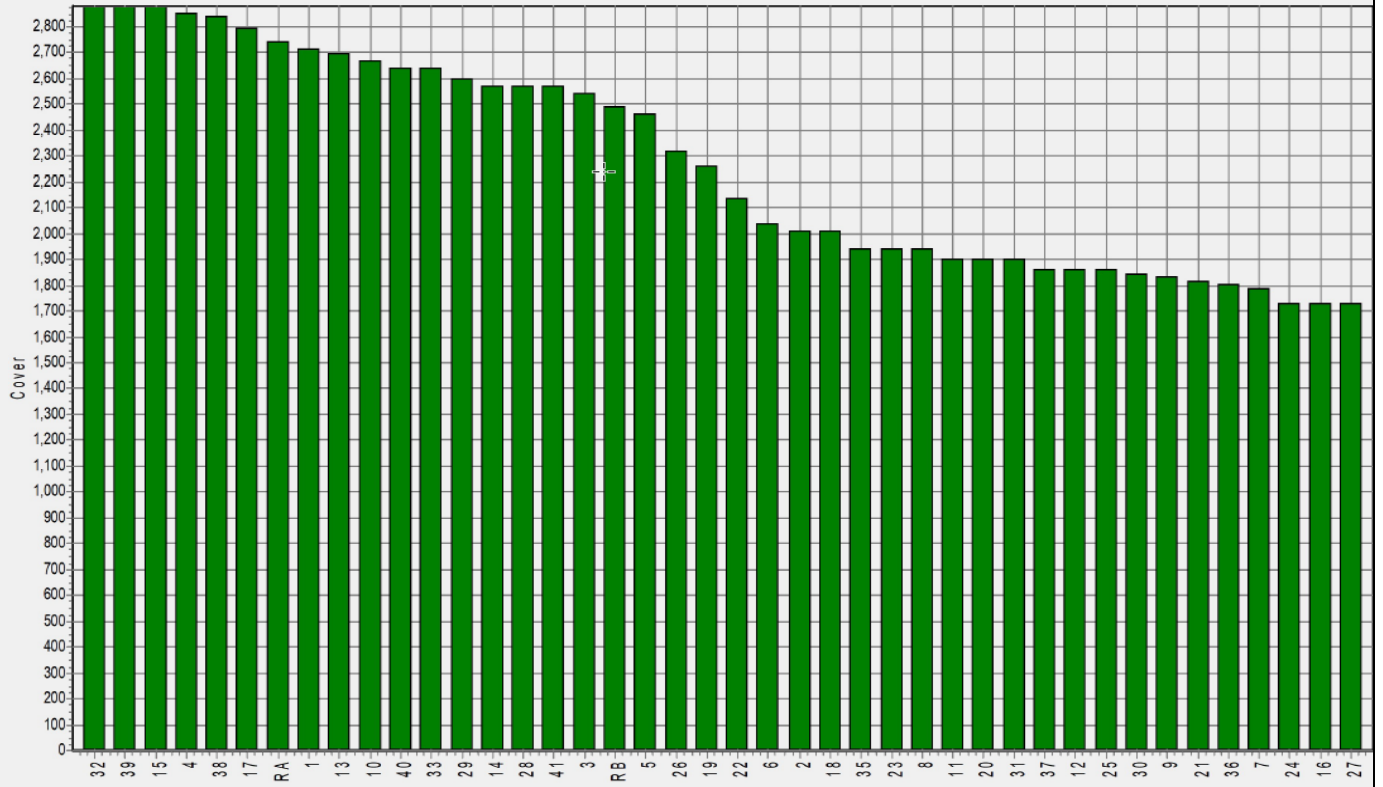
Weekly Pasture Growth Rates



Weekly Soil Temperature



Mawheraiti



Kowhitirangi

