

Lincoln University Dairy Farm – Farm Walk notes

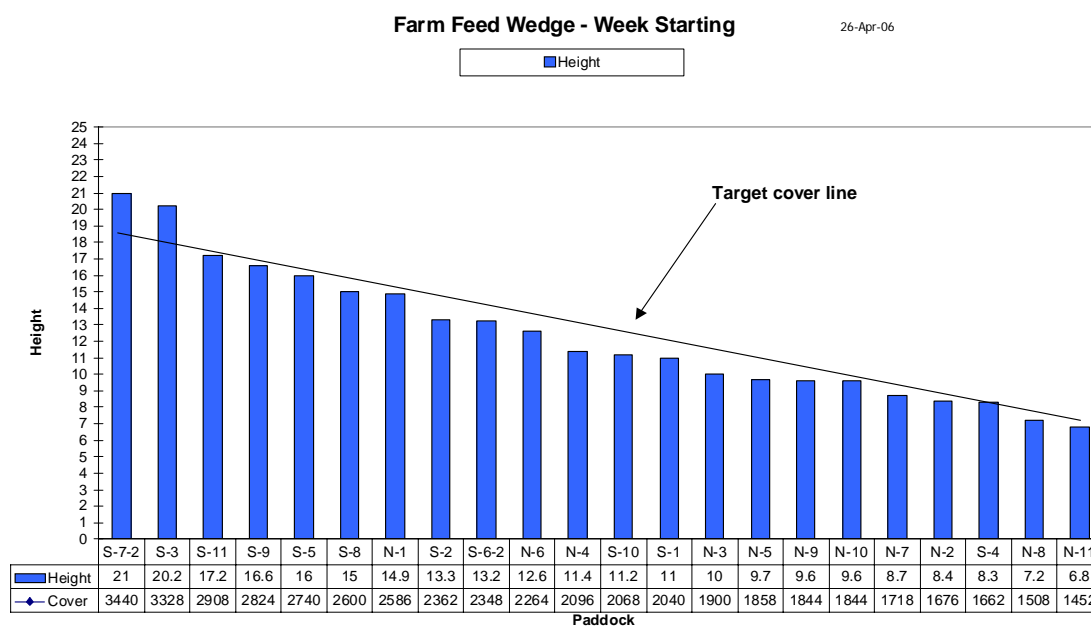
Tuesday 26th April 2006

Critical issues for the short term

1. Reduce cow numbers to better match decreasing pasture growth rates as per budgets.
2. Use the current good pasture growth to create options for feeding in May, perhaps different from our current plan.

Summary of KEY INDICATORS for Grazing Management and Animal Performance

3. Ave PASTURE COVER was measured at 2209 kg DM/ha, virtually constant for the last three weeks.
4. PASTURE GROWTH estimated at 45 kg DM/ha for last week, (56 last week). This growth rate does not match feed demand of 61 i.e. 609 cows at 16 to 16.5 kg DM /cow so cow numbers are to be reduced. All remaining 41 MT cows this week and then we will start drying off cows on Condition Score.
5. Soil Temperature has dropped from 14.4 °C to 13 over the last two days as a result of 40mm of rain over Anzac day.
6. Grazing RESIDUALS remain on target at 7 clicks or 1480 kg DM/ha. Note this is despite feeding about 5 kg DM silage per day.
7. Pasture QUALITY is as good as ever, ME of 12.8 and 12.9.
8. Per cow PRODUCTION is dropping slowly – now 1.41kgs MS/cow/day and 5.3 kg MS/ha/day.
9. We have maintained a 36 day ROTATION, feeding 4.5 ha daily, plus the 5 kg silage.



10. The next two paddocks will allow us to both reduce the area /day to 4ha and reduce the silage to 2.5 kgs /cow. By then we will have reduced cow numbers by 41 (last empties) and will return to allocating 4.45 ha/day plus 4 kgs silage. We have now used just over 200 kgs DM /cow of purchased in silage feed to milking cows and expect to use between 50 and 90 additional kgs DM /cow over the rest of this season.
11. We have used 65t of urea for the season to date. An average of 181 kgs N /ha. This may be the total N use for this season as we are now on the last grazing round of the milking platform and Average pasture cover is very close to that required to make our winter feed budgets work.

12. All winter feed blocks have been visited, covers measured and found to be as expected in our feed budgets.
13. This week each cow was condition scored by Terry Hughes as they left the cowshed. The herd average condition score is 4.7 (the same as our monitor group). The range is from C.S 4.0 to 6.5 with 21% of the cows below C.S. 4.5, 66.3% between C.S. 4.5 and 5.0 and 12.7% over C.S. 5.0. There are 30 cows amongst the early calving (August 2006) which are below C.S. 4.2 these will be dried off at the end of the week and then allocated 12 kgs of DM /cow /day of high quality grass.
14. We have also completed another whole herd PD and there have been no further pregnancy losses in the last three weeks since the previous PD. We have one further whole herd PD scheduled for late May.

Please note

**Changed Date for next LUDF Focus Day
Now on Thursday 11 May at LUDF.**

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **TUESDAY 2nd May 10.00am.**

Management Group

Shaun Back, Farm Manager, Peter Gaul (SIDDC) and Adrian van Bysterveldt (Dexcel) with support from Corrigan Sowman, Canterbury Consulting Officer (Dexcel).

Lincoln University Dairy Farm – Farm Walk notes

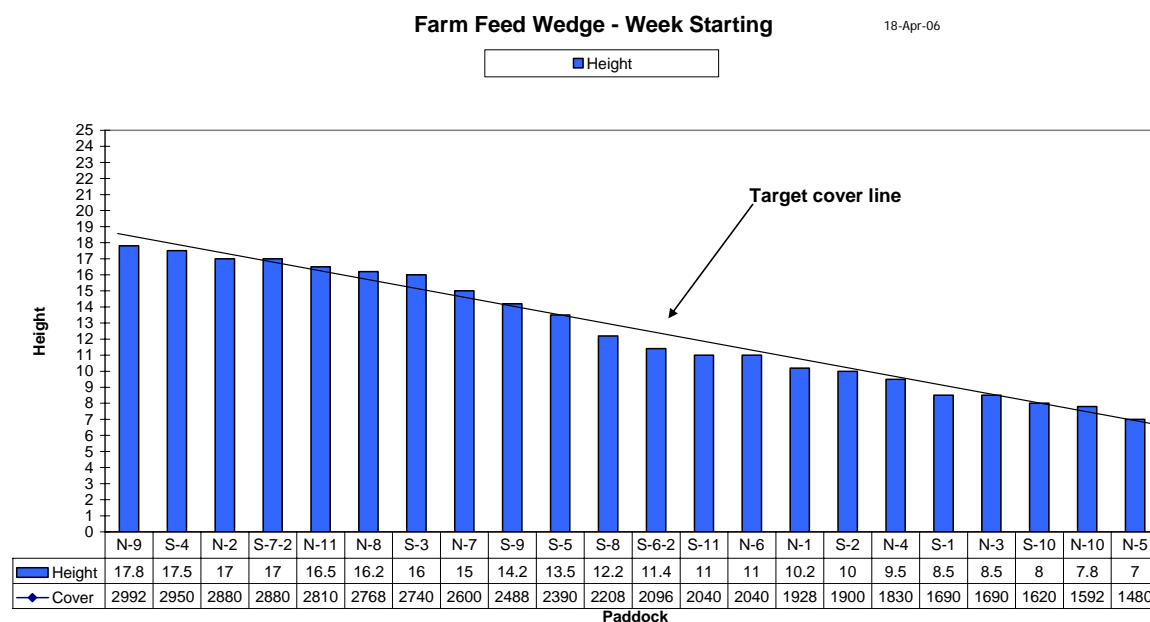
Tuesday 18th April 2006

Critical issues for the short term

1. Identify which cows might warrant early drying off – eg light early calvers.
2. Use the current good pasture growth to create options for feeding in May, perhaps different from our current plan.

Summary of KEY INDICATORS for Grazing Management and Animal Performance

3. Ave PASTURE COVER was measured at 2224 kg DM/ha, virtually constant for the last two weeks.
4. PASTURE GROWTH estimated at 56 kg DM/ha for last week, (37 last week, although this was probably a low estimate – see last weeks Notes. This growth rate does not match feed demand of 61 ie 609 cows at 16 to 16.5 kgDM/cow.
5. Soil Temperature was again 14.4 °C at Tuesday mornings reading and air temperatures continue to be high for mid April.
6. We are IRRIGATING again, light and fast – 10 mls in the last week.
7. Grazing RESIDUALS remain on target at 7 clicks or 1480 kg DM/ha. Note this is despite feeding about 5 kg DM silage per day.
8. Pasture QUALITY seems to be as good as ever, the samples from the last fortnightly cut on the 15th are being analysed now. We expect ME to be above 12.5 - see these results on the website sidc.org.nz
9. Per cow PRODUCTION is dropping slowly – now 1.438kgs MS/cow/day and 5.4 kg MS/ha/day.
10. We are maintaining a 36 day ROTATION, feeding 4.6ha daily, plus the 5 kg silage. The wedge below suggests our pasture cover should lift as a function of current growth rates and will review our supplement feeding tactics accordingly.



11. Our plan is to use the current above-target growth rates to capture maximum benefit from the silage being fed. This means we should have stronger pregrazing covers in a week, which may allow review (downwards) of our supplement feeding..

12. Our revised autumn feedplan suggested we would milk 580 cows for the 2nd half of April. The current favourable conditions means we can delay this decision for another week, and continue with the 609 cows on hand.
13. We have visited one of our winter feed blocks, the other this week. Cover is on target, but the block is very dry, and only average quality feed. We are updating our winter feed plans accordingly, and at this stage there is no cause for concern.
14. This week we will identify all early calvers and condition score them. We have said this for a couple of weeks now, no excuses left. We NEED this information to ensure we are feeding and/or milking the right numbers and classes. The information we really want is a trendline of weight for these animals, this time next season we will have access to this data through in-line weighing being installed this winter.

Please note

**Changed Date for May LUDF Focus Day
Now on Thursday 11 May at LUDF.**

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **TUESDAY 25th April 10.00am.**

Management Group

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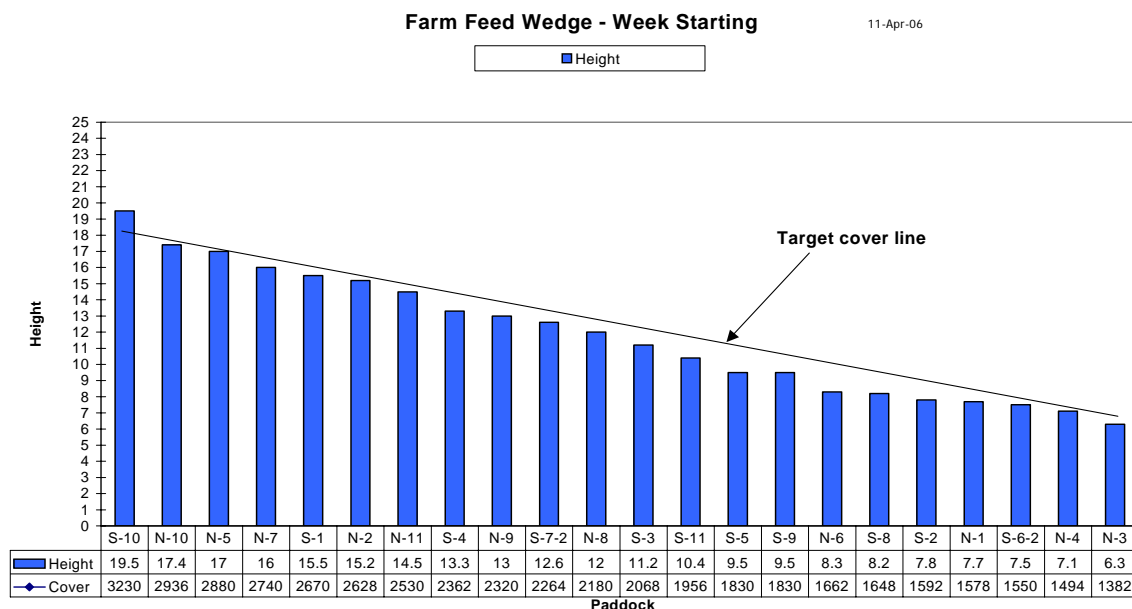
Tuesday 11th April 2006

Critical issues for the short term

- Careful feed allocation, and residual management to ensure all supplement is utilised well without affecting the grazing residual requirement of 7 clicks on plate meter (1480 kg DM/ha).

Summary of KEY INDICATORS for Grazing Management and Animal Performance

- Matching stock numbers and supplement availability with rotation length as pasture growth declines.
- Ave PASTURE COVER was measured at 2181 kg DM/ha (last week 2236). There were very strong winds during the farm walk which may have had the effect of flattening the grass and thus resulting in lower cover and growth rate being measured.
- PASTURE GROWTH estimated at 37 kg DM/ha for last week, (53 last week) and our demand has dropped and now required a growth rate of 57 to match demand. This is because cow numbers have reduced to 605.
- Soil Temperature was again 14.4 °C at Tuesday mornings reading and air temperatures have been pleasant all week suggesting that growth rates should have been higher.
- Grazing RESIDUALS remain on target at 7 clicks or 1480 kg DM/ha. Note this is despite feeding about 5 kg DM silage per day.
- Pasture QUALITY remains high, the latest tests (31 March) show ME 12.8, DM 16.5%, protein 24.5% - see these results on the website siddc.org.nz
- Per cow PRODUCTION is holding well at 1.48kgs MS/cow/day and 5.7 kg MS/ha/day.
- We have used the excellent position we were in last week to reduce the area/day to 4.5ha (a 36 day rotation) without needing to increase the amount of silage/cow/day.



The target pre-grazing cover has been reduced from 3300 to 3050 kgs DM/ha. This now reflects 605 cows needing 195 ME while being allocated 4.5ha of pasture (11.5kgsDM available) plus 5 kgs grass silage/cow. The wedge shows that we are currently in a good position. If pasture growth rates for the next few weeks are at or above average for April then we will either be able to reduce the amount of silage/cow **or** hold cow numbers for longer than planned in our feed budget.

10. Grass grub damage is become evident over a small area of the farm, particularly on the North Block. We are currently measuring the area involved and the grub densities so that we can decide what solutions we will use to address the problem.
11. We have also been re-doing our winter feed budgets and are now again visiting the properties where our cows will be wintered to measure current cover and feed quality.

Summary:

- (i) We will continue to review milking numbers and drop the remainder of our empties (30) when required to keep to our feed budget, which will probably be by late April.
- (ii) This week we identify any early light calvers with a view to selective drying off options later this month.
- (iii) Our feed plan for this current season included purchasing 250kgDM per cow from external sources. To date we have purchased 100 tDM or 156kg/cow. (This does not include the grass we paid for as winter grazing and subsequently made into silage.)
- (iv) We will review the plan weekly.

Please note

**Changed Date for May LUDF Focus Day
Now on Thursday, 11th May at LUDF.**

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **TUESDAY 18th April 10.00am.**

Management Group

Shaun Back, Farm Manager, Peter Gaul (SIDDC) and Adrian van Bysterveldt (Dexcel) with support from Corrigan Sowman, Canterbury Consulting Officer (Dexcel).

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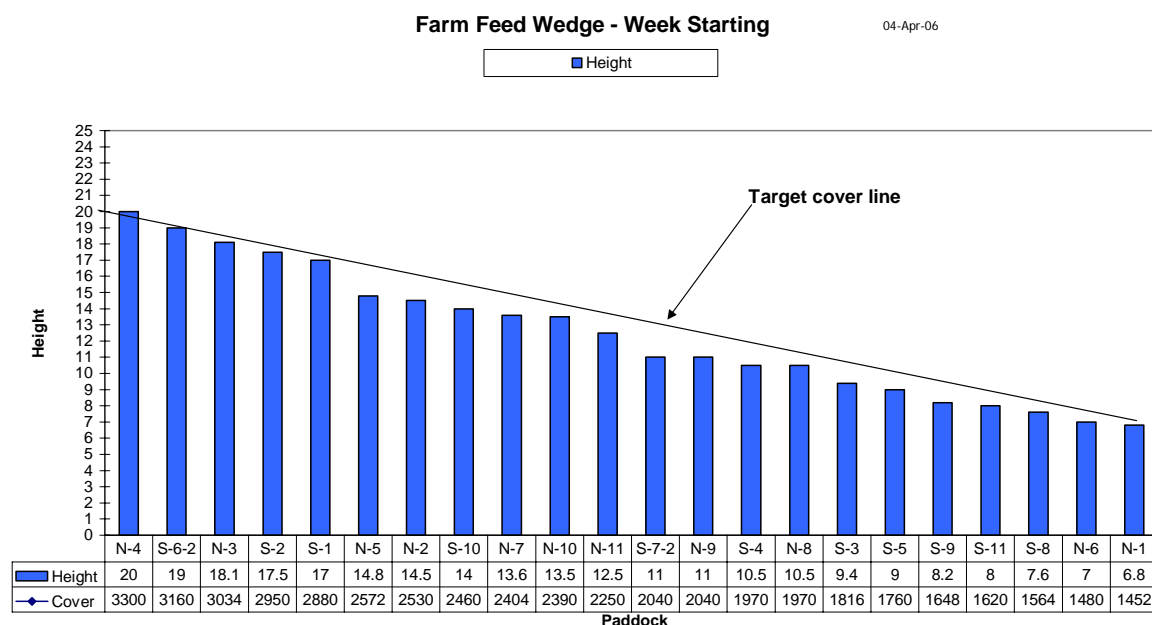
Tuesday 5th April 2006

Critical issues for the short term

1. Be prepared to adjust demand (stocking rate) if pasture growth remains low.
2. Use any opportunity to lengthen round.

Summary of KEY INDICATORS for Grazing Management and Animal Performance

3. Ave PASTURE COVER is constant at 2236 kgDM/ha, the same as last weeks 2203/ha. This is still below our targeted cover of 2300 kgDM/ha.
4. PASTURE GROWTH estimated at 53 kgDM/ha for last week, below above our required demand of 65. Note our demand drops to 57 this coming week (less cows!)
5. Soil Temperature was 14.4 °C at Tuesday mornings reading
6. Grazing RESIDUALS remain on target at 7 clicks or 1480 kgDM/ha. Note this is despite feeding up to 5+ kg DM silage per day.
7. PREGRAZING PASTURE HEIGHTS have just gone above 3000 kg DM/ha, still 300 lower than preferred for this rotation. They are lifting.
8. Pasture QUALITY remains high, the latest tests (15 March) show ME 12.9, DM 17%, protein 24% - see these results on the website sidc.org.nz
9. Per cow PRODUCTION is still holding at 1.52kgs MS/cow/day and 5.9 kg MS/ha/day, well above target. March 2006 was 7.2% ahead of March 2005. We are now 9000kg ahead of last year, and 4450 kg ahead of our target for 1750/ha.
10. On Monday 3rd April we quit 30 culls, mostly empties, reducing our milkers to 603 now.
11. As per our FEEDPLAN, we continued feeding baleage to supplement the cows, and were unable to lengthen our rotation, leaving it at 28 days.



12. The FEED WEDGE shows that we are slowly achieving our targets. Pasture growth is approaching target, and we will continue using supplements for a short while to allow the middle part of the wedge to come up to the line. We will keep reviewing supplement use weekly.

Why are we feeding autumn supplements and how do we justify it?

We are feeding silage (1) to lengthen grazing rotation, and (2) to maintain pasture residual at 1500 kgDM/ha. This will yield more total days in milk, and provided the milk returns exceed the total costs, is a worthwhile investment.

We are feeding 16.5kgDM, 11.5 kg pasture (ME 12.5) and 5 kg silage (ME 10.4).

We cannot feed more pasture without shortening the round, we will not do this.

The pasture allocation provides enough energy for maintenance plus 1.14 kg MS/cow per day. The cows are producing 1.52 kg MS/day.

The balance production (ie 1.52 minus 1.14 = .38 kgMS) comes from the extra energy provided in the diet by the addition of silage.

- (a) We are getting 78 g MS/kg silage fed as an immediate response.
- (b) We are also getting a weight gain of approx ½ kgLW per day.
- (c) We are also holding cow numbers to target, which will give us days in milk.

Based on the immediate response, the extra income looks like being 31c per kg silage purchased or fed. We value our silage at 22c per kg ready to feed (most of it has been made on farm, the balance bought at 22c landed).

This suggests a 9 cent return per kgDM silage fed for the immediate response (extra milk) plus the added value of the future responses (b) and (c) outlined above.

Summary:

- (i) We will review milker numbers and probably drop another 30 empties before mid April.
- (ii) We will score early calvers and any light cows with a view to selective drying off options later this month. We do not appear to have many problem cows, but we need to know for sure.
- (iii) Our feed plan for this current season included purchasing 250kgDM per cow from external sources. To date we have purchased 50tDM or 78kg/cow. We will purchase another 50tDM of good quality silage (ME11.8 in the line available) in line with our purchasing price criteria.
- (iv) We will review the plan weekly.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **TUESDAY 11th April 10.00am.**

Management Group

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