

Lincoln University Dairy Farm - Farm Walk notes

Tuesday, 29th April 2008

Critical issues for the short term

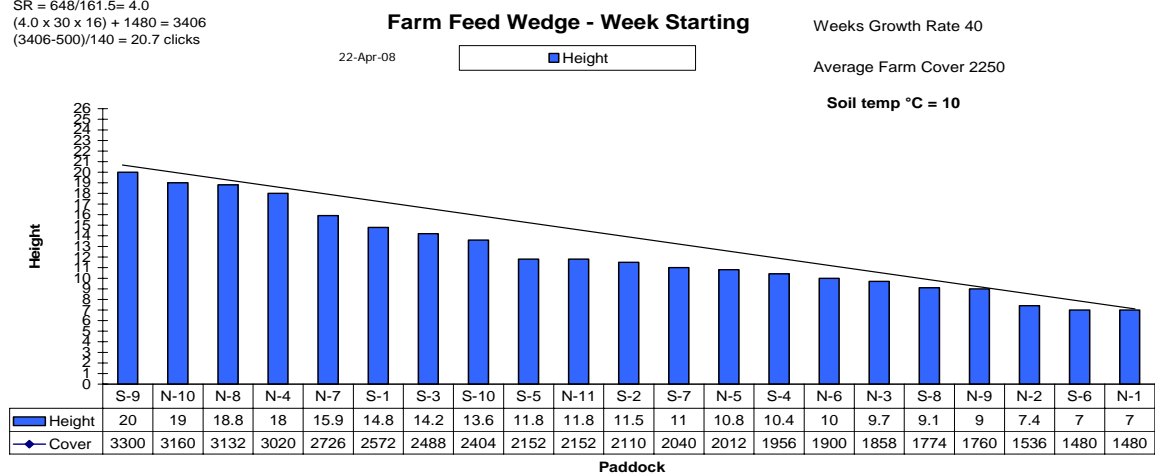
1. Average a rotation length between 30 and 35 days.
2. Maintain grazing residuals to 7 “clicks”.
3. Maintain cow dry matter intakes by also feeding out high quality grass silage.

Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance

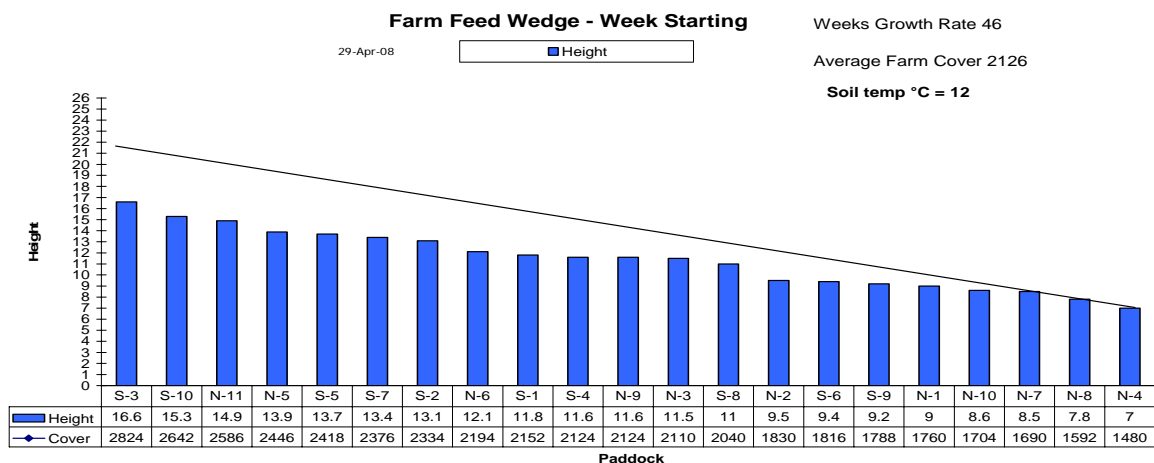
4. SOIL TEMP at 10am has continued to steadily lift from a low of 10 deg at the beginning of the week to 12.5 degrees this morning.
5. PASTURE GROWTH was 46 kg DM/ha (last week 40) on the milking platform.
6. Average pasture cover has dropped from 2250kg DM/ha to 2126 kg DM/ha. The lowest average pasture cover we will drop to before the 1 June is 2050 kg DM /ha.
7. We used an average of 5.6 ha per day, that is 1/29th of the farm and have been feeding an average of 4 kg/DM of grass silage/cow/day to hold this round.
- 8.

Last weeks pasture wedge

SR = 648/161.5 = 4.0
 (4.0 x 30 x 16) + 1480 = 3406
 (3406-500)/140 = 20.7 clicks



This week pasture wedge before stock numbers reduced



9. The very big change in the wedge is as a result of increasing the grazing round. If we had held at a 34 day round like the previous week there would be another 4 days of feed at the top of the wedge (almost two paddocks). We would have had to feed more silage to have done this so with hindsight we would have been better to have been more proactive and dried off, or quit some empty cows last week.
10. The new situation after we dry off 30 early light cows and quit 67 empty cows, all going off farm.

SR = 550/161.5= 3.4
 (3.4 x 30 x 16) + 1480 = 3112
 (3112-500)/140 = 18.7 clicks

Farm Feed Wedge - Week Starting

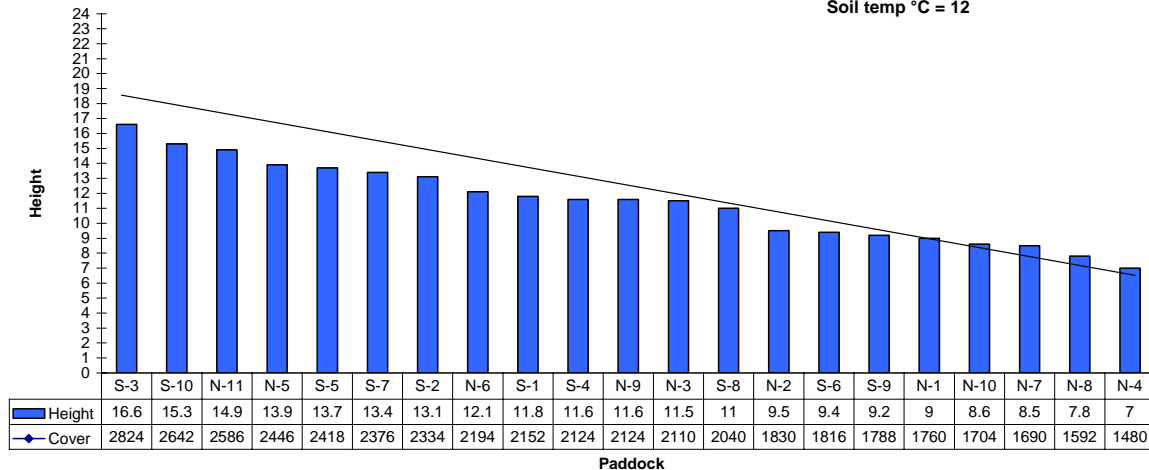
Weeks Growth Rate 46

29-Apr-08

■ Height

Average Farm Cover 2126

Soil temp °C = 12



11. The new target line presumes the 550 cows (3.46 cows/ha) are eating 16 kg DM and on a rotation of no less than 30 days. This requires a pre-grazing cover of 3112 kg DM/ha. Sixteen kgs allocation is a nominal figure to make sure that there is enough cover in the allocated area for 24 hours.
12. The shape of the wedge has changed very little from last week except that our longest paddocks now have less cover in them and the looming deficit is a little larger. Even with the reduced cow numbers we will need to feed between 3 and 4 kg DM per cow/day of silage. We must hold the rotation length at 30 days.
13. We have been disappointed with the silage utilization over the current week. This seems to have been the result of a combination of a new line of silage with a different smell (not ammonia) and that the silage has not been spread out thinly around the paddock.
14. Soil moisture levels are still slowly declining but with low ET's the plants are able to get as much moisture out of the soil as they need though there are sign that moisture may be limiting in a few small areas. We want soil moisture to be this low at this point to leave as much room as possible for autumn rain and are counting on the predicted rain on Wednesday and Thursday to prevent us getting too dry.
15. Milk production per cow has held at 1.3 kg /MS/cow/day same as last week, and per ha production is holding at 5.18 kg MS/ha/day.
16. The somatic cell count is continuing to hold between 210,000 and 224,000 and we have found 3 new mastitis cases. We are having problems with a malfunctioning automatic teat sprayer which is not helping.

17. We currently have our R2yr heifers cleaning up two paddocks on the East Block runoff that had reached covers of over 4000 kg DM. As a result the cover on this block has dropped by 200 to 2431. This mob will now move to the heifer block to do a similar job there and will be joined by the 30 early light cows that will be dried off this week. The R1yr heifers have been grazing on the Heifer block and they are just keeping up with growth as average cover has held at 2622 kg DM/ha.
18. A small number of R1yr calves that are below target weight are being run as a separate group ad lib grazing ahead of the rest of the calves.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on Tuesday, **6th May 2008 at 9.00am.**

Farmers or their Managers are always welcome to walk with us. Please call to notify us of your intention and bring your plate meter.

Management Group

Peter Hancox (Farm Manager), George Reveley (for SIDDC), and Adrian van Bysterveldt (DairyNZ).

Lincoln University Dairy Farm - Farm Walk notes

Tuesday, 22nd April 2008

Critical issues for the short term

1. Average a rotation length between 30 and 35 days.
2. Maintain grazing residuals to 7 “clicks”.
3. Maintain cow dry matter intakes by also feeding out high quality grass silage.

Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance

4. SOIL TEMP at 10am has been as low as 8 deg and is currently back up to 10 degrees. This is now close to the April average. Last weeks weather forecast was far better than the cold temperatures that we actually experienced. The forecast for the next week is for temperatures being cold to average.
5. PASTURE GROWTH was 40 kg DM/ha (last week 64) on the milking platform.
6. Average pasture cover has dropped from 2372kg DM/ha to 2250 kg DM/ha. The lowest average pasture cover we will drop to before the 1 June is 2050 kg DM /ha.
7. We used an average of 5 ha per day that is 1/32nd of the farm and have been feeding an average of 2 kg DM of grass silage /cow/day to hold this round. The cows are grazing down to “7clicks”.
- 8.

This week’s pasture wedge

SR = 648/161.5= 4.0
 (4.0 x 30 x 16) + 1480 = 3406
 (3406-500)/140 = 20.7 clicks

Farm Feed Wedge - Week Starting

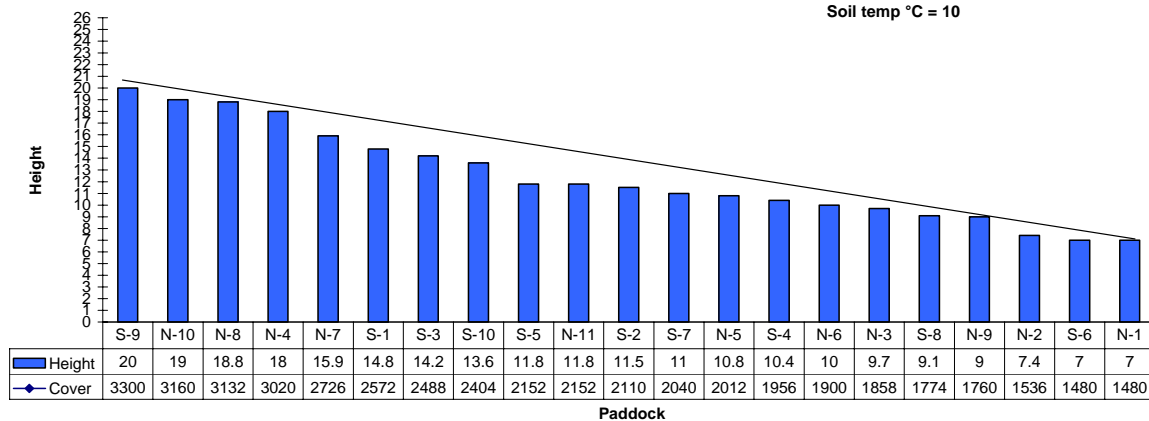
Weeks Growth Rate 40

22-Apr-08



Average Farm Cover 2250

Soil temp °C = 10



9. The new target line presumes the cows are eating 16 kg DM and on a rotation of no less than 30 days. This requires a pre-grazing cover of 3406 kg DM/ha. Sixteen kgs allocation is a nominal figure to make sure that there is enough cover in the allocated area for 24 hours.
10. The shape of the wedge has changed very little from last week except that our longest paddocks now have less cover in them and the looming deficit is a little larger. At this stage we have fed out much less of our silage allocated for the autumn so we will continue to retain cow numbers for another week. We will lift the amount of silage /cow to between 3 and 4 kg DM and slow the round down this week. By slowing the round down this week

We hope that the paddocks 5 to 10 places down the wedge will have an extra day or so to grow and as a result we will not have to dramatically increase the silage/cow when we get to these paddocks.

11. Pre-grazing covers have now dropped below 3400 so we have been able to go back to 24 hour allocation of pasture.
12. Soil moisture levels are low but not limiting which is exactly where we want them to be.
13. We are still milking 37 more cows than last year and we do not plan to reduce this number for another week at least.
14. Milk production per cow has increased from 1.27 kg /MS/cow/day to 1.3 kg MS/cow/day, and per ha production is holding at 5.1 kg MS/ha/day.
15. The somatic cell count is continuing to hold between 190,000 and 237,000 and we have found a couple of new mastitis cases.
16. Last week we condition scored every cow and the thin cows (under C.S 4.3) have been identified as a separate mob in ProTrack. This allows us to track their rate of weight gain. So far this month, these cows have been gaining weight at the same rate as the rest of the herd. It indicates that we will need to make sure that we stick to our dry off plan and dry off the early calving, thin cows later this month. We are adding 10 days to the dry off guidelines in the DairyNZ Condition Score booklet. Once dried off these cows will be going to the best quality pasture off farm grazing we have access to. They will be fed sufficient to leave milking cow residuals.
17. Both the runoffs are now at the pasture covers we needed to have them at today for our autumn/winter feed budgets to work. When we originally did these feed budgets (over a month ago), they indicated a major feed deficit in august. Despite a thorough search we could not find feed available for august at a reasonable price, but we were able to find surplus pasture available through April/May at a reasonable price. Our strategy has been to have our R2yr's out grazing so that the covers on our runoffs can lift to a level where the autumn/winter feed budget works all the way through to the end of august. We will continue to monitor our runoff covers weekly and adjust demand to keep the cover to target.
18. A small number of R1yr calves that are below target weight are being run as a separate group ad lib grazing ahead of the rest of the calves.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on Tuesday **29th April 2008 at 9.00am.**

Farmers or their managers are always welcome to walk with us. Please call to notify us of your intention and bring your plate meter.

Management Group

Peter Hancox (Farm Manager), George Reveley (for SIDDC), and Adrian van Bysterveldt (DairyNZ).

Lincoln University Dairy Farm - Farm Walk notes

Tuesday 15th April 2008

Critical issues for the short term

1. **Average a rotation length of no less than 30.**
2. **Maintain grazing residuals to 7 “clicks”**
3. **Allow soil moisture levels to slowly decline but keep them high enough not to slow pasture growth.**
4. **Maintain cow dry matter intakes by also feeding out high quality grass silage.**

Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance

5. SOIL TEMP at 10am has held at 14 °C, the same as last week. This is still over two degrees warmer than last year which was our previous warmest.
6. PASTURE GROWTH was 64 kg DM/ha (last week 49) on the milking platform. It is probable that last weeks pasture growth was more than reported, because at the time of last weeks walk there was very heavy dew on the grass.
7. Average pasture cover has dropped from 2432kg DM/ha to 2372 kg DM/ha.
8. We used an average of 4.77 ha per day that is 1/34th of the farm each day with the cows. We are now using the electric fence to set up 12 hour breaks and the cows have just been reaching the target residual of about 7 “clicks”.
9. We have fed out silage at a rate of 4 kg DM/cow/day for the last two days and before that we also took one day time grazing of about 8 kg DM/cow from the East Block. This resulted in the rotation length increasing slightly over the week compared with last week.

10.

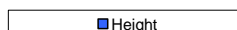
This week's pasture wedge

SR = 654/161.5 = 4.05
 (4.05 x 30 x 16) + 1480 = 3424
 (3424-500)/140 = 20.9 clicks

Farm Feed Wedge - Week Starting

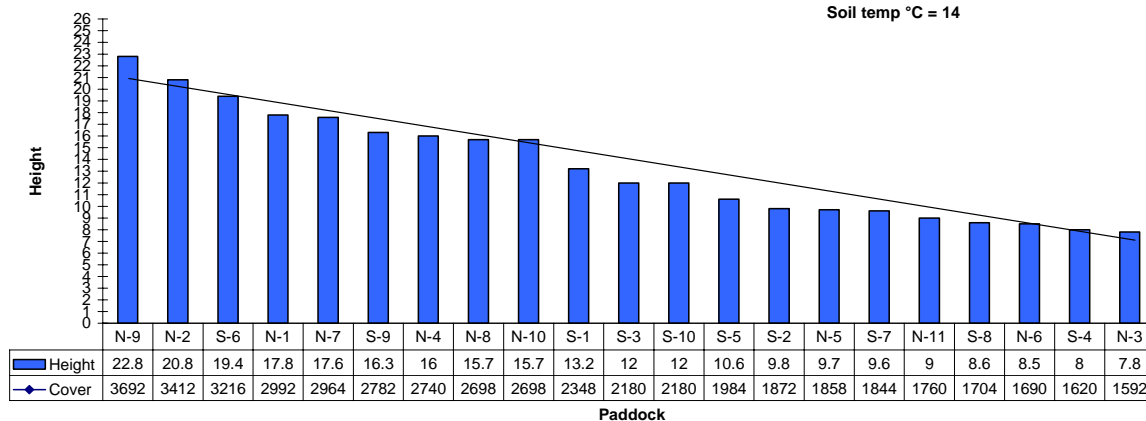
Weeks Growth Rate 64

15-Apr-08



Average Farm Cover 2372

Soil temp °C = 14



11. The new target line presumes the cows are eating 16 kg DM and will be on a longer rotation of 30 days. This requires a pre-grazing cover of 3424 kg DM/ha. Sixteen kgs allocation is a nominal figure to make sure that there is enough cover in the allocated area for 24 hours. The current pre-grazing target is as high as we can go in the autumn and still retain very high quality pasture.

12. The wedge has changed very little from last week and shows that even with a reducing average cover we would be able to get through most of the week without feeding silage. We may choose to feed out silage in the second half of the week so that we do not need to do this job on the weekend.
13. The weather forecast is for average to mild for most of next week but with no rain until next weekend. This may help keep soil temperatures at the current levels. Normal growth rates in April are in the 40's.
14. Soil moisture levels have again fallen to a low level so we will do one round with each of the pivots. We will also need to operate the corner laterals on the North block but will hold off with those on the heavier soils on the South block.
15. We are now milking 45 more cows than last year and we do not plan to reduce this number for another two weeks at least.
16. Milk production per cow has decreased from 1.35 kg /MS/cow/day to 1.27 kg MS/cow/day, and per ha production has dropped from 5.37 kg ms/ha /day to 5.09 kg MS/ha/day.
17. The somatic cell count is continuing to hold between 169,000 and 216,000.
18. Last week we condition scored every cow and the thin cows (under C.S 4.3) have been identified as a separate mob in ProTrack. This allows us to track their rate of weight gain. So far this month, these cows have been gaining weight at the same rate as the rest of the herd. It indicates that we will need to make sure that we stick to our dry off plan and dry off the early calving, thin cows later this month. We are adding 10 extra days to the dry off guidelines in the DairyNZ Condition Score booklet. This is because of our recording of weight gain over previous winters with similarly thin early calving cows showed that these cows need more time to reach their target condition score.
19. The number of lame cows is reducing and we now have only two in the treatment group.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on Tuesday **22nd April 2008 at 9.00am.**

Farmers or their managers are always welcome to walk with us. Please call to notify us of your intention and bring your plate meter.

Management Group

Peter Hancox (Farm Manager), George Reveley (for SIDDC), and Adrian van Bysterveldt (DairyNZ).

Lincoln University Dairy Farm - Farm Walk notes

Tuesday, 8th April 2008

Critical issues for the short term

1. Average a rotation length of no less than 30.
2. Maintain grazing residuals to 7 “clicks”
3. Allow soil moisture levels to slowly decline but keep them high enough not to slow pasture growth.

Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance

4. SOIL TEMP at 10am has dropped from 16 °C to 14 °C for most of the week. This is still over two degrees warmer than last year which was our previous warmest.
5. PASTURE GROWTH was 49 kg DM/ha (last week 76) on the milking platform.
6. Average pasture cover has dropped from 2546kg DM/ha to 2432 kg DM/ha.
7. We used an average of 5 ha per day. that is 1/32nd of the farm each day with the cows. We are using the electric fence to set the area/day and the cows have been reaching the target residual of about 7 “clicks”.

8.

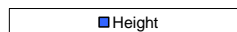
This week's pasture wedge

SR = 654/161.5 = 4.05
 (4.05 x 30 x 16) + 1480 = 3424
 (3424-500)/140 = 20.9 clicks

Farm Feed Wedge - Week Starting

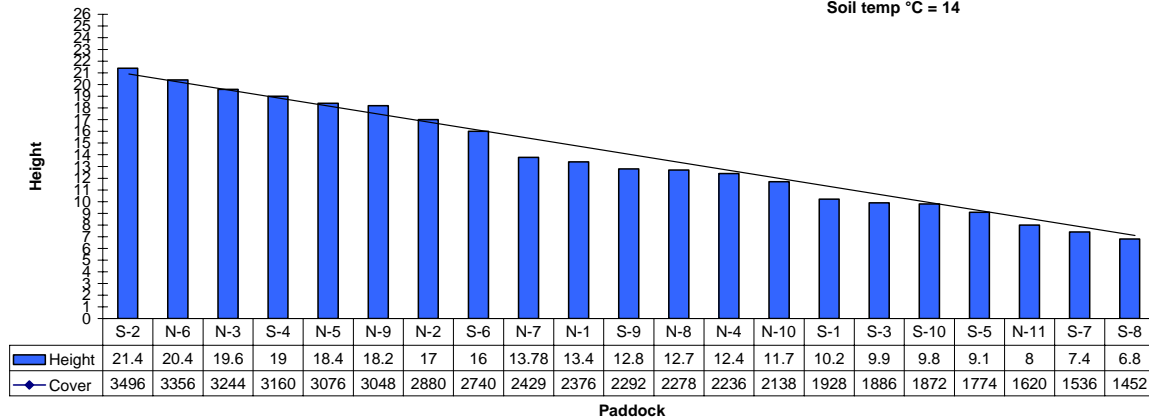
Weeks Growth Rate 49

8-Apr-08



Average Farm Cover 2432

Soil temp °C = 14



9. The new target line presumes the cows are eating 16 kg DM and will be on a longer rotation of 30 days. This requires a pre-grazing cover of 3424 kg DM/ha. Sixteen kgs allocation is a nominal figure to make sure that there is enough cover in the allocated area for 24 hours. The current pre-grazing target is as high as we can go in the autumn and still retain very high quality pasture.
10. Based on our current plan we will only be grazing the 5 longest paddocks on the wedge this week.
11. The wedge shows that we even with reducing growth rates we may just be able to get through the next week without feeding silage. As we go through the week if we find that we are needing to allocate more than 1/30th of the farm a day, we will start feeding silage to maintain a rotation length of 30 days.

12. The weather forecast is for cool to average for most of next week. This will drop soil temperatures and bring growth rates back to normal levels for April. Normal growth rates in April are in the 40's.
13. We are now milking 45 more cows than last year and we do not plan to reduce this number for another two weeks at least.
14. Milk production per cow has increased from 1.33 kg /MS/cow/day to 1.35 kg MS/cow/day, and per ha production has held at 5.37 kg ms/ha /day. These production figures are ahead of last year and ahead of budget.
15. The somatic cell count has dropped slightly and is now between 198,000 and 223,000 and we have found a couple of new mastitis cases.
16. The herd were individually condition scored last week and the average was 4.4. There were no cows below score 4.0 with only 11% of the herd under 4.3.
17. The final PD of the herd occurs tomorrow. We will then know how many of the thin cows are also early calving.
18. Last week we updated all our winter feed budgets with the new cover data from our winter grazing blocks. They are still very tight for feed and we will need the warm autumn conditions to continue.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on Tuesday 15th April 2008 at 9.00am.

Farmers or their managers are always welcome to walk with us. Please call to notify us of your intention and bring your plate meter.

Management Group

Peter Hancox (Farm Manager), George Reveley (for SIDDC), and Adrian van Bysterveldt (DairyNZ).

Lincoln University Dairy Farm - Farm Walk notes

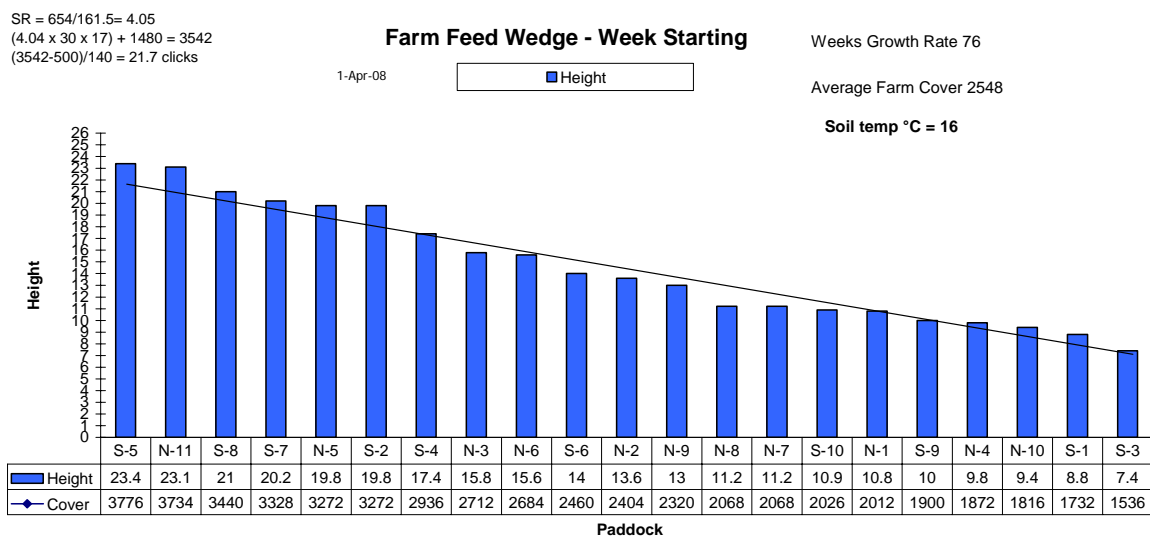
Tuesday, 1st April 2008

Critical issues for the short term

1. Average a rotation length of no less than 30.
2. Maintain grazing residuals to 7 “clicks”
3. Allow soil moisture levels to slowly decline but keep them high enough not to slow pasture growth.

Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance

4. SOIL TEMP at 10am has held at an average of 16 °C for the week (same as last week).
5. PASTURE GROWTH was close to demand at 76 kg DM/ha (last week 96) on the milking platform.
6. Average pasture cover has decreased slightly from 2582kg DM/ha to 2546 kg DM/ha.
7. We used an average of 5.4 ha per day that is 1/30th of the farm each day with the cows. We are using the electric fence to set the area /day and the cows have been reaching the target residual of about 7 “clicks”.
8. This week’s pasture wedge



9. The new target line presumes the cows are eating 17 kg DM and will be on a longer rotation of 30 days. This requires a pre-grazing cover of 3542 kg DM/ha. Seventeen kgs allocation is a nominal figure to make sure that there is enough cover in the allocated area for 24 hours. The current pre-grazing target is as high as we can go in the autumn and still retain very high quality pasture.
10. Based on our current plan we will only be grazing the 5 longest paddocks on the wedge this week.
11. The wedge shows that we still have a slight surplus but less than last week.

12. The weather forecast is for similarly warm conditions to last week for most of next week. This autumn soil temperatures have been closely following last year which was the warmest autumn we have experienced on the farm. With the current weather forecast we expect soil temperatures to hold up at these high levels for another week.
13. We are now milking 45 more cows than last year and we do not plan to reduce this number for another two weeks at least.
14. Milk production per cow was 1.33 kg /MS/cow/day, last week 1.4 and per ha production has dropped from 5.6 kg MS/ha/day to 5.34 kg ms/ha /day. These production figures are ahead of last year and ahead of budget.
15. Somatic cell count is now between 196,000 and 270,000 and we have found a couple of new mastitis cases.
16. The in-calf R2 average weight was 437 kgs (the target average was 402) and the range was from 337 for the Jersey type heifers to 522 kg for the Friesian type heifers.
17. The R1 heifer average weight was 180.8 kgs (target average was 169) and the range was 121 to 220. The lighter calves were mostly the late born ones and they have been separated into a small mob which is being adlib grazed ahead of the rest of the calves.
18. Last week we met with our winter grazing suppliers to confirm areas and volumes of feed available. The results of this meeting and today's covers on our own runoffs will be used to redo our feed budgets.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on Tuesday, **8th April 2008 at 9.00am.**

Farmers or their managers are always welcome to walk with us. Please call to notify us of your intention and bring your plate meter.

Management Group

Peter Hancox (Farm Manager), George Reveley (for SIDDC), and Adrian van Bysterveldt (DairyNZ).