

Lincoln University Dairy Farm – Farm Walk notes

Thursday 1st June 2006

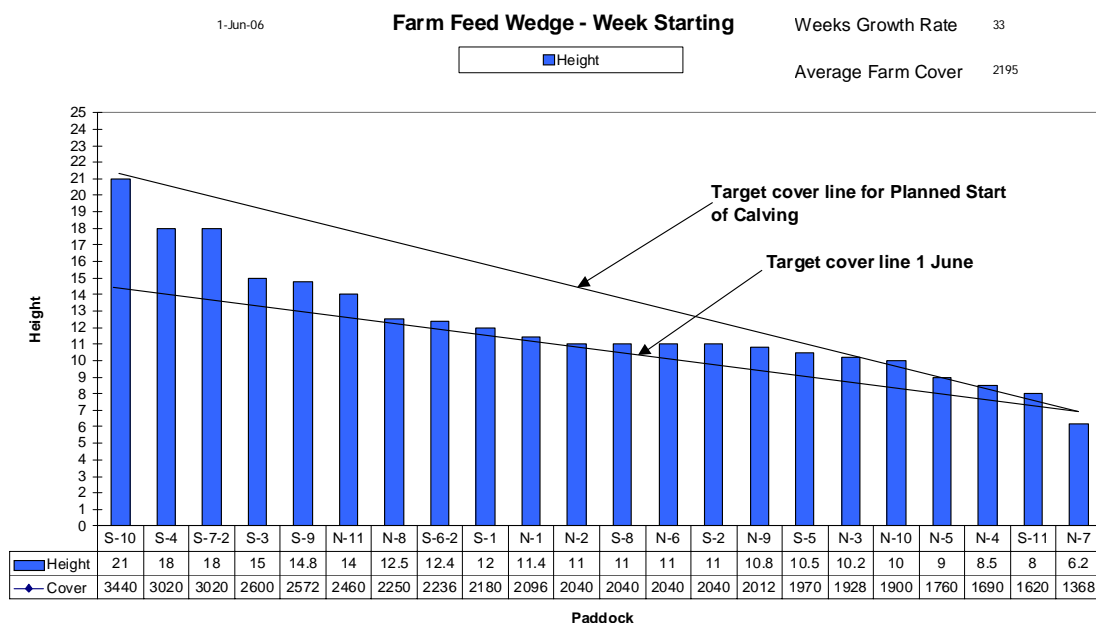
Rain on Tuesday and having a pasture cover target for 1 June resulted in the farm walk being delayed until today.

Critical issues for the short term

1. Achieving Condition Score targets for all cows.
2. Monitoring and managing the wedge of feed on the milking platform
3. Avoiding soil pugging and pasture damage on milking platform.

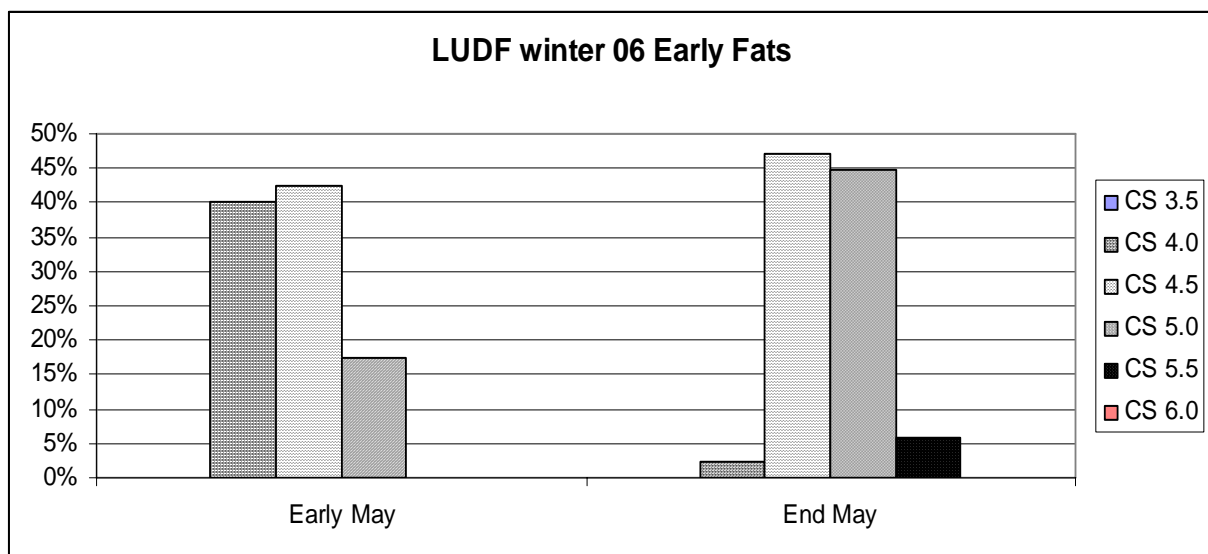
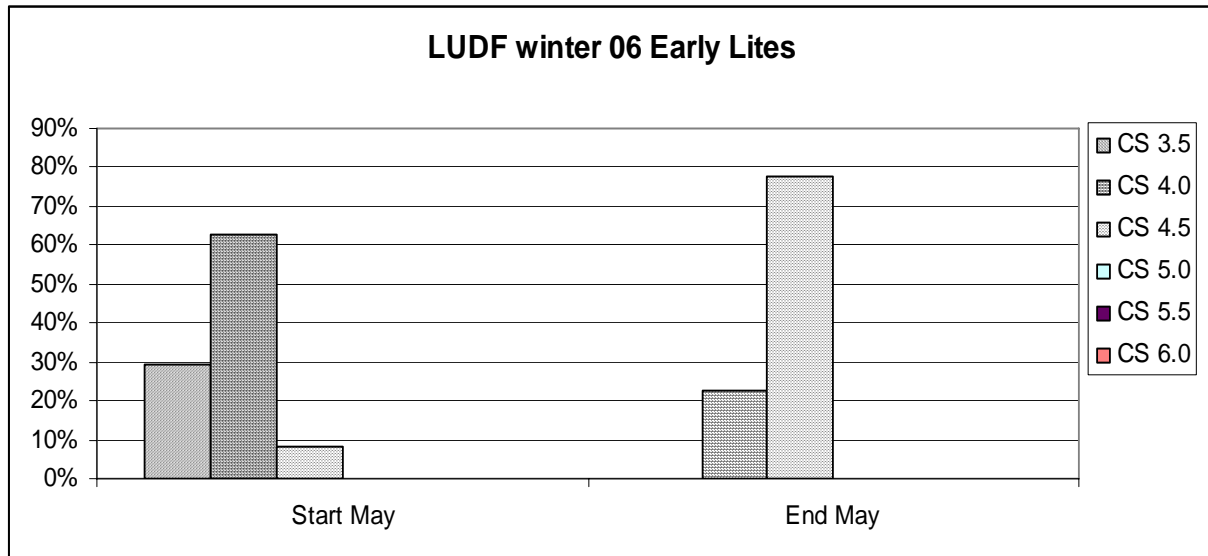
Summary of KEY INDICATORS for Grazing Management and Animal Performance

4. PASTURE GROWTH estimated at 33 kg DM/ha for last week (50% above budget)
5. Last week the average pasture cover continued to track well below 1 June target and ground conditions were wet and expected to deteriorate so we dried the herd off and removed them to off farm grazing. As a result of this and the excellent growth this week average PASTURE COVER has risen to 2195 kg DM/ha and is above the target for 1 June of 2100. We have an average cover target for each week through the winter.
6. Soil Temperature has risen from 9.2°C last Tuesday to over 10 for most of the week and has now dropped to 9.8.
7. Soil moisture conditions are very wet after double the average rainfall for May coming on top of irrigation in April. The soil conditions on the dry land winter blocks are still firm.



8. The two target lines on the feed wedge as there to show the shape of the wedge we were targeting for 1 June and where we want to get to by the Planned Start of Calving. WE are ahead of the 1 June target because we had to dry off the herd due to the very wet soil conditions. Soil conditions are improving and the plan is to bring 120 light early calving cows back to the milking platform on Tuesday 6 June (assuming that the we do not have another major rainfall event on the weekend) These cows will be used to graze the two longest paddocks which are both Tetraploid winter active pastures and if soil conditions allow the target grazing residual will be 7 “clicks” (1500 kgs DM). However if soil conditions are still too wet to allow this, we will reduce the cover on these paddocks as much as we can without causing pugging. We are confident that we will be able to re-establish the target residuals at a future date through grazing if required because of their Tetraploid nature. Getting the farm cover into an even shaped wedge may be a real challenge this winter.

9. All mobs of cows are being condition scored every two weeks and the thin cows have their numbers recorded. The aim is to have all calving cows between Condition Score 5.0 and 5.5 when they calve. Any cows not increasing condition score at the required rate will be separated from their mob and given preferential treatment. The heifers are already an average of 5.5 condition score with the range between 5.2 and 5.8.
10. The calving cows have just completed their dry off phase and have now been split into two groups (lights and fats). Dry off was done on old rank pasture with an ME of less than 10. The light mobs are being grazed on pastures with an ME above 12 and their target residual is 1500 (milking cow residual) at the end of the 24 hrs. This will ensure intakes of about 11 to 12 kgs of dry matter and energy intakes of above 130 ME.



Excellent progress is being made with both mobs. Once cows in the light mob get to score 5 they will join the fat mob. Also any cows in the fat mob not gaining weight as required will be drafted to the light mob.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **TUESDAY 6th June 10.00am. (Weather permitting)**
NEXT LUDF FOCUS DAY THURSDAY 6TH JULY

Management Group

Peter Hancox (Farm Manager) Peter Gaul (SIDDC) and Adrian van Bysterveldt (Dexcel)

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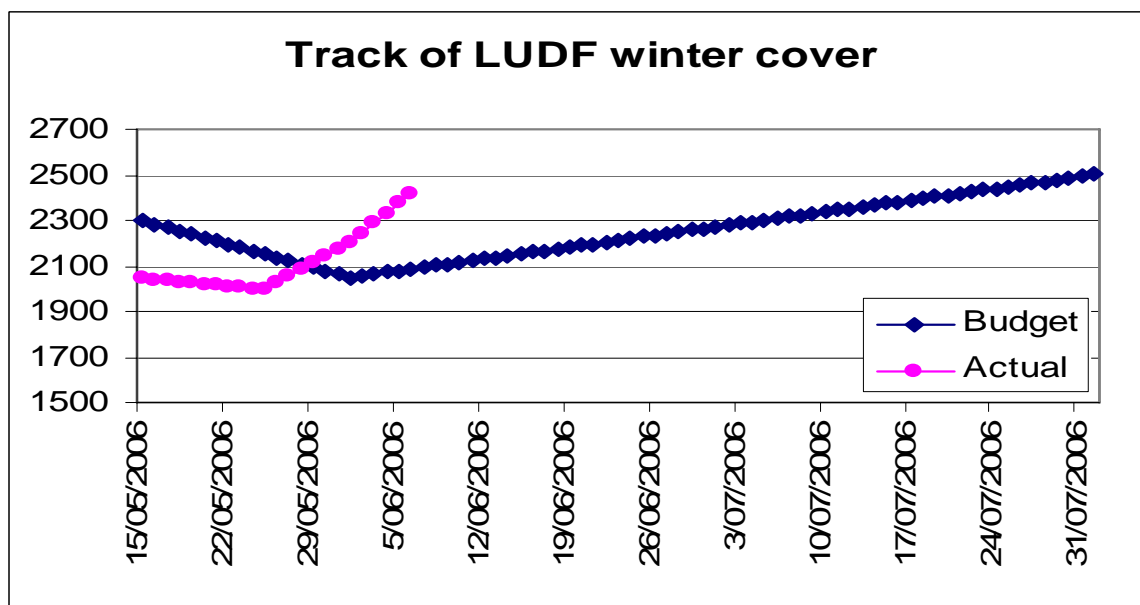
Tuesday 6st June 2006

Critical issues for the short term

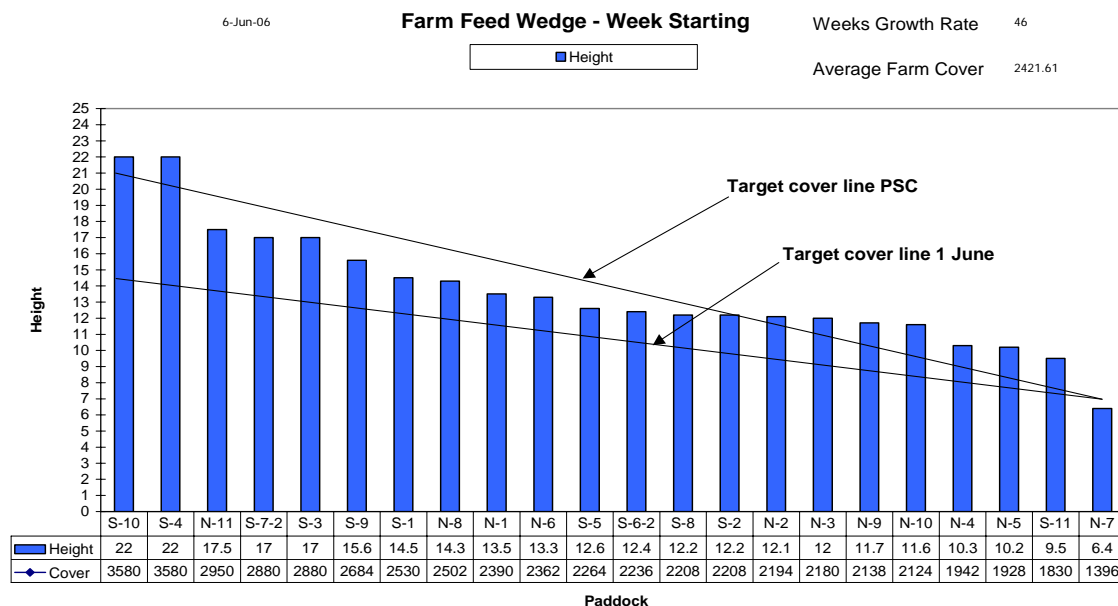
1. Achieving Condition Score targets for all cows.
2. Monitoring and managing the wedge of feed on the milking platform
3. Avoiding soil pugging and pasture damage on milking platform.

Summary of KEY INDICATORS for Grazing Management and Animal Performance

4. Some warm days before the southerly blast came through late Sunday as resulted in PASTURE GROWTH estimated at 46 kg DM/ha. This was double what was budgeted.



5. As a result of the excellent growth and no stock on the farm the average PASTURE COVER has risen to 2421 kg DM/ha. The graph above allows us to compare the actual farm cover and the target for that week through the winter. We removed the cows from the farm two weeks ago because of low covers and wet soil conditions. Covers have recovered dramatically but soil conditions are only improving slowly. We have brought back 126 light early calving cows to the farm to start grazing into this cover.



6. The two target lines on the feed wedge are there to indicate the shape of the wedge we were targeting for 1 June and where we want to get to by the Planned Start of Calving. The wedge graph and the average cover graph show that covers are well ahead of target.
7. We are currently faced with two problems. Firstly, that the farm cover has almost reached the target for 1 August (PSC) and secondly, the wedge is very uneven. The cows that have now come back home will be used to graze the longest paddock with the firmest soil conditions.
 - (a) if soil conditions allow (along with on/off grazing if necessary) the target grazing residual will be 7 “clicks” (1500 kgs DM).
 - (b) However if soil conditions are still too wet to allow this, we will reduce the cover on these paddocks as much as we can without causing pugging.
8. We are confident that we will be able to re-establish the target residuals for these two longest paddocks at a future date through grazing if required because of their Tetraploid nature.
9. Getting the farm cover into an even shaped wedge may be a real challenge this winter.
10. Average pasture cover on the 18 ha runoff has also risen dramatically and is now 2500 which is also well ahead of budget, and the longest paddocks also need grazing. This will be done in conjunction with the first grazing of the small area of Doubletake Triticale that is part of the Dairy Support Land Project Trial.
11. The last pregnancy scan has showed that two more cows have lost pregnancies and we have also had two cows abort once dried off. These four lost pregnancies are our only late pregnancy losses to date. Blood samples have been taken and will be tested to try to identify if there is a disease cause.
12. All mobs of cows will be conditioned scored again next week (refer last weeks notes for details on cow condition).

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **TUESDAY 13th June 10.00am. (Weather permitting)**

NEXT LUDF FOCUS DAY THURSDAY 6TH JULY

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