

Lincoln University Dairy Farm - Farm Walk notes

Tuesday, 25th March 2008

Critical issues for the short term

1. **Increase the rotation to 30 by the end of the month.**
2. **Maintain grazing residuals to 7 “clicks”**

Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance

3. SOIL TEMP at 10am has held at an average of 16 °C for the week (same as last week) but there has been more variability. On the coldest mornings it has dropped to 14 deg but on others it was 17 deg.
4. PASTURE GROWTH was an exceptional 96 kg DM/ha (last week 84) on the milking platform.
5. Average pasture cover has increased again from 2420kg DM/ha to 2582 kg DM/ha despite silage only being fed on one day.
6. We used an average of 5.77 ha per day, that is 1/28th of the farm each day with the cows. We are using the electric fence to set the area /day.
7. We have only fed out silage on the first day this week. It was the 6 bales already loaded in the wagon which is 2.8 kg silage /cow on that day and nothing since.
8. This week’s pasture wedge:

SR = 654/161.5= 4.05
 (4.04 x 30 x 17) + 1480 = 3542
 (3542-500)/140 = 21.7 clicks

Farm Feed Wedge - Week Starting

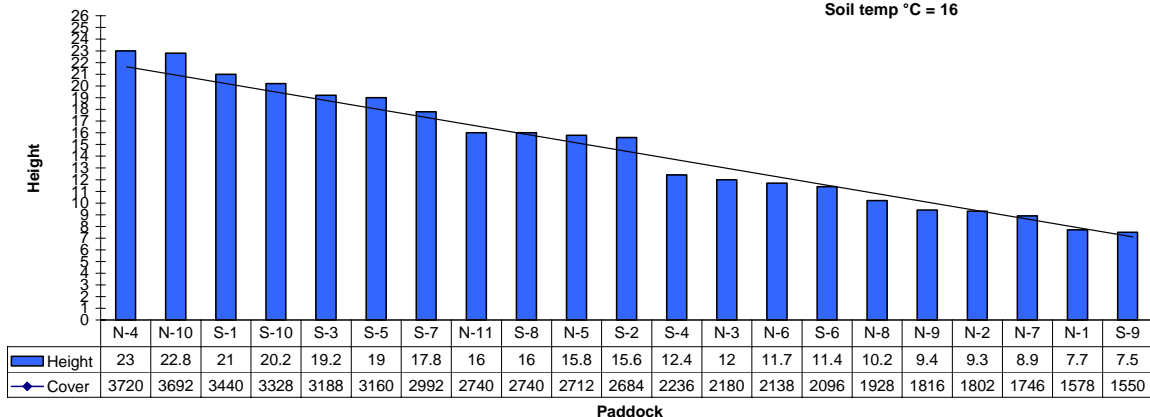
Weeks Growth Rate 96

25-Mar-08

■ Height

Average Farm Cover 2582

Soil temp °C = 16



8. 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.
9. Based on our current plan we will only be grazing the 5 longest paddocks on the wedge this week.

10. The wedge shows that we now have a surplus. This is equal to one extra days grazing. The pre-grazing cover is now above ideal, however 5 out of the 10 longest paddocks are our tetraploid ryegrass paddocks. These paddocks retain quality better than the diploid ryegrasses and the cows easily graze to the target residuals so we will make sure that we graze the diploid paddocks as soon as they get to the pre-grazing target and leave the tetraploid paddocks as the ones grazed at the higher pre-grazing covers.
11. The weather forecast is for similar conditions to last week for most of next week but then going cold and wet for the following week. This year soil temperatures are closely following last year which was the warmest autumn we have experienced on the farm. Last year pasture growth rates held up for another week and then rapidly dropped to half of what we are currently having. In earlier years this had already happened. All this leads us to decide to not make the current surplus into silage but instead through maintaining residuals we should find that we have used less than 1/30th of the farm a day over the coming week. The colder weather predicted for the following week should quickly eliminate this current surplus.
12. This year we also have 40 more cows still milking than last year, these is also making a difference and will prevent our farm cover getting much higher than currently.
13. We did some occasional irrigating this week and this continues to reduce. Now that we are in the autumn evapo-transpiration rates have dropped and persistent high rates are not likely to occur. Our plan is to now allow soil moisture levels to drop lower than the target we have been running at through most of the summer. This is to allow more space for autumn rain.
14. Milk production per cow was 1.4 kg /MS/cow/day which is only 0.06 less than last week and per ha production has dropped from 5.8 kg MS/ha/day to 5.6 kg ms/ha /day.
15. Somatic cell count is now 179,000 and 224,000.
16. The in-calf R2 will be weighed before going away for a weeks grazing (as part of plan). The empty R2's have been sold and this week will be removed from our runoff by the new owners.
17. Today we will be meeting with our main winter grazing supplier to confirm areas and volumes of feed available. We have yet to settle on a price. The results of this meeting will be used to redo both our financial and feed budgets.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on Tuesday, **1st 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, 18th March 2008

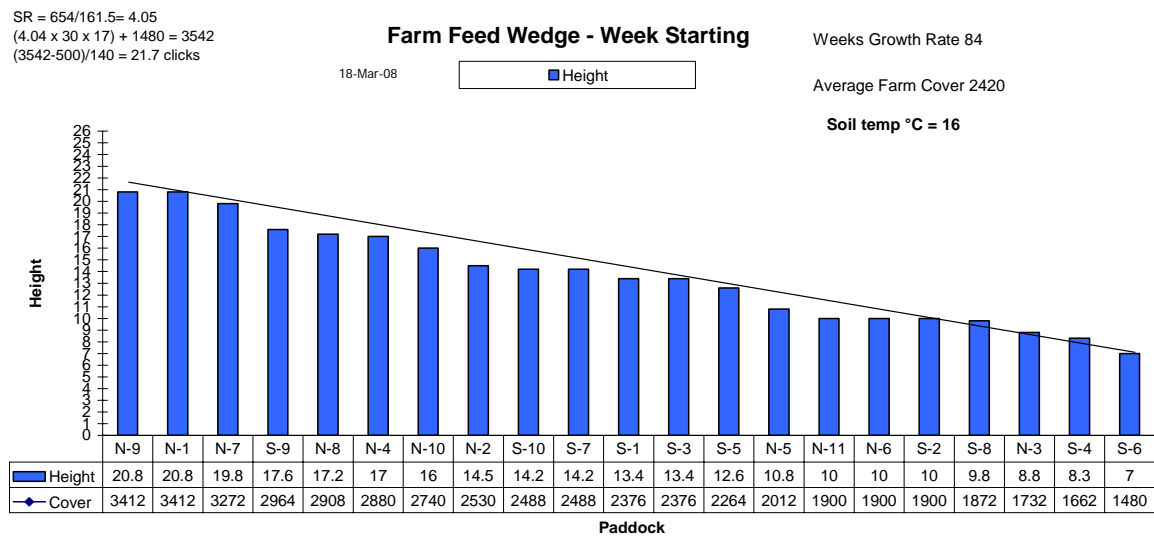
Critical issues for the short term

1. Increase the rotation from 27 to 30 by the end of the month.
2. Feed silage to lengthen round and meet cow intake requirements.
3. Maintain grazing residuals to 7 “clicks”.

Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance

4. SOIL TEMP at 10am was 15.5 °C for the week (16 last week).
5. PASTURE GROWTH was 84 kg DM/ha (last week 69) on the milking platform.
6. Average pasture cover has increased to 2420kg Dm/ha(last week 2296).
7. We used an average of 5.68 ha per day that is 1/28th of the farm each day with the cows. We are using the electric fence to set the area /day and use silage to make up the extra feed.
8. We have fed out less silage this week, down from an average rate of 3.72 kg DM/cow/day the previous week to 2.9 kg DM/cow/day this last week

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. Currently we are grazing about 5.68ha a day which means that we will only be grazing the 5 longest paddocks on the wedge plus paddock N2 which is half grazed.

11. The wedge shows even less of a deficit this week even though we have changed the target line to reflect our wish to continue to lengthen the rotation. We will again be able to use less silage this week which is desirable because the silage is of a lower quality than the grass.
12. The weather forecast is for similar conditions like we have had this week. We are therefore expecting to see growth rates continue to be above demand. This may mean that very little silage will need to be feed out until the weekend, and even then if growth rates are above demand little silage may also be required over the weekend.
13. We are still doing occasional irrigating. Now that we are in the autumn, evapo-transpiration rates have dropped and persistent high rates are not likely to occur. Our plan is to now allow soil moisture levels to drop lower than the target we have been running at through most of the summer. This is to allow more space for autumn rain.
14. Milk production per cow was 1.46 kg /MS/cow/day which is only 0.02 less than last week, and the per ha production has dropped from 5.94 kg MS/ha/day to 5.8 kg MS/ha /day.
15. Somatic cell count is now 179,000 and 216,000.
16. R2 were pregnancy tested yesterday, we had four empties out of 167, this is an empty rate of 2.4% .

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on Tuesday, **25th March 2008 at 9.00am.**

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Management Group

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

Lincoln University Dairy Farm - Farm Walk notes

Tuesday, 11th March 2008

Critical issues for the short term

1. Hold rotation length at 1/28th of farm per day.
2. Feed silage to lengthen round and meet cow intakes requirements.
3. Maintain grazing residuals to 7 “clicks”.

Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance

4. SOIL TEMP at 10am was 16° C for the week.
5. PASTURE GROWTH was 69 kg DM/ha (last week 76) on the milking platform.
6. Average pasture cover has increased to 2296kg Dm/ha(last week 2214).
7. We used an average of 5.7 ha per day that is 1/28th of the farm each day with the cows. We are using the electric fence to set the area /day and use silage to make up the extra feed.
8. We have fed out silage all week at an average rate of 3.72 kg DM/cow/day.

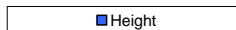
This week’s pasture wedge

SR = 654/161.5= 4.05
(4.05 x 27 x 17) + 1480 = 3339
(3339-500)/140 = 20.2 clicks

Farm Feed Wedge - Week Starting

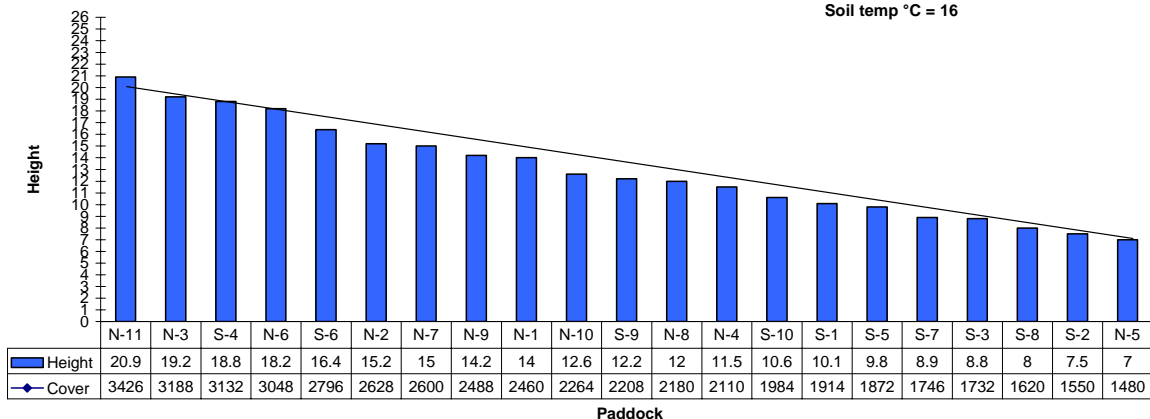
Weeks Growth Rate 69

11-Mar-08



Average Farm Cover 2296

Soil temp °C = 16



9. The new target line presumes the cows are eating 17 kg DM and will be on a longer rotation of 27 days. This requires a pre-grazing cover of 3339 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.
10. The wedge shows less of a deficit this week even though we have changed the target line to reflect our wish to continue to lengthen the rotation. We will be able to use less silage this week which is desirable because the silage is of a lower quality than the grass.
11. Soil moisture levels have dropped with the NW winds so we have again resumed all irrigation and stop again once soil moisture levels reach our target level which is about 25% of the way down to Stress Point.

12. Milk production per cow is the same as last week 1.48 kg ms/cow/day but with 20 cows less our per ha has dropped from 6.11 kg MS/ha/day to 5.94 kg ms/ha /day.
13. We have found another mastitis cow this week and the somatic cell count is now below 170,000.
14. We will condition score the herd over the next two weeks and by using the expected calving report we will be dividing them up on paper into early and late calving groups and also each of these into light and fat. The early calving light cows will then be closely monitored for weight gain over March, using the walk over weighting data and if necessary will be dried off early.
15. For sale 20 mixed aged surplus, in-milk, in-calf cows.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on Tuesday, **18th March 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, 4th March 2008

Critical issues for the short term

1. Achieve a rotation of 25 days for this next week.
2. Feed silage to lengthen round and meet cow intakes requirements.
3. Maintain grazing residuals to 7 “clicks”.

Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance

4. SOIL TEMP at 10am was over 16 °C at the beginning of the week but is now 15⁰C.
5. PASTURE GROWTH was 76 kg DM/ha (last week 72) on the milking platform.
6. Average pasture cover has dropped slightly at 2214 kg DM/ha (last week 2224).
7. We used an average of 7.9 ha per day that is 1/21st of the farm each day with the cows. Our target was to get to 1/25th of the farm. We expected to have a higher growth rate and cover and to have been able to use this to lengthen the round; however growth rates have just met demand. From now on we will use the electric fence to set the area /day and use silage to make up the extra feed.
8. We have fed out silage all week at an average rate of 3.6 kg DM/cow/day.

This week's pasture wedge

SR = 654/161.5= 4.05
 (4.05 x 25 x 17) + 1480 = 3201
 (3201-500)/140 = 19.2 clicks

Farm Feed Wedge - Week Starting

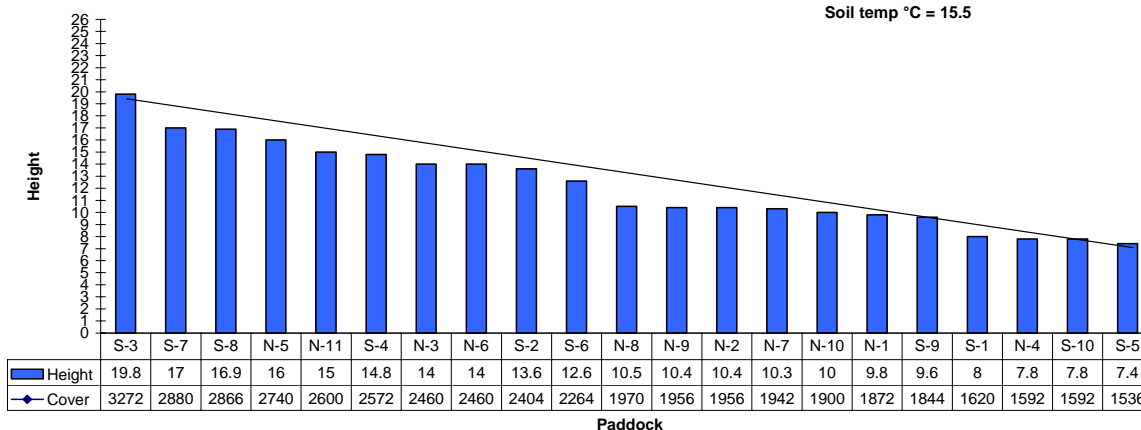
Weeks Growth Rate 76

4-Mar-08

■ Height

Average Farm Cover 2214

Soil temp °C = 15.5



9. The new target line presumes the cows are eating 17 kg DM and will be on a longer rotation of 25 days. This requires a pre-grazing cover of 3201 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. We have dried off 19 cows, some of which will be culled immediately.
10. The wedge shows a deficit most of the way down the graph. This weeks wedge looks very similar to last week's wedge which is expected given that pasture growth has been close to demand.

11. A recent herd test has identified that we have about 35 cows producing less than 1 kg MS/day. These cows will probably be eating as much silage as other cows but will be giving us an uneconomic response to the supplements they eat. To purchase phone Peter 027 4409 285 for immediate delivery.
12. Silage is fed out in the new paddock before the cows get there. We spread it out thinly all over the paddock. The reasons for doing it like this are
 - a) So that cows don't associate the tractor with getting fed
 - b) To get the cows to spread out all over the paddock rather than to concentrate in small areas like along fence lines or large clumps of silage.

This practice fits in well with 24 hr grazing where the cows get their next paddock after the afternoon milking. It also means that if there had been too much silage fed out so that if the cows had not achieved the target pasture residual by afternoon milking time they can easily be sent back to the paddock to clean up, and then be shifted later after milking.

13. Soil moisture levels are again nicely in the desired range so all irrigation has stopped but will resume if soil moisture levels drop below our target range.
14. Our second round of N application since the start of February will be 40 kg N/ha. We have saved 90 kgs N (out of our 200) to be used in the autumn in anticipation of reducing soil temperatures over the next month which will lead to lower rates of N mineralization out of the soil organic pool leading to an N deficiency large enough to impact negatively on pasture growth rates.
15. Milk production has risen slightly to 1.48 kg ms/cow/day (1.44 kg MS/cow/day last week and 6.11 kg MS/ha/day (6.0 kg ms/ha /day last week).
16. We have found another 2 mastitis cows and as a result our somatic cell count has been between 187,000 and 216,000, continuing the steady decline of the last three weeks. Other high somatic cell count cows identified in the herd test have been put onto alert status in Protrack and are being checked daily.
17. Cow live weights have risen by 1 kg /cow/day this week even after taking into account some lift for more rumen residual mass because we are feeding silage.
18. We will condition score over the next two weeks and by using the expected calving report we will be dividing them up on paper in to early and late calving groups and also each of these into light and fat. The early calving light cows will then be closely monitored for weight gain over March, using the walk over weighting data and if necessary will be dried off early.
19. The calves were drenched for the 4th time this season.
20. We mentioned last week that we have 29 cows that had conceive between weeks 9 and week 12 but have since lost their pregnancies. We are taking blood samples of these cows to see if there is an underlying disease issue.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on Tuesday **11th March 2008 at 9.00am.**

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