

# Lincoln University Dairy Farm - Farm Walk notes

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2006

## Critical issues for the short term

1. Fine tune the intakes, lifting them to milking cows while maintaining target residuals of 7 “clicks” (7 half cm as measured by the Plate Meter) ie don’t graze lower than this!

### Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance

1. SOIL TEMPS have improved to 11.5 degrees at 10.30am.
2. PASTURE GROWTH over the last week has stayed virtually the same at 54 kg DM/ha (last week was 52) and is close to our budgeted growth rates for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of September (55).
3. PASTURE COVER is still below our target cover, no immediate cause for concern, but we may be looking at no/little effective surplus in the near future, unlike this time last year.

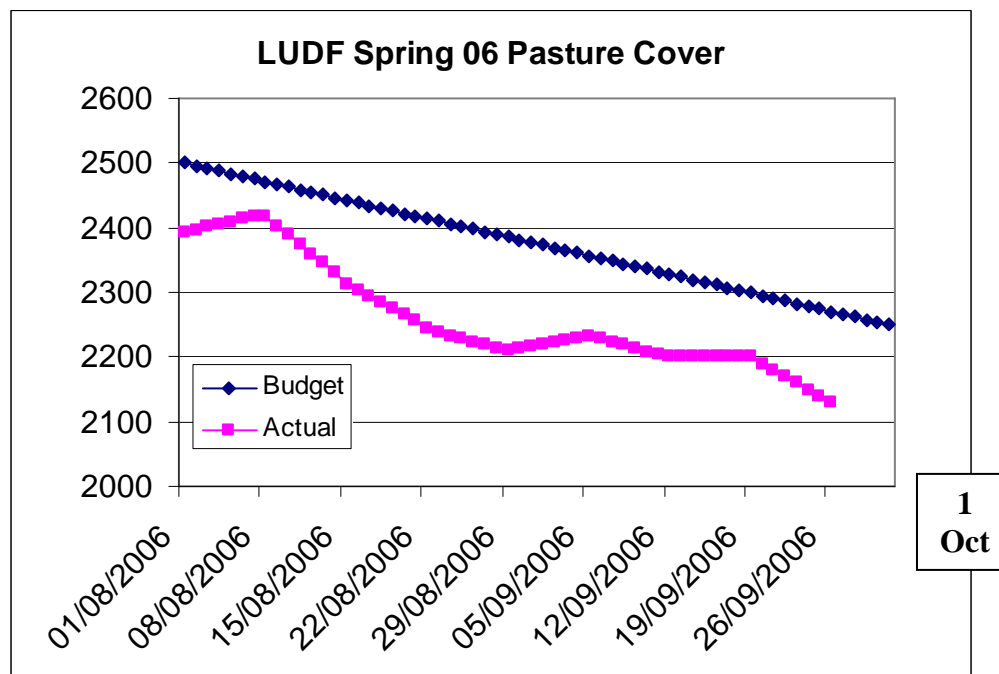
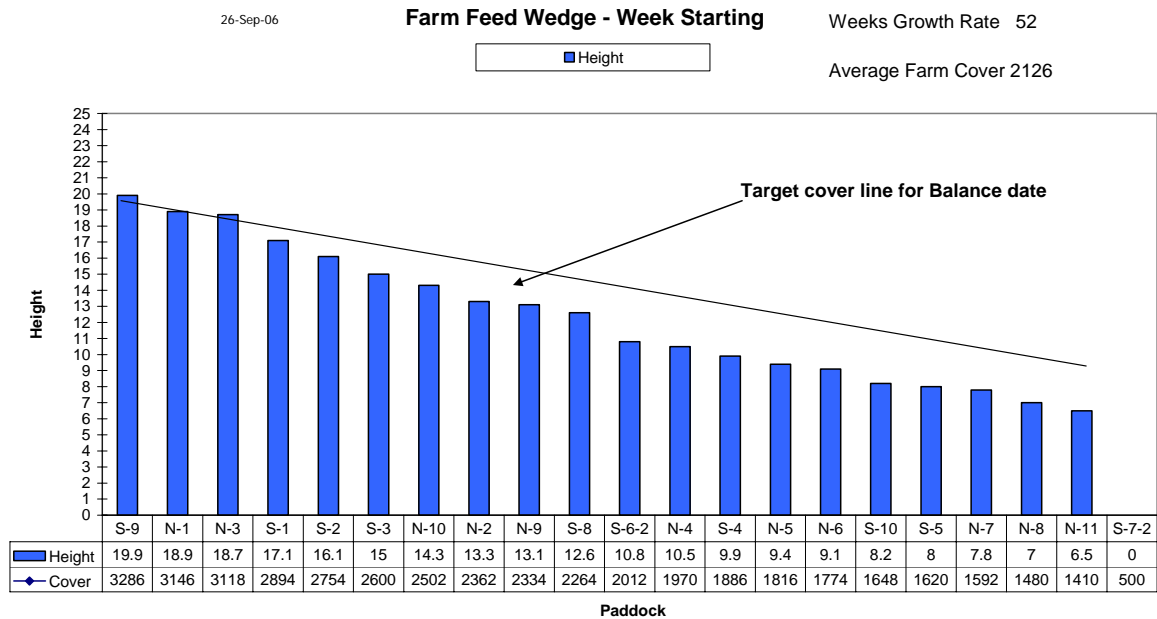


Fig 1.

4. Ave PASTURE COVER has dropped by 70kg/ha, from 2200 kgDM/ha last week down to 2126 kgDM/ha today. Our cover target line is based on a grazing 1/22 of the farm on Balance Date and a cow intake allocation of 17 kgs DM above a residual of 1500 kgs DM /ha, at an assumed date of 1 Oct. Unless pasture growth jumps, we will be below this target. We are relying on improved pasture growth to reverse this trend.
5. Over the last four weeks pasture growth rates have increased at the same rate as pasture demand from the herd has increased (more cows x increasing allocation). The farm has been “in balance” and if growth rates this week increase to over 62 then this balanced situation will continue. HOWEVER, we are still well behind on pasture cover, and are relying on an eventual “surge” in pasture growth to bring us out of this. (see wedge)

Fig 2.



6. The projected dip in pasture cover in 2-3 weeks time (see above graph of cover) is a concern, but we can't do anything about it at this stage. With improving soil temps, and October approaching, we (like many of you out there) are trusting that pasture growth WILL improve.
7. Last week we dropped one paddock (7.2ha) out for regrassing, which means our effective area became 154.3ha for the next 8 (?) weeks.
8. The herd grazed a total of 38ha last week, effectively 1/28<sup>th</sup> of the farm daily. We will hold this for the next week.
9. The FEED ALLOCATION to the milking herd has again lifted and is now 16 kgs DM/cow/day (up from 15.7 kgs DM/cow/day last week). Remember this reflects the calving spread mix times the increasing and peak feed demands. We are monitoring this carefully.
10. Milk PRODUCTION continues to lift, last 5 day average was 1.80 kgs MS/cow/day (up from 1.75 kg MS/cow), and 6.7 kgs MS/ha/day (up from 6.2 kg MS/ha/day).
11. We might have up to 10 cows with calving dates later than expected. We should see all other cows calve in the next week.
12. We are continuing to follow the cows with 20 kgs N/ha. ie 4-6 paddocks each week.
13. The herd has been tail painted and weekly recording of pre-mating heats has begun.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **TUESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> October 10.00am.**

**Management Group**

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

# Lincoln University Dairy Farm - Farm Walk notes

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2006

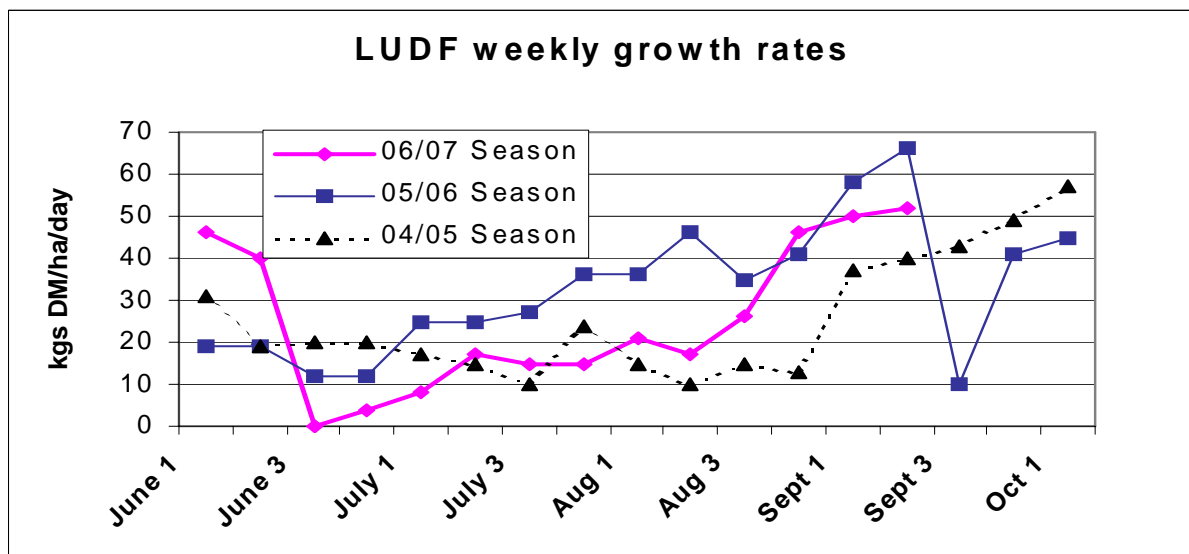
## Critical issues for the short term

1. Keep lifting allocated intakes of high quality pasture to milking cows while maintaining target residuals of 7 “clicks” (7 half cm as measured by the Plate Meter).

### Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance

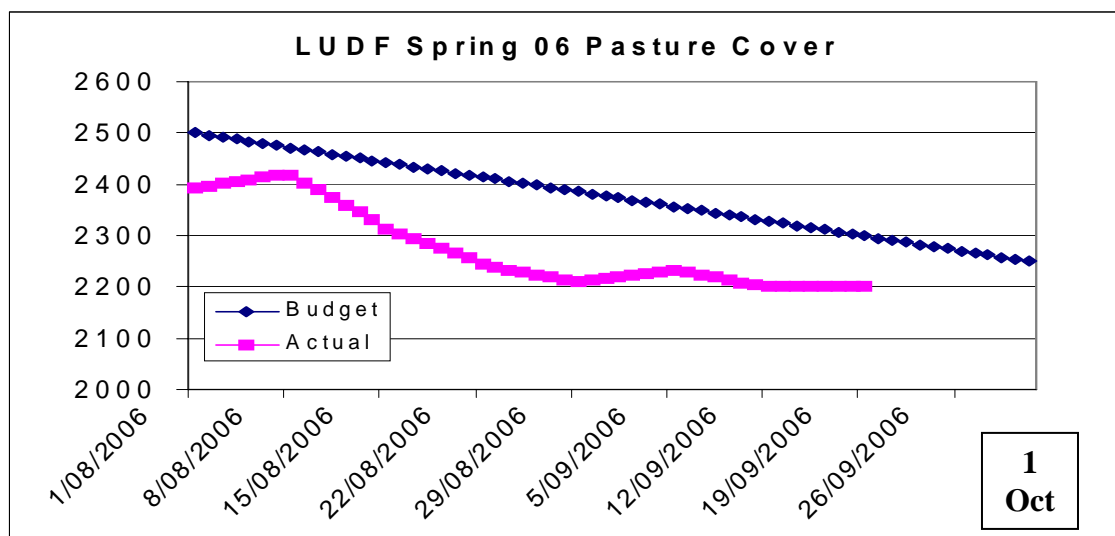
1. SOIL TEMPS have held above 8.5 degrees.
2. PASTURE GROWTH over the last week has averaged 52kg DM/ha (last week was 50) and is close to our budgeted growth rates for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of September (55).

Fig 1.



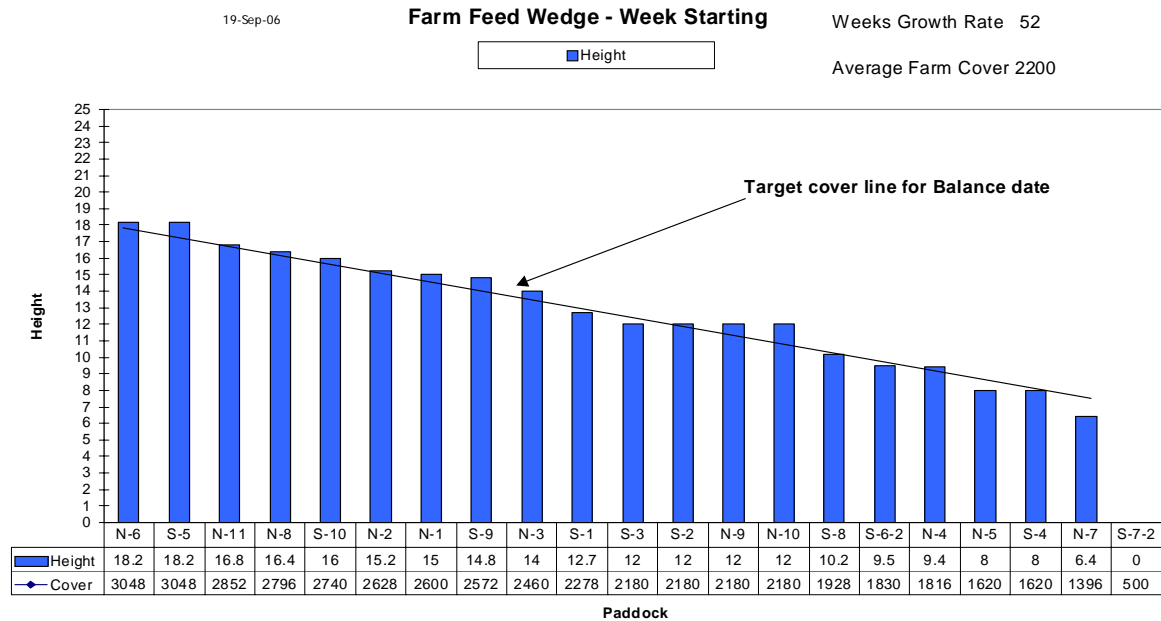
3. Weather forecasts for the next 1 to 2 weeks give us confidence that growth rates will continue to be above average growth rates at least for the next week. The result of this is that we believe that we are close to “Balance date” which this year will be earlier than the 1 Oct, which our current planning is based on.
4. These higher than average growth rates mean that we are still able to lift our per cow allocations of pasture as planned. No supplements have been used to date.

Fig 2.



5. Ave PASTURE COVER has held at 2200 kgDM/ha. Our cover target line was based on a grazing 1/22 of the farm on Balance Date and a cow intake allocation of 17 kgs DM above a residual of 1500 kgs DM /ha, at an assumed date of 1 Oct.
6. Over the last three weeks pasture growth rates have increased at the same rate as pasture demand from the herd has increased (more cows x increasing allocation). The farm has been “in balance” and if growth rates this week increase slightly to over 55 then this balanced situation will continue.

Fig 3.



7. There was more pasture in three longest paddocks last week than we had measured on the farm walk. As a result the herd only grazed a total of 21ha last week in an effort to maintain the grazing residual at 7 clicks (1500 kgs DM/ha). This gave us two extra days grazing which was sufficient along with the above average growth rate to eliminate the previous deficit.
8. S 7 was used as a sacrifice stand off paddock during the winter and it has become clear that growth rates on this paddock are well below the rest of the farm. This paddock has been sprayed with Roundup and the drainage issues are now being addressed. A light cultivation will occur later this week and we expect the paddock to be re-sown by next Tuesday.
9. The grazing area of the dairy platform is now 154.3ha. This means our current stocking rate is 3.95 cows/ha (or 1896 kgs Lwt/ha) and once the rest have calved we will peak at 4.4 cows/ha (or 2115 kgs Lwt/ha).
10. We are continuing to follow the cows with 20 kgs N/ha. Clover growth has again been very evident this week. We are applying this via fertigation through the centre pivot on the South Block and by truck on the North Block.
11. The feed allocation to the milking herd has again lifted and is now 15.7 kgs DM/cow/day (up from 15 kgs DM/cow/day last week).

12. Milk PRODUCTION continues to lift, last 5 day average was 1.75 kgs MS/cow/day (up from 1.7 kg MS/cow), and 6.2 kgs MS/ha/day (up from 5.7 kg MS/ha/day). This lift has not been as great as expected because for the last week the cows have been grazing the 1st paddocks from the first grazing round. These paddocks had reached covers in excess of 4,000 kgs DM/ha and pasture quality had declined.
13. Colostrum cows and the sick mob are continuing to be milked OAD. We have no adverse effects from this to date.
14. The herd has been tail painted and weekly recording of pre-mating heats has begun.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **TUESDAY 26<sup>th</sup> September 10.00am.**

**Management Group**

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

# Lincoln University Dairy Farm - Farm Walk notes

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2006

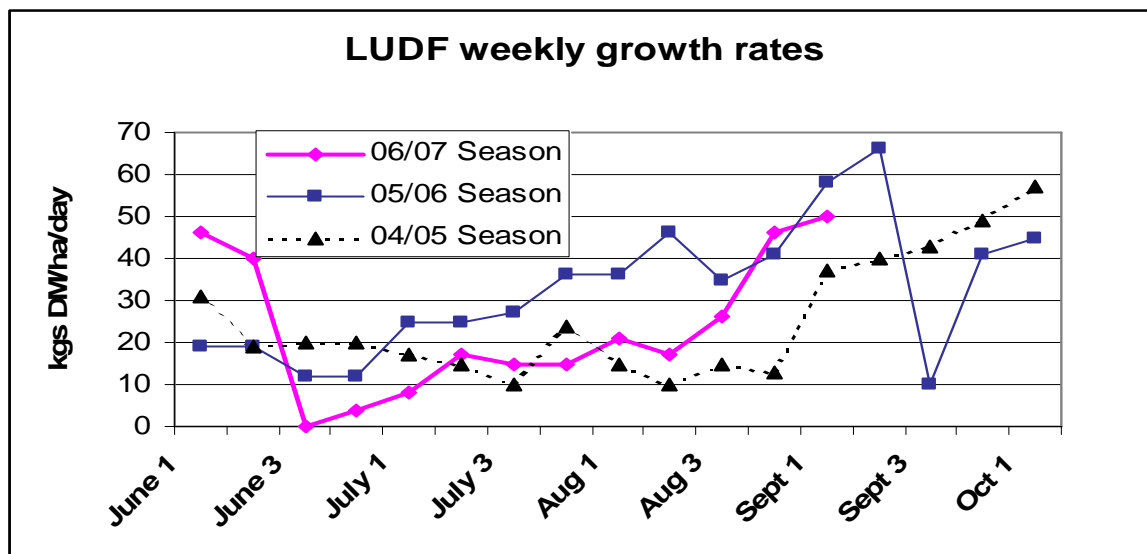
## Critical issues for the short term

1. Keep lifting allocated intakes of high quality pasture to milking cows while maintaining target residuals of 7 “clicks” (7 half cm as measured by the Plate Meter).

### Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance

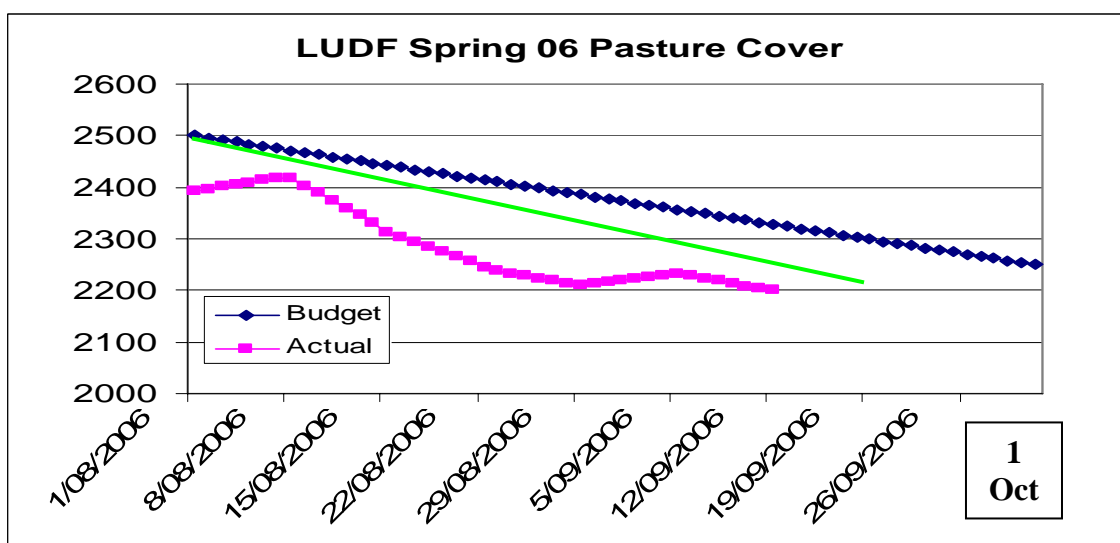
1. SOIL TEMPS have taken a dip to 8.1 degrees at the end of this week after 2 frosts. Most of the week they have been above 10 degrees C.
2. PASTURE GROWTH over the last week has averaged 50kg DM/ha (last week was 49) and is ABOVE our budgeted growth rates for the 1<sup>st</sup> half of September (45).

Fig 1.



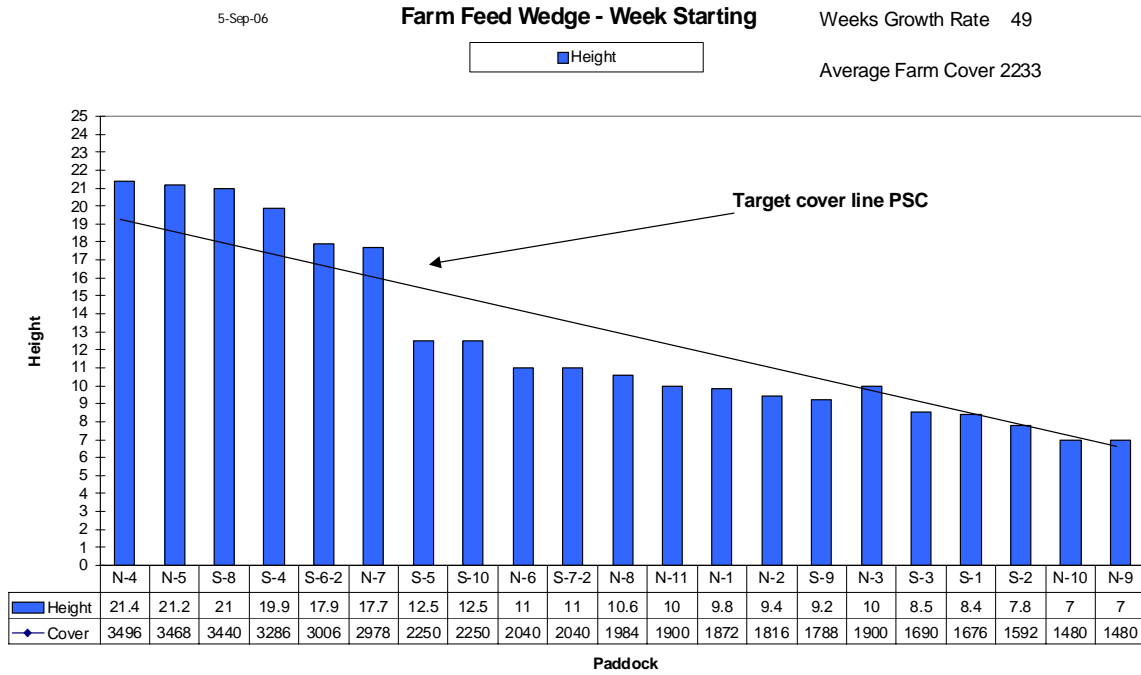
3. Weather forecasts for the next 1 to 2 weeks suggest settled weather bringing with this the expectation of continuing above average growth rates. The result of this is that we may get to “Balance date” earlier than the 1 Oct, which our current planning is based on.

Fig 2.

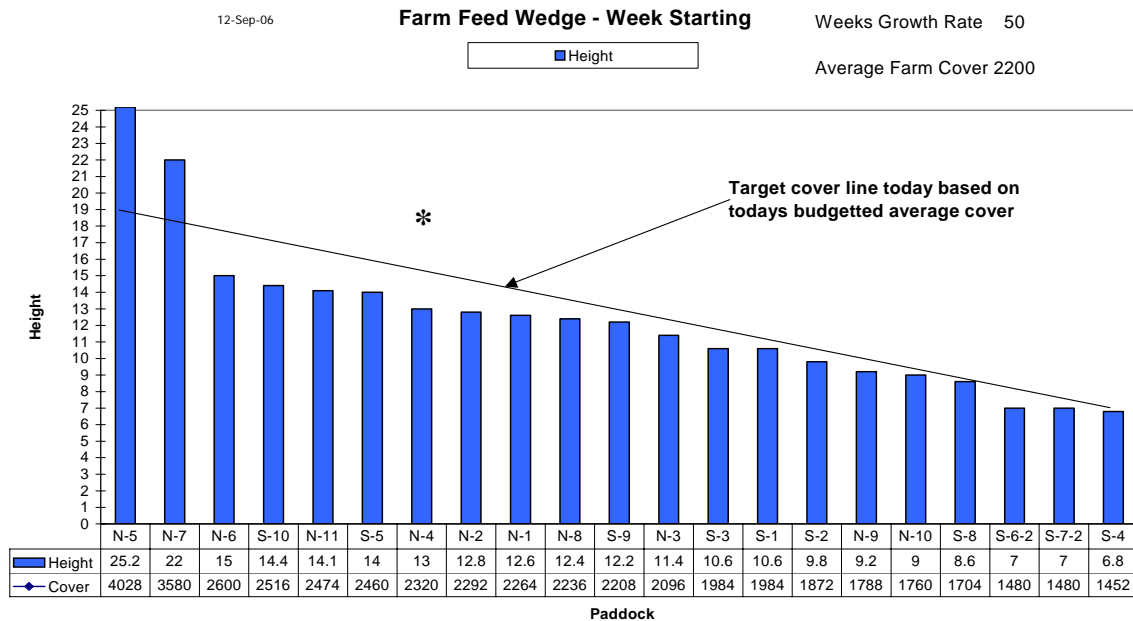


- Ave PASTURE COVER has reduced slightly to 2200 kgDM/ha. Our cover target line was based on a 22 day rotation, and a cow intake allocation of 17 kgs DM above a residual of 1500 kgs DM /ha, at an assumed date of 1 Oct. If the current above average growth rates will consider changing the target cover line to reflect a 20 day rotation length at a 20 Sept "Balance Date".
- The target cover at "Balance date" will drop from 2250 to 2200 as a result of the faster rotation length, which will also impact on the target cover line on our feed wedge.

Fig 3. Last weeks wedge



This weeks Wedge



6. Another week of above budgeted growth and the wedge has slightly changed shape and the potential deficit is not as large as it was last week.
7. There is enough pasture in N4 (\* partly grazed) and the other two paddocks with the highest covers to feed the cows for the next 5 days, even with rising allocations. During these 5 days we expect the cover on S10 to lift by 250 kgs DM/ha to above 2700 kgs DM/ha. S10 is our largest paddock (10ha) and will contain enough pasture for two days.
8. It is harder to achieve the target residual (7 clicks or 1480 kgs DM/ha) in these long paddocks but the cows are leaving these residuals.
9. If the feed deficit is still evident next week and prevents us continuing to increase Dry Matter allocations to the herd, we will re-visit our current decision not to feed supplements.
10. It is equally likely that by next week we will be in a position to start the process of re-grassing S 7 (8ha). This paddock was used as a sacrifice paddocks during the winter and re-grassing will involve corrections to surface drainage and light surface work before being re-grassed using a roller drill.
11. We are continuing to follow the cows with 20 kgs N/ha. Clover growth has again been very evident this week.
12. The Spring application of eco-n is also being applied, following the cows onto the recently grazed paddocks.
13. The feed allocation to the milking herd has now lifted above 15 kgs DM/cow/day.
14. Milk PRODUCTION continues to lift, last 5 day average was 1.7 kgs MS/cow/day (up from 1.61 kg MS/cow), and 5.7 kgs MS/ha/day (up from 4.39 kg MS/ha/day)
15. Colostrum cows and the sick mob are continuing being milked OAD. We have no adverse effects from this to date.
16. The early calving monitor group of cows (45) have again been weighed and their weight and condition score is now holding. Most of these cows have cycled.



The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **TUESDAY, 19<sup>th</sup> September 10.00am.**

### **Management Group**

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

# Lincoln University Dairy Farm - Farm Walk notes

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2006

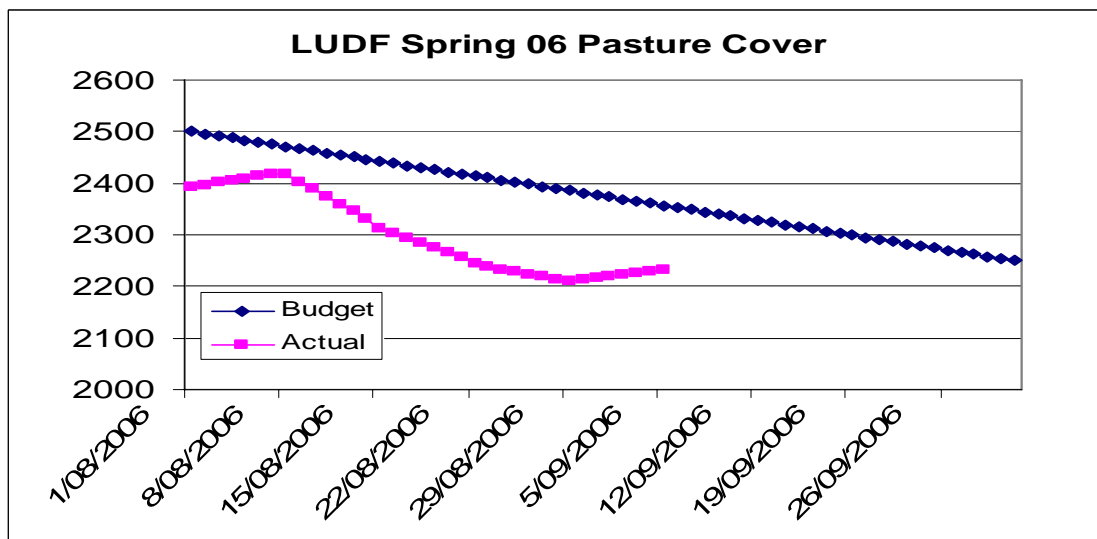
## Critical issues for the short term

1. Keep magnesium up to the milkers and springers (water supply and dusting)

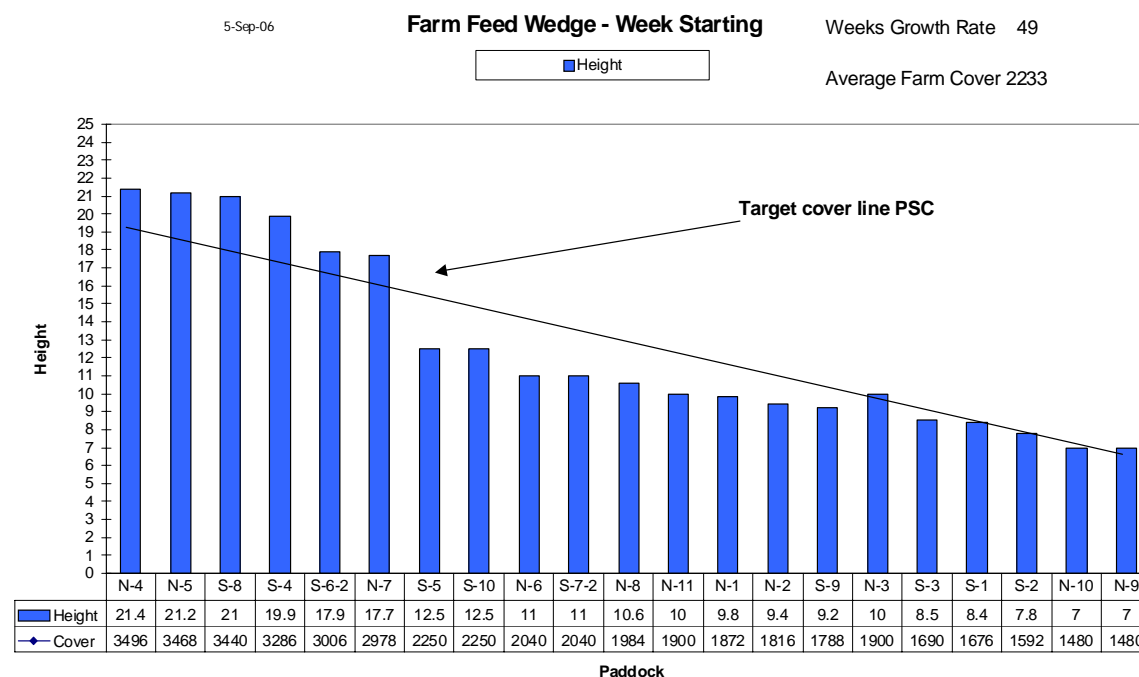
### Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance

1. SOIL TEMPS are continuing to lift and have reached 10.2, up from 7.2 °C last week.
2. PASTURE GROWTH over the last week has averaged 49kg DM/ha (last week was 41) and is ABOVE our target for the 1<sup>st</sup> half of September (45).

Fig 1.



3. Ave PASTURE COVER has risen to 2233 kgDM/ha. We are now about 110 kgDM/ha/day below target and the difference is now reducing.
4. Milk PRODUCTION continues to slowly lift, last week ave 1.61 kgMS/cow, or 4.39 kgMS/ha.
5. Milker Grazing residuals – spot on target residuals (7 clicks or 1480 kgDM/ha)



6. After a week of above budgeted growth the wedge has not changed shape BUT with the 6 longest paddocks above the target line we are now in a better position to deal with the possible deficit indicated by the group of paddocks below the target line. These longest paddocks are still green at the base so we have no concerns about either the cows achieving the target residual of 7 “clicks” or of poor re-growth.
7. We expect to be able to get 10 days grazing from these 6 paddocks. We expect to get between the covers on the paddocks currently below the target line to lift by between 400 and 450 kgs DM/ha, effectively removing most of the deficit. The deficit is not as large as it seems because each week the target line is adjusted lower to account for the lower average farm cover that is targeted for that week as we count down to balance date. (see fig 1.)
8. We are continuing to follow the cows with 20 kgs N/ha. Clover growth has been very evident this week.
9. The feed allocation is being lifted by close to 1kg/cow per week for the next 4 weeks. Some feedback to us has suggested that our feed allocations are too low, but they are based on a range of field trials, so we are sticking with them. Remember that high ME pastures deliver more available energy for milk production and maintenance. Our cow intakes have now lifted to 187 ME.
10. The cows are extremely settled in the paddock. They are cleaning the paddocks out very well, in some cases to below 7 clicks (1480 kgDM/ha). See photos below.
11. Colostrum cows and the sick mob are continuing being milked OAD. We have no adverse effects from this to date.
12. Mastitis cases were high during August, but since the rain has stopped, the run of new cases has almost stopped.
13. We have reviewed the feed budget for the dry/springing mob and are now confident that we have enough grass on the East Block so that this mob will not need to graze on the milking platform.
14. We now have three mobs each of 40-45 calves put out on pasture, with temporary shelter using 5 medium square straw bales. All calves are on OAD feeding, and are doing well.
15. The early calving monitor group of cows have now started to put on weight again and have lifted by 20 kgs and 0.05 of a Condition Score. This group are due to be weighted again in 10 days time.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **TUESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> September 10.00am.**

### **Management Group**

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

