

Southland Monitor Farm Project

Weekly Update – 30 September 2009

General Comments

Growth rates were extremely variable across the region this week. After 2 weeks of strong growth rates the Eastern Southland farm only grew 20 kg DM/ha/day which contrasts with the 61 kg DM/ha/day grown on the Demonstration Farm. Both Otago farms grew considerably less grass this week than the previous two weeks and less than half that grown in the same period last year. Only the Demonstration farm grew more than the same period in the previous 2 seasons. All the monitor farms are showing a deficit in the middle part of the wedge. Soil temperatures eased in Southern areas but continued to increase in the northern areas of the region.

Production is continuing to increase as more of the herd calves and the earlier calving cows approach peak lactation. Per cow production across all herds is greater than 2 kg MS/cow/day with the Central Southland cows producing approximately 0.3 kg MS/cow more than the other farms.

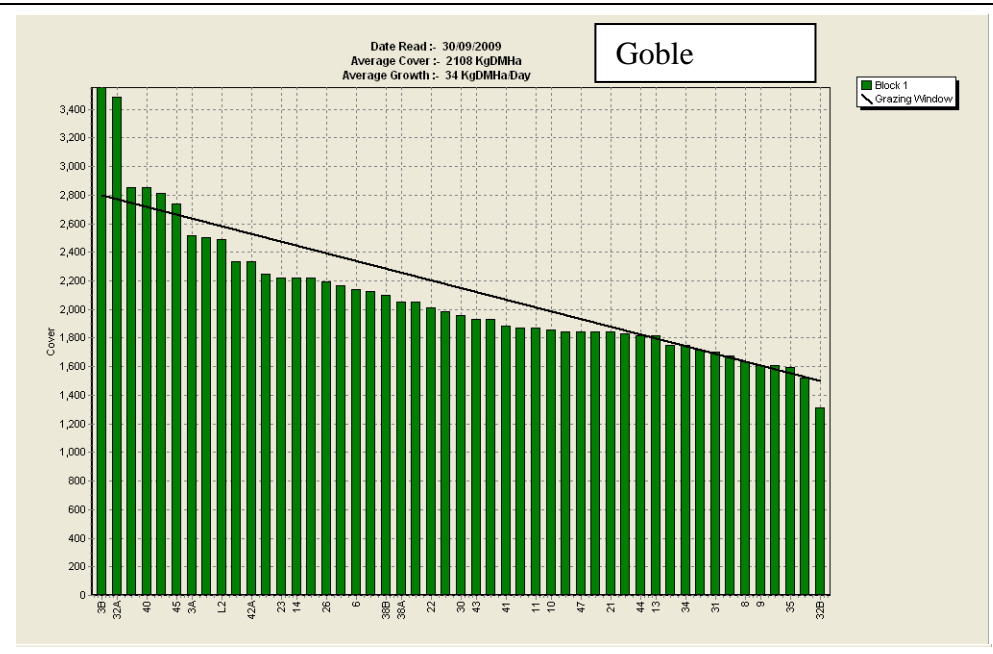
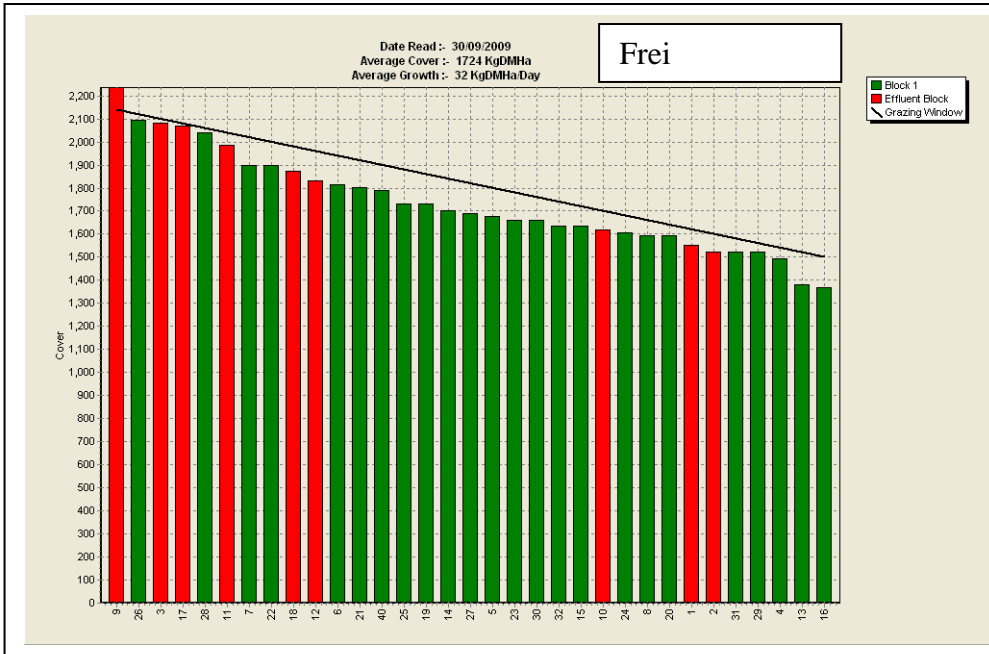
Calving has progressed well on all the farms with all farms now having less than 15% of the herd left to calve. Supplements continue to be fed to the milkers on the Central and Northern Southland farms.

Weekly Tips

Keep staff alert to avoid costly milk quality grades. Be creative with incentives to encourage staff to go the extra mile with milk quality eg weekly/ monthly grade free shouts. Update your cash flow and compare actuals with budget. Analyse the differences and determine what percentage of the annual budget you have spent in individual categories. Determine how much is left and plan against upcoming activities. Don't change farm working expenses in response to payout changes, stick to the original budget and use the extra income to reduce debt.

Farm Summary

	Demo Farm	Eastern	Central	Northern	West Otago	Telford
Average cover (kg DM/ha)	2287	2095	1980	1724	2108	1974
Supplement (kg/cow/day)	0	0	3	4.5	0	0
Rotation length (days)	27	35	30	24	30	35
Stocking rate	2.6	3.08	2.42	2.4	-	2.64
% calved	83	87	90	100	-	90
Milksolids kg/cow	2.05	2.07	2.34	2.08	-	2.03
Milksolids kg/ha	5.0	5.3	5.0	5.0	-	5.4
N (kg/ha)	42	-	-	0	-	27
Soil temperature (°C)	9.3	9.3	9.4	9.2	10.2	8.9
Growth Rate (kg DM/day)	61	20	36	32	34	26
Rainfall	17	18	21	10	15	27
Comments						



Southland Monitor Farm Project

Weekly Update – 16 September 2009

General Comments

Soil temperatures have responded positively to the warmer and more settled weather this week. Only the Northern Southland farm recorded a drop in soil temperature from the previous week, however last week they did record the highest temperature across the region. Temperatures ranged from 8.7 to 10.2 °C. Conditions for the farm walks this week were warm although strong winds buffeted the region in the afternoons on Tuesday and Wednesday. Rainfall totals were significantly less than previous weeks.

Growth rates have increased rapidly over the last 2 weeks on most farms. For many the growth is now exceeding demand (especially on farms with lower percentages of the herd calved). The Demonstration farm has dropped 76 ha out for conservation which they plan to cut immediately. Growth on the Northern Southland farm is struggling, which combined with the majority of the herd calved has resulted in this farm being on the fastest rotation.

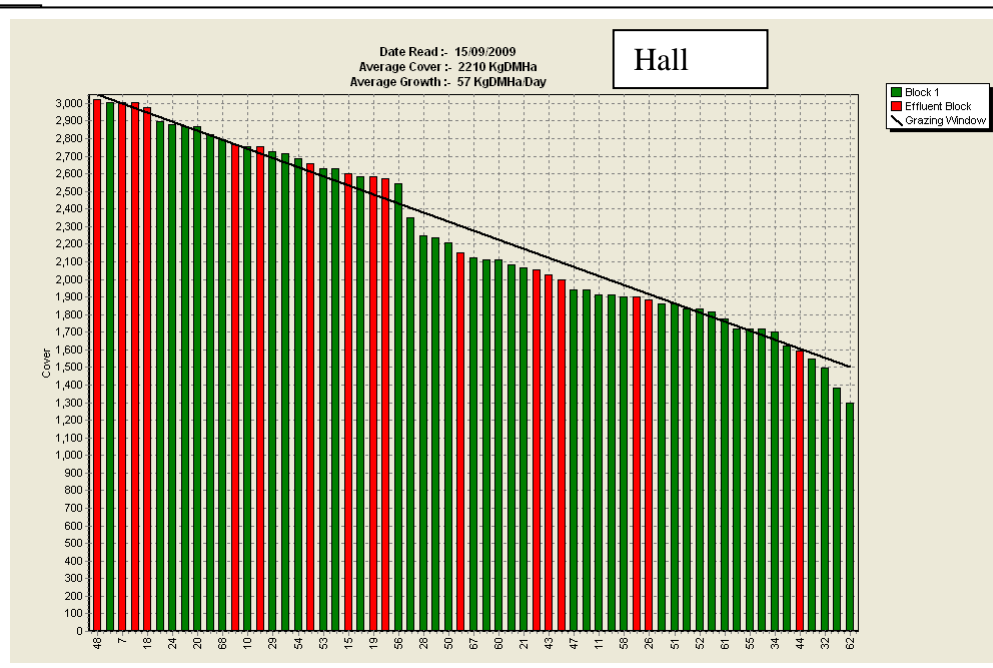
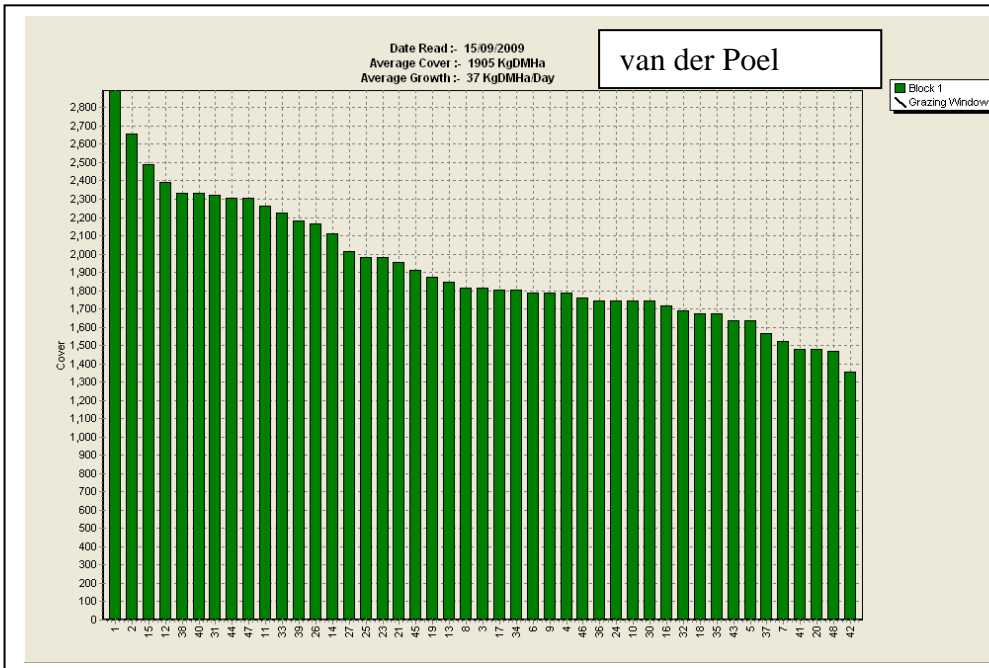
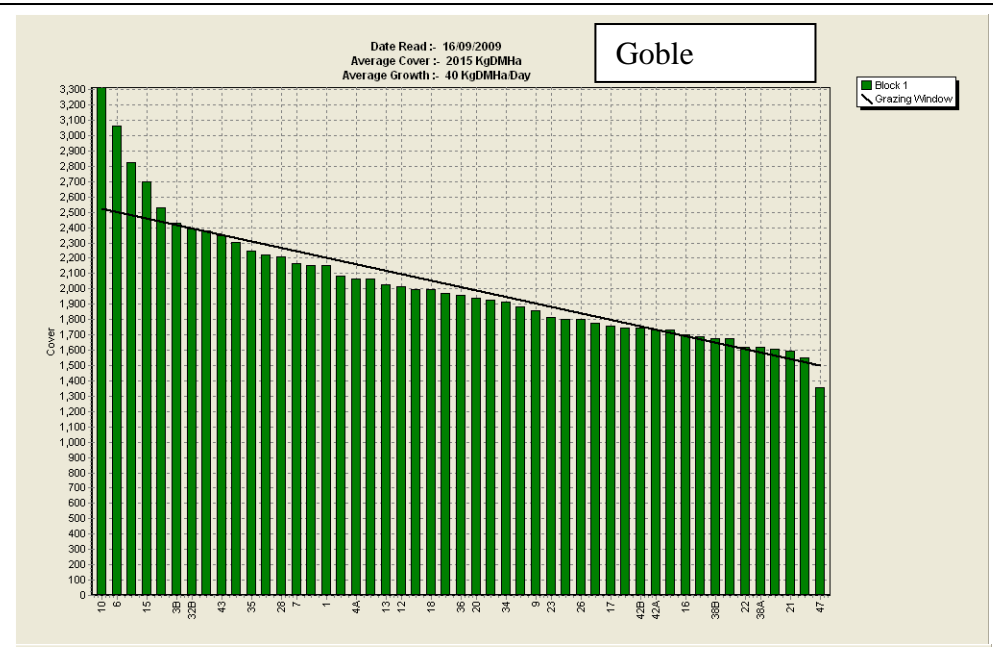
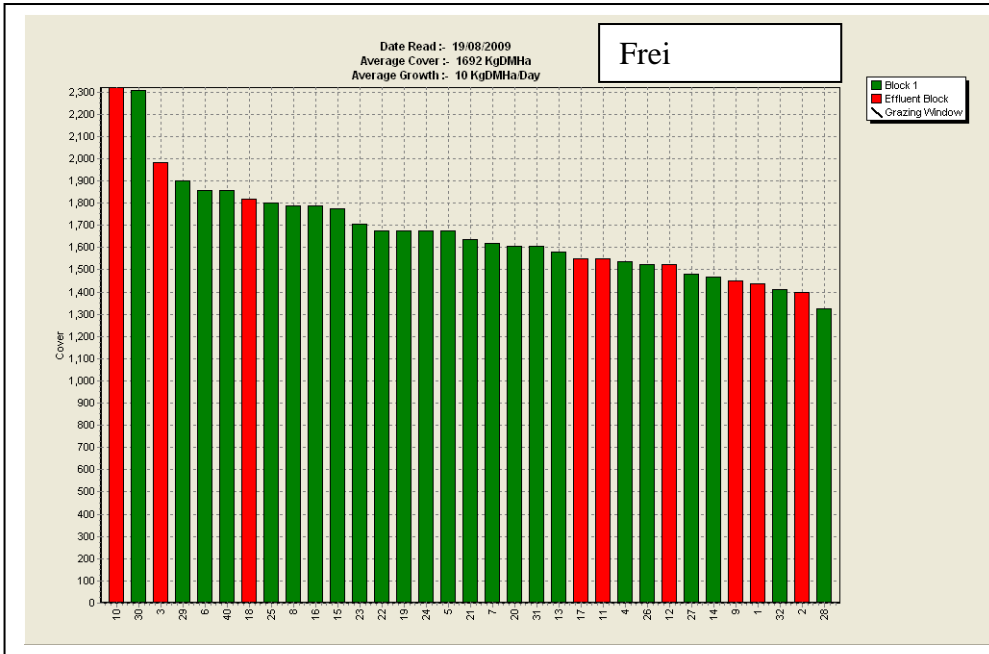
The Northern Southland farm has 93% of the herd in milk now with the remaining monitor farms having 73-77% calved. The Southland Demonstration farm has the lowest percent calved at 66%. The amount of supplements being offered has decreased considerably in the last week. Only the Central Southland and West Otago farms continue to offer supplements to the milkers. Per cow production has continued to increase on all the farms. Per hectare production across the farms this week was remarkably similar – between 4 and 4.4 kg MS/ha..

Weekly Tips

With mating just around the corner now is the time to contact your vet to discuss the herd reproduction plan. Using your fertility focus report will help identify areas that may have impacted on previous reproductive performance. To improve performance, mitigation options for these issues need to be considered. As growth rates increase, don't compromise quality next round by leaving higher residuals as paddocks grazed now will be back for grazing early in the mating period.

Farm Summary

	Demo Farm	Eastern	Central	Northern	West Otago	Telford
Average cover (kg DM/ha)	2395	2210	1905	1653	2015	2210
Supplement (kg/cow/day)	0	0	5	-	2	0
Rotation length (days)	36	45	31	24	30	35
Stocking rate	2.0	2.35	2.1	2.3	1.97	2.35
% calved	66	76	77	93	73	78
Milksolids kg/cow	2.15	1.84	2.25	1.84	2.10	1.88
Milksolids kg/ha	4.0	4.3	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.4
N (kg/ha)	33	-	40	-	-	27
Soil temperature (°C)	9.8	10.2	9.6	8.7	9.0	8.4
Growth Rate (kg DM/day)	59	57	37	18	40	48
Rainfall	8	11	6	0	1	2
Comments						



Southland Monitor Farm Project

Weekly Update – 9 September 2009

General Comments

Trends in soil temperature have varied across the region this week. Coastal and Eastern Southland recorded falls in temperature again this week while the other regions had increases in soil temperature. Conditions for the farm walks this week were much better with more settled weather. Rainfall was higher in coastal, eastern and central Southland. The Northern Southland farm is currently on the fastest round in an attempt to graze out pastures that have had very slow grow this season.

All the monitor farms now have more than 70% of the herd in milk. Supplements offered to the milkers ranges from 0 on the Eastern Southland farm to 6.5 kg/cow/day on the central Southland farm. Per cow production has continued to increase on all the farms. Per hectare production is very much dependent on the percentage of the herd that has calved.

Pasture quality across the region is high with all samples collected in early September returning ME concentrations greater than 11.7 MJ ME/kg DM. Crude protein concentrations are a little more variable with the range from 18 to 24 %. NDF levels range from 38-49%. The challenge for the farms will be to maintain these levels as growth increases and the ability to achieve 15-1600 kgDM/ha post grazing residuals becomes more challenging.

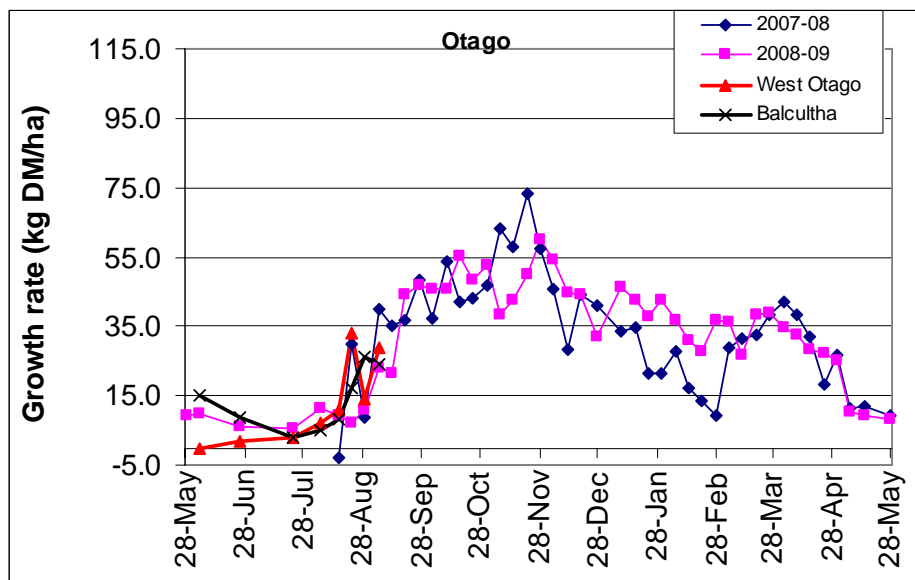
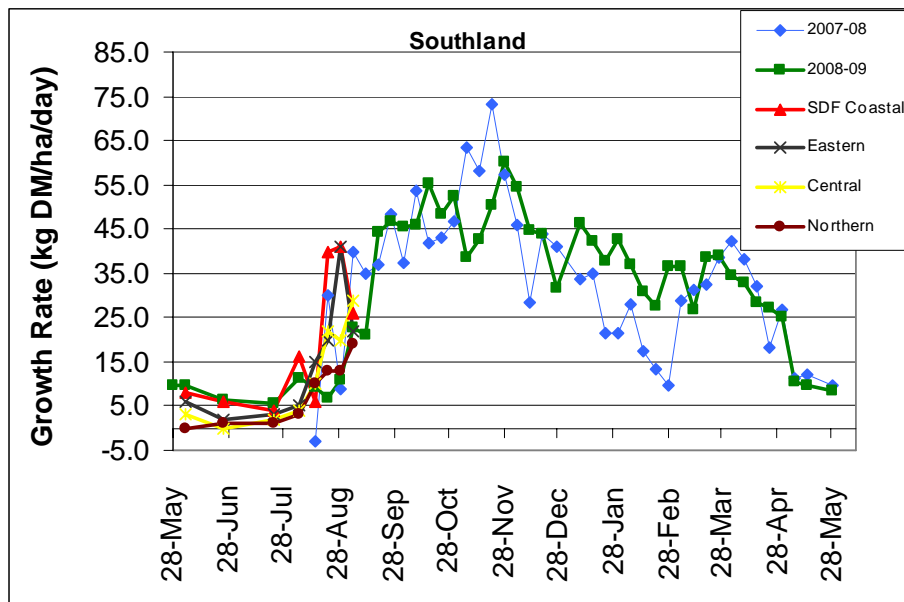
Weekly Tips

With the previous good weather growth rates have increased and pasture covers may be increasing. Keep an eye on quality, especially at the top of the feed wedge. Ensure all paddocks are grazed to 7-8 clicks (15-1600 kg DM/ha) in the first rotation to ensure quality pasture is being offered as the cows hit peak lactation. The ability to use dry cows to clean up paddocks is slowly decreasing as numbers drop. Avoid feeding supplement to the herd if grazing residuals are above 1500kgDM/ha.

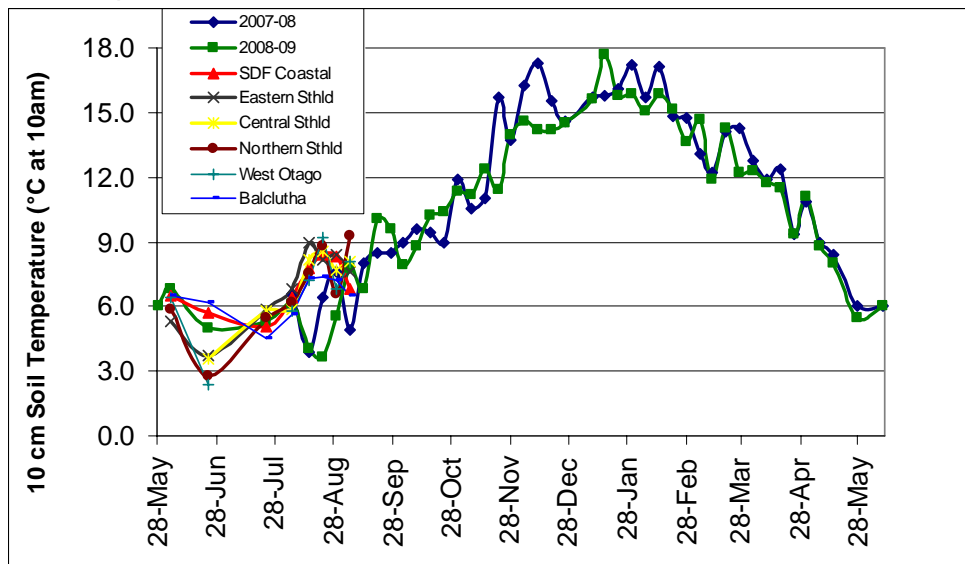
Farm Summary

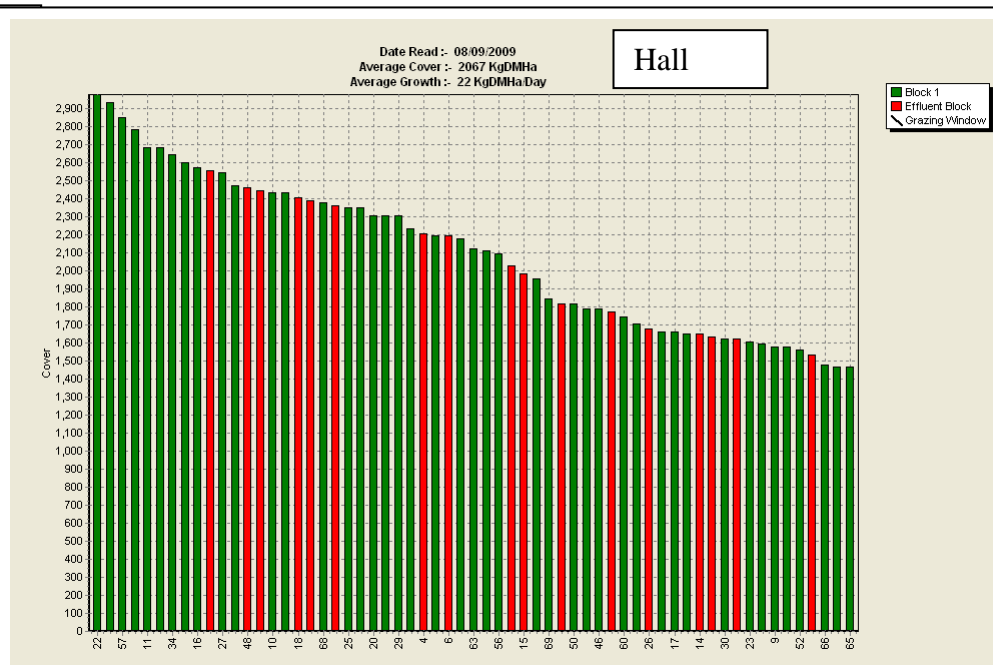
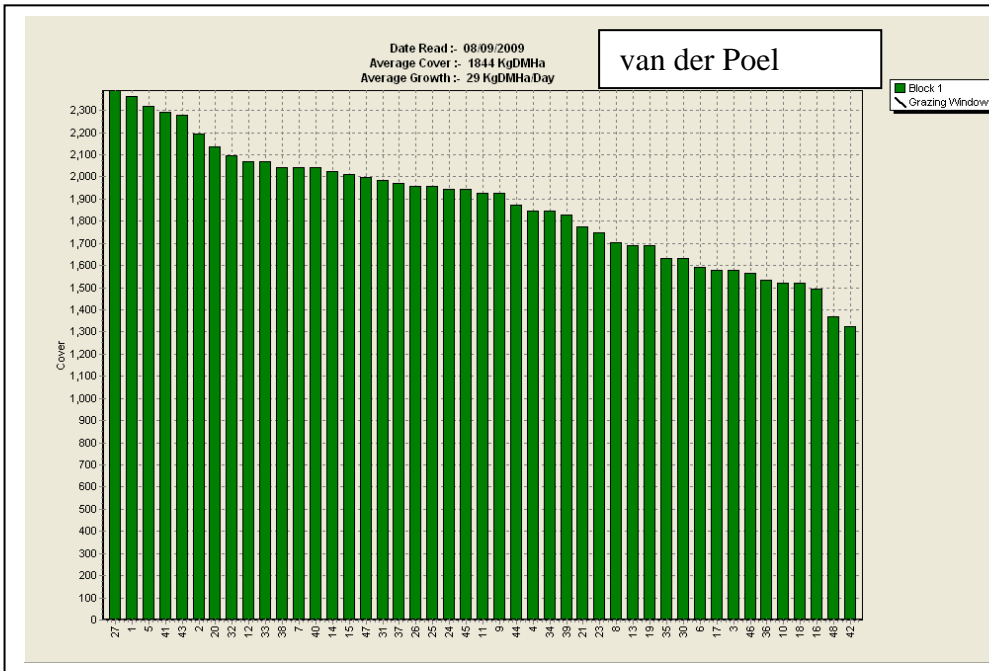
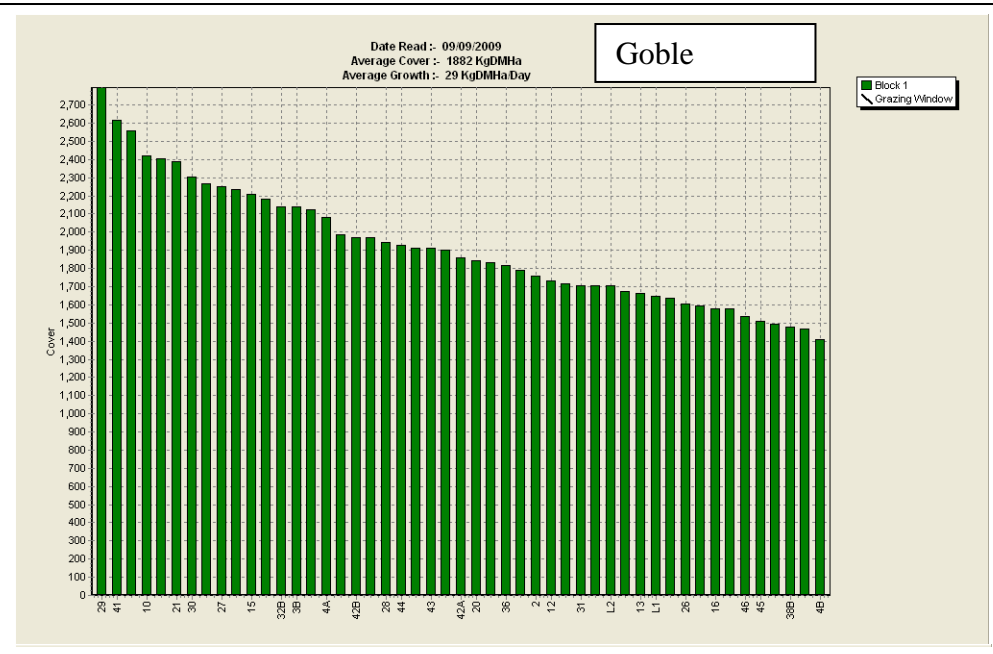
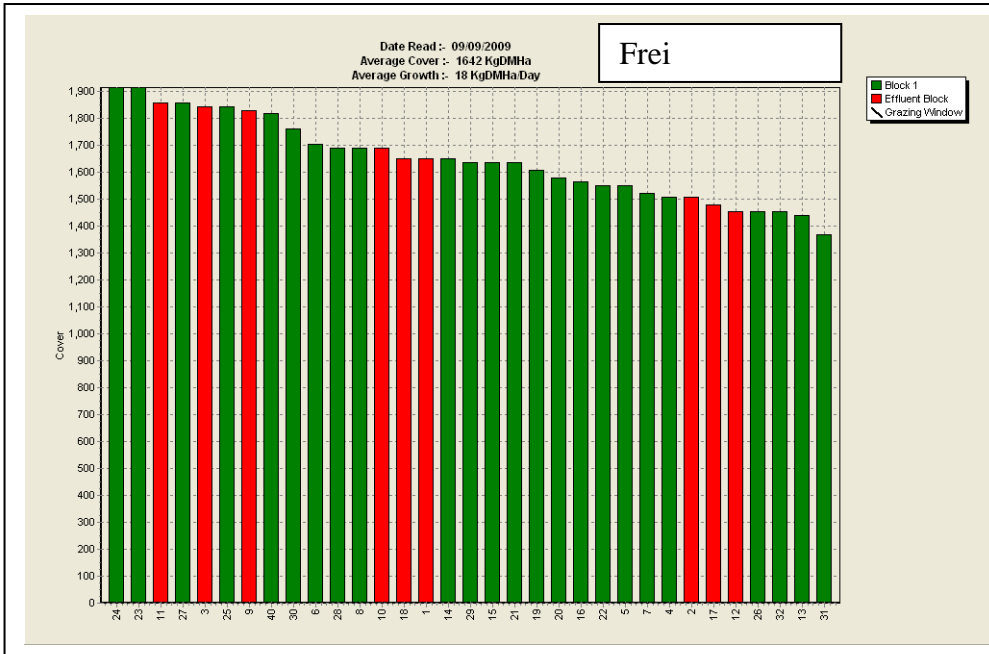
	Demo Farm	Eastern	Central	Northern	West Otago	Telford
Average cover (kg DM/ha)	2276	2067	1844	1642	1882	2063
Supplement (kg/cow/day)	2.5	0	6.5	1	2	2
Rotation length (days)	34	40	34	27	35	45
Stocking rate	1.7	2.3	1.6	2.1	1.7	2.0
% calved	50	70	70	86	76	70
Milksolids kg/cow	2.06	1.67	2.15	1.68	1.98	1.8
Milksolids kg/ha	3.4	2.8	3.4	3.6	3.4	3.6
N (kg/ha)	28					27
Soil temperature (°C)	6.8	7.6	8.1	9.3	8.1	6.5
Growth Rate (kg DM/day)	26	22	29	18	29	24
Rainfall	16	25	21	8	13	0
Comments						

Pasture Growth Rates



Soil Temperature





Southland Monitor Farm Project

Weekly Update – 2 Sep 09

General Comments

Soil temperatures have eased across the region this week as a series of cold fronts crossed the region. Rainfall has been variable with the highest falls recorded in coastal areas. Sleet was falling on Wednesday when the West Otago farm was being walked. Very wet conditions during the walk on Wednesday has likely resulted in an underestimate of paddock covers on the Northern Southland and West Otago farms. The Northern Southland farm still has a very low average pasture cover. Some of the shorter paddocks not grazed since autumn have had very slow growth so these will probably be grazed to try and stimulate growth. Composted material from the wintering shed has been applied to 2 paddocks on this farm at 8 t/ha.

All the monitor farms now have more than 50% of the herd in milk. Supplements offered to the milkers ranges from 0 on the demonstration farm to 8 kg/cow/day on the central Southland farm. Production has started well on all the farms.

The winter grown pasture has maintained its quality with all samples collected in mid August registering ME concentrations greater than 11.5 MJME/kg DM. Crude protein concentrations were all between 20 and 25%. Soluble sugars were relatively low and dry matter percentage ranged from 16 to 22%.

Weekly Tips

Record possible at risk cows as they are identified, early intervention will ensure these cows start cycling early. Continue dusting magnesium and apply to fresh breaks prior to moving cows on, especially in poor weather. During extremely wet conditions, if possible on /off graze to minimise paddock damage. Alternatively graze cows in poorer producing paddocks that will be renovated this season. Keep an eye on staff members. If people are struggling a short break may be required. This could be: a sleep in, afternoon off or an extended lunch break. For some an unscheduled day off may be necessary.

Farm Summary

	Demo Farm	Eastern	Central	Northern	West Otago	Telford
Average cover (kg DM/ha)	2376	2122	1803	1658	1860	2131
Supplement (kg/cow/day)	0	3	8	0.5	1	3
Rotation length (days)	58	60	57	36	47	50
Stocking rate	-	1.72	-	1.88	1.1	1.82
% calved	40	53	52	78	64	62
Milksolids kg/cow	1.80	1.67	1.95	1.55	1.90	1.55
Milksolids kg/ha	2.4	2.4	2.0	2.9	1.2	2.5
N (kg/ha)	28					27
Soil temperature (°C)	8.3	8.4	7.7	6.6	6.8	7.2
Growth Rate (kg DM/day)	41	41	20	13	14	26
Rainfall	66	31	20	16	18	7
Comments				Very wet when walked	Very wet when walked	

