

Westland Monitor Farm Project

Weekly Update – 28 October 2009

General Comments

Growth rates in Westport increased this week, Kowhitirangi remained the same but Mirfin and Kotuku rates decreased. Average growth this week was similar to the same week last season. Soil temperatures rose in Westport and Kotuku but remained constant in Ikamatua and Kowhitirangi. Only the soil temperatures in Westport and Kotuku were higher than the average recorded this time last season. Slight frosts were recorded in Ikamatua and Kowhitirangi this week which may explain the lack of increase in soil temperature in these regions.

The paddocks closed for conservation at Westport and Ikamatua were harvested this week. The Kotuku farm has 42 ha (9% of the farm) shut for conservation.

The quality of pastures samples collected 2 weeks ago were lower than those analysed in September. Metabolisable energy contents ranged from 11.8 to 12.5 MJME/kg DM. NDF levels were between 35 and 46 % which indicates high quality pasture, however soluble sugar levels were relatively low. DM percentages on most farms were only 14-15% which is in the low range for optimum cow intake.

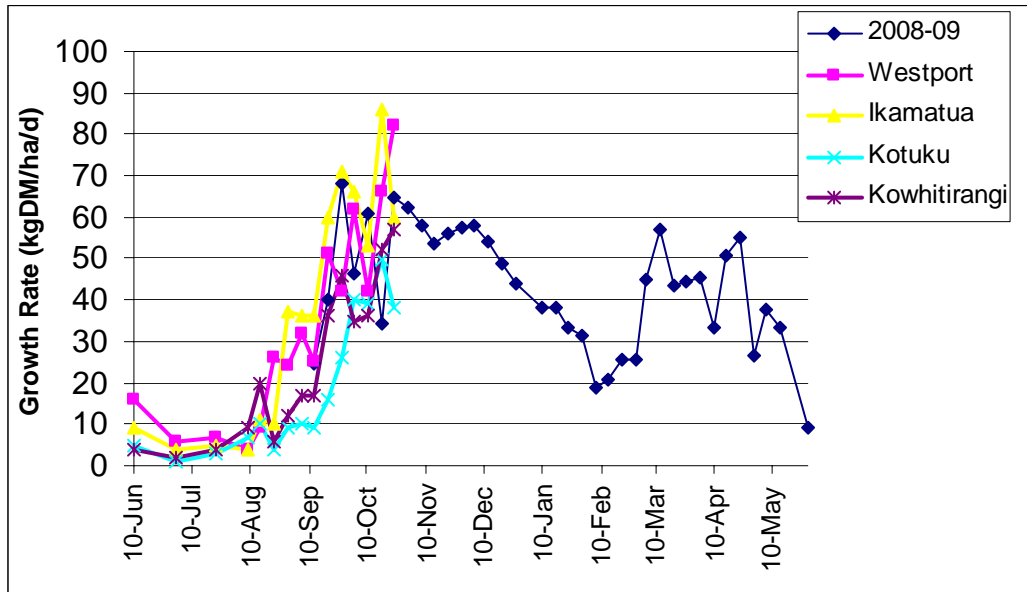
CO comment

Mating is getting under way on most farms. Avoid diet changes if possible and if using intervention do this early. Seed head emergence appears to be a week early this season. Check your pastures by pulling out a couple of plants and opening the stem to observe the presence/ formation of the immature seed head. At this stage seed heads are still relatively palatable. Eating them before they emerge will keep the plant growing strong for the rest of the season and help maintain pasture quality.

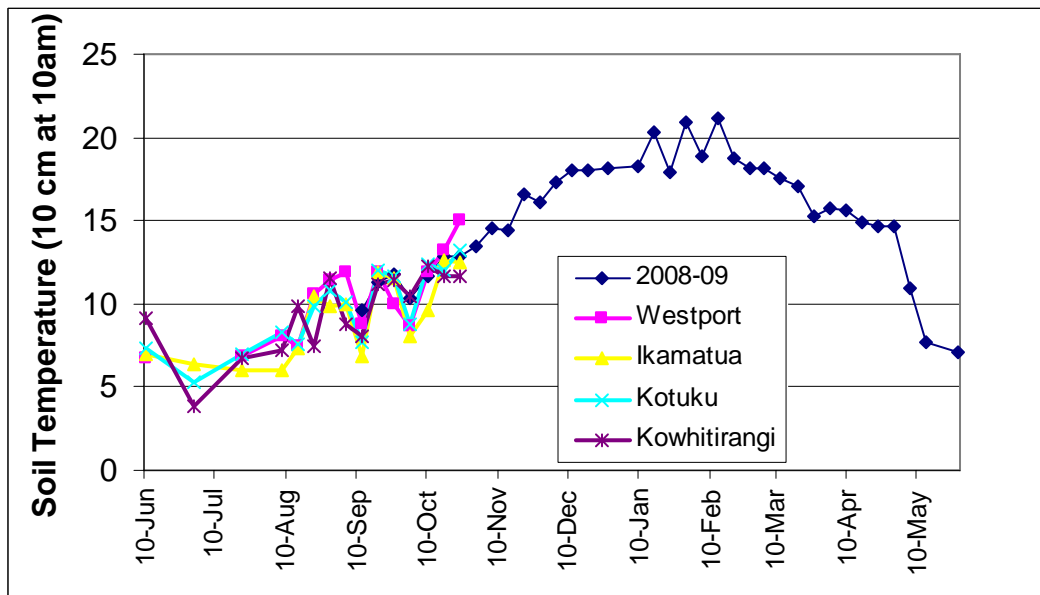
Farm Summary

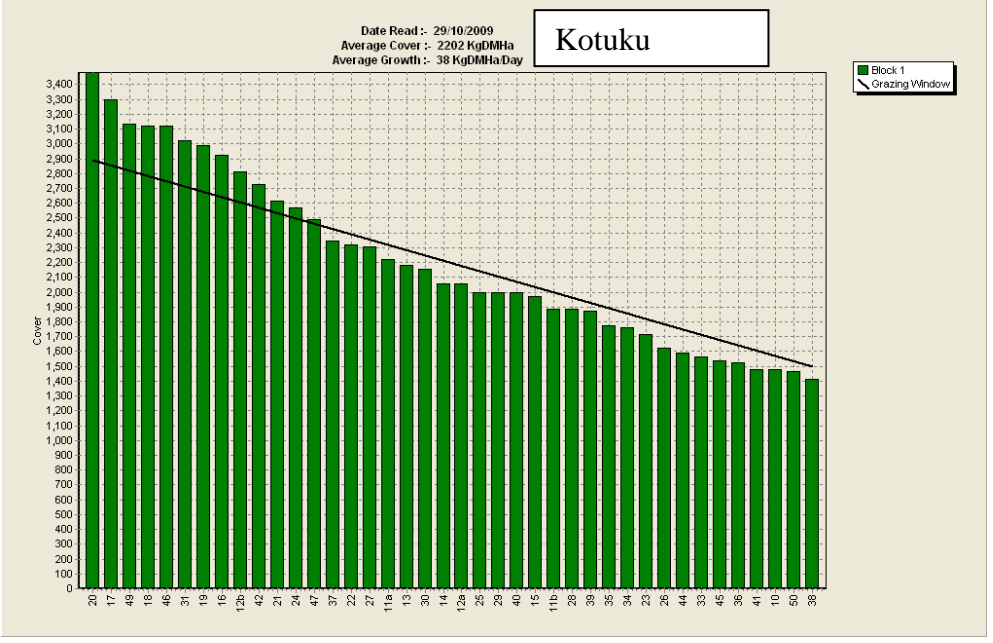
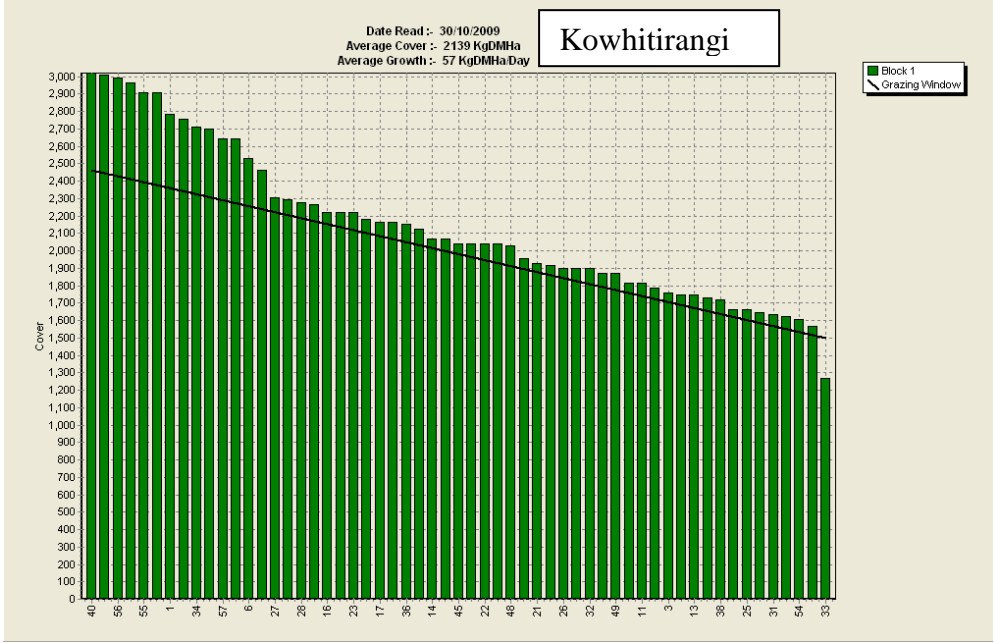
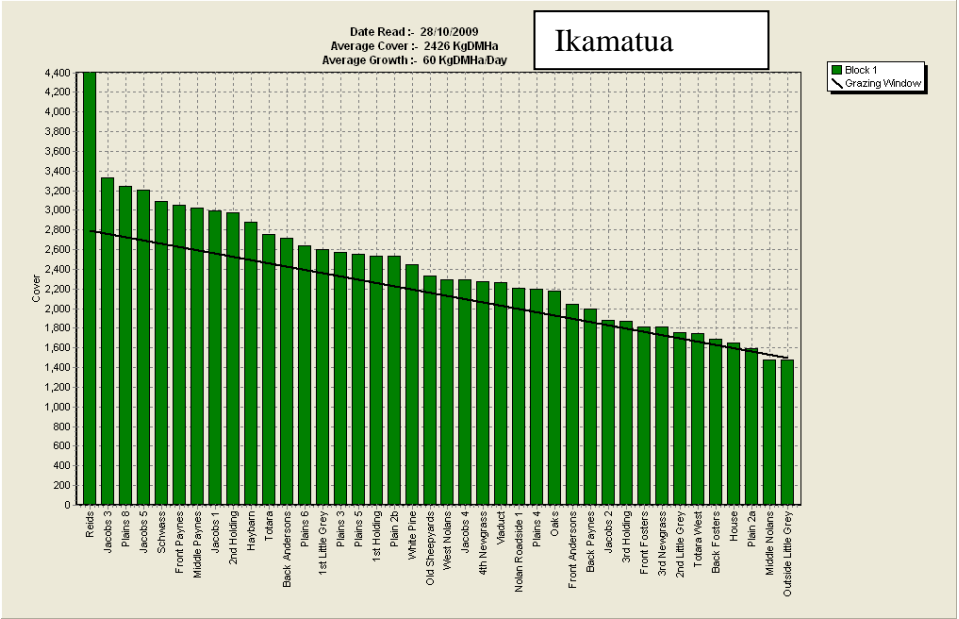
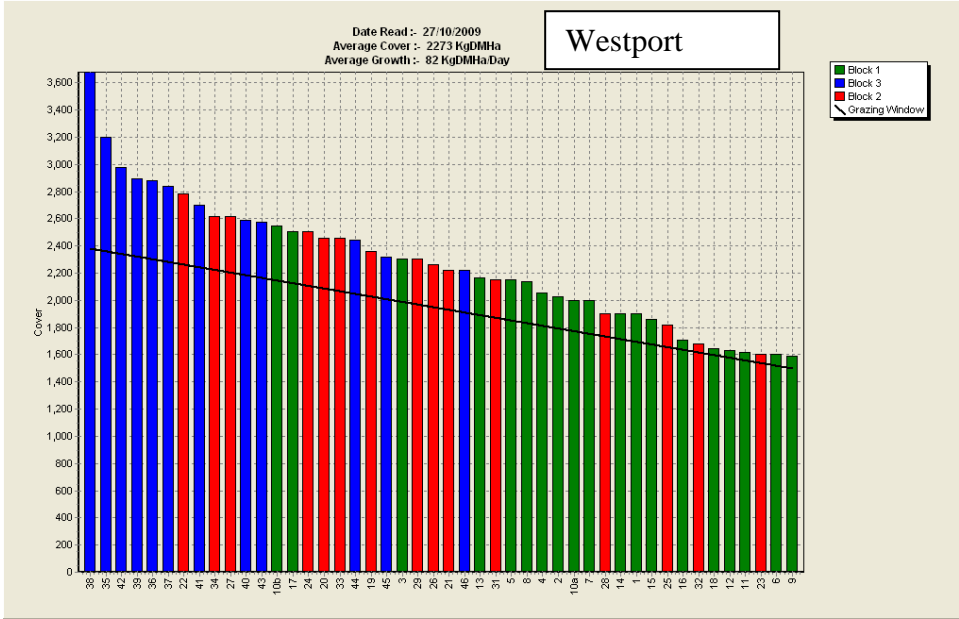
	Westport	Ikamatua	Kotuku	Kowhitirangi
Average cover (kg DM/ha)	2273	2426	2202	2139
Rotation length (days)	19	26	37	25
Stocking rate	2.88	2.74	2.69	2.40
% calved	100	100	99	100
Milksolids kg/cow	1.84	2.27	1.51	1.78
Milksolids kg/ha	5.1	5.9	3.7	4.0
N (kg/ha)	-	-	-	-
Supplement (kg/cow/day)	0	3	2	0
Soil temperature (°C)	15.0	12.5	13.2	11.7
Growth Rate (kg DM/day)	82	60	38	57
Rainfall	50	32	22	63
Comments			Slight frost	Slight frost

Pasture Growth Rates



Soil Temperature





Westland Monitor Farm Project

Weekly Update – 21 October 2009

General Comments

Growth rates increased considerably across the region this week. Last week we reported lower average growth rates across the region this year compared with last year however this trend has changed this week with average growth being 30 kg DM/ha greater than the same period last year. Soil temperature rose in Westport and Ikamatua but eased in the other 2 regions.

The Westport and Ikamatua farms now have paddocks shut for silage. The Ikamatua farm managed to harvest several paddocks over the weekend but plan to harvest the remainder at Labour weekend (weather permitting). The feed wedges are looking better for the Kotuku and Kowhitirangi farms. The Kowhitirangi farm is showing a surplus at the top of the wedge and the Kotuku farm is close to balance date. The higher average farm covers on the Westport and Ikamatua farms is probably contributing to the generally higher growth rates on these properties.

Production appears to have plateaued on all farms this week. The challenge will be for these farms to maintain production while managing pasture quality through this surplus period. In many parts of the country seed head emergence is 7-10 days ahead of previous seasons so achieving a consistent and even post grazing residual in the 1500-1600 kg DM/ha is important to ensure good quality pasture will be on offer in the next round.

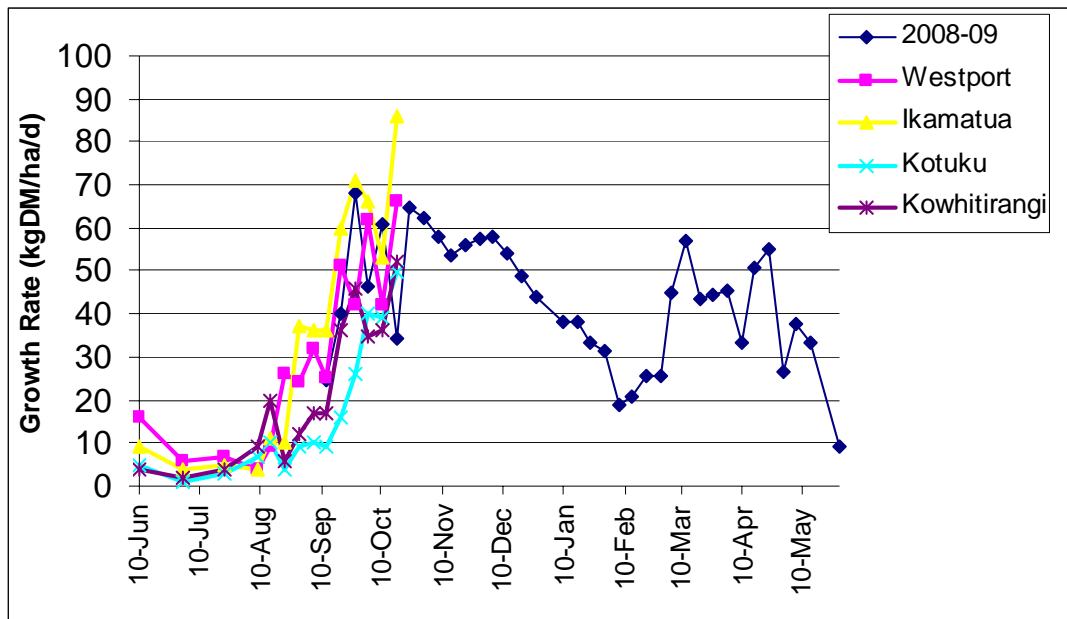
CO comment

Vets are reporting a higher incidence of bloat on West Coast farms this spring possibly because of early clover growth in response to warmer temperatures. Observe cows periodically for signs of bloating and don't put hungry cows into high clover paddocks. Rumensin supplementation can prevent bloating. If bloat is an issue on your farm consult your veterinarian and put together a bloat prevention plan.

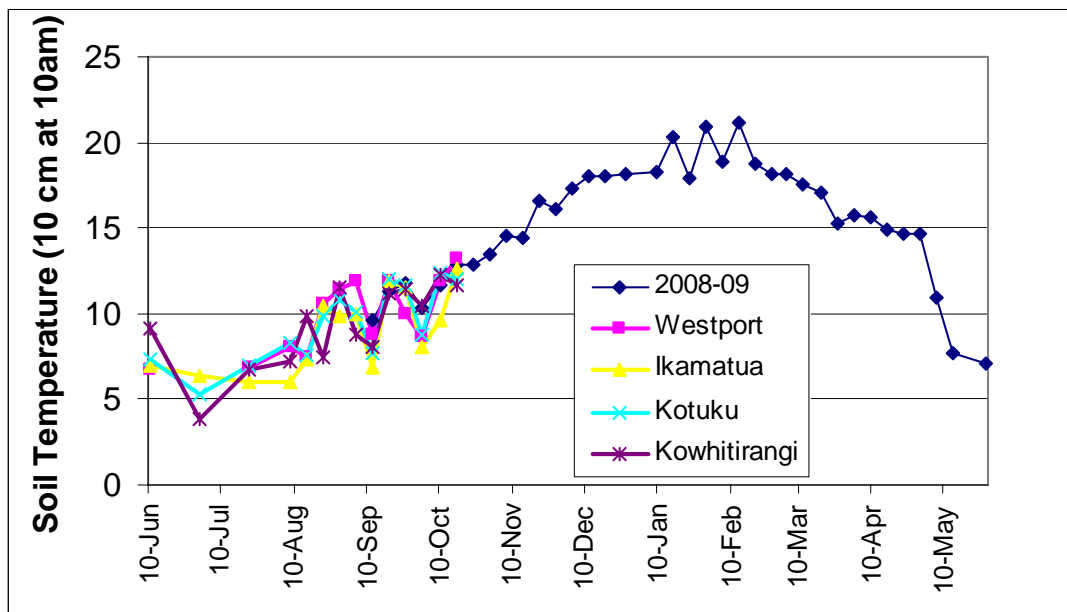
Farm Summary

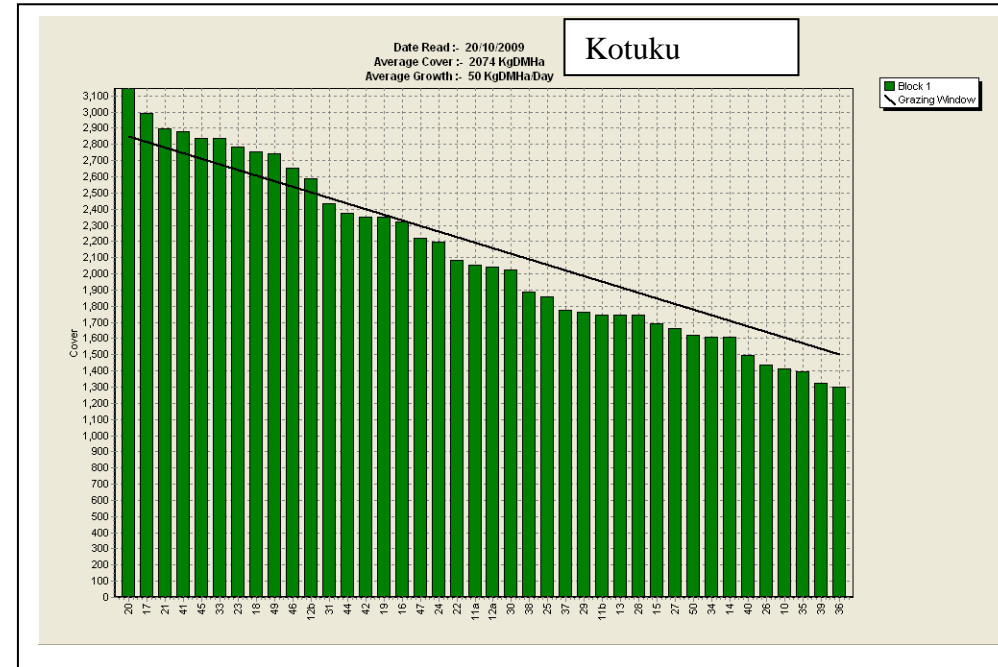
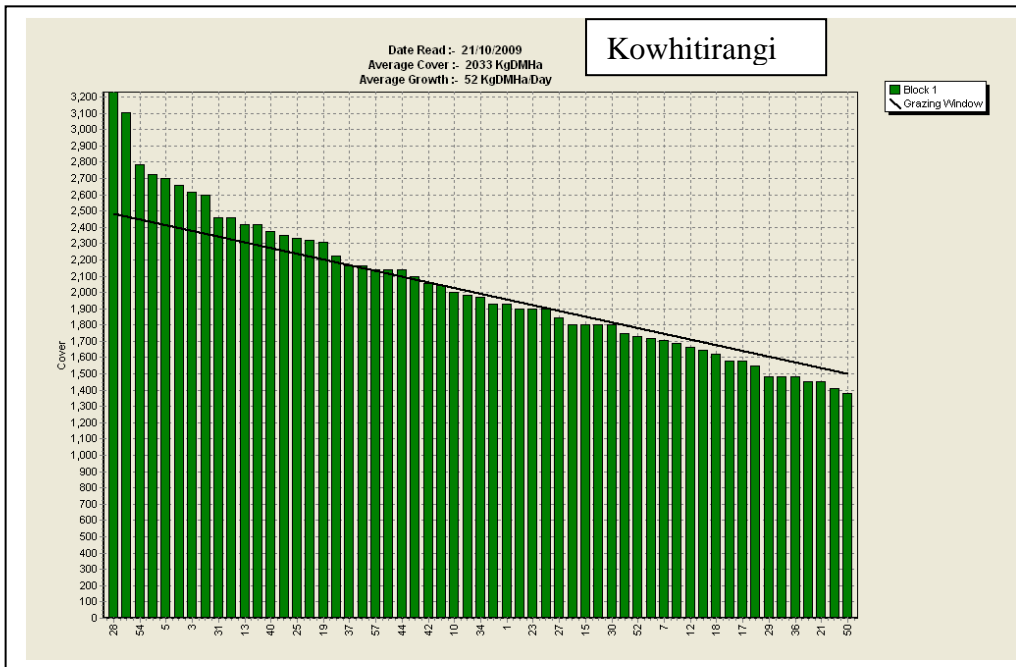
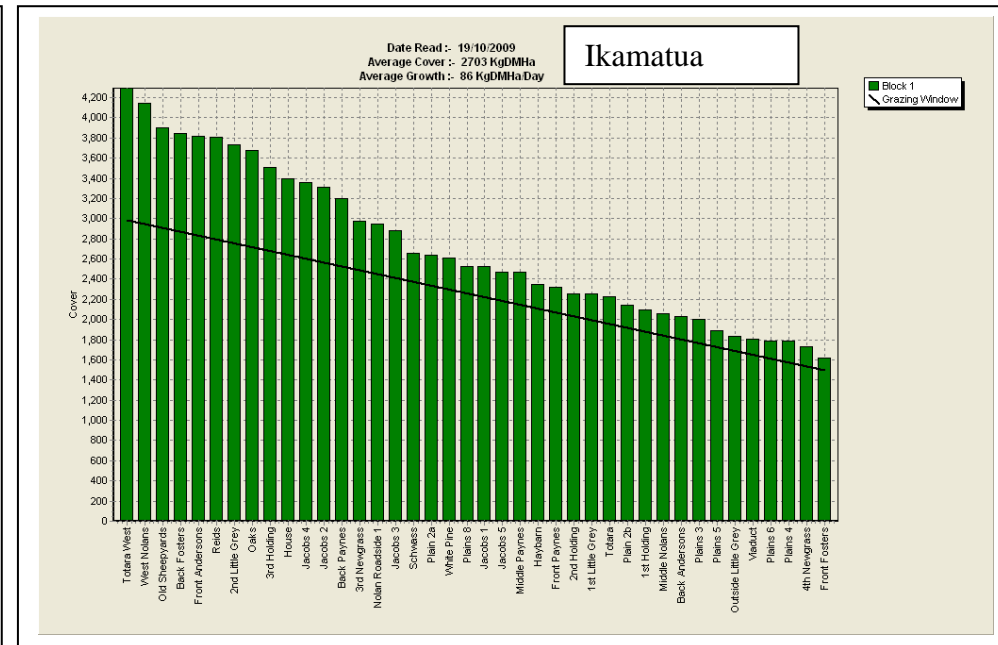
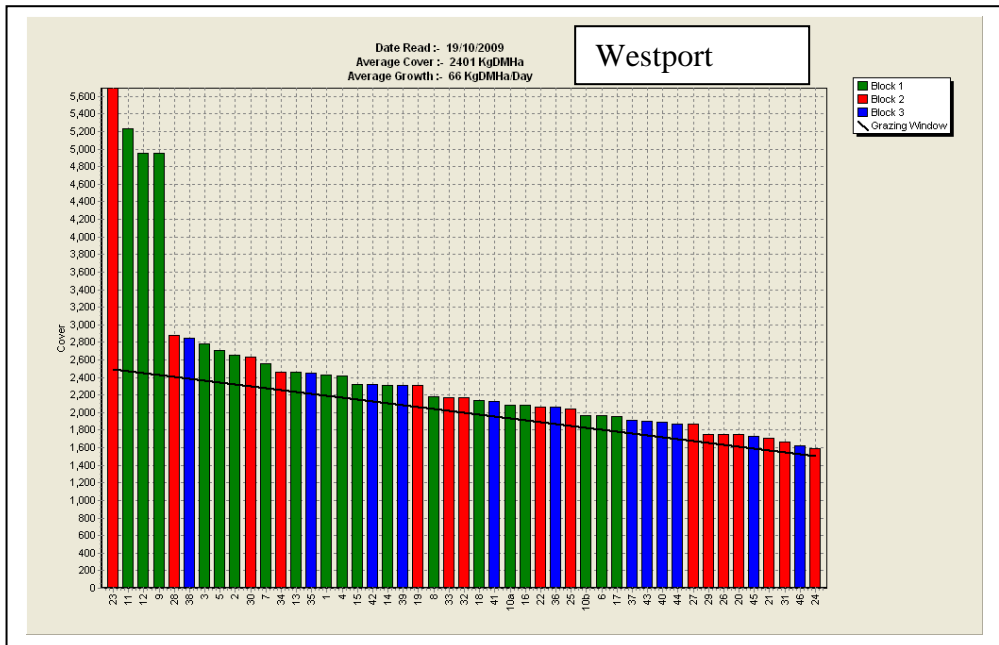
	Westport	Ikamatua	Kotuku	Kowhitirangi
Average cover (kg DM/ha)	2401	2703	2074	2033
Rotation length (days)	20	26	38	24
Stocking rate	2.75	3.17	2.54	2.40
% calved	100	100	98	97
Milksolids kg/cow	1.81	2.26	1.48	1.75
Milksolids kg/ha	5.0	6.1	3.5	3.9
N (kg/ha)	-	-	-	-
Supplement (kg/cow/day)	0	3	1.4	1.0
Soil temperature (°C)	13.2	12.6	12.0	11.6
Growth Rate (kg DM/day)	66	86	50	52
Rainfall	46	57	37	101
Comments				

Pasture Growth Rates



Soil Temperature





Westland Monitor Farm Project

Weekly Update – 14 October 2009

General Comments

Growth rates eased in Westport and Ikamatua this week while remaining constant in Kotuku and Kowhitirangi. After a good early start to the season with growth rates 15-20 kg DM/ha higher than the same time last year growth has slowed in the last 3 weeks with 2 of these weeks recording average growth about 20 kg DM/ha/day lower than last year. Soil temperatures rose again this week after a fall last week. Average soil temperature is the same as this time last year. The Ikamatua farm recorded 4 frosts this week.

The Westport farm now has 8% of the farm shut for conservation. All the feed wedges have tightened up this week with the lower pasture growth rates. The Ikamatua farm is still showing a slight surplus but the feed supply situation on the Kowhitirangi and Kotuku farms has tightened up in the last week.

Production is continuing to increase as more of the herd calves and the earlier calving cows approach peak lactation. The Kowhitirangi herd is producing 1.7 kg MS/cow/day with minimal or no supplement input. The Ikamatua farm is producing 2.27 kg MS/cow/day with 3 kg supplement in the diet.

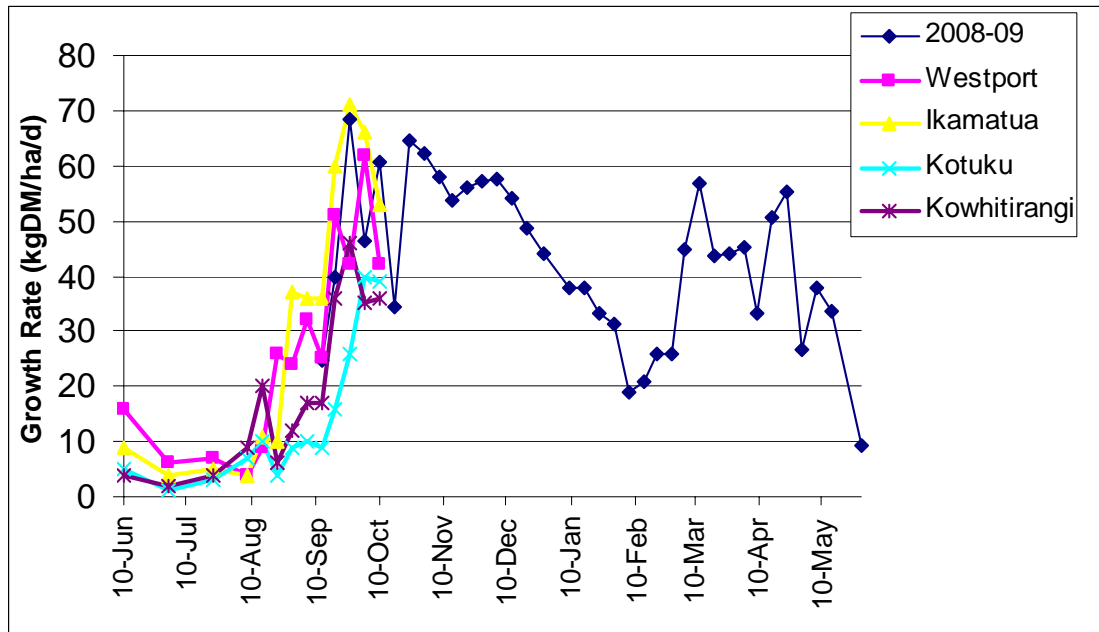
CO comment

Mating is around the corner and minerals such as Copper (Cu) and Selenium (Se) are very important for reproduction. Vets have been reporting generally normal copper levels but low levels of Selenium (Se) in blood. If you are looking to reduce animal health costs and administer only one mineral, Se is likely to be the best option. If in doubt it is best to test the levels in your animals and follow veterinary advice.

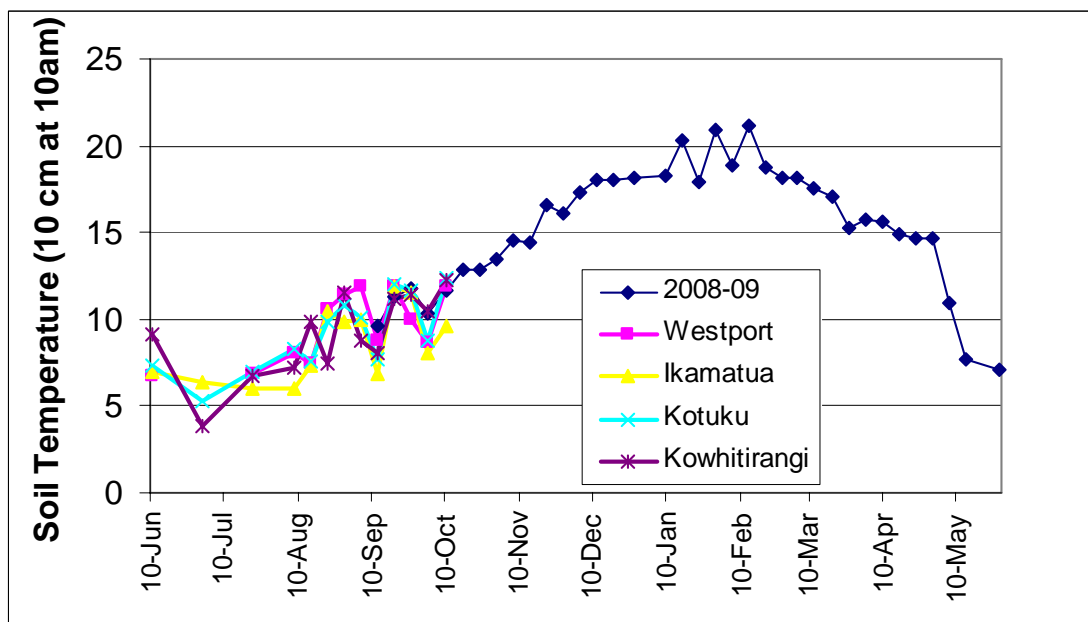
Farm Summary

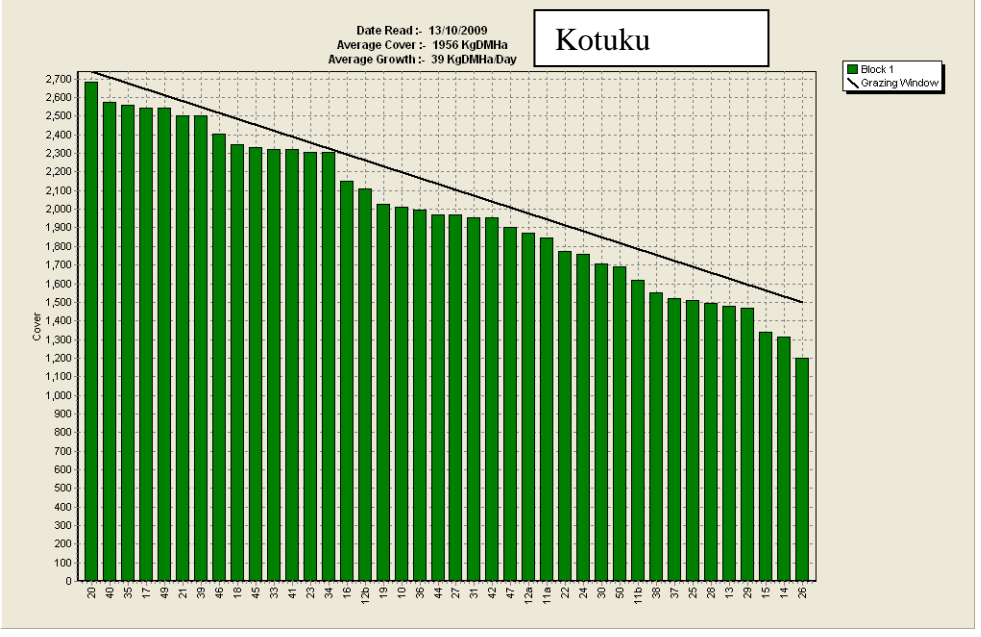
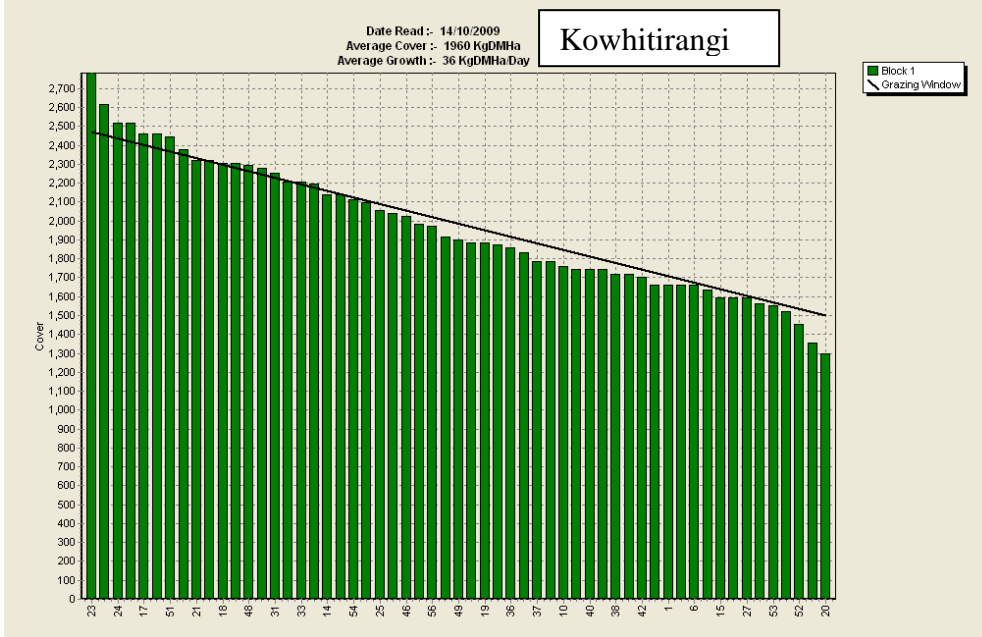
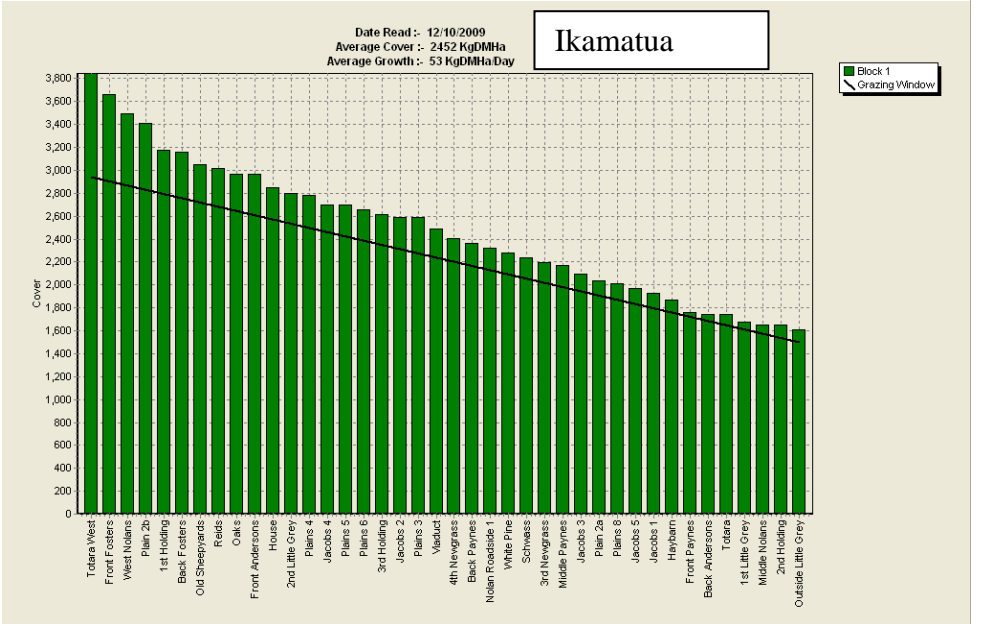
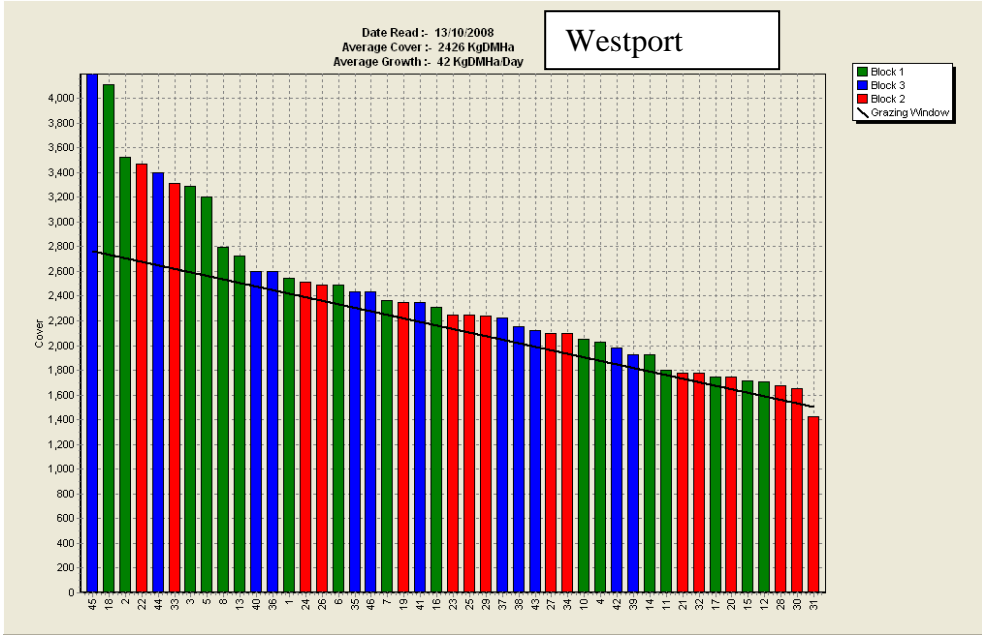
	Westport	Ikamatua	Kotuku	Kowhitirangi
Average cover (kg DM/ha)	2351	2452	1956	1960
Rotation length (days)	20	27	45	25
Stocking rate	3.1	2.8	2.2	2.4
% calved	97	99	92	94
Milksolids kg/cow	-	2.27	1.50	1.72
Milksolids kg/ha	-	6.1	3.3	3.7
N (kg/ha)	-	40	-	-
Supplement (kg/cow/day)	0	3	2.5	1
Soil temperature (°C)	11.9	9.6	12.4	12.2
Growth Rate (kg DM/day)	42	53	39	36
Rainfall	48	49	-	14
Comments		4 frost recorded this week		

Pasture Growth Rates



Soil Temperature





Westland Monitor Farm Project

Weekly Update – 7 October 2009

General Comments

Growth rates remained high across the region this week although the Ikamatua and Kowhitirangi farms did grow less than the previous week. The Westport farm felt their growth was higher than the farm conditions indicated. This may have been compensation for a lower measured growth last week when the farm was plated in very wet conditions. The general growth rate trend is very similar to this time last year. The Kotuku farm appears to be starting to get some momentum with growth and has been applying N fertiliser behind the cows for the last 2 weeks. Soil temperature eased across the region this week. The trend in soil temperature is nearly exactly the same as this time last year. Soil temperature this week was, on average, 1.5 °C lower than this time last year.

The Westport farm now has 8% of the farm shut for conservation. Both the Ikamatua farms are showing a surplus developing in the wedge, however the Kotuku farm is still showing a deficit given the current average pasture cover and demand.

Production is continuing to increase as more of the herd calves and the earlier calving cows approach peak lactation. The Kowhitirangi and Westport herds are producing 1.7 kg MS/cow/day with minimal or no supplement input.

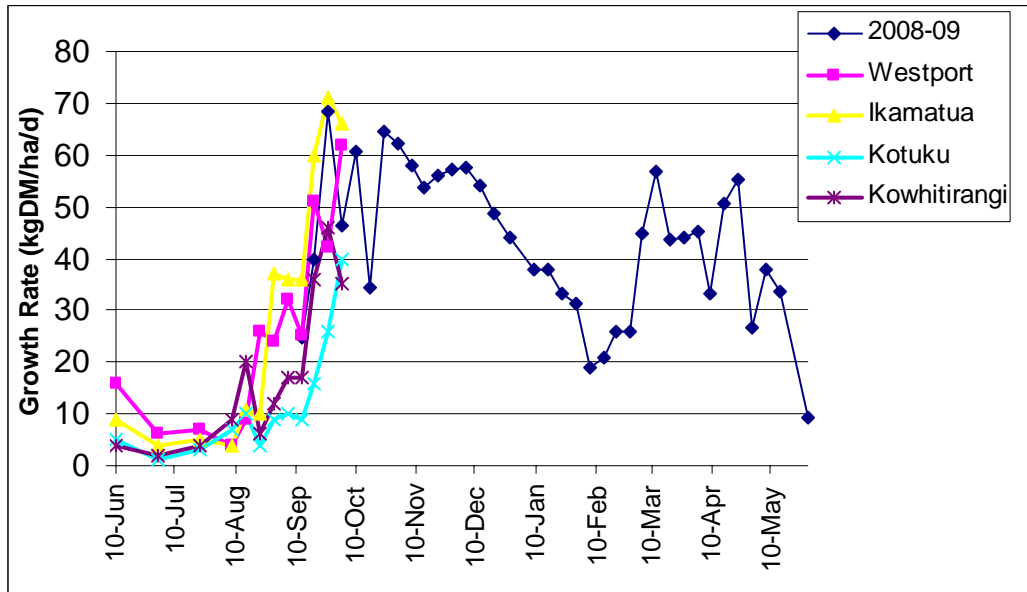
CO comment

Sustained high growth rates in several regions over the last 3 weeks have resulted in surplus grass appearing. Management of this surplus will be critical to ensuring good quality pasture is available in subsequent rounds. Delays in getting pasture ensiled increases pressure on the grazing area and may result in poor quality silage and slow re-growth. To achieve a target of 90% of the herd mated in 3 weeks, heat detection must be the highest priority job, even prior to the start of mating.

Farm Summary

	Westport	Ikamatua	Kotuku	Kowhitirangi
Average cover (kg DM/ha)	2460	2505	1887	1978
Rotation length (days)	25	27	45	23
Stocking rate	2.8	2.8	2.1	2.4
% calved	96	99	-	90
Milksolids kg/cow	1.70	2.28	-	1.72
Milksolids kg/ha	4.6	6.4	-	3.4
N (kg/ha)	-	40	-	-
Supplement (kg/cow/day)	0	3	3	1
Soil temperature (°C)	8.7	8.1	8.8	10.4
Growth Rate (kg DM/day)	62	66	40	35
Rainfall	30	67	38	57

Pasture Growth Rates



Soil Temperature

