

SDF Farm Walk Notes

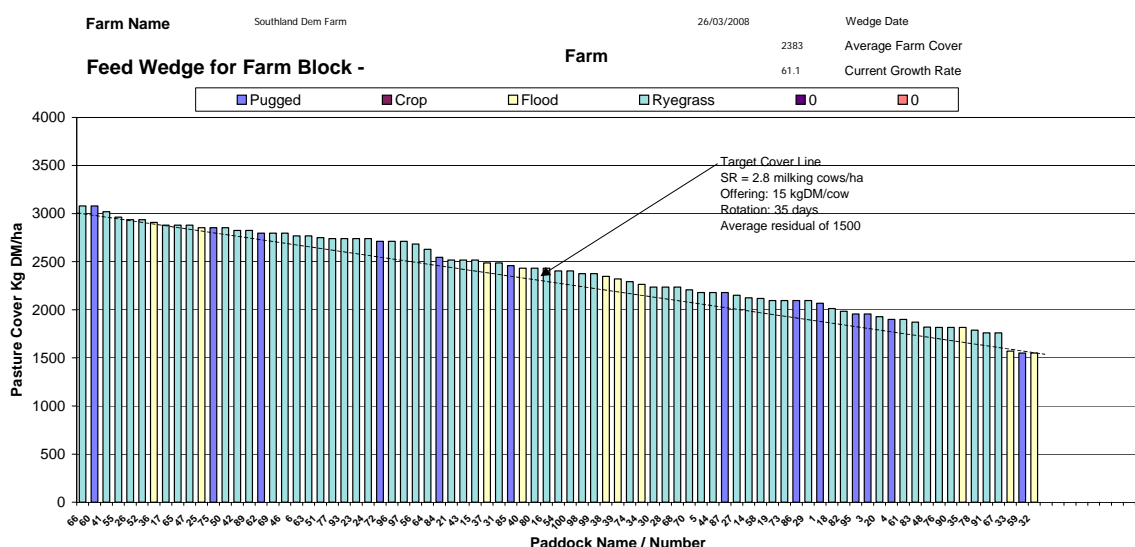
Wednesday, 26th March 2008

Critical issues for the short term

1. Aim for rotation length no less than 1/35th of the farm a day with plan to extend rotation as feed wedge allows us to.
2. With current feed wedge looking almost perfect, we will now close up silage stack.
3. 30 ha of newly renovated short-rotation ryegrasses are generally establishing well and they are expected to be in the grazing round towards the end of April.

Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance
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4. Soil temperatures have increased to an average of 12.3 degrees this week from 11 degrees last week but there is a big range around this.
5. 12.4 mm of rain this week has been very useful and has assisted to enhance pasture growth rates.
6. Average pasture cover has increased this week to 2383 kg DM / ha, up from 2202 kg DM / ha last week. This week's growth rate of 61.1 kg DM / ha /day is above demand of 42 kg DM/ha/day and is up on last weeks growth of 41 kg DM /ha /day. With this week's silage input, our pasture feed demand was around 38 kg DM / ha / day.
7. Milk solids production is around 1.42 kg MS/cow/day (1.40 kg last week). Per hectare production is now 3.71 kg MS /ha/day.
8. This week's pasture feed wedge:



9. The top of the target line on the pasture wedge above is based on a stocking rate of 2.8 cows/ha x rotation length of 35 days x nominal allocation of 15 kg DM plus a residual of 1500 kg DM/ha. The pasture wedge is almost perfect and we have decided to discontinue feeding silage.
10. An average of 6.2 ha has been grazed per day for the past week. This is 1/39th of farm's pasture area available per day.
11. Our plan is to continue to extend the rotation length as the feed wedge allows us to do so. With the expectation that pasture growth rates will be above demand again this coming week, we are expecting pre-grazing covers to rise above 3000 kg DM / ha by the farm walk next week allowing us to increase the rotation length to 40 days.
12. We have used 7.9 t DM silage this week, which should leave about 145t DM of silage in the stack (an updated measure of the stack indicates 615 cubic metres). Our feed budget has 100t of silage available for the spring (as insurance), which currently leaves about 45t of silage that we can use this autumn if we need to.
13. We continue to apply Urea behind the cows at a rate of 80 kg / ha (37 kg N / ha). There is a good amount of fertiliser N now in the system (18t of urea – 32 kg N / ha - has been applied to the farm since rain at the end of February). This N in the system is definitely assisting with building covers / extending the rotation length due to boosted pasture growth rates.
14. The 30ha of new re-grassed paddocks that was drilled three weeks ago with Delish and Ohau short-rotation / long-rotation ryegrasses is now beginning to establish and we expect this to be grazeable towards the end of April. With the introduction of this area into the round, we will automatically extend rotation length further. Having this coming into the round has assisted us with the decision to cease silage feeding at this stage.
15. Inspection of our winter crop paddocks has shown up Aphid and Cabbage White butterfly caterpillar infestations. With advice from Andrew Miller at Ravensdown, we sprayed the crops with systemic insecticides by helicopter this week to control the problem.
16. There are 20 dried-off cows that were obvious culls that have been sent to the works this week.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **Wednesday 2nd April**.

On behalf of the **Management Group** David Newport (Farm Manager), Alex Hunter (Consultant), Adrian van Bysterveldt, Chris Crossley (DairyNZ), Brad Houghton (Herd Manager).

SDF Farm Walk Notes

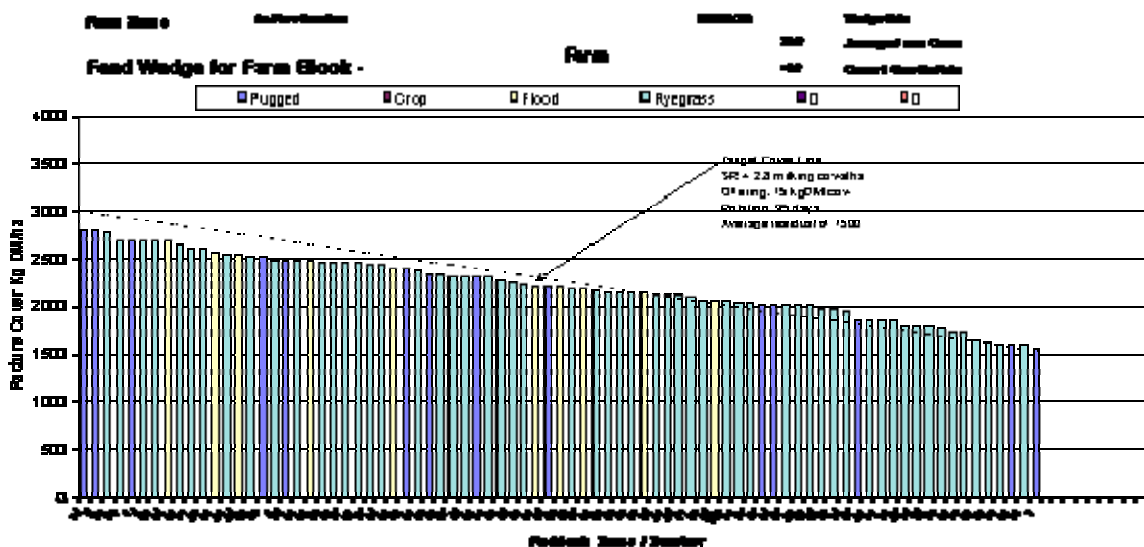
Wednesday, 19th March 2008

Critical issues for the short term

1. Maintain rotation length no less than 1/35th of the farm a day.
2. We are prepared to reduce the amount of silage fed if cows are taking longer to reach target pasture residuals.
3. Spray winter crop paddocks for aphid and cabbage white butterfly

Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance
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4. Soil temperatures have remained at an average of 11 degrees this week but there is a big range around this.
5. Only 0.9 mm of rain this week means that soil moisture levels are again starting to limit pasture growth.
6. Average pasture cover has increased this week to 2202 kg DM / ha, up from 2140 kg DM / ha last week. This week's growth rate of 41 kg DM / ha /day is around demand of 42 kg DM/ha/day and is down on last weeks growth of 47.8 kg DM /ha /day. With our current silage input, our pasture feed demand this last week was around 30 kg DM / ha / day.
7. Milk solids production is around 1.40 kg MS/cow/day (1.37 kg last week). Per hectare production is now 3.71 kg MS /ha/day.
8. This week's pasture feed wedge:



9. The top of the target line on the pasture wedge above is based on a stocking rate of 2.8 cows/ha x rotation length of 35 days x nominal allocation of 15 kg DM plus a residual of 1500 kg DM/ha.
10. An average of 6.46 ha has been grazed per day for the past week. This is 1/37th of farm's pasture area available per day.
11. There are 31 dried-off cows that are now back on the farm off waste areas, cleaning up paddocks on the milking platform.
12. Our plan is to continue to lengthen the rotation length while soil conditions are firm and silage utilization on the paddock is as good as it gets. By continuing to feed slightly less silage this week than last week we expect to use only 1/35th of the farm a day and lift the pre-grazing covers to the required 3000 kg DM/ha. This will allow us the flexibility to cut out silage and at least maintain the grazed area per day at the target 1/35th of the farm a day.
13. We have used 24.1 t DM silage this week, which should leave about 153t DM of silage in the stack. Our feed budget has 100t of silage available for the spring (as insurance), which currently leaves about 53t of silage that we can use this autumn.
14. The 30ha of new re-grassed paddocks that was drilled two weeks ago with Delish and Ohau short-rotation / long-rotation ryegrasses is now beginning to germinate.
15. Inspection of our winter crop paddocks has shown up Aphid and Cabbage White butterfly caterpillar infestations. With advice from Andrew Miller at Ravensdown, we will spray the crops with systemic insecticides to control the problem.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **Wednesday 26th March**. On behalf of the **Management Group** David Newport (Farm Manager), Alex Hunter (Consultant), Adrian van Bysterveldt, Chris Crossley (DairyNZ), Brad Houghton (Herd Manager).

SDF Farm Walk Notes

Wednesday, 12th March 2008

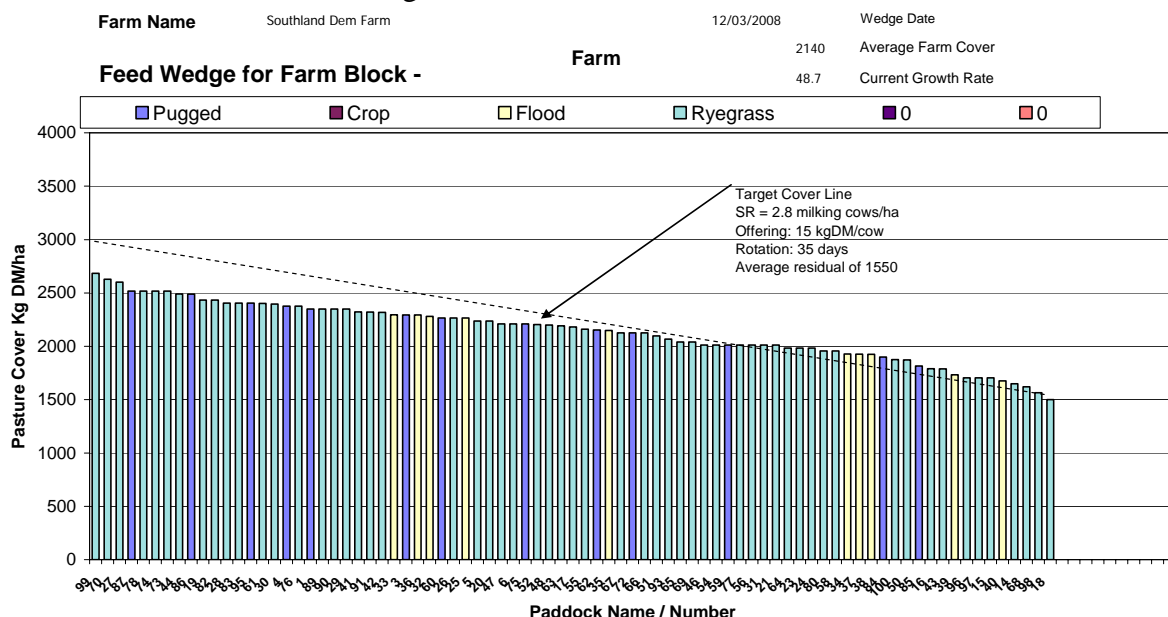
Critical issues for the short term

1. Maintain rotation length no less than 1/30th of the farm a day while actually targeting an average for the week of 1/35th of the farm a day.
2. Be prepared to reduce the amount of silage fed if cows are taking longer to reach target pasture residuals.
3. Inspect all silage bales in the Brassica crops for holes in the wrap.

Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance
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4. Soil temperatures have dropped from 12.2 degrees to an average of 11 degrees this week but there is a big range around this.
5. Another 23.7 mm of rain this week means that soil moisture levels are no longer limiting pasture growth.
6. We are continuing to have improved growth rates with 49 kg DM/ha this week (47.3 kg DM / ha /day last week).
7. Average pasture cover has increased this week to 2140kg DM/ ha, up from 2001kg DM/ha last week. This week's growth rate of 49kg DM/ha/day is above demand of 42kg DM/ha/day. With our current silage input, our pasture feed demand last week was around 30kg DM/ha/day.
8. Milk solids production is around 1.37 kg MS/cow/day (1.43 kg last week). Per hectare production is now 3.65kg MS/ha/day.

9. This weeks Pasture Wedge



10. The top of the target line on the pasture wedge above is based on a stocking rate of 2.8 cows/ha x rotation length of 35 days x nominal allocation of 15 kg DM plus a residual of 1550 kg DM/ha.
11. An average of 8.05 ha has been grazed per day for the past week. This is 1/30th of farm's pasture area available per day. This has been helped by the fact that the 31 dried off cows are grazing waste areas outside the milking platform. This week they will be coming back to clean up paddocks on the milking platform.
12. Our plan is to continue to lengthen the rotation length while soil conditions are firm and silage utilization on the paddock is as good as it gets. By continuing to feed a similar amount of silage this week as last week we expect to use only 1/35th of the farm a day and lift the pre-grazing covers to between 2800 and 3000 kg DM/ha. This will allow us the flexibility to cut out silage and increase the area per day to 1/30th of the farm a day on days when it is raining
13. 221t of silage was added to an existing stack of approximately 80t, making a total stack of 300t. There can be up to 15% fermentation losses in a properly sealed stack leaving 255t. In our feed budgets we had allocated 120t of this for the autumn.
14. Currently our measurement of the remaining stack works out that there is 800 cubic meters of silage left which at 220 kg DM/cubic metre (very well compacted silage in a bunker) leaves about 177t of silage.
15. Our feed budget has 100t of silage available for the spring (as insurance), which currently leaves about 77t of silage that we can use this autumn. This is slightly different to previous farm walk notes and reflects that these issues need to be re-evaluated regularly.
16. The 30ha of new re-grassed paddocks have now been drilled with Delish and Ohau short-rotation / long-rotation ryegrasses at a sowing rate of 30 kg/ha. 150 kg/ha of Ravensdown "Cropmaster 20" and 4 kg/ha of slug bait is also being drilled with the seed.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **Wednesday, 17th March 2008.**

On behalf of the **Management Group** David Newport (Farm Manager), Alex Hunter (Consultant), Adrian van Bysterveldt, Chris Crossley (DairyNZ), Brad Houghton (Herd Manager).

SDF Farm Walk Notes

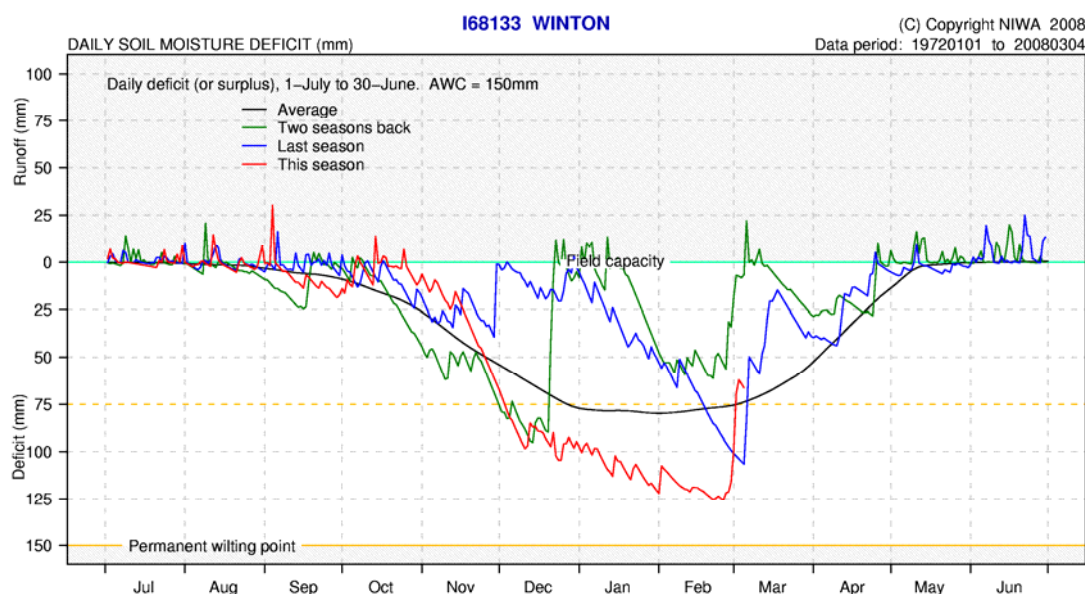
Wednesday, 5th March 2008

Critical issues for the short term

1. **Maintain rotation length**
2. **Significant rain has arrived this week – continuing to feed silage**
3. **As pastures freshen up, continue to concentrate on making cows clean up dead matter in base as much as possible**

Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance

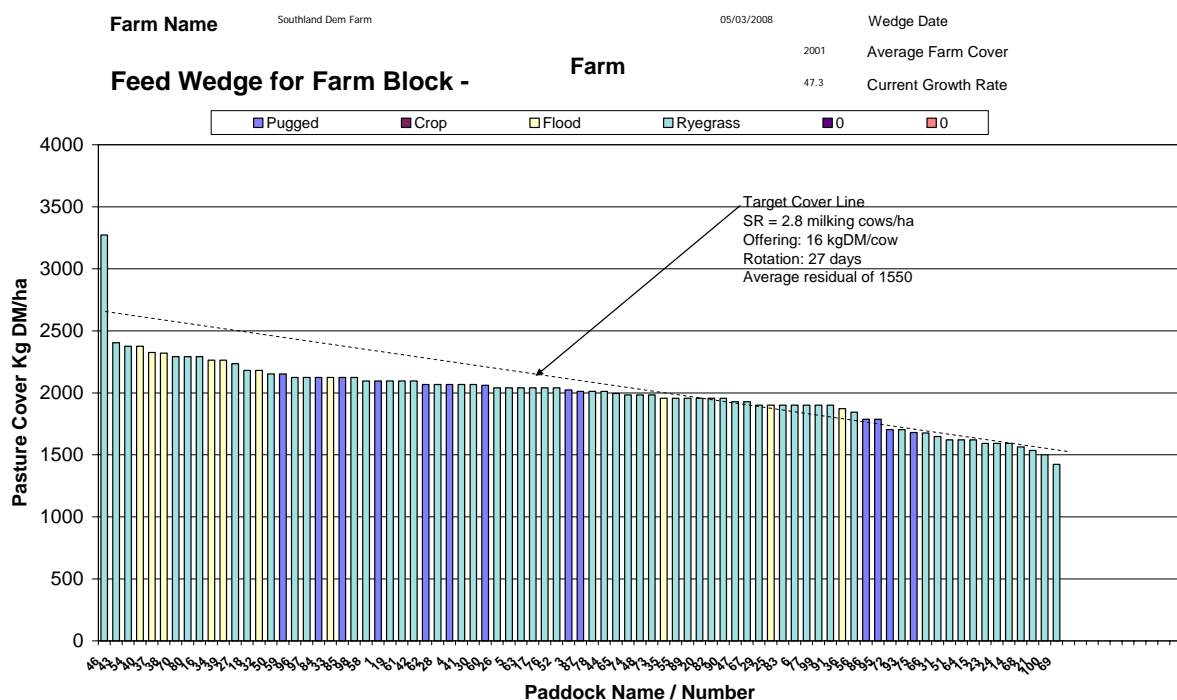
4. Soil temperatures have decreased from 14.2 degrees last week to 12.2 degrees this week.
5. We have seen an instantaneous response in growth from this week's rain with the daily pasture growth rate calculated at 47.3 kg DM / ha /day, well up from last week's growth of 11 kg DM / ha / day.
6. With 54.6 mm rain this past week, the farm soils are now above the “stress” line (soil moisture deficit 75 mm).



The soil moisture deficit graph above has been updated since last week's graph and shows that the recent rain has greatly improved the situation. The Winton graph above is very similar to the one from Invercargill Airport. As stated in last week's notes, we needed around 60 mm rain to totally turn around the situation. The 54.6 mm rain received this week has almost filled this requirement.

7. Average pasture cover has increased this week to 2001 kg DM / ha, up from 1827 kg DM / ha last week. This week's growth rate of 47.3 kg DM / ha /day is now above demand of 42 kg DM/ha/day. With our current silage input, our pasture feed demand is currently around 30 kg DM / ha / day.
8. There are a total of 244.6 ha of pasture available in the rotation.

9. An average of 9.6 ha has been grazed per day for the past week. This is 1/ 27th of farm's pasture area available per day.
10. Milk solids production is around 1.43 kg MS/cow/day (1.44 kg last week). Per hectare production is now 3.8 kg MS /ha/day.
11. The top of the target line on the pasture wedge below is based on a stocking rate of 2.8 cows/ha x rotation length of 28 days x nominal allocation of 16 kg DM plus a residual of 1550 kg DM/ha. This residual level is an average of the readings produced by the rising plate meter in current conditions utilising the x140+500 formula, the formula that has been used consistently through the season.
12. This weeks Pasture Wedge:



13. Assuming a 27 day rotation for the coming week, a pasture deficit is still evident on the top half of the wedge, with only one paddock over the top of the cover line.
14. With the good rainfall this week, we have decided to carry on with pretty close to existing cow numbers (only 13 more younger cows – less than CS 3.5 - were dried off this week) and carry on with a high level of silage input (5 kg DM per cow per day).
15. We have now fed out approximately 60,000 kg DM of silage to the cows since commencement of silage feeding just over two weeks ago. Our autumn feed budget indicated that we could allocate around 120,000 kg DM silage to be fed this autumn. This leaves around 60,000 kg DM in silage left of this allocation.
16. With the still relatively warm conditions, and more predicted showers forecast this week, we are estimating a growth rate of around 60 kg DM / ha /day for the next week which would be almost twice our current pasture demand due to continued feeding of silage. We therefore expect the average pasture cover to increase again and the feed wedge to only show a small deficit by next week's farm walk.

17. The 30ha of grass that were initially sprayed out end January / beginning February, and second-sprayed last week are now currently being direct drilled into Delish and Ohau short-rotation / long-rotation ryegrasses at a sowing rate of 30 kg / ha. 150 kg / ha of Ravensdown “Cropmaster 20” and 4 kg / ha of slug bait is also being drilled with the seed.
18. 4.5 tonnes of Urea was applied to the farm during the last week at 80 kg urea per ha. We will continue to apply urea at this rate depending on the availability of the spreading contractor. Our total annual N used on pasture totals 131 kg N / ha for the season so far.
19. The rainfall over the weekend did cause some very minor flooding on parts of several paddocks located next to the Oreti river.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **Wednesday, 12th March 2008** .

On behalf of the **Management Group** David Newport (Farm Manager), Alex Hunter (Consultant), Adrian van Bysterveldt, Chris Crossley (DairyNZ), Brad Houghton (Herd Manager).