

SDF Farm Walk Notes

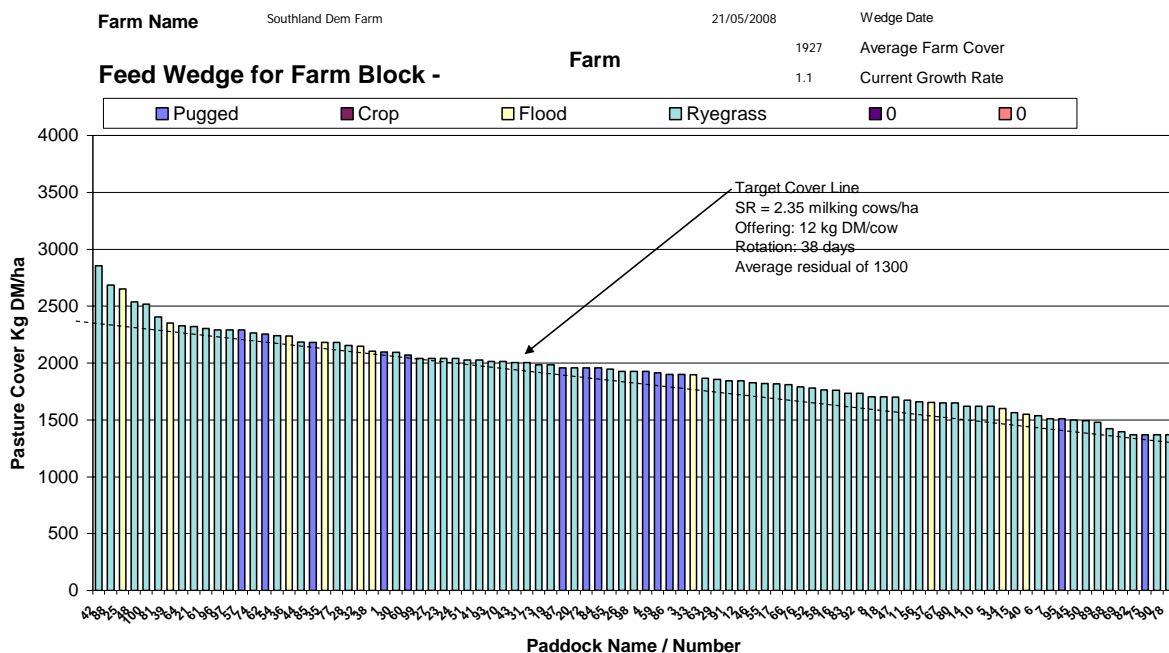
Wednesday, 21st May 2008

Critical issues for the short term

1. **Dry off all cows to protect cover.**
2. **Organise winter grazing strategies.**
3. **Ensure remaining culls are sent away as soon as possible.**

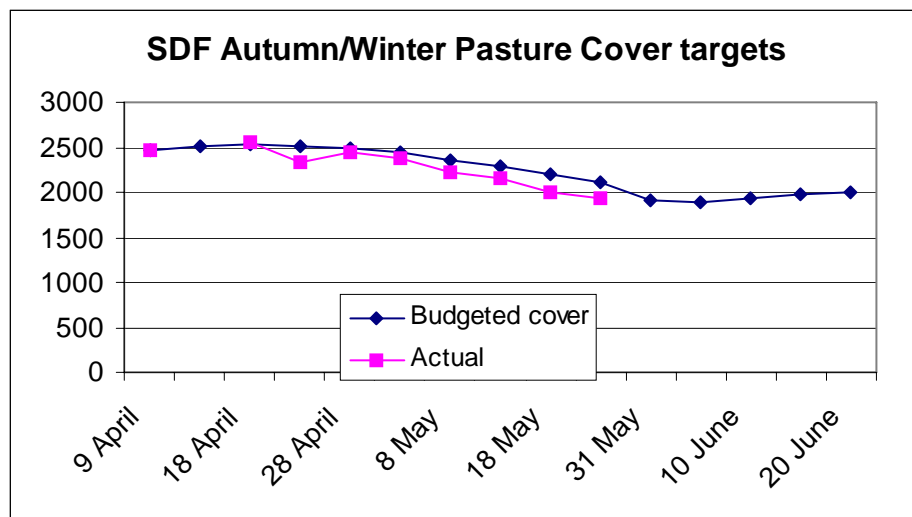
Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance
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4. Soil temperatures have increased from 7.7 degrees C last week to 8.3 degrees C this week.
5. There was 2.2 mm rainfall measured over the last week and with the cloud cover this past week there has been no frosts.
6. Average pasture cover has decreased rapidly this week to 1927 kg DM / ha, down from 2160 kg DM / ha last week. This was due to the average pasture growth rate this week being negligible at 1.1 kg DM / ha /day. This was mainly due to some ungrazed paddocks recording a loss in cover since last week.
7. This week's pasture feed wedge:



8. With the large drop in APC to 1927 kg DM/ha (down 233 kg DM / ha from last week) and the expectation that growth rates will not recover between now and the end of the month, the risk of a further significant drop in the APC is high if we continue milking. In order to protect the cover from further deterioration, the decision has been made to dry off the remainder of the herd.

9. As a result of the decision to dry off, target pre-grazing cover has been reduced to 2372 kg DM/ha as a result of changes in target intakes, round length and residuals. Targeted residuals this week will be 1300 kg DM/ha.
10. The top of the target line on the pasture wedge is based on a stocking rate of 2.35 cows/ha x rotation length of 38 days x nominal allocation of 12 kg DM plus a residual of 1300 kg DM/ha. This translates into a pre-grazing cover of 2372 kg DM/ha. Intakes are calculated to be 12 kg DM/cow/day. Using an intake figure of 12 kg DM/cow/day our demand is 28.2 kg DM/cow/day. Demand is therefore well in excess of expected pasture growth rates of less than 10 kg DM/ha/day, especially with inclement weather forecast for this coming week.
11. Milk solids production of 1.32 kg MS/cow/ day is up on last weeks' production of around 1.25 kg MS/cow/day. Per hectare production has dropped from 2.36 kg MS /ha/day to 1.6 kg MS/ha/day.
12. The graph comparing budgeted average pasture cover as predicted by the autumn feed budget with actuals is shown below:



13. The above graph indicates that our APC continues to be falling below our budgeted APC target, due to May having overall lower than budgeted pasture growth rates.
14. The targeted round length for this coming week is 38 days with 7.8 ha/day being grazed.
15. Nitrogen application for the year was 172 kg N/ha.
16. Cows will be drafted up over the next week into winter grazing mobs. Of the 645 cows currently on the farm, 45 culls will be sent away next week, 100 lease cows will be returned to the lessor, and 200 cows will go to winter grazing at Wanaka. 100 heifers have been purchased by the Trust to replace the lease cows and they will come onto the SDF in the next week to winter on the crops on the farm. Therefore, around 400 cows will be wintered on farm, 200 wintered at Wanaka and 205 in-calf heifers reared from the Brock herd, are also grazing off farm. The plan is therefore to winter a total of around 800 cows on and off-farm from 1st June.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **Tuesday 27th May at 1.30pm**. 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

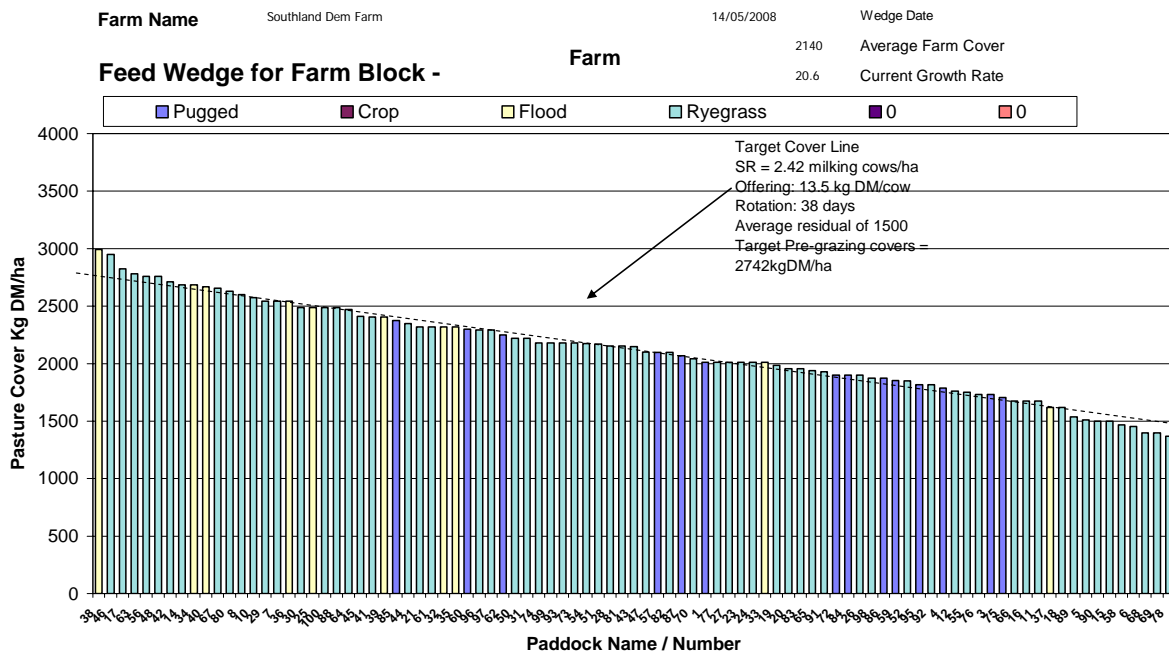
Wednesday, 14th May 2008

Critical issues for the short term

1. Carefully monitor cow condition and intakes.
2. Matching cow feed demand to feed supply as growth rates slow down and focusing on achieving target residuals of 1500 kg DM/ha.
3. Ensure the cows to be dried off and culled leave the farm as soon as possible.

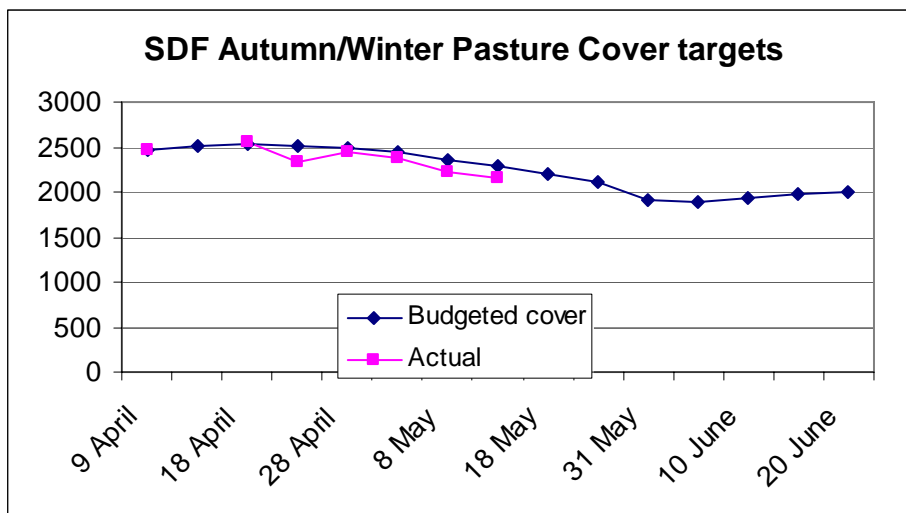
Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance
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4. Soil temperatures have increased from 6.9 degrees C last week to 7.7 degrees C this week. This marginal increase was due to the more stable weather over the last week.
5. The rainfall over the last week measured 22.2mm. Overall soil moisture levels have recovered to between the stress threshold for grass and field capacity. This however, is still down on the long term average soil moisture levels for this time of the year.
6. Average pasture cover has decreased this week to 2160 kg DM / ha, down from 2210 kg DM / ha last week. Average pasture growth rate has increased to 20.6 kg DM / ha /day, almost double last week's growth rate. This is line with the long-term average growth rates for May.
7. This week's pasture feed wedge:



8. Target pre-grazing cover has been reduced to 2742 kg DM/ha as a result of changes in target intakes, round length and residuals. The focus on achieving target grazing residuals of 1500 kg DM/ha has delivered results this last week.

9. The top of the target line on the pasture wedge is based on a stocking rate of 2.42 cows/ha x rotation length of 38 days x nominal allocation of 13.5 kg DM plus a residual of 1500 kg DM/ha. This translates into a pre-grazing cover of 2742 kg DM/ha. Intakes are calculated to be 13.5 kg DM/cow/day which is a weighted average of 15 kg DM/cow/day for the milkers on and 11 kg DM/cow/day for the dry cows. Using an intake figure of 13.5 kg DM/cow/day our demand is 32.7 kg DM/cow/day. Demand is therefore still in excess of pasture growth rates of 20.6 kg DM/ha/day resulting in a further drop in APC, but with the lower pre-grazing target cover being lower at 2742 kg DM/ha, the feed wedge nicely matches the target cover line. Therefore there will be no need to feed supplement.
10. Milk solids production of 1.25 kg MS/cow/ day is up on last weeks' production of around 1.23 kg MS/cow/day. Per hectare production has dropped from 3.0 kg MS /ha/day to 2.36 KG MS/ha/day, this being a result of drying off all the cows that were on OAD. Bulk SCC has dropped back to around 230 000/day.
11. The graph comparing budgeted average pasture cover as predicted by the autumn feed budget with actuals is shown below:



12. The above graph indicates that our APC to be falling below our budgeted APC target which is due to this last three weeks of lower than average calculated pasture growth rates.
13. The targeted round length for last week was 38 days but with significant numbers of cows being dried off (213 cows) the round speed slowed to 42 days, with 6.43 ha/day being grazed.
14. No nitrogen was applied this last week.
15. All paddocks now have Eco-N applied.
16. We are continuing to monitor cow condition closely and we will dry off about another 20 cows that are either lame or slow walkers due to sore feet. This is to give them time to recover and to prevent any avoidable weight loss due to foot problems.

17. The criteria we will use for culling the remaining cows on the cull list will be: high SCC counts, recurring lameness, poor udders and 3-teaters and production worth. The aim to milk as many cows as practicable for as long as possible through May still remains our intention.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **Wednesday 21st May**.

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

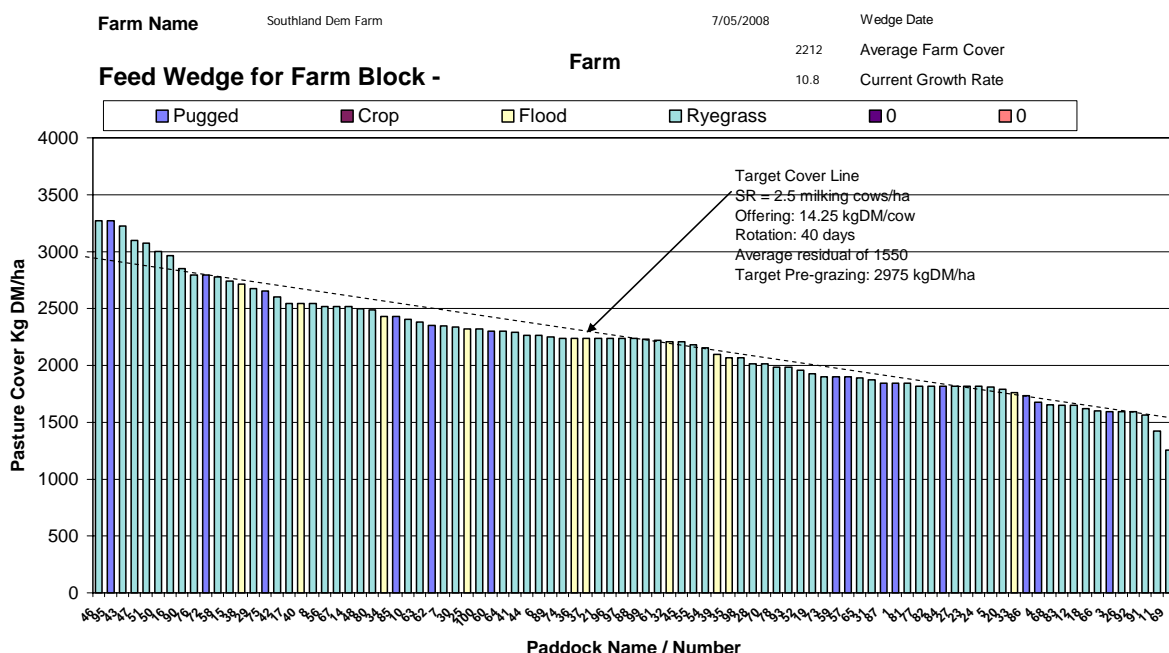
Wednesday, 7th May 2008

Critical issues for the short term

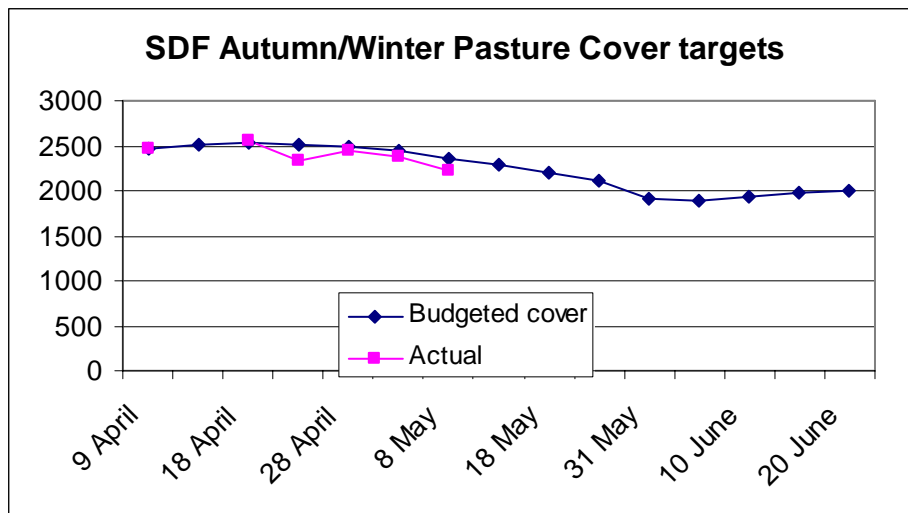
1. Carefully monitor cow condition and intakes.
2. Maintain as long a grazing round as possible and focus on achieving target residuals of 1550 kg DM/ha.
3. Ensure the cows to be dried off and culled leave the farm as soon as possible.

Summary of Key Factors affecting Grazing Management & Animal Performance
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4. Soil temperatures have decreased significantly from 10.4 degrees C last week to 6.9 degrees C this week. This decrease would be as a direct result of the heavy frosts and low air temperatures over the last 4 days, the outcome of which is declining pasture growth rates.
5. The rainfall over the last week measured 33.3mm. Overall soil moisture levels are still well down on average. Despite good rains this last week, the drop in soil temperatures has prevented attaining pasture growth rates above demand.
6. Average pasture cover has decreased this week to 2212 kg DM / ha, down from 2443 kg DM / ha last week. Pasture growth rate dropped severely to 10.8 kg DM/ha/day, down from last weeks growth rate of 47.2 kg DM /ha/day. We believe that some of the large drop in cover and associated low growth rates is a result of some under-reading by the rising plate meter on frosted pastures. This decrease has resulted in a small deficit as seen on the wedge below.
7. This week's pasture feed wedge:



8. Target pre-grazing cover has been reduced to 2975 kg DM/ha as a result of changes in target intakes, round length and residuals. With the wet weather late last week and over the weekend, the round speeded up to 36 days in an effort to avoid pugging the pastures. With the high pre-grazing covers as shown on last weeks' feed wedge, the increase in round speed resulted in average grazing residuals lifting to just over 1700 kg DM/ha and numerous paddocks with clumps. The focus this week will be on attaining target residuals of 1550 kg DM/ha (7 – 8 clicks).
9. The top of the target line on the pasture wedge is based on a stocking rate of 2.5 cows/ha x rotation length of 40 days x nominal allocation of 14.25 kg DM plus a residual of 1550kg DM/ha. This translates into a pre-grazing cover of 2975 kg DM/ha. Intakes are calculated to be 14.25 kg DM/cow/day which is a weighted average of 16 kg DM/cow/day for the milkers on TAD (424 cows), 13kg DM/cow/day for the milkers on OAD (196 cows) and 10 kg DM/cow/day for the dry cows (54 cows). Using an intake figure of 14.25 kg DM/cow/day our demand is 35.6 kg DM/cow/day. Demand is therefore way in excess of pasture growth of 10.8 kg DM/ha/day resulting in the small deficit apparent on the feed wedge above.
10. Milk solids production of 1.23kg MS/cow/ day is down on last weeks' production of around 1.32kg MS/cow/day. Per hectare production has also dropped marginally to 3.0kg MS /ha/day. An increase in the bulk SCC resulted when part of the herd (196 cows) were put on OAD last Friday. However, this has come back to acceptable levels after the "culprits" were found.
11. The graph comparing budgeted average pasture cover as predicted by the autumn feed budget with actuals is shown below:



12. The above graph indicates that our APC to be falling below our budgeted APC target which is due to this last week of lower than average calculated pasture growth rates.
13. An average of 7.56 ha has been grazed per day for the past week, i.e. 36 days round speed. The target round length this week is 1/40th of the farm per day which equates to 6.85 ha per day.

14. No nitrogen was applied this last week.
15. The weather for the rest of this week is forecast to be quite variable. This will present some challenges for pasture management over this period!
16. The application of Eco-N is continuing on a weekly basis on paddocks grazed by the cows during the week.
17. We are continuing to monitor cow condition closely to ensure we keep this on track and believe that putting the “lights” on OAD will help us achieve our target cow condition of close to a BCS of 5 at drying-off.
18. The aim to milk as many cows as practicable for as long as possible through May still remains our intention.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **Wednesday 14th May**. On behalf of the **Management Group** David Newport (Farm Manager), Alex Hunter (Consultant), Adrian van Bysterveldt, Chris Crossley (DairyNZ), Brad Houghton (Herd Manager).