

# SDF Farm Walk Notes

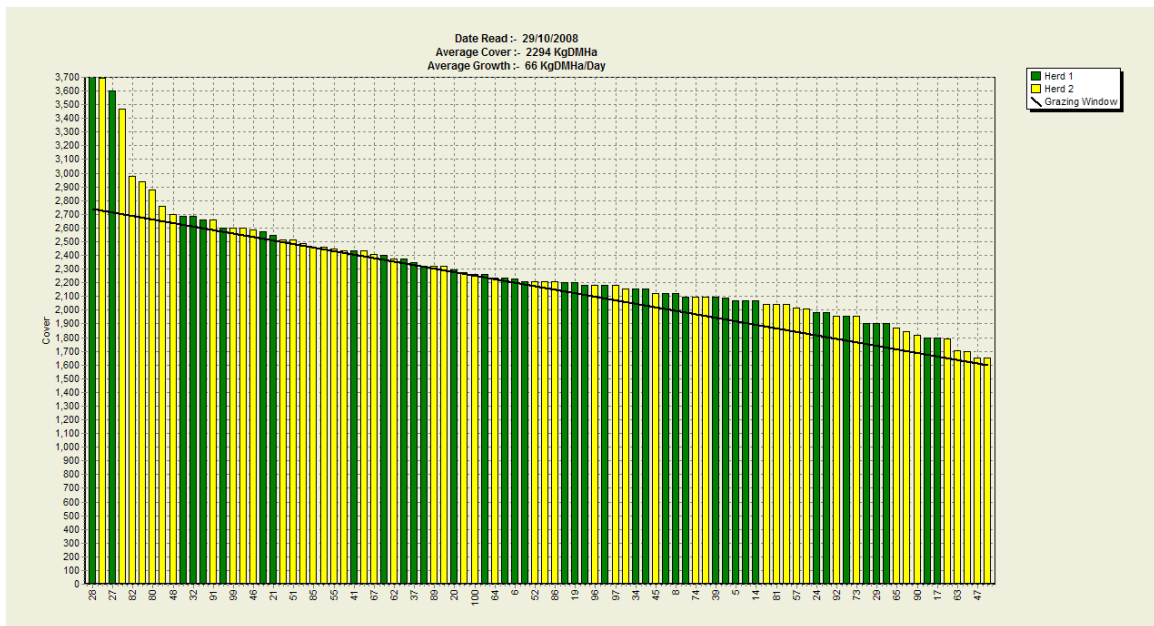
Wednesday, 29th October 2008

## Critical issues for the short term

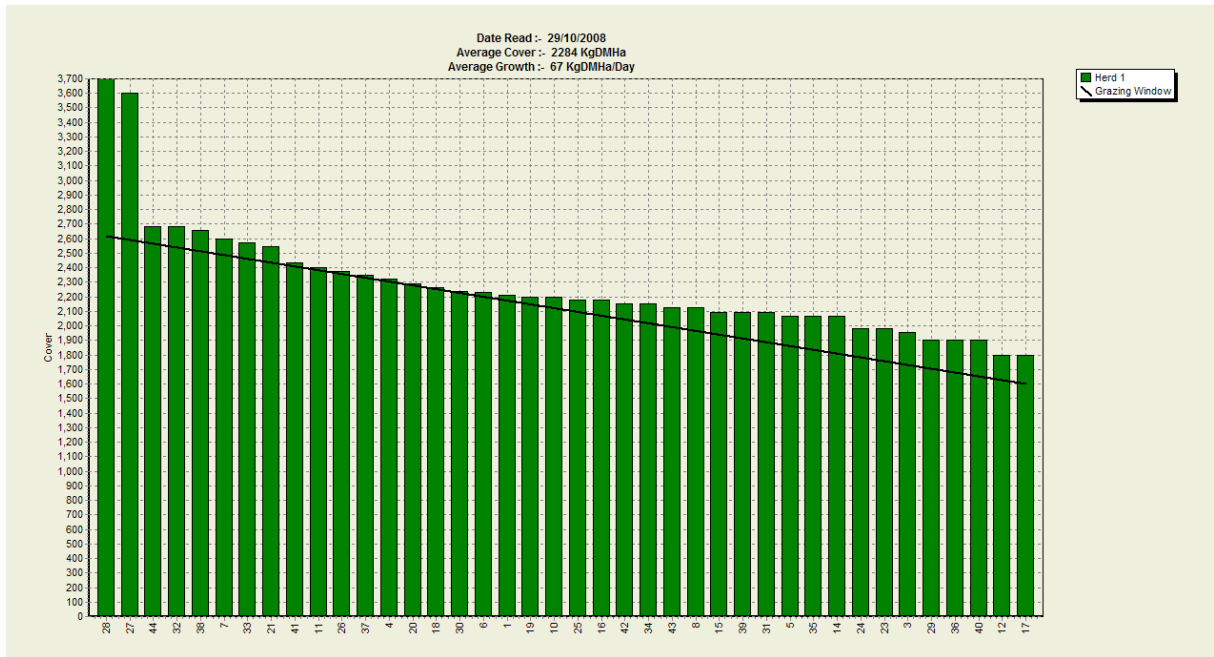
1. **Mg supplementation of all cows – through water supply and causmag.**
2. **Identify non-cyclers in herd and vet-check prior to mating start – CIDR anoestrous cows.**
3. **Maintain pasture residuals at 1500 – 1600 kg DM /ha – residuals are increasing over this currently and we will use the mower to tidy up some paddocks.**

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

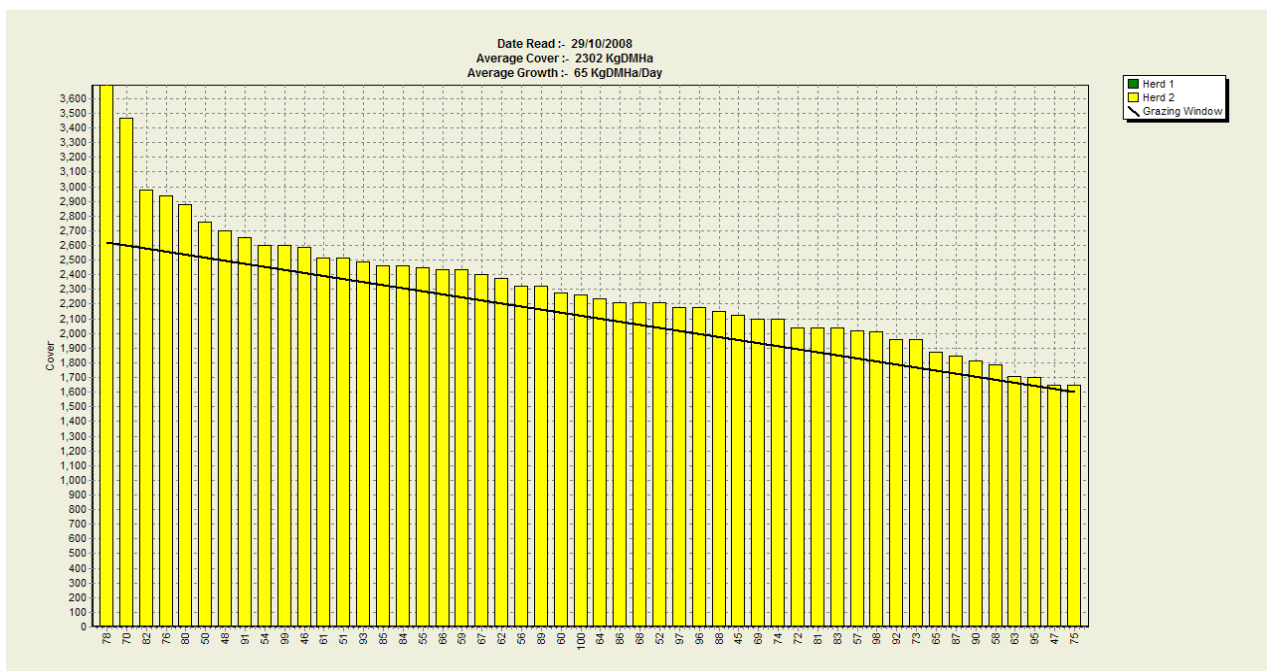
4. Soil temperatures at 9 am have been average 9.7 ° C this week, compared to 10.3 °C last week.
5. Pasture growth this week was 66 kg DM / ha / day – last week we grew an average of 34 kg DM / ha / day.
6. Average pasture cover is 2294 kg DM/ha, up from 2144 kg DM / ha last week.



7. The 29th October pasture feed wedge is above. The green bars are paddocks grazed by herd 1, the yellow bars are grazed by herd 2. It is clear that residuals at the bottom part of the wedge are rising above optimum levels. We need to gain control of this by expecting the cows to get back within target residuals, and commence mowing to tidy up the odd paddock.



8. The feed wedge for Herd 1 is above.



9. The feed wedge for Herd 2 is above.

10. The wedge shows that we now have a surplus of 35t, although some of this is due to paddocks just been grazed coming over the target cover line. At this stage there are 7 paddocks that can be stepped over as surplus. We have had a lot of trouble harvesting silage due to no prolonged periods of fine weather for the whole of the month of October so far. The long range forecast for the week remains unsettled.

11. The round planned for this coming week will graze 1/22<sup>nd</sup> of the available pasture area a day. If we allocate 18 kg DM/cow (on average for milkers and dries) the calculated trigger level is for the cows to go into paddocks of pre-grazing cover 2650 kg DM / ha.

12. We now have 724 cows calved.
13. We have 721 cows being milked twice a day into the vat and production is 5.03 kg MS/ha/day and 1.85 kg MS/cow/day (4.63 kg / ha / day and 1.80 kg ms per cow / day last week).
14. The per cow production level is disappointing considering that we are expected to be only about a week away from the normal peak date. We note that this time last year pre-grazing pasture ME was >12.7 MJ ME per kg DM, and a sample was taken last week to check where pasture quality is at currently (these results should be available imminently). Given the up and down nature of the weather through October, and the current cow production levels (note that there are 42% heifers in the herd also), it will be interesting to view the pasture feed quality results compared to this time last year.
15. The number of cows cycling in the herd during pre-mating observations is meeting our expectations. 70% of the herd should have cycled prior to mating start, and we have met this KPI. With the level of cycling activity, we are expecting to CIDR less than the 134 cows that were treated last year.
16. The R2 heifers are scheduled to be mated to AB for three days using the 2 PG method of synchronisation. This will start on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, same time as mating start for the herd.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November**.

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

# SDF Farm Walk Notes

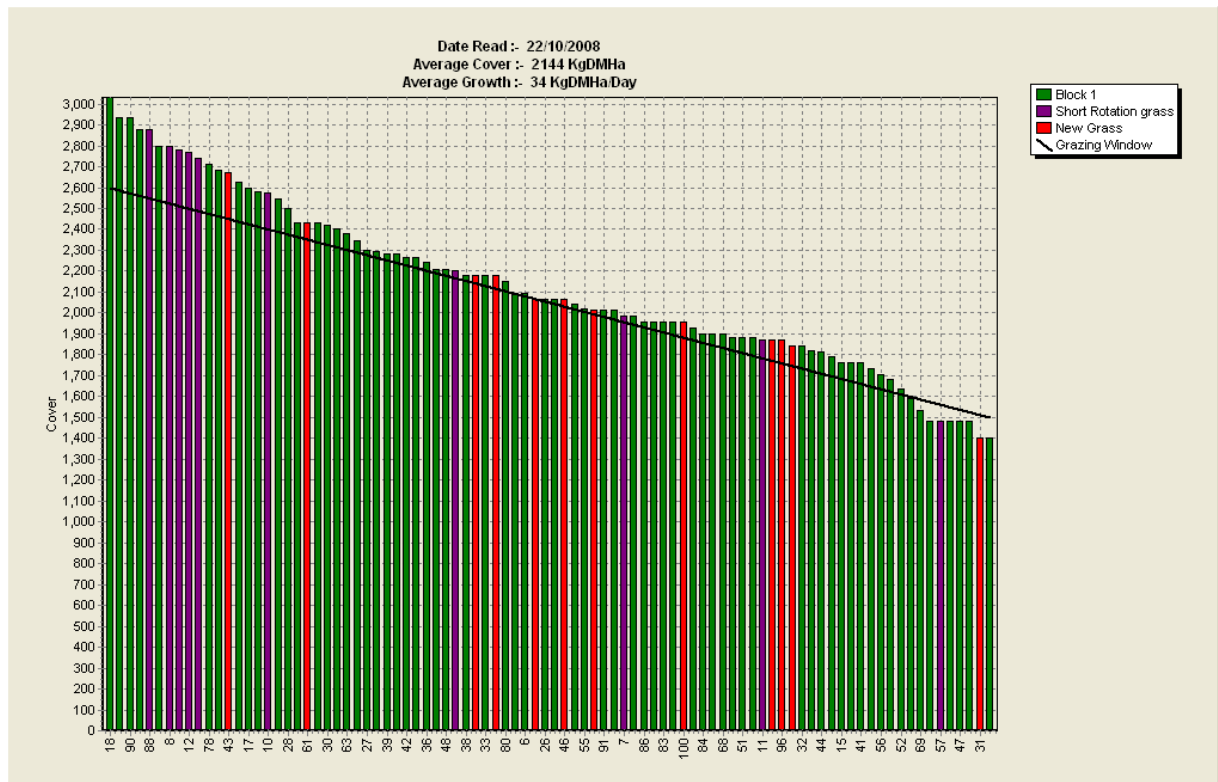
Wednesday, 22nd October 2008

## Critical issues for the short term

1. **Mg supplementation of all cows – through water supply and causmag.**
2. **Commence synchronisation-mating programme with R 2 heifers.**

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

3. Soil temperatures at 9 am have averaged 10.3 degrees C this week, which is slightly higher than last week.
4. Pasture growth this week was 34 kg DM / ha / day – last week we grew an average of 66 kg DM / ha / day.
5. Average pasture cover is 2144 kg DM/ha. Three paddocks have been mown for silage and are expected to be baled before Friday.



6. The 22<sup>nd</sup> October pasture feed wedge is above. The red bars are new perennial ryegrass pasture, the purple bars are new short rotation pasture. You can see the three mown paddocks at the bottom of the feed wedge scored at 1480 kg DM / ha.

7. The wedge shows that we now have a surplus of 26t and at this stage we have decided not to step over more paddocks. We have had a lot of trouble harvesting silage due to no prolonged periods of fine weather forecast for the whole of the month of October so far. We have in fact gone back into several of the paddocks previously stepped over.
8. The round planned for this coming week will graze 1/22<sup>nd</sup> of the available pasture area a day. If we allocate 18 kg DM/cow (on average for milkers and dries) the calculated trigger level is for the cows to go into paddocks of pre-grazing cover 2600 kg DM / ha.
9. We now have 723 cows calved.
10. We have 720 cows being milked twice a day into the vat and production is 4.63 kg MS/ha/day and 1.80 kg MS/cow/day (4.6 kg / ha / day and 1.85 kg ms per cow / day last week).
11. The per cow production drop is disappointing considering that we are still expected to be about a fortnight away from the normal peak date. We note that this time last year pre-grazing pasture ME was >12.7 MJ ME per kg DM, and a sample has been taken this week to check where pasture quality is at currently. Given the up and down nature of the weather through October, and the current cow production levels (note that there are 42% heifers in the herd also), it would not be surprising to see pasture ME levels down on this time last year.
12. Some more fertiliser N has been applied this week, and annual total per ha used so far is 48 kg N / ha. Obviously fertiliser N will assist to boost pasture growth rates, but any pasture surpluses identified (as long as we can harvest them!) will go into baleage that can be used as part of our on-farm wintering.
13. The R2 heifers are scheduled to be mated to AB for three days using the 2 PG method of synchronisation. This will start on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, same time as mating start for the herd.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **Wednesday 29th October**.

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

# SDF Farm Walk Notes

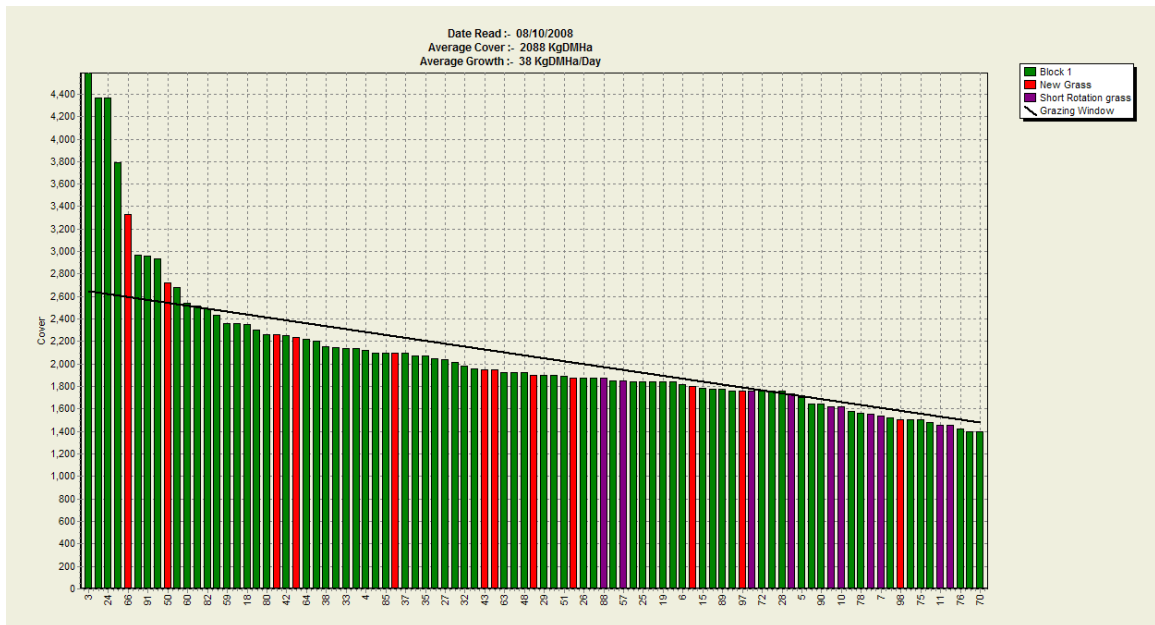
Wednesday, 15th October 2008

## Critical issues for the short term

1. **Mg supplementation of all cows – through water supply and causmag.**
2. **Identify surplus grass and remove from grazing round as soon as possible.**

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

3. Soil temperatures at 9 am have been average 10 degrees C this week, which is higher than last week.
4. Pasture growth this week was 95 based on last weeks' numbers, but last week the reported growth rate of 38 was much lower than we had expected considering the week's growth conditions. The most likely situation was that last week, due to staff sickness, a proportion of the farm had to be walked by a person and plate meter not normally utilised on that particular part of the farm. This highlights the importance of using the same person, with the same platemeter, when carrying out the weekly farm walk, to ensure consistency of platemeter readings. We therefore believe that last week's reported growth was actually higher than the reported 38 and therefore this week's is lower than we have measured. Over the two week period, it would seem that we have grown an average of 66 kg/DM/ha/day.
5. Average pasture cover including the silage paddocks is 2382 kg/DM/ha.



7. The wedge shows that we now have a surplus of over 80t and we have to step over more paddocks. We have not harvested any silage due to no prolonged periods of fine weather forecast (we will need at least 3 days fine weather to get some wilting), and we have, in fact, gone back into several of the paddocks previously stepped over. We now have 10 paddocks (up from 3 last week) excluded from the grazing round, earmarked for baleage.
8. The round planned for this coming week will graze 1/22<sup>nd</sup> of the available pasture area (excluding surplus pasture paddocks stepped over) a day. If we allocate 18/kg/DM/cow (on average for milkers and dries) the calculated trigger level is for the cows to go into paddocks of pre-grazing cover 2700 kg/DM/ha.
9. We expect to make the ten surplus paddocks into baleage as soon as we possibly can, when we have a few days of warm drying NW winds. The long-range weather forecast indicates that the next week will be slightly unsettled, but hopefully we will be able to get these paddocks harvested this week (at last!)
10. We now have 690 cows calved (730 this time last year).
11. We have 645 cows being milked into the vat (695 this time last year) and production is 4.6 kg/MS/ha/day and 1.84 kg/MS/cow/day (4.4 kg/ha/day and 1.89 kg/MS/cow/day last week).
12. Some more fertiliser N has been applied this week, and annual total per ha used so far is 34 kg/N/ha. Obviously fertiliser N will assist to boost pasture growth rates, but any pasture surpluses identified (as long as we can harvest them!) will go into baleage that can be used as part of our on-farm wintering.
13. Cows are being metrichecked by our vet today pre-mating. Pre-mating heat observations are being carried out, with tailpaint being freshened up regularly.

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

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

# SDF Farm Walk Notes

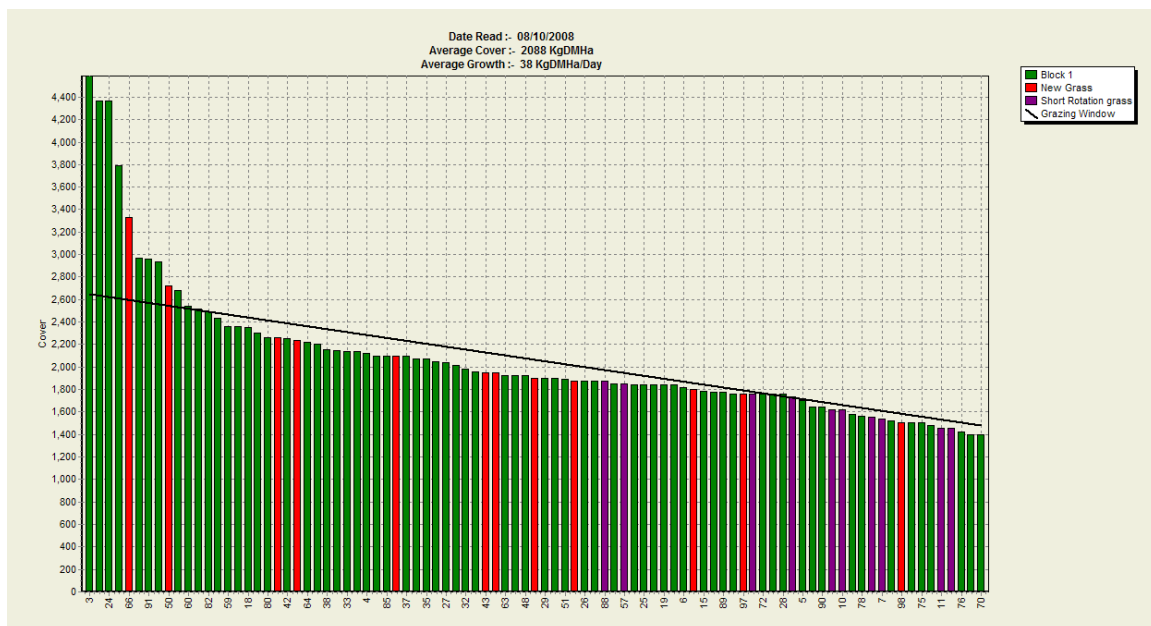
Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2008

## Critical issues for the short term

1. **Mg supplementation of all cows – through water supply and causmag.**
2. **Surplus grass removed from grazing round to be harvested as soon as possible.**
3. **Organise regrassing of winter crop ground and allocate next year's winter crop paddocks.**
4. **Apply urea at 50 kg per ha, to match any N deficiency and grow extra grass to fill a possible deficit.**

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

5. Soil temperatures at 9 am has averaged 8.9 degrees C this week, which is the same as last week but slightly lower than long term average for early October. This was due to colder, unsettled weather over the last few days.
6. We had 15.9mm of rain through the week and there have been days where negative wind chill temperatures have been recorded. Cows and staff would like to see some settled sunny weather.
7. The unsettled conditions have resulted in average pasture cover dropping 600 kg/ha from last week's high of 2644 kg/DM/ha to 2088 kg/DM/ha this week.
8. Average pasture growth rate was 38 kg DM per ha /day, well down from the 86 kg DM / ha / day achieved last week. This calculated growth rate is not strictly correct, as Pasture Coach records paddocks with a negative growth rate as zero, and a good proportion of paddocks mid-wedge have lost cover since last week's walk.



9. The 8<sup>th</sup> October pasture feed wedge is above.  
The red bars are new perennial ryegrass pasture, the purple bars are new short rotation pasture

10. The wedge shows that we now have a surplus of 6.2t, well down from last week's surplus. We have not harvested any silage due to no prolonged periods of fine weather (we will need at least 3 days fine weather to get some wilting). We have gone back into several of the paddocks previously stepped over. We now have only 3 paddocks (down from 11 last week) excluded from the grazing round earmarked for baleage.
11. The grazing round planned for this coming week will be 1/20<sup>th</sup> of the available pasture area/day (excluding surplus pasture paddocks stepped over). The calculated trigger level is for the cows to go into paddocks of pre-grazing cover 2650 kg DM / ha.
12. We expect to make the three surplus paddocks into baleage as soon as we have a few days of warm drying NW winds. The long-range weather forecast indicates that the next week will bring more settled drier weather from Friday.
13. We now have 686 cows calved (727 this time last year).
14. We have 638 cows being milked into the vat (690 this time last year) and production is 4.4 kg MS/ha/day and 1.89 kg MS/cow/day (4.21 kg / ha / day and 1.90 kg ms per cow / day last week).
15. Our hope of making production gains on last season in October aren't being realised so far, with us falling 1000 kg ms behind last year to date. Even though we have 300 heifers in the herd (41%), and we had 6% more cows calved at this time last year, we are still aiming to have the cows peaking higher per cow this year, due to the management of the first round that saw cows fed better than last season. The problem this year is that we have been going into pre-grazing covers that are higher than ideal and then asking the cows to graze down to target post-grazing residuals. With the help of a period of settled weather, and more cows calved, we really would like to see the results improve over the next few weeks.
16. We will analyse our latest herd test results to compare the production performance of our heifers with those of our cows. We will report this information in next week's notes.
17. We now need to urgently apply urea at 50 kg urea / ha behind the cows from as soon as soil conditions allow a bulky on the paddocks. Some fertiliser N has been applied this week, but other than this, no N has been applied since the end of August, and grazed paddocks are showing definite signs of N deficiency. Some fertiliser N will assist to boost pasture growth rates.
18. We are finalising plans to synchronise our yearling heifers to AB mating. The 2 PG (progesterone) method of synchronisation will be used where cows are given their first PG jab on 20<sup>th</sup> October, the second on 31<sup>st</sup> October, and heifers inseminated for three days on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of November. Bulls will go out on the afternoon of the 4<sup>th</sup>.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **Wednesday 17th October**.

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

# SDF Farm Walk Notes

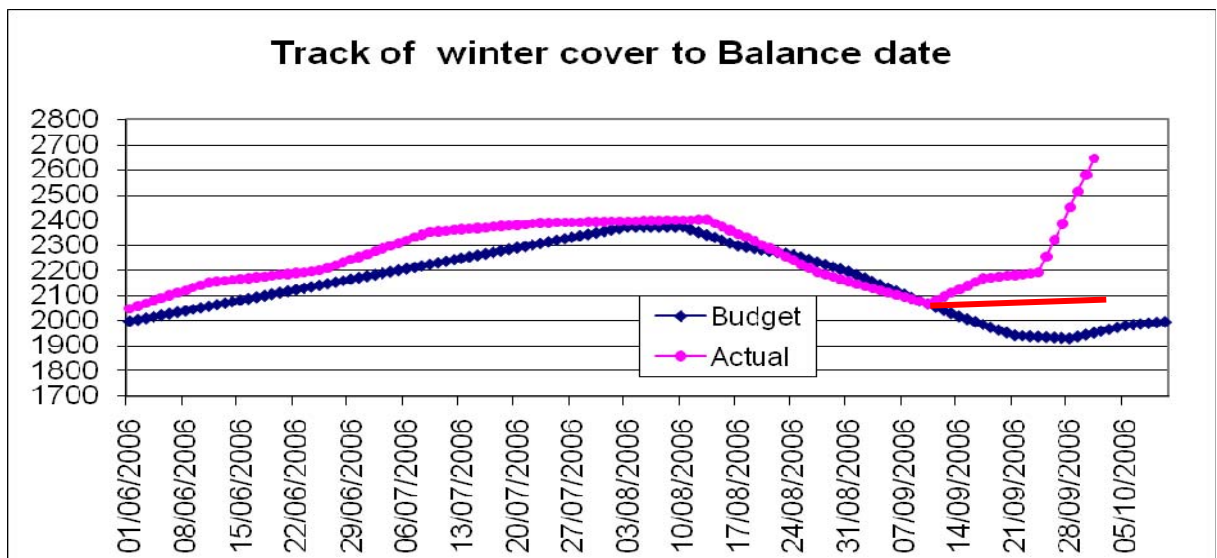
Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008

## Critical issues for the short term

1. **Mg supplementation of all cows – through water supply and causmag.**
2. **Identify surplus grass and remove from grazing round.**
3. **Organise regrassing of winter crop ground and allocate next year's winter crop paddocks.**

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

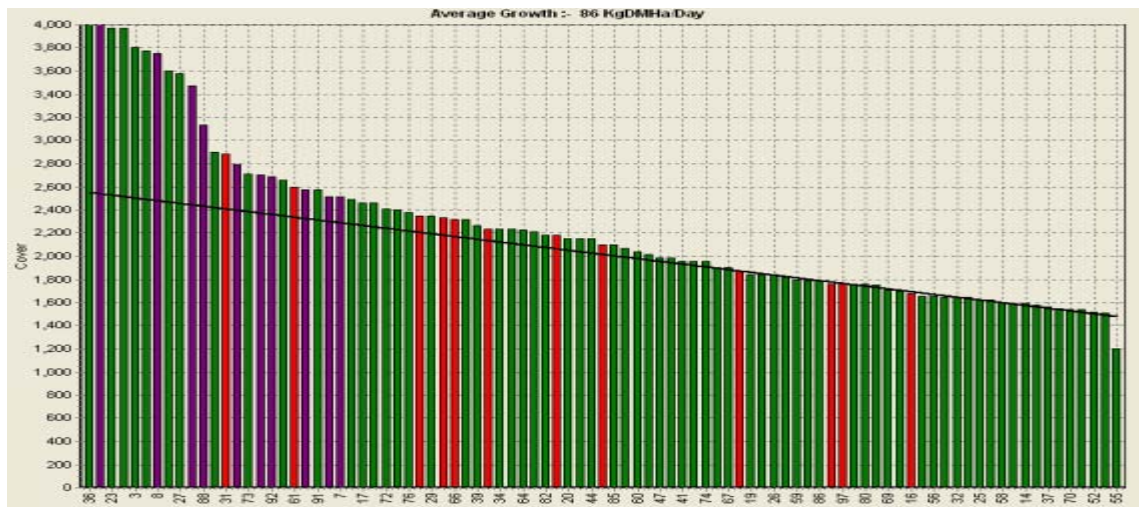
4. Soil temperatures at 9 am has been average 8.9 degrees C this week, which is on average 0.6 degrees lower than last week due to colder, unsettled weather over the last few days.
5. We had 37.5 mm of rain throughout the week but then there has been days with northwest winds, the sort of weather that is usual around the equinox. July was below average for rainfall but both **August and September have been 50% above average.**
6. Average pasture cover was 2644 kg DM/ ha on the farm walk today up hugely from 2192 kg DM / ha last week. The feed budget predicted that Average Pasture Cover would still be falling.
7. The graph comparing budgeted average pasture cover as predicted by the autumn feed budget with actual is shown in pink below: The red line shows the average cover on the actual grazing part of the farm i.e. with the 30 ha of silage removed.



8. We have had a big change on the pasture position on farm compared with the target cover worked out through our feed budget. We are not feeding out any silage or other supplementary feed and we have all the cows on the farm but have been held up in our attempts to make the surplus into silage because of weather.

9. Average pasture growth rate was 86 kg/Dm/per/ha/day, up from 47 kg/Dm/ha/day achieved last week. This growth rate is higher than we had budgeted on.

10. The 1<sup>st</sup> October pasture feed wedge for the whole farm (including silage paddocks) is;

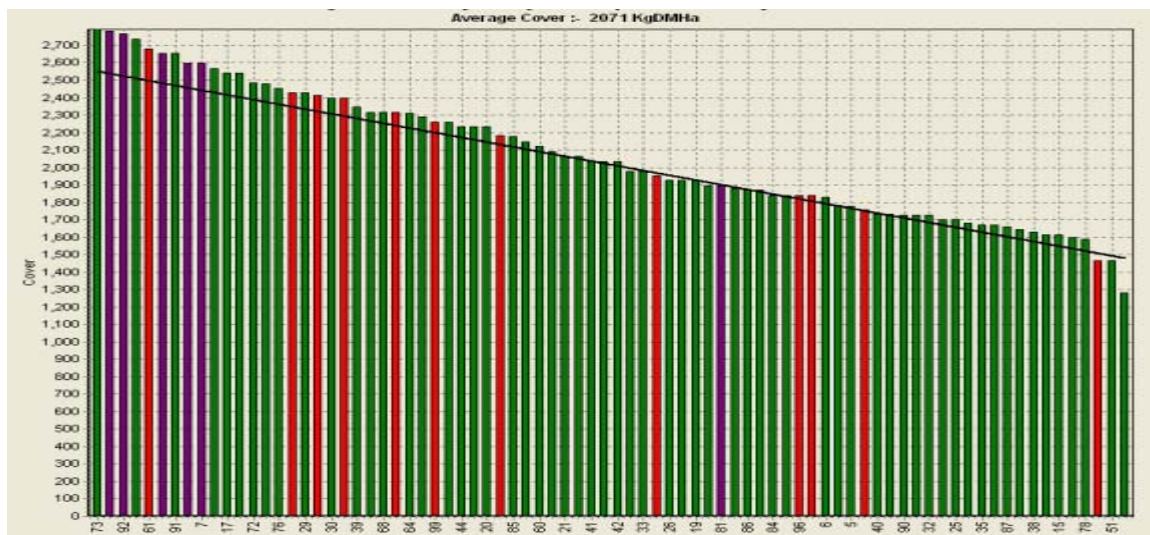


The red bars are new perennial ryegrass pasture  
The purple bars are new short rotation pasture

11. The target line is now based on the budget average cover for 1<sup>st</sup> October. The wedge shows that we now have a surplus of 67t.

12. We expect to make these paddocks into silage as soon as we possibly can, when we have a few days of warm drying NW winds. The long-range weather forecast indicates favourable weather for most of the next week especially after Sunday.

This Pasture wedge is the grazing part of the farm (the silage paddocks removed)



13. Average cover on the grazing part of the farm is 2071 kg DM/ha and we will continue to speed up the round to 1/20<sup>th</sup> of the available pasture area (excluding surplus pasture paddocks stepped over) a day as long as the cows graze down to target residuals. The key thing to achieve this is for the cows to go into paddocks of maximum 2700 rather than longer. To do this we have now stepped over at least 10 paddocks from the grazing round (30 ha).

14. Post grazing residuals are being achieved except for the few paddocks that have been grazed in bad weather.
15. We have 616 cows being milked into the vat (630 this time last year) and production is 4.25 kg/MS/ha/day and 1.90 kg/MS/cow/day (4.21 kg/ha/day and 1.92 kg/MS/per/cow/day last week).
16. We will continue to apply urea at light rates (50 kg/urea/ha) behind the cows from as soon as soil conditions allow a bulky on the paddocks. No fertiliser N has been applied on the farm since end of August, and some grazed paddocks are showing slight signs of N deficiency.
17. Somatic cell counts are stable around the 200,000 mark. So far this has been kept in check by careful observation by the person cupping on and off. Installation of Milfos Automatic Cup Removers has been completed over the last fortnight, which has been a major hassle for staff. Milking times have had to be compromised to allow time for installation and there have been numerous break downs which have disrupted milkings. Farm staff (and cows) are now adapting to their use.
18. The plan for a 2 PG synchronising of the R2 heifers has been worked through with the vet and grazier. This will be started early enough for the heifer mating to occur at the same time as the mature herd. This will be three days of easy calving AB followed by Jersey bulls. This synchrony program will only work on animals that are well grown and are cycling.
19. Tail painting of the herd will occur this week to give us at least three weeks of pre-mating heats.
20. Bloat oil is now going into the water system.
21. Last winters crop paddocks have been ploughed and are ready for final working up before re-grassing.

The next WEEKLY farm walk is on **Wednesday 8th October**.

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