



CRITICAL ISSUES	
1	To top or not to top?
2	Soil moisture limitations looking forward
3	Fodder crop spraying regime
4	Silage conservation



## SUMMARY OF FARMING OPERATION DATA

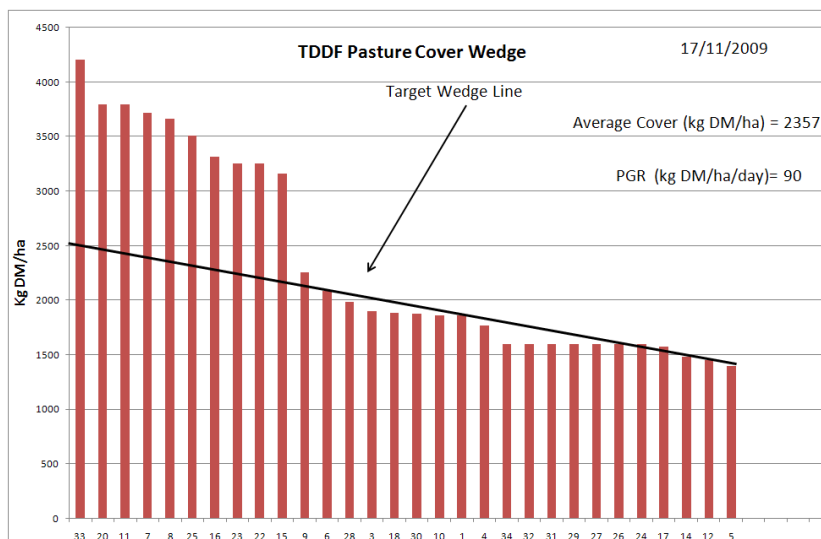
Pasture Information		Animal Production	
LER	9 days/leaf	Cows	827 (twice-a-day) 30 (sick herd)
Rotation Length	22 days	Litres/cow/day	15
Pasture Growth Rate	96 kgDM/ha/day	MS/cow/day	1.2kg
Average Pasture Cover	2300 kgDM/ha	MS/ha/day	2.8kg
Soil Temperature 9AM	17°C	Cow intake (allocated)	16 kgDM/cow/day
Rainfall (past 7 days)	1 mm	Supplement Fed	Nil
Soil tension	22 kpa	Body Condition Score	4.4 (monitor group)

### Pasture management

The platform is drying out with less than average rainfall. Soil tension is 22kpa (35kpa is when the plant will succumb to soil moisture stress and start to shut down).

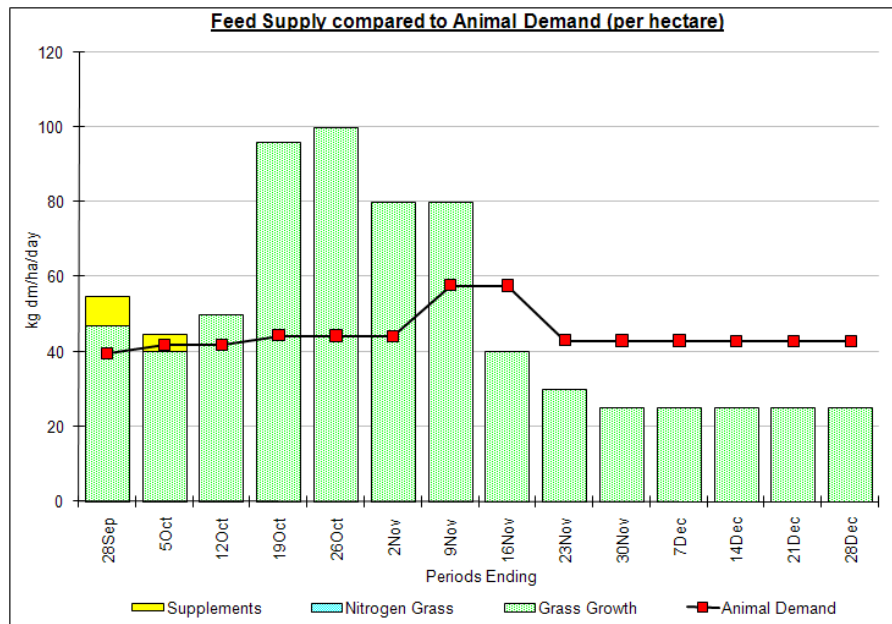
Seed head emergence is more pronounced in paddocks and is due to the plants response to dryer conditions. The question to top was raised and it was decided that the cost of doing so would not provide a sufficient economic return for this dry land farm.

Fodder crops were sprayed 10 days ago for diamond back moth. These crops were assessed during the farm walk and there looks to be a need for another spray. Due to mechanical problems with the planting equipment about 5 ha of the 45 ha was resowed earlier in the week. We are happy with the strike of 20 – 25 plants per square meter. 120kg urea (55kgN/ha) has been applied to the fodder crop paddocks over the past week.



There is quite a large tail at the top of the wedge, indicating a pasture surplus. The decision was to not harvest this as silage as the seasonal conditions could mean a very early finish and the conservation would be a risky if pasture growth dropped. It was decided to graze these paddocks and slow the rotation, instead of harvesting and potentially having to feed out 14 days later. Having said that, if the farm received a significant amount of rain over the next 7 days these paddocks would be harvested ASAP. The rotation has been extended to 22 days but will slow further as the herd grazes through the higher covers. We are still budgeting to leave a post grazing residual of 1500kgDM/ha.

Pasture growth was 90kgDM/ha for the last week. We are budgeting for a substantial drop in pasture growth this week if it does not rain, see feed supply versus demand graph below.



Nitrogen applications have ceased until rainfall occurs.

All 80ha of silage has been harvested; we estimate that the stack is holding 200 – 220tonneDM.

### Animal performance

827 cows make up the main two milking herds; there are 30 cows in a sick herd. The wet weather has affected areas of the farms lanes causing them to lose their cap and exposing some sharp blue metal stones. These areas will be managed to deal with the issue.

Milk production continues to hold, but we do expect a drop as more seed head is emerging in the pasture.

Bulk milk cell count is averaging 170,000 similar to last week.

The 10 week mating period is finishing this Friday November 6. All observations suggest very good reproductive performance for the herd. The first pregnancy test is due in late December.

Another herd test will be conducted before supplements start to be fed to determine which cows to be culled or dried off. While the farm is feeding cows solely on pasture with no supplements it was decided that no cow would be culled or dried off providing they were producing milk. With the challenging start to the season, the farm has very little room for strategic culling.

**THE NEXT WEEKLY TDDF FMG** farm walk will be on Tuesday November 24 starting at 10:30am.

Farm Management Group – Kevin Mills (Farm Manager), Chris Haynes (TIAR), Adrian Neasey (VDL) and Darryl Quilliam (Roberts)