



FMG'S CRITICAL ISSUES	
1	Monitor soil temperatures
2	Monitor the grazing rotation and feed intakes
3	Spray for corbies and cockchafers
4	Set up for next season



## SUMMARY OF FARMING OPERATION DATA

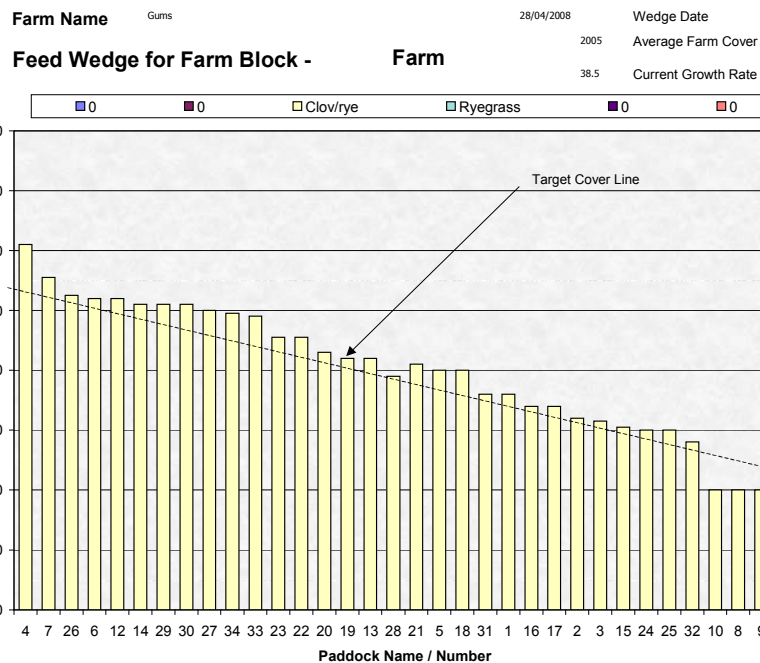
Pasture Information		Animal Production	
LER	14 days/leaf	Cows (dry)	700
Rotation Length	60 days	Litres/cow/day	0
Pasture Growth Rate	39kgDM/ha/day	MS/cow/day	0kg
Average Pasture Cover	2005 kgDM/ha	MS/ha/day	0kg
Soil Temperature 9AM	11.5°C	Cow intake	10 – 11 kgDM/cow/day
Rainfall (past 7 days)	16 mm	Supplement Fed	-
MOFC (\$/cow)	\$0.00	Body Condition Score	4.8 (Heavy herd) 4.5 (Light herd)

## TDDF Grazing and Animal KPI'S

### Pasture Management

- Pasture growth rates have remained at around 40kgDM/ha/day. It is expected that this above average figure will start to decrease over the next few weeks. Soil temperatures have dipped to 11.5°C, with the farm receiving a minor frost on Monday. In the coming weeks it will be important to monitor soil temperature to get a gauge on where pasture growth rates are heading.
- Leaf emergence rate has increased slightly to 14 days per leaf and the rotation length is still at 60 days. Again the FMG have decided against reducing rotation length to correspond with the leaf emergence rate, as obtaining pasture cover is still a priority. At this time of year there is a very fine line between obtaining cover and losing it, especially with the potential of volatile changes in pasture growth rates.
- Pasture renovation is to be completed by the middle of this week. Paddocks will be sowed down to Extreme at a rate of 23kg/ha. In an ideal situation these paddocks should have been renovated 2 weeks ago, but due to delays in contractors this could not be done. A limitation to the whole VDL system is the delay in getting contractors and is almost always generally due to the fact that all the other VDL farms require the same service at the same time.
- By the end of the week, paddocks will be sprayed for corbies and cockchafers. Although the problem is not visibly apparent they are starting to show up on the some of the other VDL farms, hence this management practice.
- Pasture feedtest results have been delayed and hopefully will be in next weeks notes.

- There are some concerns in regards to the feedwedge, especially if current pasture growth rates are maintained. At the current rotation length of 60 days, cows are being allocated 6 ha per day and leaving post grazing residuals of 1400kgDM/ha. The dilemma here is that if the rotation is sped up to combat the extra cover, higher residuals will be left as animal demand is not high enough to eat all allocated pasture. So in reality if the rotation was reduced to 45 days, in effect, it still would be 60 days because the cows would have



enter the paddock again to graze it down to below 1500kgDM/ha. There are 110 ha (~11 paddocks) currently above 2500kgDM/ha, which on a 60 day rotation will take 20 days for those paddocks to be grazed. In light of this, the use of nitrogen might be questionable. However, the FMG are keen to have the nitrogen going on to better secure pasture for the cold winter months. This just highlights the challenges with managing a wedge into winter, especially with higher than expected pasture growth, a lower stocking rate and need to obtain an average pasture cover of 2100kgDM/ha at calving.

- The FMG has decided against obtaining the replacements on-farm a month earlier. Feedbudgets suggested that the farm could have managed these animals through, but it would have increased its exposure to severe changes in pasture growth rates. In the short term, these animals would have been great to help realign the wedge but the risk of creating a pasture deficit was too high.

### Animal and Financial Performance

- The grazing management trial of following the heavy cows behind the light cows has been a success. The light cows have been able to maximise their intakes, with the heavy cows getting pushed a little harder but still gaining condition.
- The herds are still being allocated 6 ha per day, with ration of 10-11kgDM/cow/day pasture. As pre-grazing covers start to increase post-grazing residuals may also increase, therefore it is paramount to make sure these do not get above 1500kgDM/ha. The heavy herd will be used to correct post grazing residuals if required.
- The body condition score of the light and heavy herds are 4.5 and 4.8 respectively, up from 4.0 and 4.5 last week. It is physically impossible to increase the BCS of a cow by 0.5 in a week, which highlights the problems with different people doing the scoring each week. The bottom line is that both herds are rapidly putting on condition and the FMG do not see any problems in getting the herd to BCS 5.0 at calving.

**THE NEXT WEEKLY TDDF FMG** farm walk and BBQ will be on Monday May 5 at 10:30am. TDDF Farm Management Group – Basil Doonan (Davey & Maynard), Rob La Grange (TIAR), Chris Haynes (TIAR), and Justin McGowan and Nicki Devantier (TDDF Sharefarmers).

#### Topics for discussion will be:

- *Winter feedplanning*
- *Transition cow feeding*
- *Body condition scoring*
- *Cow numbers for the 2008/09 season*