SOUTHERN DAIRY HUB

SDH Farm Tour

Managing second-round grass and milk urea

Wednesday 8 October, 11am – 1pm

SDH Cow Shed, 611 Ryal Bush Wallacetown Rd

Insights. Conversations. Practical tools for the season ahead.

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Thank you for joining us at the Southern Dairy Hub today. This event is an opportunity to walk the paddocks, hear from experts, and have practical discussions about pasture management, milk urea, and feeding strategies at this key point in the season.

Our guest speakers bring specialist expertise and on-farm know-how:

- Dr Charlotte Westwood (PGG Wrightson Seeds) will cover managing pasture quality for the second round, testing pasture quality, and interpreting milk urea results.
- Leo Pekar (FarmWise) will talk about balancing pasture intakes before mating, identifying key trigger points, and using the feed wedge to support decision-making.

Whether you're here in person or reading this online, we hope the presentations give you fresh ideas, practical tips, and confidence to apply them back on farm.

Andrea Dixon
Southern Dairy Hub General Manager

Guest speaker:
Charlotte Westwood

Charlotte is a veterinarian and nutritionist with a special interest in the links between forage nutrition, ruminant reproduction and animal health.

After graduating from Massey University, she worked in a large animal practice in Te Awamutu before completing a PhD in dairy cow nutrition and reproduction at the University of Sydney. She then spent seven years in farm consultancy, based in both New Zealand and southern NSW, before returning to NZ in 2009 to join PGG Wrightson Seeds.

Charlotte's Take-Home Messages

1. Pasture Quality Basics

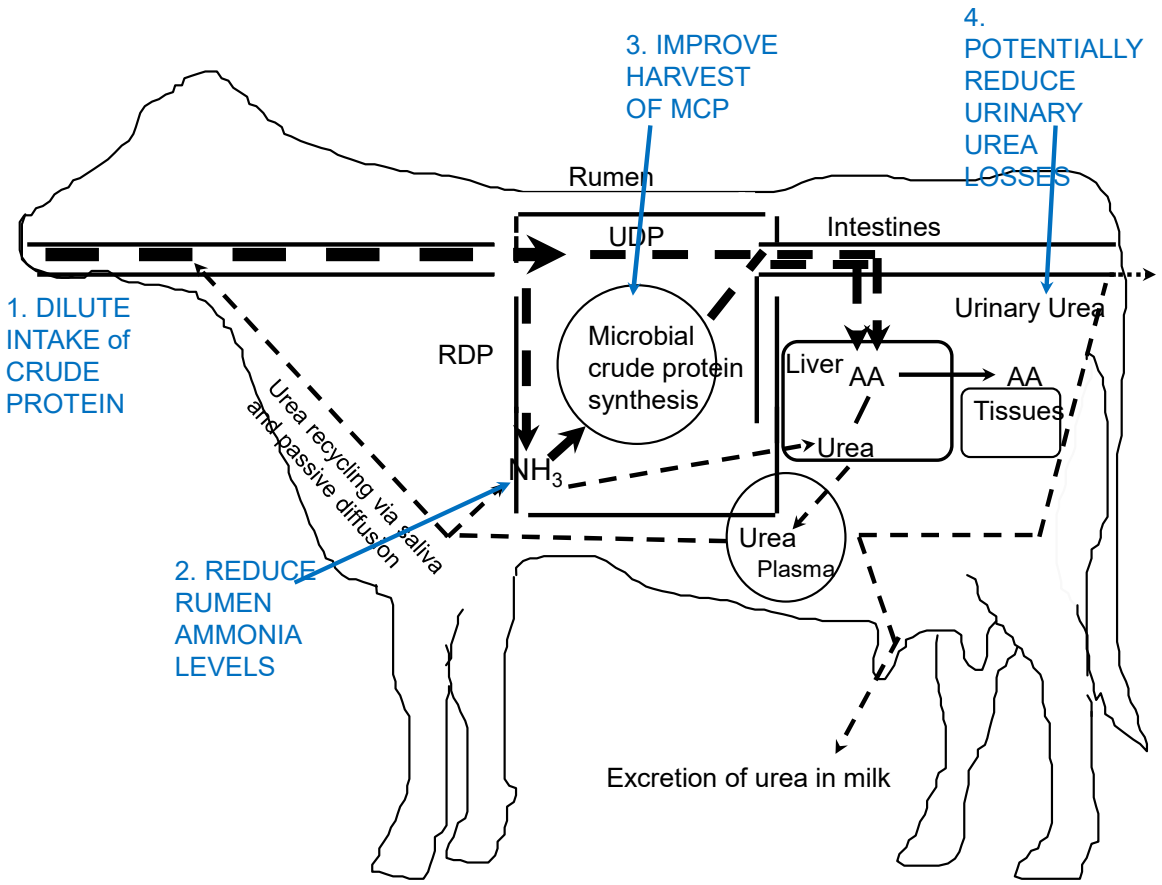
- Pasture is the main feed base.
- Pasture quality is more than just energy (MJME). Fibre (NDF/ADF), lignin and water soluble carbohydrates affect how much cows can eat and how easily they digest it.
- Second-round pasture is often the best quality of the year (higher energy and protein, lower fibre and lignin).

2. Practical assessment tips

- Pluck samples like a cow would – is it easy or hard to tear?
- Taste/feel the pasture: soft vs coarse, sweet vs fibrous.
- Watch cows: are they grazing easily or struggling?
- Check dung consistency – it reflects diet quality.

3. Managing pasture quality

- Tidy first-round residuals so clumps don't affect regrowth.
- Take surpluses as baleage or silage to reset the round with better quality.
- Use topping strategically.
- Clover is higher quality than ryegrass.
- Choose ryegrass cultivars carefully to spread risk of quality "crash."



4. Milk Urea (MU)

- MU is a by-product of protein breakdown.
- Urea travels throughout the body in the bloodstream before being excreted in the urine. Because it is such a small molecule, it also passes into the udder and milk. This means milk urea can be used as a rough proxy for dietary crude protein (CP), particularly the amount of rumen degradable protein (RDP) being broken down in the rumen.
- High MU often reflects very high crude protein in pasture – common in Southland.
- Low MU isn't always linked to the diet; other factors (stage of lactation, cow genetics, cow condition) play a role.
- Before feeding extra protein in early lactation, test pasture and supplements to check CP levels. Unnecessary protein is costly, and if not matched with enough dietary energy it can drive milk production at the expense of body condition – a risk for cows about to be mated.
- MU is a useful indicator, but don't base all decisions just on MU – overall energy balance matters for reproduction success.

For full notes, graphs and references, you can download Charlotte's complete presentation at **southerndairyhub.co.nz/farmtour2025**

Guest speaker:
Leo Pekar

Leo is a farm consultant supporting dairy farmers across Southland and South Otago. With strong farming experience and knowledge, he focuses on getting the basics right in pasture-first systems to lift production and profitability while keeping things simple and sustainable.

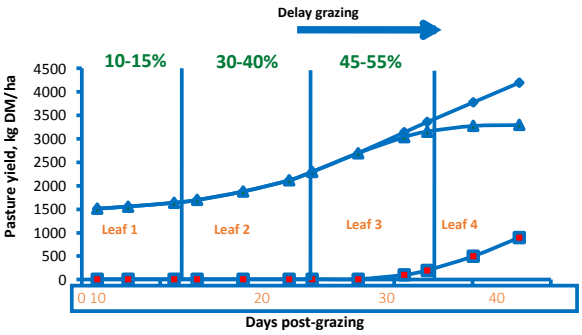
He works alongside farmers to turn challenges into opportunities, from fine-tuning feed plans and improving financial performance to building resilient businesses. Leo is passionate about people on farm and delivering practical solutions that work in the paddock.

Leo's Take-Home Messages

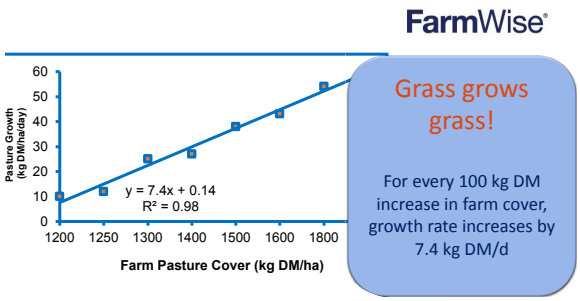
1. Grass grows grass – quality matters

- The foundation of pasture management is maintaining quality.

How Pasture Grows



Spring Pasture Growth



2. Using trigger points and farm walk data

- Set your pre-grazing cover target: (stocking rate × intake × round length) + residual.
- Round length should be based on leaf stage (2½–3 leaves, ~3000+).
- Paddocks above target: cut for silage.
- Paddocks below target: feed supplements (don't speed up the round).

Setting trigger points and using farm walk data

Pre-grazing cover target	**(stocking rate x intake x round length) + residual**	**=**
Round length	**(pre-grazing cover - residual) / stocking rate / intake**	**=**

3. Rules for mowing

- Start mowing as soon as growth exceeds demand.
- If mowing in front of cows, allow an extra 100 kgDM/ha cover.
- Mow night breaks after morning milking (no more than 50–60% of the daily grazing area).
- Graze both night and day paddocks so the mower covers the whole paddock.
- Follow mower with urea at 65 kg/ha.

4. Mowing in front vs topping behind

- Mowing in front of cows:
  - Increases intakes, creates wilting, improves palatability and harvesting efficiency.
  - But doesn't improve quality, and cows lose the ability to select.
- Topping (after cows):
  - Lets cows choose what they eat.
  - Milk solids % and production often rise.
  - Spreads dung across paddock (and tractor).
- Front-mowing lifts intake, topping supports selection and milk solids.

For full notes, graphs and references, you can download Leo's complete presentation at **southerndairyhub.co.nz/farmtour2025**

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Certificate of Analysis

Client:	Southern Dairy Hub	**Lab No:**	3997407	shvpv1
Address:	611 Ryal Bush Wallacetown Road RD 4 Invercargill 9874	**Date Received:**	01-Oct-2025	
		Date Reported:	02-Oct-2025	
		Quote No:		
		Order No:		
		Client Reference:		
		Submitted By:	Charissa Thomas	

Plant Analysis Results

Sample Name:	Paddock 57 New Grass 24/09/25	Paddock 61 24/09/25	Paddock 63 24/09/25	Paddock 66 24/09/25	Paddock 78 24/09/25	Paddock 90 24/09/25
Lab Number:	3997407.1	3997407.2	3997407.3	3997407.4	3997407.5	3997407.6
Sample Type:	Mixed Pasture	Mixed Pasture	Mixed Pasture	Mixed Pasture	Mixed Pasture	Mixed Pasture
Sample Type Code:	P1	P1	P1	P1	P1	P1
Nitrogen %	2.8	3.0	3.3	3.2	2.7	2.9
Nitrogen %DM	2.9	3.2	3.4	3.4	2.8	3.0
Crude Protein %DM	17.8	19.7	21.4	21.1	17.7	18.8
Acid Detergent Fibre (seq)* %DM	21.3	21.8	21.7	19.8	20.9	20.7
Neutral Detergent Fibre* %DM	42.8	40.1	40.8	39.0	40.3	41.0
Lignin* %DM	2.3	2.7	2.7	2.2	< 2.0	< 2.0
Ash* %DM	9.8	9.1	9.1	9.6	8.4	8.4
Organic Matter* %DM	90.2	90.9	90.9	90.4	91.6	91.6
Soluble Sugars* %DM	14.2	12.9	13.0	13.1	13.6	13.5
Starch* %DM	0.8	0.7	0.6	< 0.5 #1	0.8	0.7
Crude Fat* %DM	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.5	2.9	3.2
Digestibility of Organic Matter in Dry Matter (DOMD)* %	77.2	78.3	77.7	78.1	79.1	79.5
Metabolisable Energy* MJ/kgDM	12.3	12.5	12.4	12.5	12.7	12.7
Non Structural Carbohydrate* %DM	26.1	27.8	25.4	26.8	30.8	28.7
OMD in-vivo* %DM	85.6	86.1	85.5	86.4	86.4	86.8

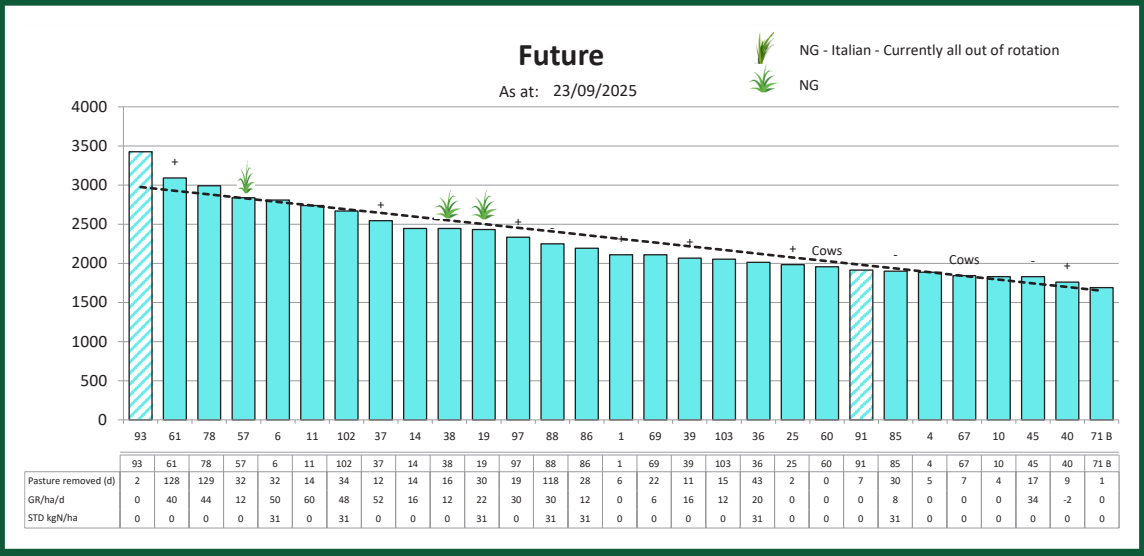
Plant Analysis Results

Sample Name:	Paddock 95 24/09/25	Paddock 6 24/09/25	Paddock 24 24/09/25			
Lab Number:	3997407.7	3997407.8	3997407.9			
Sample Type:	Mixed Pasture	Mixed Pasture	Mixed Pasture			
Sample Type Code:	P1	P1	P1			
Nitrogen %	2.4	3.4	2.8	-	-	-
Nitrogen %DM	2.5	3.6	2.9	-	-	-
Crude Protein %DM	15.5	22.4	17.8	-	-	-
Acid Detergent Fibre (seq)* %DM	19.8	20.4	20.2	-	-	-
Neutral Detergent Fibre* %DM	38.4	38.0	39.0	-	-	-
Lignin* %DM	< 2.0	2.1	< 2.0	-	-	-
Ash* %DM	8.6	9.5	8.5	-	-	-
Organic Matter* %DM	91.4	90.5	91.5	-	-	-
Soluble Sugars* %DM	14.8	14.6	14.7	-	-	-
Starch* %DM	0.6	0.6	0.9	-	-	-
Crude Fat* %DM	3.0	3.5	2.9	-	-	-
Digestibility of Organic Matter in Dry Matter (DOMD)* %	79.0	81.0	80.3	-	-	-
Metabolisable Energy* MJ/kgDM	12.6	13.0	12.8	-	-	-
Non Structural Carbohydrate* %DM	34.4	26.5	31.7	-	-	-
OMD in-vivo* %DM	86.5	89.5	87.8	-	-	-

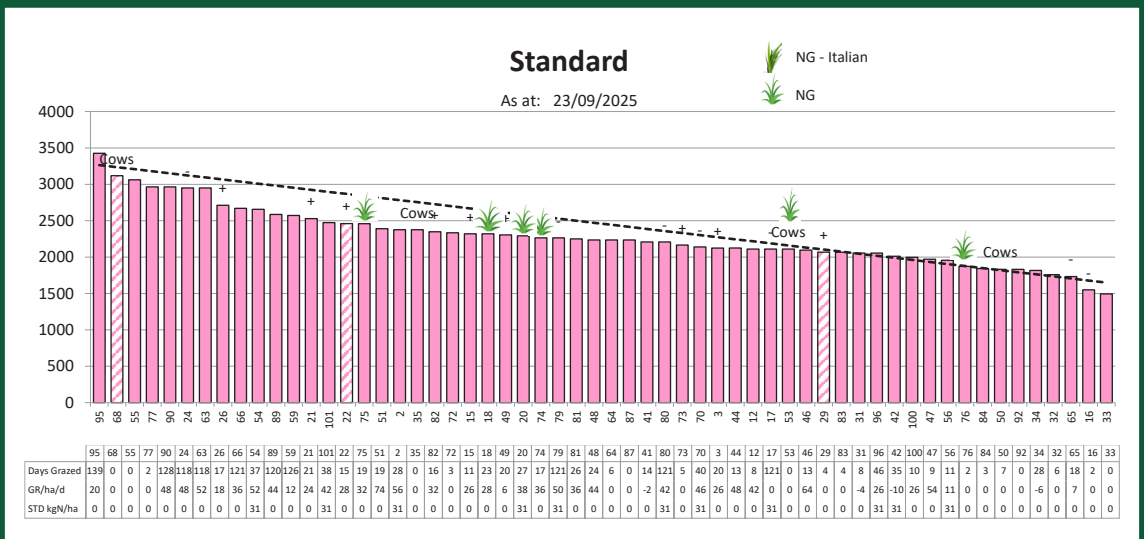
Demonstration: Research in Action

At SDH, our key comparison is between two herds: the standard herd, where decisions are made at herd level, and the future herd, where decisions are made at cow level. This side-by-side model lets us test new ideas in real-world conditions.

The following feed wedge is a snapshot of pasture cover and a handy tool for proactive pasture management.



	93	61	78	57	6	11	102	37	14	38	19	97	88	86	1	69	39	103	36	25	60	91	85	4	67	10	45	40	71 B
Pasture removed (d)	2	128	129	32	32	14	34	12	14	16	30	19	118	28	6	22	11	15	43	2	0	7	30	5	7	4	17	9	1
GR/ha/d	0	40	44	12	50	60	48	52	16	12	22	30	30	12	0	6	16	12	20	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	34	-2	0
STD kgN/ha	0	0	0	0	31	0	31	0	0	0	31	0	31	31	0	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	0	0	0



	95	68	55	77	90	24	63	26	66	54	89	59	21	101	22	75	51	2	35	82	72	15	18	49	20	74	79	81	48	64	87	41	80	73	70	3	44	12	17	53	46	29	83	31	96	42	100	47	56	76	84	50	92	34	32	65	16	33
Days Grazed	139	0	0	2	128	118	118	17	121	37	120	126	21	38	15	19	19	28	0	16	3	11	23	20	27	17	121	26	24	6	0	14	121	5	40	20	13	8	121	0	13	4	4	8	46	35	10	9	11	2	3	7	0	28	6	18	2	0
GR/ha/d	20	0	0	0	48	48	52	18	36	52	44	12	24	42	28	32	74	56	0	32	0	26	28	6	38	36	50	36	44	0	0	-2	42	0	46	26	48	42	0	0	64	0	0	-4	26	-10	26	54	11	0	0	0	0	-6	0	7	0	0
STD kgN/ha	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0	31	0	0	0	0	0	31	0	31	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	0	0	31	31	0	0	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

For full notes, graphs and references, visit:
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