

Weekly Farm Summary 25 October 2023

Farm-system impacts of: Bales vs Beet for winter AND Reducing N loss to water by 30%.

	Std Infrastructure Blue	LI Baleage Pink	Std FB Green	LI FB Yellow
Farmlet area including wintering	49.3	93.6	86.9	60.8
Peak cow numbers	138	210	233	136
Milking Area	43.5	82.0	69.5	52.1
Current Herd size (cows)	138	210	233	136
Pasture Stocking rate (current)	3.2	2.6	3.4	2.6
Winter Feed Milking supplement	Baleage	Baleage	Beet	Beet
	In-shed feed 500kg/cow + silage as required			
Average Cover (kgDM/ha)	2403	2572	2424	2438
Average Growth (kgDM/ha/d)	58.2	68.2	67.0	52.0
Target rotation length (d)	24	30	26	29
Last week actual rotation (d)	22	32	21	29
Last week supp (kgDM/c)	4.2	1.8	3.5	2.7
Latest Average BCS	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6
% of herd on priority management	11.5%	16.8%	14.6%	14.7%
% in Milk	100%	100%	100%	100%
7-day Average Milk yield (L/cow)	24.3	24.7	24.9	25.1
7-day Average Milk yield (kgMS/c)	2.18	2.22	2.25	2.27
Nitrogen Cap kgN/ha/yr	180	50	180	50
% Nitrogen used (kgN/ha) YTD	7% (13kg)	6% (3kg)	8% (14kg)	8% (4kg)
Effluent N YTD	1	1	3	2
YTD Pasture growth TDM/ha	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.8
YTD supp (kg DM/c)	159	116	198	114
YTD MS/c	116	117	122	123
YTD MS/milk ha (YTD MS/farm ha)	365 (322)	297 (260)	412 (330)	315 (270)
Focus area	Current Status			
Milk Production	Milk production is holding relatively steady with a few fluctuations related to variation in pasture quality and quantity in paddocks across the farmlets. SCC has stabilised in both herds, and it is nice to see the fodder beet herd consistently in the excellence band. Protein:Fat ratio is fluctuating between 0.78 and 0.82			
Pasture & Feed	Growth rate this week averaged 61 kgDM/ha/day across the farm with all farmlets growing above demand. This has put us into a genuine surplus for the two LI herds and paddocks have been stepped over for conservation. In previous seasons we have baled surplus pasture as soon as possible after it is identified, weather permitting. However, with the lower payout and need to reduce costs we will be leaving these for 7-10 before conservation this year to increase the bales/ha that are harvested.			
Animals	The collars have identified 80 animals that are more than 45 days post calving that have not cycled. This list has been assessed and approximately 30 identified for a CIDR programme starting 27 th Oct. The calves at the support block were weighed last Friday and averaged 72kg, ranging from 54 to 98kg. Based on their weights 24 were weaned with another group close to target which will be reweighed and likely weaned next week.			
Environment	Second round N applications for the Std farmlets are continuing. The second round for the LI farmlets is still on hold but will likely start next week. Emptying of the weeping wall started this week with the material being spread on winter paddocks ahead of replanting. Samples have been taken for nutrient analysis.			
Wintering	Groundwork is continuing in the winter paddocks with them all cultivated and rolled to break up any clods. The next step is surface working, levelling, and reseeding. With a significant requirement for winter baleage we have started working through options for sourcing this.			
People	Last Friday night the on-farm team and their families got together for a shared dinner and the opportunity for families to have a look around the farm. From all accounts it was a great night with lots of fun and laughter.			
Research	The Plantain Potency and Practice Governance Group visited SDH this week to look at our pastures including plantain and to see the plantain cultivar evaluation trial that is part of Nicole Hammonds PhD.			

Milk production

Principles of Milk Production management this week

Milk production	There have been a few wobbles in milk production this week but in general production is going well. We are now less than 2000 kg MS behind last season and the gap is closing daily.
Key Influences of Milk Production	Many cows will be past peak milk production so our challenge now is to hold production for as long as we can. With strong pasture growth we have reduced the amount of supplementary feed being offered so we need to make sure the cows can physically eat the pasture on offer, especially as the pasture dry matter percentage has dropped. Cows have not been forced to grazed into the base of paddocks where residuals were left high last grazing. The mower is being used to reset the residuals in these paddocks.
Cow Management	We have seen a fall in BCS in the last fortnight so with mating rapidly approaching more cows have been put onto OAD and/or priority feeding. We now have 137 cows on OAD milking in their farmlet herds and an additional 157 on priority feeding.

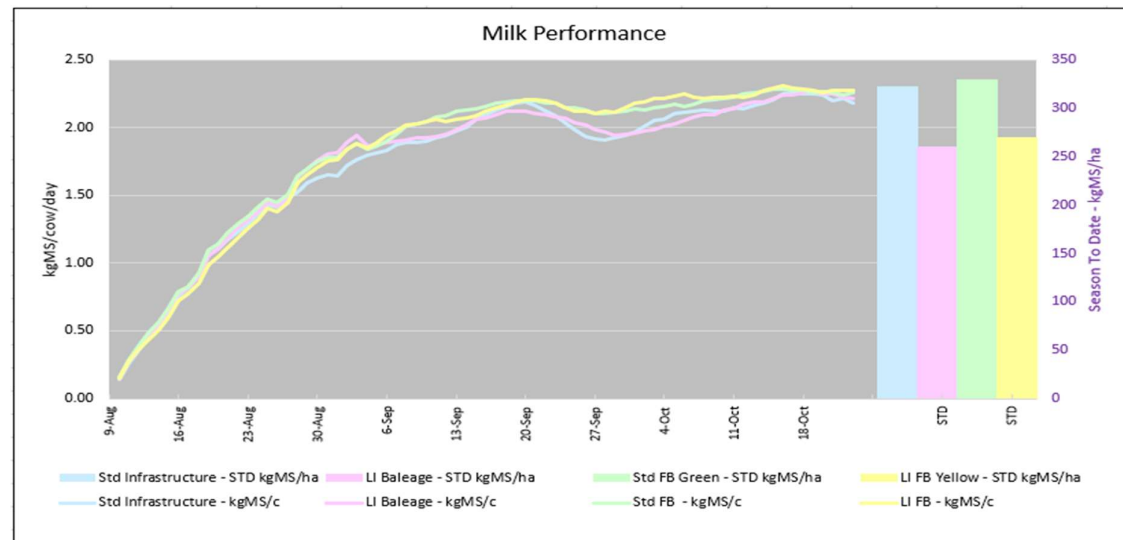


Figure 1. Milksolids per cow/day season to date and kgMS/ha season to date.

Feed management

Principles of Feed management this week

Feed Quality

Pasture quality is generally good across the farm although there are a few paddocks with high base residuals from the previous round. Cows have not been forced to graze into the base of these pastures so they have either been topped or will be targeted for conservation in the next round. It is important when topping the paddocks that we are achieving our aim of resetting the residual rather than just topping so the paddock looks tidy. To achieve this the blades on the mower have been checked and adjustments made to the topping height.

Growth Rate

Growth has exceeded demand in all the farmlets this week resulting in paddocks being stepped over for conservation in three of the four farmlets. These paddocks will be left for at least 7 days before conserving to increase the bulk of pasture for baling. We will also be discussing the mower height with our contractor to make sure we are achieving the desired residual. As the graphs below indicate we have good soil temperature and sufficient moisture for good growth rates.

Nitrogen Strategy

Second round applications are continuing for the Std herds and we have deferred the decision on the second round for the LI farmlets till next week.

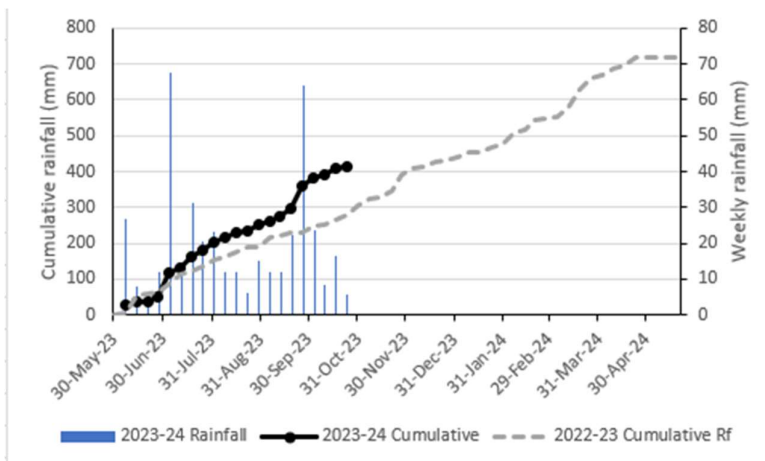


Figure 2. Season to date rainfall compared with cumulative rainfall 2022-23

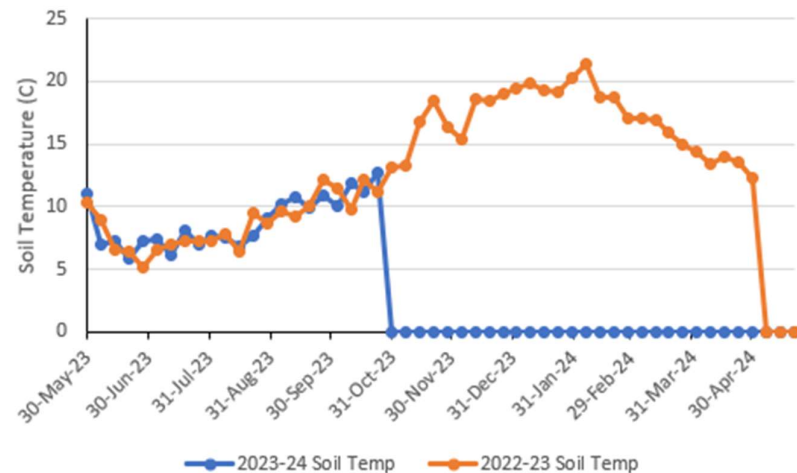


Figure 3. Soil temperatures 2023-24 vs 2022-23

Feed management

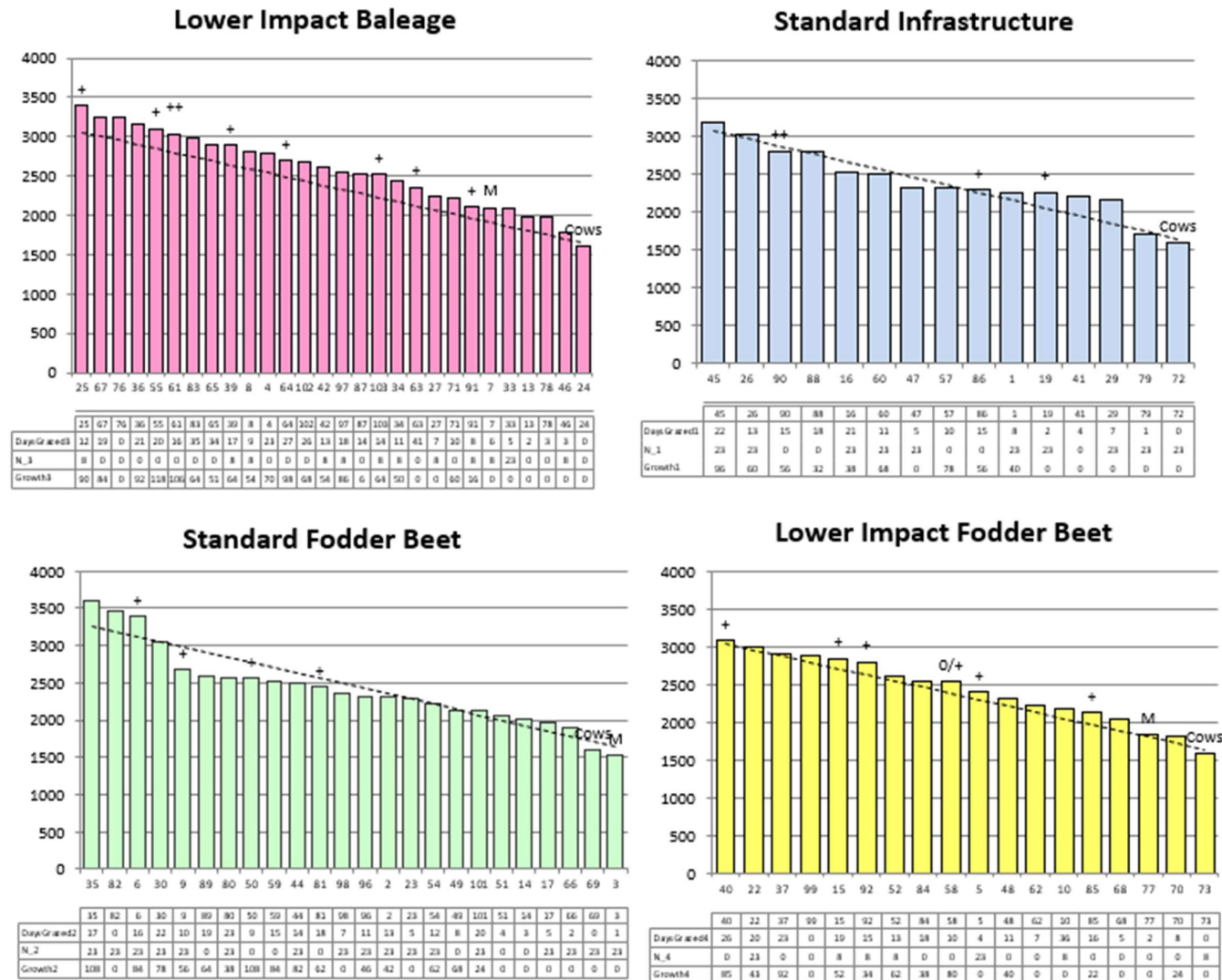


Figure 4. Plate meter feed wedges at 25 October 2023

Animal management

Reproductive Intervention

Decision rules for selecting CIDR cows

We have taken a similar approach as last season when deciding which cows will be suitable candidates for reproductive intervention. The decision rules for who will receive CIDR's are:

- 3-6 yrs.
- Not identified to be a cull at the end of season
- Have calved > 42 days and no cycle detected on Allflex collar (and cross-referenced with tail paint)
- At least BCS 4.5 as at 19 Oct 23
- BW > 100

Calf Management

Last Friday all the calves at the support block were weighed, drenched, and had their first 7:1 leptovaccination. Twenty four were weaned but there were a lot close to their weaning weight target so another weigh will be done on the 3rd November.

Of the 177 calves that were weighed the average weight was 72 kg with a range from 54 to 98 kg. Weaning weight is based on breed with Friesian types weaned at 100 kg, crossbreds at 90 and jersey types at 80 kg.



Figures 5 & 6. Calves coming through the yards for weighing, drenching, leptovaccination and weaning if at target weight