

# 2025/26 Season

## Weekly Farm Update

as at 8 October 2025

Your weekly glimpse into research in action at Southern Dairy Hub



		08-Oct-25	08-Oct-25
		Standard	Future
Farm Area	Grazing area available to milkers - ha	170.7	85.81
	Winter area - ha	26.1	13.3
Stock Numbers	Cows milking into vat	495	211
	Cows milking NOT into vat - treated	12	2
	Total cows milking	513	216
	Colostrum cows	6	3
	Total Sick Cows	12	2
	Dry cows on farm	3	1
	Average BCS (camera, milking cows only)	4.7	4.8
	BCS 4.5 or less (%)	29	20
	Average pasture cover (kg DM/ha)	2132	2295
Feed Budget	Current Pasture fed - milkers (kg DM/cow/day)	11.1	16.3
	Current Silage fed - milkers (kg DM/cow/day)	5.3	2.8
	Current Inshed feed - milkers (kg DM/cow/day)	3.6	0.9
	Current per cow (kg DM/cow/day allocation)	20.0	20.0
	Stocking rate	3.0	2.5
	Current Pasture demand - milkers (kg DM/ha)	34	41
	Pasture growth rate	40	40
	Pre-graze cover target (for week coming)	2800	2800
	Residual (average for week past)	1700	1800
	Round length (actual)	27	30
Milk production	Weekly average milksolids (kg/cow)	2.41	2.30
	Fat:protein	0.71	0.70
	SCC	96	152
	Milk urea	18.1	19.8
Farm Conditions	Soil temperature average (degree C)	10.5↑	
	Rainfall (mm)	26.4	
	Rainfall season to date (mm)	405	
	Soil conditions	Wet	
People	Current Roster	5 in 2	
	Health and safety incidences		
	Milking routine	TAD	
Farm System Description	<b>Standard herd:</b> average BW Southland herd stocked at 3.2 cows/ha at peak, up to 180 kg N/ha and wintered on swedes. <b>Future herd:</b> higher genetic merit herd (127 BW difference) stocked at 2.5 cows/ha at peak, up to 180 kg N/ha and wintered on baleage.		
Decisions and Insights	<b>Milk production vs supplementary feed input:</b> The Standard cows this week are producing more than the Future cows (2.41 kgMS vs 2.30 kgMS); however, the additional supplementary feed required to fill the grass deficit is costing us \$3.53 per cow for the Standards vs \$1.48 per cow per day for the Futures. The net effect is that the Future cows are providing us with \$1 more income per day, despite being the lower producers this week. This is largely linked to the quality of supplementary feed, as grazing residuals are the same. If both herds were being fed the same, we would expect the Futures to outperform the Standards, as we have seen in the past. The focus continues to be on hitting grazing residuals, maximising grass harvest, and then filling the deficit with supplementary feed.		
	<b>Pasture growth rates have certainly lifted this week</b> , and we expect them to continue increasing with the warmer weather. Growth has just exceeded demand, leading to a need to reduce in-shed feed and silage. With such rapid changes in pasture growth, these decisions are being made every couple of days. We are mindful of the need to be proactive in our decision-making to step over (conserve) Future paddocks with the lower stocking rate, with a real focus on maintaining pasture quality.		
	<b>We sent the first group of calves to the support block this week.</b> They are on a regular drench programme, with careful monitoring for coccidiosis to prevent any outbreak. They are being fed 3 litres of milk, meal, hay, and ad lib grass.		
	<b>We have received the blood and liver results for the milking cows.</b> All cows require a Se/B12 top-up, while copper levels are within range, so we will continue supplementation through the water at this stage as we lead into mating.		
	<b>We continue to use the BCS camera fortnightly to identify lighter-conditioned animals for priority management.</b> These scores are uploaded to MINDA, as this is very useful information as we head into mating.		
	<b>We have just finished our first round of Ammo 31.</b> Perfect grass-growing weather.		
	<b>A fantastic turnout at Wednesday's farm tour.</b> Farmers joined the SDH team and guest speakers Dr Charlotte Westwood (PGG Wrightson Seeds) and Leo Pekar (FarmWise) to chat about managing second-round pasture and milk urea. Plenty of practical tips were shared, and everyone left with something to reflect on and take back to their own farms. A huge thanks to our speakers and to everyone who came along, asked questions, and enjoyed a delicious lunch with the team.		