

HubWatch

2025/26 Season

Weekly Farm Update as at 10 April 2026

Your weekly glimpse into research in action at Southern Dairy Hub.



Insights

Nitrogen fertiliser application: No further [nitrogen fertiliser](#) will be applied this season. This is due to strong average pasture covers across both herds, good silage reserves, and the cost of application (fuel and nitrogen).

Autumn feed budgets, using predicted growth rates from previous years, suggest we will exceed the dry-off target of 1900 kgDM at current growth rates and covers. This will continue to be monitored weekly.

Baleage conservation: Four permanent grass paddocks and our three Italian (winter baleage) paddocks were mown this week to help manage pre-graze covers and achieve target post-grazing residuals, which are critical for pasture quality. The focus is on setting up high-quality pasture for spring, driven by decisions made now.

Body Condition Score (BCS) and dry-off decisions: A BCS spreadsheet was completed this week to set dry-off targets:

- BCS 5 for second calvers
- BCS 4.5 for mixed-age cows

This accounts for current BCS and expected winter gains.

- +0.5 BCS/month for cows on grass and baleage
- +0.3 BCS/month for cows on baleage and swedes

Targets are 5.5 BCS for three-year-olds and 5 for mixed-age cows at PSC.

Based on this, one mob in the Standard herd has been moved to once-a-day (OAD) milking to lift BCS through April and reduce the need for early dry-off.

Production: The Future herd continues to outperform the Standard herd.

- Future herd: 1.84 kgMS/cow/day (no in-shed feed, grass only)
- Standard herd: 1.74 kgMS/cow/day (with 1.8kg in-shed feed)

The Future herd is maintaining strong production late into the season.

Effluent: Focus remains on lowering effluent pond levels ahead of wetter months.

Current level is 48%, above the 30% target.

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as at 8 April 2026

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		08-Apr-26	08-Apr-26
		Standard	Future
Farm Area	Grazing area available to milkers - ha	168	87.54
	Area out of rotation - ha	28.77	11.6
Stock Numbers	Cows milking into vat	480	201
	Cows milking NOT into vat - treated	4	3
	Total cows milking	484	204
	Total Sick Cows	5	7
	Average BCS	4.3	4.2
	BCS 4.0 or less (%)	24	37
	Average pasture cover (kg DM/ha)	2455	2649
Feed Budget	Current Pasture fed - milkers (kg DM/cow/day)	17.2	19.0
	Current Silage fed - milkers (kg DM/cow/day)	0.0	0.0
	Current Inshed feed - milkers (kg DM/cow/day)	1.8	0.0
	Current per cow (kg DM/cow/day allocation)	19.0	19.0
	Stocking rate (based on available pasture area)	2.9	2.3
	Current Pasture demand - milkers (kg DM/ha)	50	46
	Pasture growth rate	41	34
	Pre-graze cover target (for week coming)	3100	3000
	Residual (average for week past)	1860	1900
	Round length (actual)	25	30
	Weekly average milksolids (kg/cow)	1.74	1.84
Milk production	Fat:protein	0.76	0.77
	SCC	142	166
	Milk urea	35.3	32.0
	Soil temperature average (degree C)	15.5↓	
Farm Conditions	Rainfall (mm)	4	
	Rainfall season to date (mm)	828	
	Soil conditions	Dry	
People	Current Roster	5 in 2	
	Milking routine	TAD	
Farm System Description	Standard herd: average BW Southland herd stocked at 3.2 cows/ha at peak, up to 180 kg N/ha and wintered on swedes Future herd: 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		