

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



Insights

- **Winter feed budget planning:** We've started planning our winter feed budget to ensure there is enough baleage on hand. The budget uses the average of previous season crop yields (15T for swedes and 13T for kale). While a few extra early bales have been made this year, some baleage will still need to be purchased, but less than originally budgeted for this season.
- **Plantain and new grass paddocks:** New grass paddocks are growing well, with strong plantain establishment. These were planted at 3kg/ha (see photo). As a Plantain Partner farm, work is underway to lift the proportion of plantain in pasture. This includes planting 3kg/ha in permanent new grass paddocks and using a drone last year to broadcast seed (4kg/ha) onto paddocks with no plantain or plantain older than two years. It's still early days to see results.
- **Body Condition Scoring (BCS):** We've seen a small lift in BCS in the Standard herd over the past couple of weeks, increasing to 4.3 (from 4.2). There's also been a reduction in the proportion of cows under 4 BCS, now 42% for Futures and 31% for Standards, down from 44% and 34% respectively last week. Great to see this positive shift.
- **Herd testing and Johne's:** The third herd test is scheduled for Monday 9 February, including our annual Johne's testing. Testing has been undertaken for a number of years, with Johne's cases reducing from 3% in 2018 to 0.5% in 2024. Testing continues to prove its value.
- **Decisions ahead:** February will provide key information to determine which cows leave the farm, including in-calf results, Johne's testing, milk production, SCC to date, and farm team nominations.

		28-Jan-26	28-Jan-26
		Standard	Future
Farm Area	Grazing area available to milkers - ha	156.3	74.2
	Area out of rotation - ha	40.5	24.9
Stock Numbers	Cows milking into vat	511	208
	Cows milking NOT into vat - treated	3	0
	Total cows milking	514	208
	Total Sick Cows	5	7
	Average BCS (camera)	4.3	4.2
	BCS 4.0 or less (%)	31	42
Feed Budget	Average pasture cover (kg DM/ha)	2260	2323
	Current Pasture fed - milkers (kg DM/cow/day)	16.5	15.4
	Current Silage fed - milkers (kg DM/cow/day)	1.8	3.0
	Current Inshed feed - milkers (kg DM/cow/day)	1.7	1.6
	Current per cow (kg DM/cow/day allocation)	20.0	20.0
	Stocking rate (based on available pasture area)	3.3	2.8
	Current Pasture demand - milkers (kg DM/ha)	54	43
	Pasture growth rate	38	38
	Pre-graze cover target (for week coming)	3100	2950
	Residual (average for week past)	1750	1800
	Round length (actual)	27	28
Milk production	Weekly average milksolids (kg/cow)	1.87	1.99
	Fat:protein	0.81	0.76
	SCC	125	164
	Milk urea	20.8	20.1
Farm Conditions	Soil temperature average (degree C)	16.8↓	
	Rainfall (mm)	31.6	
	Rainfall season to date (mm)	670	
	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		