

2.1 Maximise pasture growth rates

Pugging

Pugging will lower pasture growth rates for the next 3-4 months at least. NIL PUGGING DAMAGE is the target. If very wet, stock must be on-off grazed (this includes milkers). Milkers can eat their allocation in two grazings of 3.5-4 hours each. In order of priority, stand off dry cows, springers if they can safely calve on the stand-off area, and then milkers.

When standing off you need to teat spray the dry cows 2-3 times per week due to the hygiene challenges associated with mud and stand-off areas.

Block graze rather than strip graze. Walk out of different gates. Where possible start grazing at the back of the paddock and walk stock in and out of paddocks on long grass. Stand off, use an appropriate stand-off area to avoid pugging and over grazing (less than 1100 DM/ha), see DairyNZ's 'Minimising Muck Maximising Money' for guidelines www.dairynz.co.nz

Nitrogen and sulphur

Apply nitrogen to all paddocks with a cover of (1200-2200kg DM/ha) on the rising platometer. Follow the cows at same rate of nitrogen and complete a round of the farm.

Sulphur may also be limiting where there has been a lot of leaching (heavy rain on free draining soils) or where soil temperatures are less than 10°C (low sulphate levels due to the lack of microbial activity to convert sulphur to sulphate). Where sulphate is limiting, use a mix of sulphate of ammonia (SOA) and urea, or any fertiliser that contains sulphate and can be safely mixed with urea.

Average pasture cover (APC)

Use supplements and reduce demand to slow the rotation and increase APC. Where APC is low due to a fast rotation, pasture growth will be reduced as shown in *Figure 2* (page 6). Therefore to maximise growth rates it is very important to slow the rotation down ASAP to get the APC above 1800kg DM/ha.

Work out the profitability of feeding supplements using *Tables 2 & 3* in Section 1.4 to select the likely response to supplements you could get based on the conditions that you are going to feed the supplement. Only in severe feed deficits lasting two weeks or more will you be able to pay more than 5% of payout per kgDM basis (for 11 ME supplement) and make a profit. However, if milkers are going to be fed less than 10 kgDM (Friesian cows) or 8 kgDM (Jersey cows) or dry cows fed less than 5 kgDM then supplement **must** be purchased or stocking rate reduced as feeding rates will be below minimal animal welfare standards.