Focus Farm Wilson & Sandra James Farm Walk Notes

Monday 21st Dec 2009

Critical issues for the short term

1. Pasture growth of 22 kg DM/ha/day is less than half of demand resulting in a substantial reduction in average pasture cover (from 2075 to 1920 kg DM/ha).
2. From the feed wedge there is a substantial deficit loaming with further increases expected if rain does not arrive within the next couple weeks.
3. Stock numbers will be reduced this week to lower demand. Sixteen culls have been sent today with the option to send a further 25 cows to be milked at the James's Nukuhou farm.
4. The smaller herd (younger and skinny cows) will be considered for OAD in the next few weeks if growth rates continue to remain low.

Summary for Week

Average Pasture Cover	1920 kg DM/ha (2075 kg DM/ha last week)
Pre-Graze Target	(27 day rd x 15 kg DM pasture/cow x 3.1 c/ha) +1500 = 2750 kg DM/ha
	APC = 1255/2 + 1500 = 2130 kg DM/ha
Average Growth Rate for Week	22 kg DM/ha/day (last week 42 kg DM/ha/day)
Growth Rate to Meet Demand	49 kg DM/ha/day (437 cows – 16 culls)
Cows Milked	437 cows
Mastitis	4 treated for mastitis; 0 lame cows
Bulls	10 in the herd; 4 lame bulls
Rotation length for week	27 days for last week av. ha/day = 4.8 ha
Supplement	0.3 kg PKE/ cow (2 bins of PKE fed all week)
Supplement Fed to Date	60t grass silage; 29t maize; 171.5 t PKE (wet)
(peak cows 444);	2018 kg DM/ha; 586 kg DM/cow
Soil temperature	21.0℃ (21.0℃ last week)
Rainfall for week	5 mm
Nitrogen this week	Nil N/ha
Nitrogen applied STD	143 kg N/ha Season to date compared to 187 kg N/ha STD last year

Production to 20th December

Year	Kg MS YTD	MS YTD/ha	Cows	MS/ha/d	MS/cow/d	Mid Point Season
2009/10	92863	720	437	4.56	1.35	?
2008/09	99,568	906	422	4.99	1.52	12 Nov
2007/08	104,773	812	418	4.67	1.44	25 Nov

BMSCC	250,000 – 268,000
Cow condition score 7th Dec	4.2 average;19% of the cows < BCS 4.0
Facial Eczema Spore Count	**Nil**

Summer Management Objectives:

1. To protect next season's production and reproduction by getting all MA cows to body condition score (BCS) 5.0 by calving and 1st calvers to 5.5.
2. To achieve maximum, profitable milksolids production for the rest of the current season.

Management Plan

- Soils have continued to dry out with only 5ml of rain this week. Conditions have proven to be hot which is evident walking through paddocks with clover dying off.
- Pasture growth rates have been significantly lower this week (22 kg DM/ha/day vs 42 kg DM/ha/day last week). This is well below demand (49 kg DM/ha/day) and if continues average pasture cover, cow condition and milk production can be expected to decline.
- The cows are currently on a 27 day rotation and require a pre-graze cover of 2800 kg DM/ha. Cow intake is now budgeted at 15 kg DM/ha/cow/day reflected in a drop in per cow production to 1.33 kg MS/cow/day.
- The feed wedge line has been revised to a pre-graze target cover of 2800 kg DM/ha and grazing to 1500 kg DM/ha residuals.
- At the current stocking rate the feed deficit from the feed wedge equates to 230 kg DM/ha or just under 30t for the farm.
- Sixteen cull cows were sent on the 21st December. Cow numbers maybe reduced further later this week if there is a surplus of grass at the James's Nukuhou farm.
- If pasture growth rates continue at the same level this week (22 kg DM/ha/day), pasture cover can be expected to drop to 1750 kg DM/ha.
- Per cow production has continued to drop off sitting at 1.33 kg MS/cow/day compared to 1.42 kg MS/cow/day last week. This reduction can be attributed to a combination of reduced intakes and lower quality pasture offered. Hot and dry conditions have resulted in higher levels of lignin and structural carbohydrates, and lower levels of ME and crude protein in the pasture.
- Feeding out is not an option for Wilson as it is too early as there is only 100t DM of grass silage on hand.
- Options to reduce feed demand are to:
    - Cull more cows (can cull another 25 for traits other than empty) and/or
    - Milk the 1st calvers and thin young cows OAD.

Considerations for Culling Cows

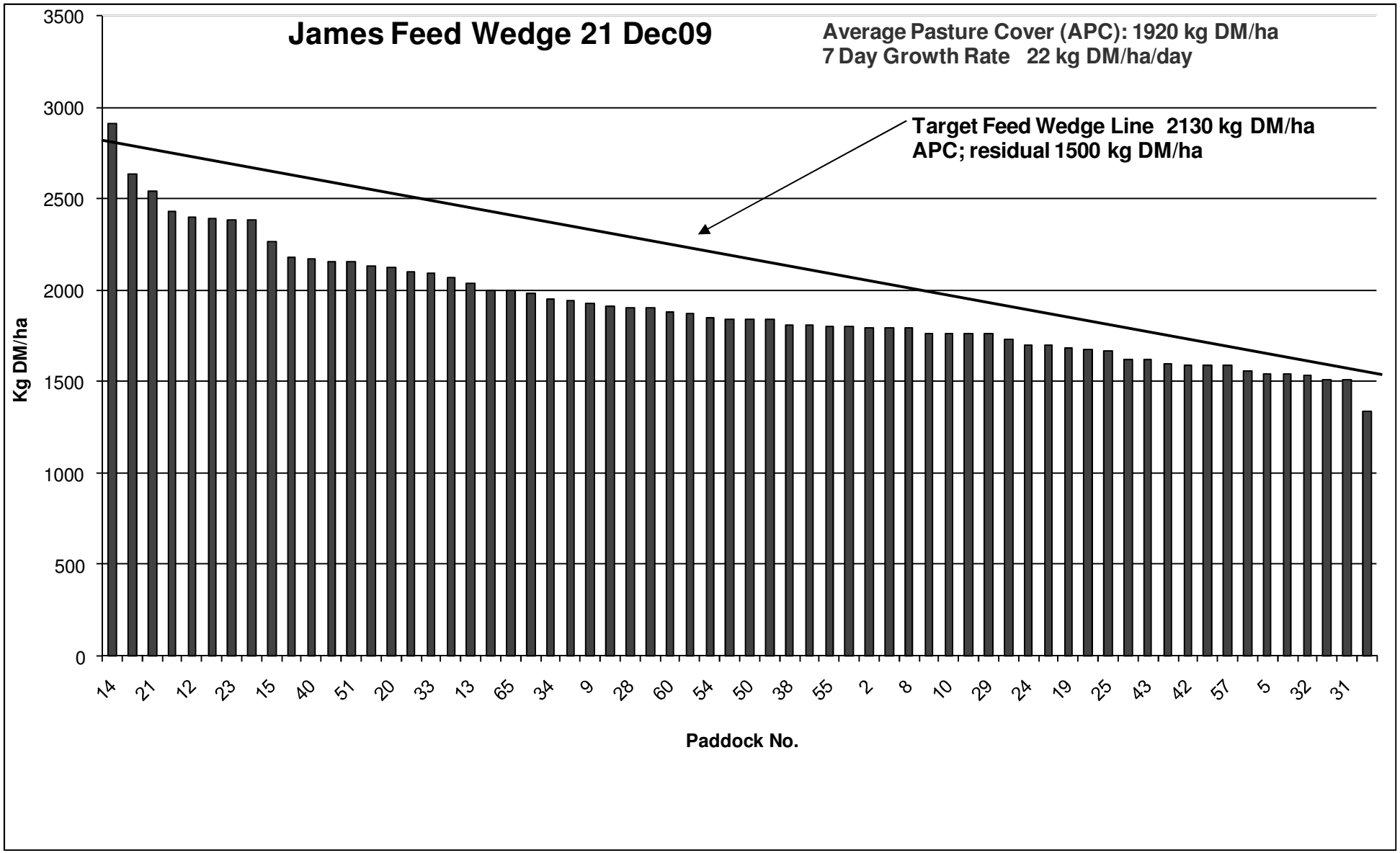
1. For most farms milking 80-85% of peak cows from January onwards does not result in low pasture utilisation or less milk production – in fact more milk is produced as less feed goes to cow maintenance.
2. Feedings supplement to cull cows is expensive.
3. Where 20% of the herd is culled the remaining cows are fed 25% more i.e. cows have more feed for milk production and cow condition.

Once-A-Day (OAD) Milking:

Three milkings in two days or OAD milking are good options to take pressure off cows when feed supply is limited especially first calvers.

During the transition to OAD it is critical to manage feeding well:

- Maintain feed quality & quantity at twice a day levels for at least the first week
- Cow requirements are not being met if MS/cow drops by more than 0.2 kg/d
- Underfeeding during the transition to OAD may exacerbate SCC issues as the somatic cells will be concentrated in a smaller volume of milk.



RPM – Rising Plate meter. All kg DM/ha calculated on the formula height x 140 + 500