



Tafi Manjala



## Welcome

July was a month of strong winds, cold temperatures and heavy rainfall. Northland received in excess of 300mm in July which represents 21% of the annual average rainfall. This compares to the July long term average of 11.5% of total. This means soils are extremely wet and prone to pugging and pasture utilisation is at its lowest. Pugging can reduce pasture production by 50% for up to 6 weeks. Imagine suddenly having a 60ha farm, from 120ha.

Soil temperatures are 9°C, growth rates are 20 - 35kg DM/ha/day as of the 6 August. Daily milk production is 0.5% ahead of last season and so this points to a great season, but....the key to realising your farm's potential at this season's high payout is management and this is 100% in your control.

## Management to reduce pugging

On off graze dry cows and if necessary milkers. In 3.5 hours dry cows can eat maintenance under dry conditions but you may need 4 - 4.5 hours in wet cold conditions. Milkers eat requirements in two grazings of 3.5 hours each. Block grazing and using sacrifice paddocks will help minimise pugging. Reducing pugging will make more pasture available to the herd and reduce potential need for supplement. When standing cows off feed quality supplements out before they go on to the paddock = less walking around the break and less wastage.

Calving is a stressful time so here are some ideas to help make it easier: -

1. Identify what needs to be done by **planning** your week in advance. Prioritise work into urgent - to be done today and tasks that can wait - which get done if there is time.
2. Have a daily, weekly and monthly **checklist** that is accessible to everyone. Tick off completed work and roll over uncompleted tasks so that things are not forgotten and rushed at the

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end of each day, increasing accident risk.

3. Mid-way through calving the **team** will begin to tire and moral is at an all time low. Does everyone need to start at 5am? A sleep in will do wonders. Plan for it - do your rosters.

Fatigue results in accidents. How will your business perform if you or your staff are injured? How about taking half a day off to rest and recharge?

4. Spring season is when most farm spending occurs? Plan ahead to spend wisely and identify options early. Do your homework for best bargains on fertiliser, animal health, supplements etc. Feed budgeting should include cash flows to determine if any additional inputs are required.

## Pasture management

After balance date a rotation faster than 24 days reduces total herbage grown between grazings. This is because you are not allowing full expansion of the third leaf which contributes about 55% of the total dry matter. Similarly, a 45 day rotation reduces pasture quality as the first leaf dies and you start to deposit dead material in the base of the sward.

What do you do when cows have left more than 7- 8 clicks (over 1600kg DM/ha)? Danny and Heather Woodcock calculate how much has been left behind and divide that by the feed allowance per cow, for one day and then put the first few rows or last rows in to clean up. They also do the same to determine where the fence goes if the paddock is too big for a 12hr grazing. Some farmers graze with dries but the challenge is to train the cows to graze to the required level. The message remains - residual drives quality.

Tafi Manjala

Dexcel Consulting Officer  
Whangarei West

Phone: 09 433 7528  
Mobile: 027 499 9021  
Email: tafi.manjala@dexcel.co.nz

  
www.dexcel.co.nz

## Key messages for spring

- Use Dexcel spring rotation planner, or feed allocation for first rotation to be 50 days
- Monitor average pasture cover (APC) at least every 10 - 14 days against target, cover from your feed budget
- Use supplements to keep APC over 1800kg DM/ha and where milkers are leaving residuals below 1350kg DM/ha. Supplements are marginal for residuals over 1400kg DM/ha
- Other options if short of feed include once a day milking (OAD), nitrogen and grazing off dry stock
- Supplement cows with magnesium and other minerals
- Maintain calving records, including at risk cows and inductions. Then use these records for decision making leading into mating

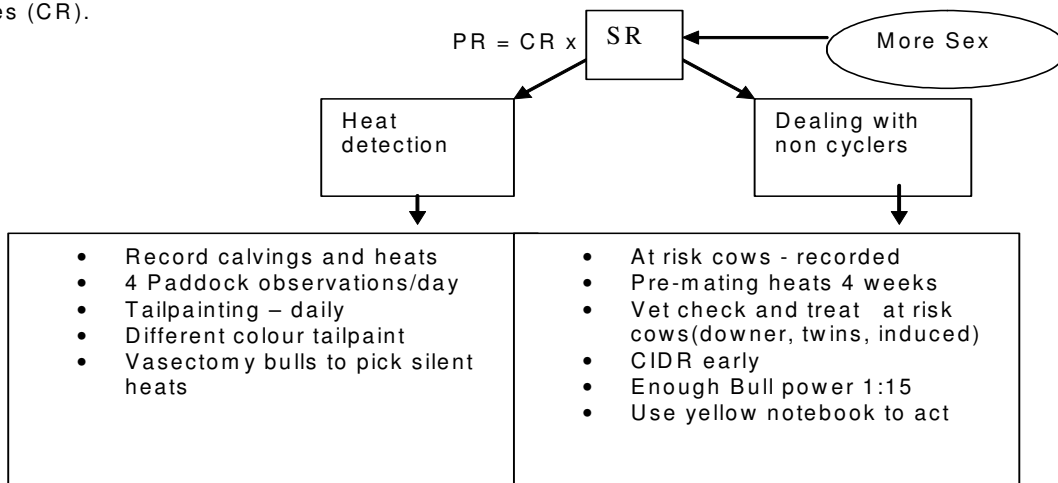


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## Are you frustrated by a drawn out calving or high empty rates?

Come to the field day on the 20 September (see events) to get ideas on how to get all your cows pregnant in 10 weeks. Here are some key points from Peter and Trixie Footie's "More Sex More Money" presented at the Northland Conference in February 2007. Their results are 95% calved in 6 weeks, 95% submission rate (SR) in 3 weeks, 12 weeks mating, 1350kg MS/ha and 6% empty.

Pregnancy rate (PR) is a result of a high submission rate (SR) that leads to high conception rates (CR).



## Upcoming events...

### Titoki/Kokopu Discussion Group

31 August 07 6.30pm – 8.00pm  
17 October 07 10.30am – 1.30pm

Poroti Pub  
Dennis and Lynne Anderson's property, Kokopu Rd,  
S/N 13012

### Maungakaramea Discussion Group

17 September 07 10.30am – 1.30pm  
8 November 07 10.30am - 1.30pm

Gavin Neeumann's property, Maungakaramea Rd,  
S/N12515  
Jackson's property, Travinor Rd, Maungakaramea  
S/N12433

### Dargaville Discussion Group

16 October 07 11.00am – 1.30pm  
16 November 07 11.00am – 1.30pm

Sanfords Farm, Redhill Rd, Te Kopuru, S/N 18078  
Lee & Kylie Gordon's farm, Opuna Rd, Pouto S/N18823

### Jersey Club Specialist Group

25 September 07 10.30am – 1.30pm

Venue to be advised

Visit the [www.dexcel.co.nz](http://www.dexcel.co.nz) or [www.fencepost.com](http://www.fencepost.com) for all Dexcel events.

## Contacts

Tafi Manjala  
Consulting Officer, Whangarei West  
Phone: 09 433 7528  
Mobile: 027 499 9021  
[tafi.manjala@dexcel.co.nz](mailto:tafi.manjala@dexcel.co.nz)

Joanne Sheridan  
Acting Regional Manager  
Phone: 07 871 9967  
Mobile: 027 285 9273  
[joanne.sheridan@dexcel.co.nz](mailto:joanne.sheridan@dexcel.co.nz)



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