TAKING ADVANTAGE OF ADVERSITY

Adapting to ‘the new normal’ creates opportunities for sharemilkers

Maximising growth
Getting grazing frequency right

Challenging times
What is the future for sharemilking?
over the fence...

Even though it is extremely tough right now for dairy farmers, sharemilkers are one of the very vulnerable groups we are focused as an industry to specifically help get through.

Earlier this year, we ran a series of ‘What are my options?’ events across the country to help sharemilkers, contract milkers and their farm owners plan a path forward for this season. We also produced a range of support tools and resources such as example variable order cashflow budgets, budgeting templates and offered one-hour free consultation accountant sessions.

This issue of Inside Dairy is all about using the best advice and support available to help sharemilkers adapt to the prolonged low milk price. It’s times like this that can also drive innovation and create new opportunities.

Sharemilkers are a dynamic and innovative group who continually strive to progress their careers. You only need to read the cover story of Ben and Lizzy Moore who have taken the opportunity to fine-tune their business to cope with the price volatility.

Sharemilking still remains a viable progression pathway for dairy farmers and we have provided examples and tips of how to continually build wealth and equity for their businesses.

We are also now into the busy calving season. Even though this is a hectic time of the year, it’s important you and your team stay safe and take breaks where possible to reduce injury and fatigue.

It was great to spend time recently at the National Fieldays and SIDE in Invercargill. There was definitely a strong sense of commitment to dairy and a focus on farming smarter and being innovative to fine-tune farm business operations.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the Guild of Agricultural Journalists and Communicators for awarding me the 2016 Landcorp Agricultural Communicator of the Year. It was an honour and privilege to receive this award on behalf of the dairy industry. These things are always a team effort and I think it reflects the great support I have at DairyNZ from scientists through to economists, and of course, communications. It is also an award for all our dairy farmers too! I will be donating my prize money to the Rural Support Trust.

I welcome your feedback. Feel free to email me at tim.mackle@ceo.dairynz.co.nz.

Tim Mackle
Chief executive
DairyNZ

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TAKE 5...

1. Make your health a priority
With the busy period on-farm starting, staying healthy is even more important so you can enjoy your work, as well as sustain it. Preparing freezer meals and pre-bagging ingredients for the slow cooker is a good way to help ensure you get nutritious hot meals that won’t take long to make.

2. Sort rosters for time off
While hours inevitably increase in a busy period, it’s important to have time off organised. Having a roster sorted early will highlight where you might need to get cover in. Use a simple online roster system like DairyNZ’s Roster Builder to create rosters quickly. Visit dairynz.co.nz/rosterbuilder.

3. Calve like a boss
We know most farmers have excellent calving practices in place and there’s been a great turnout at the Bobby Calf Focus and CalvingSmart events. Events are still being held in Waikato, Canterbury and Southland/Otago. Make sure you’re up to speed with new regulations by visiting dairynz.co.nz/calves and get in touch for support if needed.

4. Transition onto crops with caution
Cows need sufficient time to adapt to crops being part of their diet. A typical transition on to fodder beet for example would involve slowly lifting the fodder beet input by 1kg DM/cow every second day, from a starting base of 1-2kg DM/cow/day (for mature). Visit dairynz.co.nz/crops.

5. Keep on top of grazing residuals
Research shows that a post-grazing residual of 3.5-4cm is the ideal length – so ‘use it or lose it’. Why? Leaves have a limited lifespan and if left ungrazed, they die before the next grazing. For resources to help with grazing management visit dairynz.co.nz/grazing.
Operators – Ben and Lizzy Moore.
Location: Okoroire, Waikato.
Farm size: 145ha
Herd size: 450 crossbreeds
Ownership: family farm, lease 100ha, own 45ha
System: 2
Production: 177,500kg MS (2015/16 season)
Original budgeted FWE 2015/16: $3.00/kg MS
Actual FWE 2015/16: $2.65 (reduction of $1.15 from 2014/15 season)
Price volatility has been a fact of life since Ben and Lizzy Moore’s dairying career began in 2013. But rather than ignore or rail against it, the couple have thrived in this ‘new normal’ environment. They’ve tuned their business and even take the opportunity to expand it.

Ben and Lizzy started sharemilking in 2013 with $170,000 of equity. With less than the usual experience, they were conscious of the big step they were making from Ben’s earlier job as second in charge on a large 1600 cow South Waikato farm.

However the opportunity Lizzy’s parents Tony and Sally Wilding gave them to come back to the 100ha home farm at Okoroire was one too great to miss. It also continued something of a tradition in the Wilding family.

“Both my brothers had the opportunity to come back and manage or sharemilk on the farm before they progressed, either further into dairying or elsewhere,” says Lizzy.

For Tony and Sally, conscious of treating all family fairly, providing that opportunity was part of that goal, giving one of their daughters a similar run at getting started in the industry.

Three years into their tenure, the couple readily admit they have felt the slide from the dizzying heights of an $8-plus milk price, where money came regularly and relatively easily, to the gloomier “$4-something” period.

“Over the $8/kg MS payout period cashflow was good, not only did this make paying the bills easy but enabled us to make significant debt reductions of $200k,” says Lizzy.

Lizzy takes hands-on role

But since that figure almost halved she has come to play a closer role in the farm business, as self-appointed budget compiler, cost analyst and cashflow manager, alongside her busy role off-farm working for Primary ITO and looking after their 15-month-old son Henry.

Like many, the sharemilking couple faced the cold reality last year as the boomer retro-payments of 2014 petered out, and they faced a winter with zero retro-payments trickling in to the account.

That reality focused their minds upon how to farm smarter as more cost effective sustainable operators.

New opportunits despite conditions

An opportunity to buy the neighbouring 45ha was also one they had not expected to arrive so soon, and one that despite conditions, could not be ignored.

“The timing was not perfect, but we knew it was an opportunity we could not turn down, given how well it fitted alongside the family farm next door,” says Lizzy.

The bank was supportive and Tony could see the succession benefits that having family owning land next door, and also
farming at home, would bring.

But his position as chairman of Federated Farmers’ Sharemilkers employers section meant he was more aware than most of the impact volatility was having on sharemilkers, and what it would have on his own family members taking on a larger debt over land.

“We agreed a lease arrangement across the property would be a good way to go forward. It would see the farm costs each party bore combined into one, while a good lease arrangement offered the opportunity to provide some certainty to all parties involved on payments and income.”

Lizzy and Ben set on a lease arrangement with Tony and Sally that acknowledged that volatility, by setting a rate based on present base production per ha multiplied by milk price, multiplied by 25 percent. The owners also agreed to cap the lease at a $7 milk price.

“This really set a firmer platform for us to go forward on, knowing what the payment was we were up for each month. Every time there is a payout announcement and change, we sit down and re-work it, working out who may owe who more,” says Lizzy.

Setting a clear lease arrangement meant they could then set their attention to tuning up their business and constructively reducing expenses.

The runners up in the Waikato section of the national dairy awards for share farming have matched their skills well to weather the tough times.

Devoted planning is key

Ben admits he is an avid planner, setting a time and place for each step through the farming year that are not compromised, while Lizzy has proven an adept cash manager operator.

That has been reinforced by her working towards the NZ Diploma in Agribusiness Management through Primary ITO.

She has found the business planning and financial papers she has completed invaluable.

“It is a lot more work updating Cash Manager regularly, but you know exactly every week where you are at, if there are any surprises that come, you can see straight away what that is going to mean to your cash-flow and potential further debt.”

Ben and Lizzy feel that some farmers are making knee jerk, rather than planned decisions, considering the implications of productivity and people.

“To cut things out, you have to know what the numbers are to start with, many don’t.”

Deciding which costs to cut

Their first area of focus was the farm’s fertiliser inputs.

“We were fortunate to be on a farm with high phosphate levels already, and it had 60ha covered by effluent system. It meant over autumn we only applied some ammonium phosphate to help release more nitrogen in the system.”

This has helped cut their fertiliser costs back 50 percent on the year before, brought about by no phosphate in spring and spreading their own potash and nitrogen.
Big changes to feed arrangements

Feed has been subject to some significant changes. While many farmers are looking at reduced crop areas, the Moores have lifted theirs to 14ha split between turnips and swedes, aiming to make minimal grass silage over spring.

Ben calls on his experience cropping in the United Kingdom to do an above average job, cultivating early, preparing seed beds for an earlier than typical sowing date of late September.

The resulting 18-20t DM/hectare yields cuts feed costs by 40 percent by doing all cropping work themselves.

Having swedes, an unusual crop for the Waikato, means he can carry them well forward after the turnips have finished, when the farm is still low on feed in autumn to early winter.

“The swedes keep for longer after the turnips, and planting an early maturing turnip means we can have it back in grass by February.”

They are also dropping maize from the crop regime this year. Losses feeding it in the paddock were too high, and they did not want the capital cost of a feedpad.

Overall feed costs have fallen to 51c/kg MS this season, both a factor of price and volume due to a favourable summer. In the 2014/15 season it was 83c/kg MS. In both years this includes the cost of additional on farm feed through cropping.

Savings on breeding

The third area they have saved in is breeding. After successfully bringing their calving date forward two weeks, the focus this year has been on smarter mating.

This season, they only put their top 300 cows to higher Breeding Worth (BW) bulls using artificial breeding (AB). The remaining 150 were naturally mated to friesian bulls. AB was kept to four weeks and followed up with good bull power.

Their mating costs were halved from $81/cow to $40/cow and empty rates are acceptable at 10 percent. They achieved a 77 percent six-week in-calf rate, slightly down on 80 percent in 2014/15.

The savings were mainly from less intervention and mating detection aids.

Lizzy says animal health costs also halved from $85/cow to $40/cow, by taking more on-farm ownership for cow health.

These key cost focuses have bought Lizzy and Ben’s on-farm working expenses down from $3.85/kg MS to $2.65/kg MS, putting them in a good position to weather another tough year and pay the $1.65/kg MS lease-loan obligations.

They believe this is sustainable for 2016/17, even with some phosphate going back in the fertiliser budget.
With these sorts of numbers, their breakeven position is made up of costs including farm working expenses of $2.65, finance and lease costs of $1.65, and levies and tax of 55 cents, totalling $4.85/kg MS.

Stock sales are 50c/kg MS, so the breakeven milk price for the Moores is $4.35/kg MS.

“Like a lot of farmers, our tax is not going to be an issue for the next 12 months and drawings are well below the 50c/kg allowance.”

**Seeking advice from experts**

But keeping the operation sustainable over tough times also includes good communication.

Ben has been quick to leverage off the significant skill base he sees surrounding Kiwi dairy farmers, from cropping experts at seed companies, fertiliser reps and experienced bankers.

“The advice is all there, and we are happy to tap into areas we are not experts in.”

This includes regular kitchen table discussions with Tony and more structured meetings with their farm advisor Paul Lawrey of Dairy Solutions.

“Paul challenges us on decisions and keeps us up-to-date on any changes in the industry and markets. He is a very good sounding board.”

Tony’s experience with sharemilker-landowner relationships means he’s happy to “walk the talk” on communication. He’s seen plenty of farm businesses where neither party is happy to release information to the other, or often may not even know the critical cost components of their business.

“I admire these two because they see this as a challenge. It’s not easy, but there are opportunities in the challenge.”

Tony Wilding can watch the challenge his daughter and son-in-law face farming in tough times with more than just the usual empathy one has for family.

He and wife Sally recall the Rogernomics period in the later eighties when farmers faced interest rates approaching 20 percent and a complete deregulation of the economy.

But then, as now, that brought opportunities. Some farmers had their loans discounted, while others like he and Sally, toughed it out.

Tony also sees some similarities then and now in what helps people get through.

“It was really important to keep good company, with people who were positive and who did not talk about getting out of farming. We would talk to people about how they were managing and share ideas.

“We were heavily involved in the farm cadet scheme, and we enjoyed good contact with that group, along with farm discussion groups.”

He believes Lizzy and Ben are adopting a similar philosophy, and even appear to be enjoying the challenge that tougher times have bought. It has given them the opportunity to buy a farm and to tune up their operation’s profitability.

“It’s also important to be open with your accountant and your banker. They will all support you if you are honest and upfront with them.”

He also cautioned his generation of farmers not to be too judgemental on the reaction of younger farmers to tough times.

“Our experiences and our expectations were quite different then, so we try to take care not to impose our thinking or make judgement on how they are coping now.”
DairyNZ chair outlines the year ahead

Michael Spaans was appointed the chair of DairyNZ at the end of last year and, here, updates dairy farmers on the board’s plan for the coming year.

It’s been a little over six months in my role as the chair of DairyNZ and I have been fortunate enough over this time to meet up with many farmers.

Given it’s the start of a new financial year for farmers and the DairyNZ organisation, I thought it timely to update you all on what the board has signed off for the coming 12 months.

As a board, we are clear on the direction of travel for DairyNZ which is anchored in the Strategy for Sustainable Dairy Farming. The Strategy is all about making dairy farming work for everyone. With ten objectives evenly split between making dairy farming competitive, while also maintaining focus on being responsible.

We know farmers’ have tightened their belts and reshaped their business operations to meet current economic conditions, and DairyNZ is no different.

With the reduction in milk volume, we have cut our cloth and reviewed our budgets, while remaining focused on delivering the right services, science and outcomes to our farmers. Of course we should, since farmers’ are having to.

We continue to support farmers through the low milk price challenge through our Tactics campaign. Driving up driveways with ‘Touching Base’ visits, financial reviews and linking up farmers with more support where needed, through Rural Support Trust or Dairy Connect.

Our board are also conscious of the need to generate new research and development options for the future. There’s a number of new, exciting pasture and forage focused projects that our board have approved. You’ll be hearing more about these projects soon.

In the meantime, best wishes for the spring ahead and I encourage you to make the most of the resources DairyNZ has available.
Is sharemilking still a viable path for progression?

Creating more flexible and well structured sharemilking agreements may be key to ensuring the continued viability of the sharemilking industry. AgFirst NZ chairman James Allen explains a new report on the future of sharemilking.

Sharemilking has long been considered a cornerstone of the New Zealand dairy industry, providing a viable progression pathway for young dairy farmers to build experience and wealth, and aim to achieve their ultimate goal of farm ownership.

This pathway has been under pressure in recent years, with the number of herd-owning sharemilking (HOSM) positions steadily declining due to a variety of factors. In the past five years there has been significant fluctuation in milk prices, and this volatility has created additional problems for farm owners and sharemilkers alike.

This is a summary of the Pathways to Progression report which was commissioned by DairyNZ and Federated Farmers to explore the latest sharemilking trends and statistics, examine the issues that milk price volatility is creating, and provide some ideas on how the industry may need to react to ensure viable progression pathways continue.

Changes in sharemilker agreements

The dairy industry in New Zealand continues to evolve with larger farm sizes, more corporate ownership, and higher debt levels. These are some of the factors that have led to a steady decline in the number of HOSM. However the overall number of sharemilking agreements as a percentage of farm businesses has remained constant at around 32 percent (Table 1). Although there are fewer HOSM agreements available, these have generally been replaced by variable order (VOSM) or contract milking arrangements.

Variable order sharemilking

VOSM has come under significant pressure in the past two seasons as the agreement struggles to cope with massive fluctuations in milk price. These fluctuations make it difficult to agree to a fair percentage that will work for both the farm owner and the sharemilker, particularly when agreements are typically signed three to six months before the forecast payout is announced.

Major changes in milk pricing within a season can quickly put pressure on either farm owner or sharemilker, or both, if the percentage that has been agreed upon is out of line with what farm budgets can stand. As a result, there have been a number of farms that have moved from a VOSM arrangement to a contract milker or manager situation this season.

Appetite for risk a factor

The choice between contract milking and variable order sharemilking essentially comes down to your appetite for risk. If you can afford to take on the risk of a significant decline in the milk price, then a VOSM arrangement allows you to share

Table 1: Trend in the number of dairy farms and sharemilking positions over the past 20 years

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All farms</td>
<td>14,597</td>
<td>11,883</td>
<td>1,1691</td>
<td>11,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All sharemilkers</td>
<td>5016</td>
<td>4260</td>
<td>4041</td>
<td>3879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herd-owning sharemilkers</td>
<td>3614</td>
<td>2719 (-90/yr)</td>
<td>2303 (-80/yr)</td>
<td>2050 (-50/yr)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
profits with the farm owner with the hope that the milk price will rise and there will be an additional benefit. In contrast, if a sharemilker cannot afford, or does not want to bear the risk of these major changes in milk price, contract milking is a more stable arrangement.

The future of sharemilking

There are a number of key points that the industry and individuals may need to consider if sharemilking is to remain a viable and key part of our industry. These include:

- Creating more flexibility and variability with sharemilking agreements in order to suit the individual circumstances of each farm business. For example, we are now seeing VOSM agreements with minimum thresholds to protect the sharemilker, contract milking agreements with variations in contract rates depending on milk price, and HOSM agreements based on profit share arrangements.
- This innovation in agreements is healthy for the industry, however it now means that proper due diligence and analysis is more important than ever.
- Generally, it appears that often there is a lack of effective due diligence from sharemilkers when looking at new sharemilking options. Some of this arises due to a lack of supply of sharemilking positions, which means sharemilkers feel they have few options. However, taking the wrong sharemilking agreement would be worse than doing nothing at all. Discussions on building a due diligence checklist for business partnerships (farm owner, sharemilker) and guidelines are underway. For example, is there is a clear sharing of business and financial plans between farm owner and sharemilker before the agreement is signed? Is it possible for the sharemilker to reference check the farm owner?

Conclusion

Sharemilking still remains a viable progression pathway for dairy farmers aspiring to build wealth and equity for their businesses. While the ultimate goal of farm ownership is not necessarily the end goal for all sharemilkers, a well-structured sharemilking arrangement does provide good opportunity for wealth creation. Questions sharemilkers need to ask themselves are: what their appetite for risk is; is there a fair reward for the risk involved; and do they have sufficient reserves available should the risk eventuate (e.g. low milk price).
Working together to guarantee a future

The viability of sharemilking has come under increasing scrutiny this season with the prolonged downturn in milk price. DairyNZ strategy and investment leader – people and business Mark Paine, discusses sharemilking as a careerpath.

A recent study contracted by DairyNZ concludes sharemilking is still a viable option in New Zealand for career progression, as a means of building wealth and for enjoying a farming lifestyle.

The changes across our industry as a result of the 2015-16 milk price have left many farmers feeling as if they are in a holding pattern as equity and cashflow have fallen in line with global milk prices. Despite these challenges, over the past 18 months we’ve seen evidence of the capability of sharemilkers and farm owners to work smarter and harder together as business partners.

Sharemilkers are an innovative and dynamic group who are finding ways to progress their careers, be that farm ownership, running multiple sharemilking operations or growing investment within the industry. We see that when sharemilkers and farm owners work closely together, the successful operation of the farm profits both parties.

The Pathways to Progression report released in June provides a ‘state of the nation’ picture of sharemilking at a time when farmers are under increasing pressure to manage finances and when agreements are being tested in terms of business partnerships. It reinforces what we already know about sharemilkers and the farm owners they work with – farmers work together to find creative and inventive ways to build wealth and reach their goals.

Choices made on best path to take

This season, a number of variable order sharemilkers have moved into contract milking positions to provide stability of income for the current season.

Farm owners have been instrumental in stepping forward to ensure the progression of young people in the industry and protect the interests of the sharemilkers they work with. Other variable order sharemilkers assessed the risks and potential rewards and have continued on with their variable contracts.

The Pathways to Progression report has a decision tree which outlines some of those risks. It is useful to seek external advice too.

If you are currently sharemilking, take heart – our industry has many options for connecting with other farmers and rural professionals who are willing to share their knowledge and experience.

Share with those around you what you want to achieve in the future and position yourself to strike when the opportunity arises. Others have succeeded and opportunities are out there.

So how do you reach your goals in today’s climate?

Consider the following:

- Read the Pathways to Progression report to learn what others are doing: dairynz.co.nz/pathways.
- Write down clear goals: dairynz.co.nz/markandmeasure.
- Build relationships with trusted advisers – other farmers, your banker, your accountant.
- Get a Dairy Connect buddy to help develop skills or knowledge: dairynz.co.nz/dairy-connect.
- Join a Progression Group to learn people and business skills: dairynz.co.nz/progression.
- Become a Federated Farmers member for advice and camaraderie: fedfarm.org.nz.
- View the sharemilking support and events webpages: dairynz.co.nz/sharemilker.
Making people a priority during calving

Calving is a demanding time of year, but with planning and preparation you can maintain the wellbeing of yourself and your team, manage workloads and reduce risks. DairyNZ people team leader Jane Muir provides some suggestions.

What extra support can you provide your team through the busy calving period? People that are well looked after are also more motivated and productive. This is especially important for young, single staff members who are new to the area or to the industry. Not only will you increase your chances of retaining good people for multiple seasons, your business will perform better too.

We’ve gathered some practical ideas other farmers have put in place with good results – you may find some of these helpful too.

Health and wellbeing
• Consider providing a hot meal each day – this could be as simple as bacon and eggs on the barbeque at the cowshed.
• Have tea and coffee making facilities available as well as a supply of bottled water and nutritious energy-boosting snacks such as fruit, muesli bars and protein drinks.
• Buddy up new team members with an existing staff member or provide them with contact details for NZ Young Farmers or local sports clubs.
• Timesheets will alert you when the number of hours worked are creeping up. Discuss with your team ideas on how rosters and hours of work can be improved. How are tasks allocated? Are some staff having to get up early all the time? Are they getting enough breaks and time off to recharge?
• Talk through important health and safety issues for this time of year. Accidents are more likely when people are tired and busy, so put precautions in place to reduce risk where possible. Check first aid kits are fully stocked.

Communication
• Keep talking and make sure everyone is up to speed, knows what needs to happen and what they are responsible for. Regular catch-ups are more important than ever and will actually save time by everyone knowing what the priorities are. Depending on the number of people you employ, this could be as simple as catching up over breakfast or a ten minute meeting after morning milking.
• If something goes wrong, take a few minutes to explain how it could be improved for next time.
• Take time to celebrate milestones during the busy period. A dinner out one night, or a morning tea shout, can be a real morale-booster.

For more tips to help you communicate and manage your team during the busy calving period, visit dairynz.co.nz/people.
Focus on pasture aided by Spring Rotation Planner

Getting grazing frequency right in early spring is key to maximising growth and supplying the quality feed needed for milksolids production before Christmas.

One of the tools to help farmers during this critical period is DairyNZ’s Spring Rotation Planner (SRP) designed to help take the guesswork out of grazing management.

DairyNZ farm system specialist Chris Glassey says the tool is designed to help create a plan that the whole farm team can understand.

“Pastures in early spring are affected more by frequency of grazing than severity. The Spring Rotation Planner (SRP) will help farmers wisely manage the pasture and number of grazings which means pasture cover at balance date is well positioned to maximise growth and supply the quality feed needed for milksolids production,” says Chris.

“If pasture cover gets too low in early spring it can take months to recover, meaning feed deficits can extend into November, compromising production performance or requiring supplement to be fed during a period when most farms with average stocking rates should be able to feed cows on pasture only.

“People often think the SRP is about pasture only when really it’s about looking after your pasture first. It doesn’t matter how much feed you buy in or what part of the country you live in, the SRP can help you plan ahead.”

“Working this out can be done with a feed budget or by benchmarking against similar farms or trial and error.” In most cases it will be between 2200 and 2400kg DM/ha.

Visit dairynz.co.nz/srp.

Tactics campaign continues

Over the next few months DairyNZ’s Tactics campaign will focus on helping farmers perfect their pasture management as a way to survive the current low milk price.

David McCall, DairyNZ general manager of research and development, says all of New Zealand’s farming strategies rest on pasture management.

“The best dairy farmers have mastered pasture feeding, kept their farm working expenses low and focused on margin,” says David.

DairyNZ events before and after calving will showcase the ‘pasture first’ message and help farmers get the most out of their pasture.

Budget case studies will also be updated. This resource details the financial spending of top performing dairy farms to help others identify ways they can reduce the impact of lower milk prices on their farms.

For more information visit dairynz.co.nz/tactics.
Spring Rotation Planner in action

For John Assen, a sharemilker of 390 cows near Taupiri, Waikato, preparing a Spring Rotation Plan before calving and using it as a basis for monitoring and decision making during early spring are essential routines in his management calendar.

John has used the Spring Rotation Planner (SRP) for a few years and uses the online version to input information.

Monitoring progress
Importantly, John monitors progress against his target pasture covers and rotation lengths on a weekly basis during calving.

“If I was only able to do six farm walks during the season, I would do them each week from early August to mid-September,” he says. “As we get close to balance date, pasture growth can often explode rather than gradually increase. Regular monitoring will identify this quicker than the eye or gut.

Using the SRP
Below John shares how he uses the SRP to monitor and make decisions.
This example illustrates how the information was used to make decisions. In this case John used 70 bales less than planned, worth $6000, to carry forward for future use. These outcomes would not have been possible without John taking control of his spring management.

Managing a deficit
On July 26 John detected he was falling into a pasture deficit. The cows had calved more quickly than expected and growth rates had been lower than normal. While still on track for his rotation length, his pasture cover was falling behind target. He needed to act to ensure that future pasture covers were not dragged too low.

He held the round length where it was and added some extra baleage to recover the deficit. Things changed quickly and he was back on track a week later and able to speed up to the SRP allocation again.

Managing a surplus
From August 15 the pasture cover was starting to exceed targets. To manage this he progressively started shortening the rotation (increasing area grazed) and dropping out supplement to manage his pasture down.

On September 5 John made the decision to go to his maximum rotation speed of 22 days, or 5ha/day. Reflecting on the season John felt that he was carrying too high a cover at planned start of calving (PSC), at 2450kg DM/ha and that starting calving at 2250 kg DM/ha is adequate for most years. He now starts his SRP pasture cover plan from this point. This allows him to milk on longer in autumn, or reduce supplement use depending on the season, as he would not have to dry off quite as early to hit pasture cover targets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Target rotation length (days)</th>
<th>Target average pasture cover kg DM/ha</th>
<th>John’s actual figures pasture cover Kg DM/ha</th>
<th>Actual rotation length</th>
<th>John’s comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 July</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>2450</td>
<td>2450</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>I have since learnt don’t need this much cover – already ahead of plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 July</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2352</td>
<td>2200</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Cover falling behind – stay on 70 days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 August</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>2293</td>
<td>2356</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Back on track – increase to 63 days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 August</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2224</td>
<td>2285</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>On track – stick to plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 August</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2155</td>
<td>2300</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Cover getting too high – increase area fed to 2.8ha/day or 40 days. Reduce baleage feeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 August</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2087</td>
<td>2375</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Too high – increase area to 3.2ha/day Don’t feed baleage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 August</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2166</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Closer to target but need to reduce this more. Increase to 4 ha/day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 September</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>2199</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Too high – increase area to maximum of 5ha/day. Spray out crop paddocks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fieldays draws farmers to spread of resources

Fieldays 2016 was a busy event for DairyNZ, which once again had a stand in the pavilion.

This year, DairyNZ team members helped farmers set-up for the season ahead and talked through feature topics. Staying ahead in the environmental space and preparing for the season ahead were common themes during the four days at Mystery Creek, Hamilton.

Riparian planning made easy
A new online riparian planning tool, launched by DairyNZ, was a popular resource at Fieldays – illustrating how easy it can be to create a management plan to fence, plant and protect waterways.

DairyNZ staff helped farmers create a specific farm plan on site, mapping a farm’s waterways and estimating the costs around fencing, planting and maintenance.

dairynz.co.nz/riparian-planner

Caring for calves
A suite of new resources developed to help plan and prepare for a successful calving season were also on display. Ensure the farm team has the right knowledge and skills to give calves the best start to life, by viewing the resources online.

dairynz.co.nz/caring4calves

New calf rules
New regulations recently announced around the management and treatment of bobby calves come as the dairy industry gears up for the 2016 calving season.

The first of these regulations are planned to be in place for this calving season and are:

- that young calves must be at least four days of age and physically fit before they are transported for sale or slaughter
- setting a maximum duration of 12 hours journey time for young calves being transported for sale or slaughter
- prohibiting the transport of young calves by sea across the Cook Strait
- prohibiting the killing of any calves by use of blunt force trauma, except in an emergency situation.

mpi.govt.nz

Create spare time with the roster builder
DairyNZ’s new roster builder was also showcased at Fieldays. The tool helps create farm rosters quickly and easily, with farmers able to customise it to their farm, so they’ll spend less time on staff schedules and reduce inefficiencies by deciding on the best staff rotation.

dairynz.co.nz/rosterbuilder
Fieldays videos online

Video interviews shot at Fieldays are online, covering some of the key DairyNZ issues and tools available for dairy farmers. The videos include:


Health and safety

With the new health and safety regulations now in place, there’s been much interest in resources to help farms set-up systems.

dairynz.co.nz/health-and-safety

Spring feed management

Setting up for spring is key to securing a successful season, achieved by having good feed management practices in place.

DairyNZ has a range of resources, including the Spring Rotation Planner, Spring Survival Guide and an in-paddock pocket guide to assessing post-grazing residuals to help farmers achieve a good spring.

dairynz.co.nz/spring
Former CO remembered

Bob O’Reilly was a consulting officer in the New Zealand dairy industry for 40 years (1962-2002).

Bob was well known to dairy farmers in most of New Zealand as he lived and worked in Whangarei, Papakura, Paeroa and Palmerston North. During his career, it’s estimated he attended over 4000 dairy discussion groups where he supported and provided learning opportunities for many dairy farmers.

The dairy industry changed hugely during these 40 years. Average herd size grew from 60 to 230 cows, the rotary dairy was introduced and the number of dairy companies reduced from 37 to three. Assisting farmers throughout this change was something Bob was greatly respected for.

Bob was also a mentor and teacher for many new graduate consulting officers and this took him all over New Zealand. In this role he helped many people improve their effectiveness as either consulting officers, dairy farmers or in various other roles in the industry.

Industry visionary made a real impact

DairyNZ acknowledges the passing of Prof Colin Holmes who contributed outstanding service to the dairy industry during his 40-year research and lecturing career at Massey University prior to his retirement in 2007.

Colin had an integral role in the debate regarding the optimal size of dairy cows for efficient production of milksolids and established a trial with Livestock Improvement Corporation to select for large and small cow sizes. This trial had direct relevance to the Animal Evaluation System which was introduced in 1996.

He was a visionary for the once-a-day milking movement and initiated investigations into the use of somatic cell counts (SCC) as a means of detecting the presence of mastitis.

DairyNZ CEO Tim Mackle says Professor Holmes was widely known throughout the New Zealand dairy industry as an effective communicator with a passionate commitment to the dairy farming community.

“He was a firm believer in maintaining profitable pastoral systems based on a sound understanding of underlying science,” says Mr Mackle.

“After 40 years of teaching diploma and degree classes, Colin had a significant impact on the thinking and actions of a generation of dairy industry people.

“On behalf of the DairyNZ board, staff and industry, we want to pass on our heartfelt sympathy to Dorothy and the Holmes family as we all mourn loss of one of our great dairy leaders,” says Mr Mackle.
DairyNZ welcomes new associate directors

Two dairy farmers from Canterbury and south Auckland will be joining the DairyNZ Board of Directors this year.

New associate directors Jessie Chan-Dorman and Stu Muir have been selected to join the DairyNZ board for successive six month terms. Jessie begins this month and Stu from January 2017.

DairyNZ chair Michael Spaans says Jessie and Stu bring great industry experience to the roles, which are about providing experience to future leaders, showing first-hand how a board works and what goes into making key decisions. “It’s an opportunity for them to see governance in action and we directors learn from them too, as they inject a fresh approach and new thinking which encourages great discussion on issues,” says Michael.

“Both Jessie and Stu have strengths we will value having around the table this year.”

Five other farmers have been associate directors with DairyNZ since the initiative was introduced in 2013. The associate director positions are non-voting roles and are for dairy farmers wanting to move beyond their farm and into industry leadership.

**Jessie Chan-Dorman**

Jessie Chan-Dorman and her husband Hayden are dairy business owners leasing 420ha and milking 950 cows at Dorie in Canterbury. She has an honours degree in animal science and has worked in a range of rural professional positions over the past 15 years.

“I hope being part of the DairyNZ Board will help grow my governance skills and maybe allow me to contribute some diverse thinking. This is a tough time for the industry that will require us all as farming businesses and as an industry body to be really clear about our purpose.”

Jessie currently holds governance roles with several organisations, including Federated Farmers national dairy executive and Ashburton Trading Society.

**Stu Muir**

Stu Muir is a farm owner, with wife Kim Jobson, milking 500 cows on 140ha at Waiuku.

Stu is an industry leader with roles in a range of environmental initiatives, including project managing a large scale wetland restoration programme on the Waikato River, which has received much local and national recognition.

“I hope being part of the DairyNZ board will not only enable me to expand my knowledge and expertise in governance, but also add a unique perspective based on experience, the ability to think laterally and challenge the status quo, while accepting the viewpoints and experiences of others,” says Stu.

“My particular interests are around the environment, health and safety, and finance. I’m extremely grateful to have this opportunity.”

Stu also has governance roles with the Lower Waikato River Catchment group and a Waikato Regional Council sub-committee, and was a Fonterra Shareholders Council member.
Challenging times for sharemilkers

With international milk prices still at stubbornly low levels, the 2016-17 season is set to be another challenging year, particularly for sharemilkers. DairyNZ economist Zach Mounsey explains.

On the positive side, cashflow and total returns (including livestock and other dairy cash) will be higher than 2015-16 with a forecast average milk price for herd-owning sharemilkers (HOSM) of $2.15/kg MS. This is largely due to higher Fonterra retrospective payments of which HOSM receive 25 cents in 2016-17, compared to six cents in 2015-16.

Benchmarking performance over time is important for all businesses and understanding markets and how others are responding can be useful in forming your own plans. However, focusing on what you can control, which is your on-farm cost of production; farm working expenses per kilogram milksolids (FWE/kg MS), growing and utilising pasture, efficient use of supplementary feed, staff management, reproduction and animal health, will lead to improving your profitability.

The graph below shows the 2016-17 expected distribution of FWE/kg MS for herd-owning sharemilkers. Average FWE are around $2.15, but DairyNZ expects 22 percent of sharemilkers to be under $1.80. On the other hand there are 10 percent who would spend over $2.80 FWE. The $1 FWE/kg MS spread is equivalent to approximately $140,000/herd based on a farm of 135ha producing 1,050kg MS/ha.

Source: DairyNZ Economics Group
Knowing your cash position throughout the season allows you to take financial control, enabling you to take early actions to reduce risk and can help offer peace of mind.

The real benefit in budgeting comes from the decisions made from the information you have, while keeping in mind your personal and business goals.

The table below shows the estimated New Zealand average FWE for herd-owning sharemilkers. How do your budgets compare to this?

An initial 2016-17 annual budget can bring to light potential risk areas for the business and ignite ideas for potential actions on-farm.

A monthly cashflow budget can show when action needs to be taken. Plan both income and expenditure right through summer and autumn, and consider options if the summer turns out to be dry.

DairyNZ online tools, budgets and DairyBase can help all dairy farmers regardless of percentage of milk price received. Share your production, income and cash expenditure plans with your wider team and monitor regularly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cash farm working expenses</th>
<th>$/farm</th>
<th>$/cow</th>
<th>$/effective ha</th>
<th>$/kg MS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wages</td>
<td>49,500</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>0.34</td>
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<td>Animal health &amp; breeding</td>
<td>54,000</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>0.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net feed made, purchased, cropped</td>
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<td>155</td>
<td>435</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stock grazing</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>0.27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fertiliser (incl nitrogen)</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles &amp; fuel</td>
<td>21,500</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairs &amp; maintenance</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>68</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>56,500</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>0.42</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Farm working expenses (FWE)</strong></td>
<td><strong>308,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>810</strong></td>
<td><strong>2300</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: DairyNZ Economics Group*
MPI announces new regulations for bobby calves

New regulations to strengthen the law around the management and treatment of bobby calves have been announced by the Minister for Primary Industries, Nathan Guy.

The new regulations span the whole supply chain and will go to Cabinet for final approval. The first of these regulations are planned to be in place for this calving season. Three further regulations will be introduced next year to ensure enough time to make any changes necessary.

New regulations for this season
- Calves must be at least four days of age and physically fit before they are transported for sale or slaughter.
- Maximum duration of 12 hours journey time for young calves being transported for sale or slaughter.
- No transport of young calves by sea across the Cook Strait.
- No slaughter of any calves by use of blunt force trauma, except in an emergency situation.

New regulations in place from 2017
- **Proposed February 2017**: Young calves must be fed at least once in the 24 hours prior to slaughter.
- **Proposed August 2017**: Suitable shelter is provided for young calves before and during transportation, and at points of sale or slaughter.
- **Proposed August 2017**: Loading and unloading facilities are provided and used when young calves are transported for sale and slaughter.

The regulations follow a period of public consultation by the Ministry for Primary Industries and are part of a wider programme of work by farmers, industry and government to strengthen bobby calf welfare.

Eight organisations formed the Bobby Calf Action Group at the end of 2015 to accelerate and add to existing measures aimed at ensuring everyone involved with bobby calves applies best practice in their handling and care.

The Bobby Calf Action Group includes DairyNZ, Dairy Companies Association of New Zealand, Meat Industry Association, Federated Farmers, New Zealand Petfood Manufacturers Association, Road Transport Forum, New Zealand Veterinary Association and the Ministry for Primary Industries.

DairyNZ is making sure farmers are supported in making any changes on farm by working with others in the supply chain, helping farmers to make sure calves are fit for transport and ensuring farmers have suitable facilities for loading.

For advice, resources and training events to help farmers meet their obligations around calving and calf care visit [dairynz.co.nz/calves](http://dairynz.co.nz/calves).

For further information of the new regulations, visit the Ministry for Primary Industries website [mpi.govt.nz](http://mpi.govt.nz).

[Image of person feeding calves]
Spring pasture renewal a useful tool

For South Island farms that are under irrigation, at high altitude or not under moisture stress, new pasture can be sown in spring and autumn. DairyNZ developer Sally Peel explains.

In these situations, spring is often the preferred time for pasture renewal as paddocks can be renovated when there is a feed surplus.

The best economic benefit usually comes from strategically targeting paddocks with comparatively poor growth and which can be easily renewed – keeping costs down.

Pasture growth varies between paddocks on every farm. On many farms the worst paddock only produces half as much pasture as the best paddock.

Pasture growth records and grazing information can be used to rank paddocks on their performance. One way to find out how much a paddock grows is comparing the number of times a paddock has been grazed (relative to the number of cows). Paddocks can be visually ranked using the Pasture Condition Score Tool (dairynz.co.nz/pasture-tool).

Visual assessment is important for recognising factors causing poor performance (e.g. pests), however anecdotal reports suggest that visual assessment alone may not provide a true assessment of pasture yield. The more methods and assessments you have to compare the better (and easier) the decision to renew will be.

The highest producing paddocks illustrate the farm’s overall potential. Taking into account differences in soil type, terrain and drainage; identify the worst yielding paddocks that could perform at the farms potential if quality pasture renewal was undertaken.

Understanding this potential yield increase from pasture renewal will allow you to assess the economic benefit of spring renewal in your system.

Don’t delay pasture renewal

In highly stocked farms, the spring surplus period can be hard to predict and can cause pasture renewal to be pushed out past target dates. A strong economic benefit – determined from a good analysis on how pastures are performing – provides justification to continue with a pasture renewal plan and not delay too long.

Furthermore, a potential cost to delaying spring pasture renewal is the continuation of a poor performing pasture. Delays may also lead to ingress of weeds and a late sowing date increases the risk of a summer dry period affecting pasture establishment.

Under low stocking rates, pasture renewal may be used to control late spring pasture surpluses maintaining feed quality. Spring renewal effectively reduces the grazing area while the new grass is sown and establishes. A new quality pasture is then available in time for summer deficits.

dairynz.co.nz/pasture-tool
Rural Mental Wellness initiative announced

Phase two of the Rural Mental Wellness Funding Initiative was revealed at this year’s Fieldays at Mystery Creek, Hamilton. Pictured is Minister for Primary Industries Hon. Nathan Guy, DairyNZ director Elaine Cook, DairyNZ CEO Tim Mackle, Prime Minister Rt Hon. John Key and DairyNZ chair Michael Spaans.

The joint funding from the Ministry of Health and Ministry for Primary Industries will help raise awareness of mental health in rural communities, strengthen referral pathways and provide practical help to increase community support and skills of health professionals in the rural sector.

Phase one of the initiative was led by DairyNZ and the Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa NZ (RHAANZ).

The work has strengthened the regional Rural Support Trusts by recruiting and training new facilitators and coordinators, establishing clinical champions to improve referral pathways, and delivering training to rural health professionals.

Over 600 rural professionals attended workshops to help people recognise and respond to mental health awareness.

MPI will lead phase two alongside RHAANZ, working with the Rural Support Trusts and rural professionals through the DairyNZ Tactics campaign. This phase also expands on the GoodYarn programme initiated under the Transforming the Dairy Value Chain Primary Growth Partnership programme, to upskill rural professionals to recognise and respond to those in difficult situations.

Phase two includes continued support for the Rural Support Trust community engagement, a health sector focus on suicide prevention and a new programme managing suicidal patients in a rural setting. There will also be support for local initiatives through RHAANZ’s 15 regional clinical champions and medical director, and developing a long-term approach to improving rural mental health outcomes.

Rural-support.org.nz

The Transforming the Dairy Value Chain PGP programme is a seven-year, $170 million innovation programme led by commercial partners, including DairyNZ, Fonterra and Zespri, in partnership with the Ministry for Primary Industries.

Update to the Inside Dairy mailing list

We’ve changed a few things with our Inside Dairy mailing list. If your mailing details aren’t quite right, you’ve received too many copies or you’d like extra copies for your team – please let us know. Email info@dairynz.co.nz or phone 0800 4 DAIRYNZ (0800 4 324 7969). If you’ve shifted, you can also let us know your new address by visiting dairynz.co.nz/address. We’re working hard to continually improve our mailing list – and your help is very much appreciated.

Nitrogen forms due August 1

Remember to submit your farm system information for your nutrient budget to your dairy company by August 1. Once your farm system information (e.g., fertiliser use, imported feed, effluent area) is processed, your dairy company will provide you with your farm’s nitrogen loss (expressed as kg nitrogen lost/ha/year). Talk to your consultant or a farm systems expert about ways to reduce leaching and increase uptake into pasture growth.

In the Sustainable Dairying: Water Accord the industry has committed that 100% of dairy farms will have an annual nutrient budget.

Inside Dairy | July 2016
Taranaki dairy farmers are encouraged to take it slow and steady when transitioning dairy cows to fodder beet crops this season.

DairyNZ regional leader for Taranaki, Katrina Knowles, says use of fodder beet is growing in the region, as some farmers test out the high yielding crop.

“More farmers are dabbling in fodder beet across Taranaki so it’s important that the transition process is managed closely, particularly if relatively new to it,” says Katrina.

“Cows need to be eased gradually onto fodder beet and farmers need to keep a close eye on their cows during the process, which can take up to three weeks.”

Cows must be very slowly introduced to fodder beet by gradually decreasing the pasture/silage allocation and increasing the crop over 14-21 days.

Too much of the high sugar crop in a cow’s daily feed intake, or not having sufficient time to adapt to fodder beet as part of the winter diet, can lead to lactic acid production in the cow’s rumen, causing acidosis.

Farmers need to look for cows that separate themselves from the mob, are not eating, are dehydrated, scouring, bloating, have milk fever like symptoms, are down or die suddenly, and contact their vet immediately.

DairyNZ senior scientist Dawn Dalley says cows vary in how quickly they adapt to a new feed and the amount they can eat.

“We recommend farmers start mature cows with 1-2kg DM fodder beet per cow per day and only increase by 1kg DM every second day to the required allocation,” says Dawn.

“During transition do not increase allocation if all cows are not eating beet or bulbs are being left on previous days’ breaks.”

Heifers and rising yearlings should start on 1kg DM fodder beet per cow per day and only increase by 0.5kg DM every second or third day, once all animals are eating.

Careful transitioning onto fodder beet

- Introduce cows to fodder beet by gradually decreasing the pasture/silage and increasing the crop over 14-21 days.
- Start mature cows on 1-2kg DM fodder beet per cow per day and only increase by 1kg DM every second day to the required allocation.
- During transition do not increase allocation if all cows are not eating beet or bulbs are being left on previous days’ breaks.
- Heifers and rising yearlings should start on 1kg DM fodder beet per cow per day and only increase by 0.5kg DM every second or third day, once all animals are eating.
- Offer silage, hay or straw at least three hours before feeding fodder beet.
- Measure the crop yield, which includes knowing the percentage of dry matter of the crop being offered.
- Be vigilant – if you think cows aren’t looking well, call a vet to check them.
DairyNZ runs a wide variety of farm system discussion groups, field days and specialist events. For the full list of what’s on near you, visit dairynz.co.nz/events.

JULY EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>SOUTH WAIKATO</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>SOUTH LAND</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>NORTH WAIKATO</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LOWER NORTH ISLAND</td>
<td>Marton discussion group</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>SOUTHLAND</td>
<td>Spring Rotation Planner workshop – Gore</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>WEST COAST</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>NORTH TARANAKI</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WEST COAST</td>
<td>CalvingSmart – Greymouth</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>WEST COAST</td>
<td>Bobby Calf Focus event – Murchison</td>
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</table>

NORTHLAND

A progress report on a farm systems experiment measuring the profit of three farmlets with different feed inputs is available online.

The research trial, set up by Northland Dairy Development Trust and supported by DairyNZ, is testing how two dairy production systems using all ‘home grown’ feed (grass only farm and cropping farm) compare to a system using palm kernel expeller (PKE farm).

The grass only farm had the highest operating profit per ha in the first year of the trial. The PKE farm was close behind and the cropping farm had the lowest profit.

For a summary of the results to date visit www.nddt.nz

NORTH WAIKATO

In the next few months the North Waikato team will help farmers set up for spring and maximise their pasture harvested. This will be done through discussion groups where farmers can also share what they are doing to prepare for the coming months.

Farmers wanting a consulting officer to do a feed review visit, to see how the Spring Rotation Plan is going, will need to get three or four other farmers together to form a ‘cluster group’ for a one off discussion on farm.

For more information contact phil.irvine@dairynz.co.nz or visit dairynz.co.nz/events.

SOUTH WAIKATO

DairyNZ consulting officer Michael Booth will cover the Otorohanga/King Country area while Monique Dickson is on maternity leave.

Michael joined the South Waikato team as a trainee consulting officer at the beginning of this year and started covering Monique’s area in June.

For information on events in the area visit dairynz.co.nz/events.

BAY OF PLENTY

Farmers can access data from a range of farms in their area by signing up for regular Bay of Plenty Monitor Farm emails. The emails provide updates on pasture growth rates, average pasture cover, rotation length, feed intake, type of feed, N use, rainfall, milk production figures and number of cows in milk. The farms that provide data are in Opotiki, Matata, Galatea and Te Puke.

To sign up for regular updates email Julian.reti-kaukau@dairynz.co.nz or visit dairynz.co.nz/subscriptions.
LOWER NORTH ISLAND
Developing and implementing a spring pasture plan for the farm is the topic of discussion groups over the next few months.

The events will focus on methods farmers can use to assess their current feed situation and provide a forum to discuss strategies around spring management.

Farmers will also be stepped through DairyNZ’s Spring Rotation Planner, which takes the guesswork out of grazing management in early spring.

The groups will also talk through how farmers can access a Spring Feed Review.

For more information visit dairynz.co.nz/events.

TOP OF SOUTH ISLAND/WESTLAND
Everyone in the farm team, from owners to employees, can boost their skills and knowledge at a DairyNZ CalvingSmart event in Greymouth on July 19.

The one-day event is split into sessions for different experience levels and will deliver tips and techniques to help prepare for the calving season. The event is free to levy-paying farmers and their staff.

Get practical tips for pre and post-calving, hear the latest research and find out how to ensure the best wellbeing for calves, cows and people.

Visit dairynz.co.nz/events.

CANTERBURY/NORTH OTAGO
The Canterbury consulting officer team are offering spring review visits over the next few months as a follow up to Spring Rotation Planner workshops, held at the end of June.

Farmers can request a visit where a consulting officer will help create a plan or for those who already have a Spring Rotation Plan in place, progress can be discussed.

The visits are part of DairyNZ’s goal to provide information to farmers so they can get the best returns possible from all feed used on farms.

Visits are limited. If you are interested please contact virginia.serra@dairynz.co.nz.

SOUTHLAND/SOUTH OTAGO
A CalvingSmart workshop in Tapanui on July 14 will help farmers prepare for a smooth and successful calving season.

Practical tips for pre and post-calving will be provided along with the latest research on colostrum and how to ensure wellbeing for calves, cows and people.

The hands-on event is suitable for all experience levels from new entrants and farm assistants to decision-makers.

For more information visit dairynz.co.nz/events.

DAIRYNZ CONSULTING OFFICERS

**Northland**
- Regional Leader: Chris Neill 027 499 9021
- Far North: Graeme Peter 027 807 9686
- Lower Northland: Mark Forsyth 021 242 5719
- Whangarei West: Corey Thorn 027 886 0221

**North Waikato**
- Regional Leader: Phil Irvine 027 483 9820
- South Auckland: Jamie Haultain 027 486 4344
- Hamilton North: Jaimee Morgan 021 245 8055
- Matamata/Kereone: Brigitte Ravera 027 807 9685
- Morrinsville/Paeroa: Aaron Traynor 027 293 4401
- Hauraki Plains/Coromandel: Phil Irvine 027 483 9620

**South Waikato**
- Regional Leader: Wade Bell 027 285 9273
- Te Awamutu: Stephen Canton 027 475 0918
- Otorohanga: Michael Booth 027 513 7201
- South Waikato: Kirsty Dickins 027 483 2205

**Bay of Plenty**
- Regional Leader: Sharon Morrell 027 492 2907
- Western Bay of Plenty: Kim Reid 021 225 8345
- Central Bay of Plenty: Kevin McKinley 027 288 8238
- Central Plateau: Wilima Foster 021 246 2147
- Whakatane: Julian Reti-Kaukau 027 593 4123

**Taranaki**
- Regional Leader: Katrina Knowles 021 831 944
- South Taranaki: Erin Hutchinson 021 246 5663
- Central Taranaki: Sarah Payne 021 287 7057
- Coastal Taranaki: Michelle Taylor 021 276 5832
- North Taranaki: Lauren McEldowney 027 593 4122

**Lower North Island**
- Regional Leader: James Muwunganirwa 027 499 9020
- Horowhenua/Wanganui/South Taranaki/South Coast: Scott Cameron 027 702 3760
- Wairarapa: Leo Hendrikse 021 286 4346
- Tararua/Manawatu: Abby Scott 021 244 3428
- Northern/Central Hawkes Bay: James Muwunganirwa 027 499 9020
- Southern Hawke’s Bay/Central/Northern Manawatu/Rangitikei: Julie Morris 021 222 9023

**Top of South Island/Westland**
- Regional Leader: Wade Bell 027 285 9273
- Nelson/Marlborough: Mark Shadwick 021 287 7057
- West Coast: Ross Bishop 021 277 2894

**Canterbury/North Otago**
- Regional Leader: Virginia Serra 021 932 515
- Hurunui: Virginia Serra 021 932 515
- North Canterbury: Jo Back 021 246 2775
- Mid Canterbury: Erin Christian 021 243 7337
- Central Canterbury: Natalia Benquet 021 287 7059
- South Canterbury: Caleb Strowger 027 593 4124
- North Otago: Trevor Gee 021 227 6476

**Southland/South Otago**
- Regional Leader: Richard Kyte 021 246 3166
- South West Otago: Guy Michaels 021 615 051
- North West/Central Southland: Nicole E Hammond 021 240 8529
- North East/Eastern Southland: Richard Kyte 021 246 3166
- Western Southland: Monique Topham 027 702 2219
- Southern/coastal Southland: Nathan Nelson 021 225 6931
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