



## Dairying in a Variable Climate Project – run at NARF (Dargaville)

A new project run by the Northland Dairy Development Trust (NDDT) kicked off on the 1<sup>st</sup> July. This project is centred around a farm systems trial run at the Northland Agricultural Research Farm (NARF). It investigates the differences in management strategies, production, profit and environmental impact between three farm systems that have different supplement use. The three farm systems are:

1. **Pasture Only Farm** - No imported supplement - 2.7 cows/ha
2. **PKE Only Farm** – PKE used to fill feed gaps within milk FEI limits – 3.1 cows/ha
3. **PKE Plus Farm** - PKE used until milk FEI limit and then other supplements added – 3.1 cows/ha

*This project is funded by DairyNZ, MPI (Sustainable Farming Fund) and Hine Rangi Trust.*

19 <sup>th</sup> July 2018	Pasture Only Farm	PKE Only Farm	PKE Plus Farm
Pasture Growth Rate (kg DM/ha/day)	32	33	32
Average Pasture Cover (kg DM/ha)	2675	2592	2561
Rotation Length (days)	80	78	78
Pasture Demand (kg DM/ha/day)	27	26	29
Cows Calved	32	21	33
Dry Cows	44	67	54
Supplement Fed (kg DM/cow/day)	0	2.5 (milkers)	2.5 (milkers)
Supplement Fed to Date (kg DM/cow)	59	70	54
Worry Score (1 = Low, 10 = High)	4	4	4
Nitrogen - Season to Date (kg N/ha)	26	36	35
Rainfall (last 2 weeks)	65 mm		

### **CURRENT MANAGEMENT**

- Pasture cover estimates are high, however we know that the plate meter overestimates this time of year so probably not as much there as what it says.
- Cows have been standing off on the feed pad, races or sand areas when wet, which has been most of winter so far. Care to avoid pugging damage will continue and will pay dividends over the next few weeks. New grass paddocks are top priority and will be grazed during dry periods.
- Milkers on the Pasture Only Farm are getting around 80 sq m/day and around 70 sq m/day on the other farms. Dry cows are getting around 40 sq m.
- Supplements are being added as required to keep grazing residuals behind the milkers around 1500 kg DM/ha. Baleage to the Pasture Only farm and PKE to the other two farms.

**For more information including past updates and field day handouts, go to [www.nddt.nz](http://www.nddt.nz)**

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