

Weekly Farm Summary 3 April 2024

Farm-system impacts of: Bales vs Beet for winter AND Reducing N loss to water by 30%.

	Std Baleage Blue	LI Baleage Pink	Std FB Green	LI FB Yellow
Farmlet area including wintering	49.3	93.6	86.9	62.2
Peak cow numbers	139	208	233	136
Milking Area	49.3	90.7	75.3	52.1
Current Herd size (cows)	128	194	220	130
Pasture Stocking rate (current)	2.6	2.1	2.9	2.5
Winter Feed Milking supplement	Baleage	Baleage	Beet	Beet
	In-shed feed 500kg/cow + silage as required			
Average Cover (kgDM/ha)	2516	2326	2335	2228
Average Growth (kgDM/ha/d)	44	32	40	29
Target rotation length (d)	26	31	26	27
Last week actual rotation (d)	29	34	26	32
Last week supp (kgDM/c)	0.9	0.9	2.5	1.4
Latest Average BCS	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.5
% of herd on priority management	9.4%	8.8%	23.2%	6.9%
% in Milk	100%	100%	100%	100%
7-day Average Milk yield (L/cow)	14.5	15.0	15.8	16.6
7-day Average Milk yield (kgMS/c)	1.55	1.61	1.69	1.78
Nitrogen Cap kgN/ha/yr	180	50	180	50
% Nitrogen used (kgN/ha) YTD	77% (139kg)	96% (48kg)	78% (140kg)	98% (49kg)
Effluent N YTD	15	15	13	15
YTD Pasture growth TDM/ha	14.8	12.6	14.2	12.5
YTD supp (kg DM/c)	508	465	590	457
YTD MS/c	430	447	455	478
YTD MS/milk ha (YTD MS/farm ha)	1112 (1112)	958 (928)	1337 (1158)	1185 (1016)
Focus area	Current Status			
Milk Production	The whole farm is currently 3.8% or 11000 milksolids ahead of last year after an exceptional year for grass growth.			
Pasture & Feed	Growth was below demand this week but in line with that used in the feed budgets. Most farmlets have enough grass to continue their current rounds and in shed feed levels apart from the standard fodder beet herd which is going to once a day milking on 4 April and will be getting some baleage. Pasture dry matter continues to be low, 12-15%			
Animals	Lameness is continuing to be a problem, with 15 new cases this week. A locomotion score will be carried out this week to identify any animals with pending feet issues. A farmlet going on OAD will also help. The herd going OAD will have increased stripping to monitor for mastitis. Next week will see a unit load of culls go, likely to be mainly empties and some discretionary, as we await results of Johnes and Staph screening. Next week will likely see the first batch of cows dried off for BCS gain.			
Environment	Standard farmlets are going to get as much of their final application of N as possible, leaving out effluent paddocks, starting next week.			
Wintering	Paddocks that are being used for baleage wintering are having their final grazing now, as are the first springer paddocks. This will get them to their target pre gazing levels of 2800 kg DM/ha for baleage wintering and 3200 kg DM/ha for springers			
People	Congratulations to Billy for winning the farm manager emerging talent award at the Dairy Industry Awards. The team went to the Murray Grey stud farm the terminal sire semen comes from, a very informative day around growing and breeding beef animals			
Research	Getting all the details nailed down around culls, drying off, crop yields and wintering plans is keeping the team busy.			

Milk Production

Principles of Milk Production management this week

<p>Milk production</p>	<p>Pasture has made up the bulk of the cows' diet for summer and autumn, so quality of that pasture has been the largest contributing factor to milk production. There has been some variation in quality due to pasture species, residuals and weather, but milk production has remained consistent through this time.</p> <p>As cows are transitioned to once-a-day milking over the next month production per cow will drop off, starting with the standard fodder beet herd going OAD this week.</p>
<p>Key Influences of Milk Production</p>	<p>As pasture has been the major contributor to the cows' diet, any fluctuations in pasture quality, or recently dry matter %, have a large impact on milk production, with a reduction in the ME cows are receiving.</p> <p>Dry matter % ranged from 12-15 % in the latest samples, so pasture yield is likely to be overestimated (Winter plate formula assumes 15%+ DM) The difference in ME intake between 12 and 15% dry matter for cows eating the same wet weight of pasture is 20%, a significant enough difference to effect milk production.</p>
<p>Cow Management</p>	<p>Cows are being dried off depending on calving date, and BCS gain required to have that cow at 5 for mixed age cows or 5.5 for first and second calvers. Cows do not gain condition in the last month of pregnancy, at SDH we allow for 0.3 BCS gain / month for dry wintering cows, the rest of the BCS gain needs to come from feeding over the cows requirements for maintenance and milk production. A gain of 1 BCS will require our cows to eat 125-205 kg/DM over and above maintenance depending on the feed used. Going OAD is a way to make sure more the extra feed offered is going to weight gain instead of production, and should help the lameness issue as well.</p>

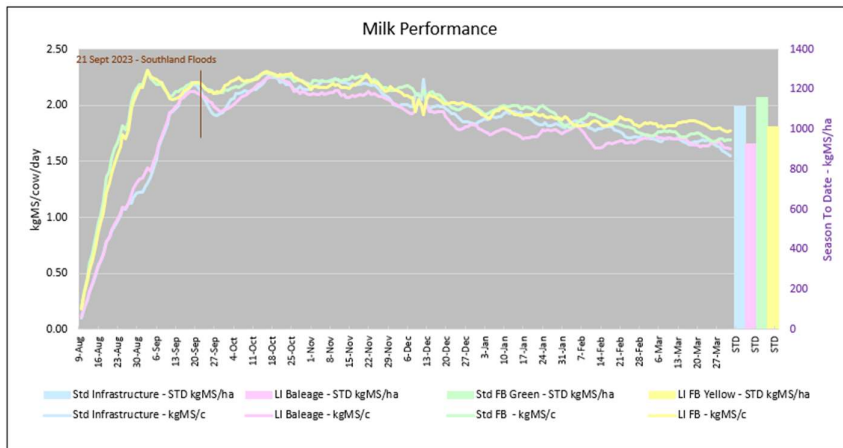


Figure 1. Milksolids per cow/day STD and kgMS/ha STD

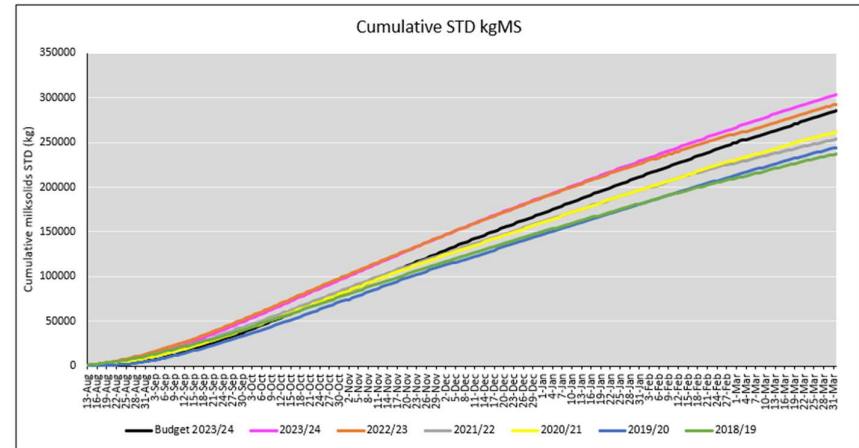


Figure 2. Cumulative kg Milksolids & Budget season to date

Feed Wedges

Principles of Feed management this week

Feed Quality	<p>Quality at this time of the season is a result of management decisions around residuals and interventions such as topping and surplus conservation early in the season.</p> <p>Getting cows to eat into fertility patches can become harder as the round lengthens, as the contrast between the pasture between the “clumps” becomes greater, and cows preferentially graze the younger better quality pasture between the fertility patches. It is important to not carry this lower quality feed through to next seasons’ milking cows feed, so prioritize maintaining quality in any paddocks that won’t be grazed by dry cows.</p>
Growth Rate	<p>Soil temperatures are steadily declining in line with the season, this with reducing air temperatures and daylight hours have seen our growth rates drop below demand</p>
Nitrogen Strategy	<p>Soil temperatures are still high enough for a good nitrogen response, and N grown grass is still the cheapest form of feed. Standard farmlets will commence their applications next week as timing allows.</p>

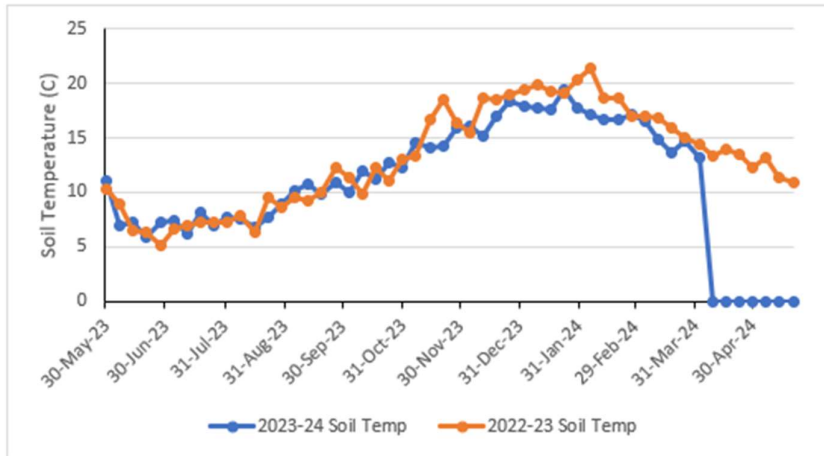


Figure 3. Soil temperatures 2023-24 vs 2022-23

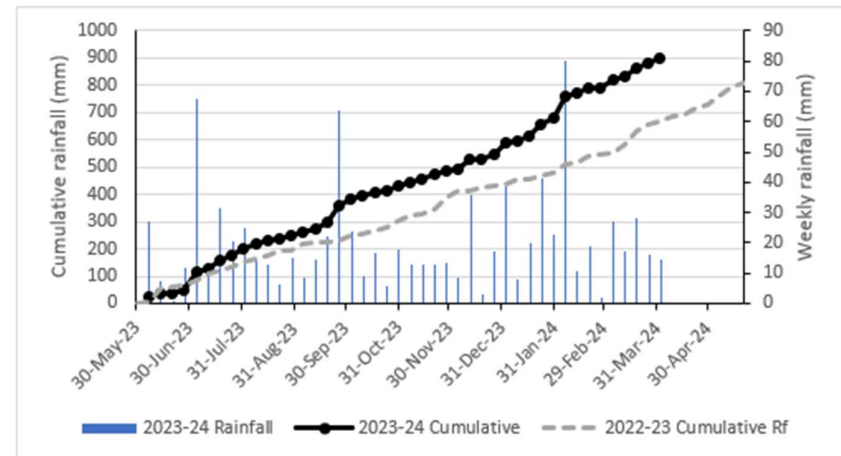


Figure 4. Season to date rainfall compared with cumulative rainfall 2022-23

Feed Wedges

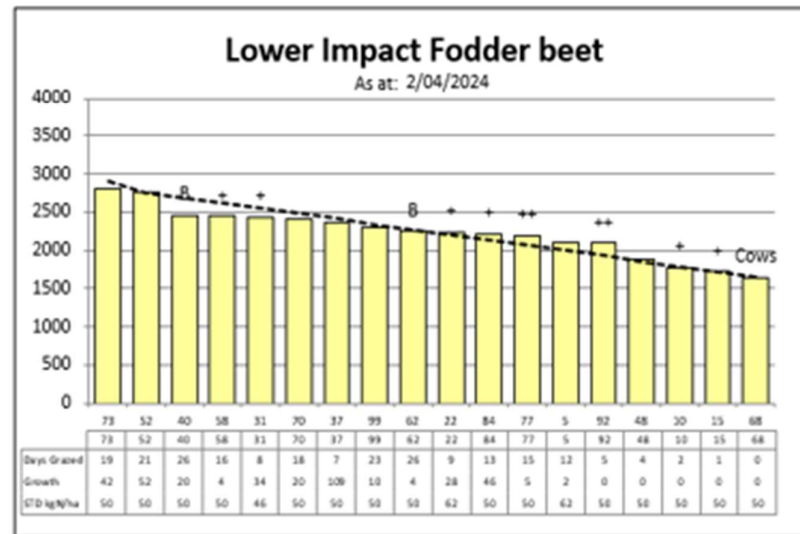
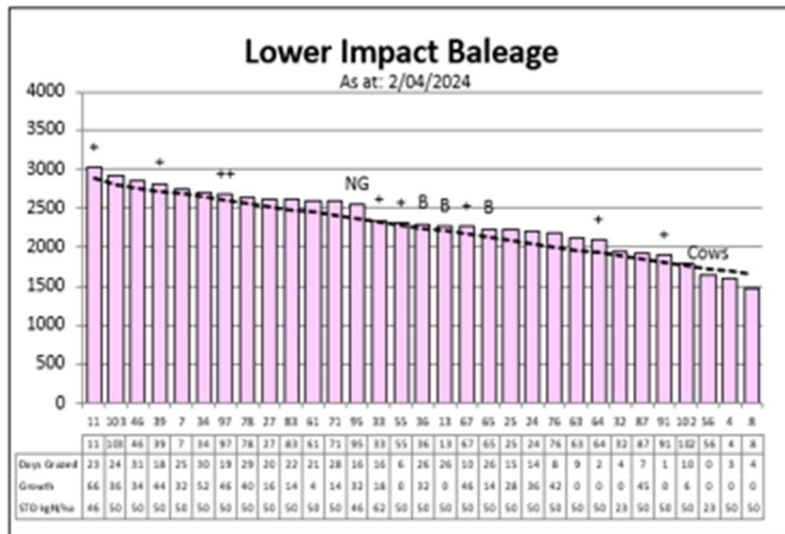
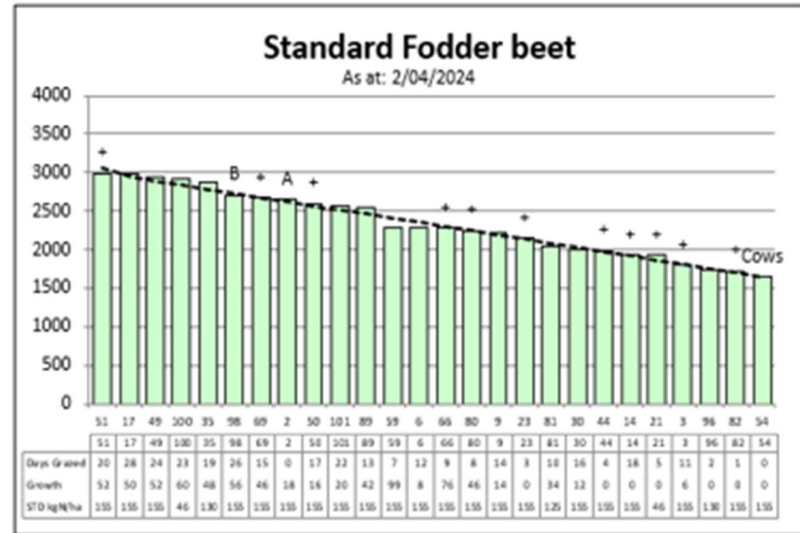
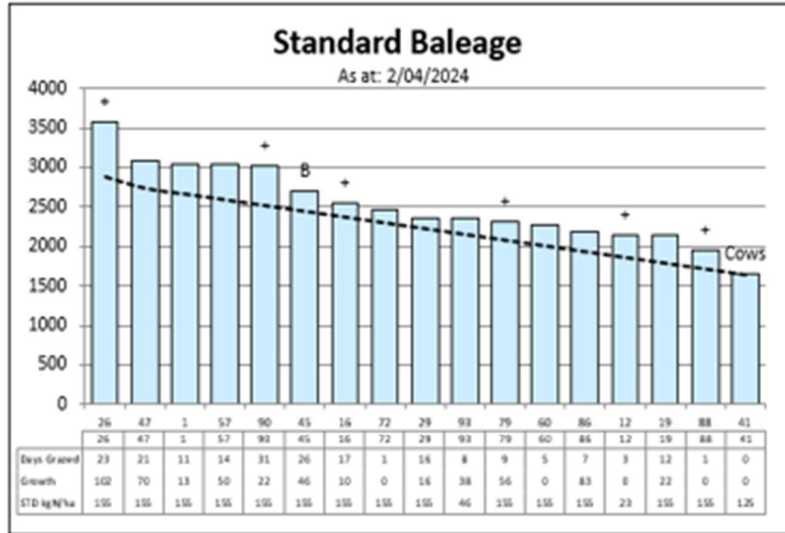


Figure 5. Plate meter feed wedges as at 2nd April 2024