NSW DPI A DAIRYFARMERS' NEWSLETTER FROM NSW DPI

dairynews

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EDITORIAL

Tony Dowman
Technical Specialist, Kempsey

The recent extreme weather events resulting in the fires in Victoria, and flooding in northern Queensland, Bourke and the mid north coast of NSW is a not too subtle reminder that nature is the boss, and humans are tolerated visitors on this planet. The climate change advocates are saying "get used to it". What has amazed me, as seen on television footage, is the sometimes casual approach some people take when facing natural disasters. Standing on the roof in shorts and tee-shirt with a 12mm plastic garden hose to wet down the house as the bush fires approach seems a little casual to me. Bushfires however are not the only natural disaster threat to the NSW dairy industry, as the majority of dairy farms are located on or near flood plains in either coastal or inland catchments. Flooding is by far a bigger issue for the majority of these dairy farmers.

How prepared are you for flooding, or any other natural disaster event? Do you have a livestock management plan for natural disasters? A recent survey of landholders on the Macleay floodplain highlighted the potential problem.

There are over 1600 landholders on flood prone land in the valley of which half have been on their property for less than 10 years with limited flood experience. One third did not have a livestock flood management plan. Fortunately the majority of cattle on the flood plain are owned or managed by experienced locals who have seen it all before. But that still leaves a lot of people and livestock at risk when the inevitable next flood occurs.

In flood prone areas a documented flood management plan is essential. Information in the plan should include possible stock numbers, flood height to trigger action, action required if choosing to leave stock on the farm, action required if re-locating to higher ground, and contact details of essential services including SES, police, stock carriers, and feed suppliers. All family members and employees need to be aware of the existence of the plan and where to find it when required. Inside your head is not necessarily the best place to keep this plan.

Judging by the phone calls our office received seeking help after the Kempsey flood in February, not everyone has put a plan in place. Check out the example of the Kempsey livestock flood management plan template in this newsletter if you need somewhere to start to formulate your own plan. When completed, place copies in prominent places for all to read, and update as circumstances change.

NSW DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES
DAIRYAUSTRALIA Delivering for the dairy industry
Dairypathways

Then and now

Terry Launders

Senior Research Agronomist, Taree

As my time in NSW DPI is running down, Tony Dowman and Ray Johnston have requested that I pen a few thoughts about the winter forage situation and its changes between 1975 and 2009.

The Mid North Coast was in a process of change when I came to Taree, with oats being replaced by ryegrass as the major winter forage.

Algerian oats had been a mainstay for a long while in the dairy industry along the coast. It had been strongly promoted by University of Sydney's Faculty of Agriculture during my student years (1959-1962). But the new cultivar Saia had been making deep inroads into Algerian's dominance, as well as other lines coming from oat breeding programmes conducted by DPI's in both NSW and Queensland.

However, this was all swept aside by the "ryegrass revolution". Suddenly the short season annual Wimmera ryegrass was overtaken by the broad leaved later season tetraploids such as Tama, Tetila and Tetrone.

A few years later came another change with the advent of a fine-leaved prolific tillering diploid ryegrass Concord. In turn, this has been joined by more late season flowering diploids Crusader, Hulk, Sonik and Maverick Gold among others.

When Concord was still new, a trial co-operator at Gloucester told me at sowing that "nothing would beat that broad leaved tetraploid Tetila". After 5 harvests, Concord was about 20 per cent better in yield, and he told a field day on the site "I've always liked the fine leaved ryegrass Concord".

Oats have survived to the present by being a valuable component in an oats + ryegrass mixture. The quick early oats growth covers up the slow early ryegrass growth and gives a first grazing after 5 to 6 weeks.

Subsequent grazings thin out the oats stand and allow the ryegrass to take over in late winter-early spring. The ryegrass dominant forage then grows for about 2 months after the oats is finished.

Thus, the strength of one component of the oats + ryegrass mixture covers the weakness of the other component.

My predecessor at Taree, David Kemp, pioneered subterranean clover as a winter forage crop. March sowings were needed to get full value from the crop, while disease problems and a mid spring finish to growth restricted wide spread adoption. To limit bloat, a small quantity of ryegrass was added at sowing.

The place of high density clover as a winter forage crop was examined to reduce the need for nitrogen topdressing after grazing. The cost of bloat oil often reduced the advantage of not having to topdress with nitrogen, while poor clover growth during a wet winter was a major problem.

The place of nitrogen topdressing of ryegrass forage crops becomes important when these crops are grown purely as a monoculture. Trials of rates of nitrogen topdressed after each grazing determined that 30kg Nitrogen per hectare was the most economical rate. Increasing the application rate to 60kg per hectare lifted returns just enough to pay for the extra fertiliser.

Over the years since the above trial, the price of urea has doubled, reaching $1125/tonne in mid-2008. Interestingly, when reworking yields for the higher nitrogen cost, the same result was obtained**.**

Footnote: Terry will soon retire after 50 years of distinguished service to the agricultural industries of NSW. Congratulations Terry!

Logging onto a world of information

Greg Mills

Livestock Officer - Industry Development, Intensive Industries

A Broadband internet connection is rapidly becoming a must-have for farming businesses. Gaining access to the information you need is key to the success of any business. Keeping up-to-date with industry news, technical issues and market analysis is all important in today's business management. Assistance is available through the Australian Broadband Guarantee to get your farm connected at little or no cost

Once upon a time fax machines, mobile phone and email addresses were unknowns to most people. Now its blogs, wiki's. podcasts, vidcasts, webinars, twitter and e-books. While these terms don't mean anything to most people at the moment, this may change very quickly. As people learnt to use emails they will learn to use some of these emerging systems also.

Even today if you want a user's manual for equipment or information on a new product the quickest way to get this information is to go online to view a download of the document.

With the cost of printing and distribution continuing to rise, many organisations are discontinuing paper based documents leaving online as the only way to access the Information. This trend is sure to continue at an increasing pace.

As document size increases and audio visual content become more readily used it is important to have a connection to the World Wide Web at a speed that allows access to this material. This means that a Broadband Internet connection has become a must-have for farming businesses.

Broadband is a term used to describe fast, always-on access to the internet. This means having faster access to better multimedia services and applications, bigger data files and new communication services.

The Australian Broadband Guarantee provides all Australian residents with access to broadband services that reasonably compare to broadband services available in metropolitan areas. Assistance is available to most farm business to connect with a broadband service at little or no cost.

If you do not already have Broadband installed contact the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy on freecall 1800 883 488 weekdays between 8.30 am and 5.00 pm.

Once registered for the Australian Broadband Guarantee you will receive an information pack advising you of the metro-comparable broadband services that may be available to your premises.

In most cases this assistance will cover the complete installation cost of satellite based broadband systems. With ongoing monthly charges of $50-$100 for most farms, the benefits to be gained through Broadband access far outweigh the costs.

Better Human Resources

Kerry Kempton

Livestock Officer – Dairy, Tocal

Recognising the importance of people issues on dairy farmers to the future of the NSW dairy industry, three NSW DPI Dairy Livestock Officers have recently undertaken a training program to assist farmers deal with human resource management. The course is the Diploma in Business Management (Human Resources) Dairy, which is a component of The People in Dairy program of Dairy Australia and has been developed through the National Centre for Dairy Education Australia.

Michael Ison, Ray Johnston and Kerry Kempton took on the course last year, along with Michelle Blakeney from National Foods, to enhance their skills and experience to assist with recruitment and selection of staff, developing farm policies and systems, succession planning, performance management and work life balance.

The diploma is the first time advisers have been able to access HR training that is customised for the dairy industry; and dairy is one of the few industries with a specialist HR qualification.

According to Ray Johnston: “I’ve found the course very useful in enabling me to help farmers evaluate their people productivity on farm, and to identify their strengths and weaknesses when it comes to working with all people on the farm.”

Dairy farmers can now access trained advisors as well as the excellent resources through The People in Dairy website, with modules to assist from finding the right person through to succession planning.

NSW DPI dairy team are planning to deliver Employer Focus Groups throughout the state in 2009, where farmers can come together and be supported to analyse their people productivity, identify issues and use the People in Dairy resources to develop solutions.

“The training I’ve received is backed up by the tools and resources on The People in Dairy website, which are very user friendly and easy to access,” said Kerry Kempton. “I’ve used the resources to assist farm owners write position descriptions and to produce safety protocols, which are very important for all farm staff to understand.”

For more information, contact Michael Ison at Tocal Agricultural Centre on 02 49398814, or email: michael.ison@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

To find out more about the Diploma of Business Management (HR) Dairy, visit the website: www.thepeopleindairy.org.au

Photo: Recent participants of the Diploma in Business (Human Resources) Dairy are Michael Ison, Kerry Kempton and Ray Johnston

Play it safe on the farm

Providing a safe environment for everyone working and living on the farm is a priority for anyone running a dairy business. And now it’s easier than ever thanks to the resources available on The People in Dairy website.
All farm businesses have an obligation under law to provide a safe and healthy workplace for their employees, contractors, family, visitors and members of the public.
Human Resources Advisor, Trevor Westacott says farm businesses that don’t meet their health and safety responsibilities put their employees at risk and may face significant fines and penalties.
Minimising risk involves identifying safety hazards, removing risks and training staff in safe operating procedures, but sometimes over familiarity with the workplace can make some risks hard to identify.
“The Farm Safety and Overview Checklist on The People in Dairy website is a great starting point for working out what you need to do to make the farm safer place,” Trevor said.
“There is also a range of templates for farm safety policies and systems, for accident and incident reports, the induction of new employees, contractors and visitors, and a generator which can produce a range of farm safety protocols to help control risks on the farm, prevent injuries and ill health and assist in meeting your legal compliance,” he said.
For more information contact The People in Dairy Ph: (03) 9620-7283 or www.thepeopleindairy.org.au

KEMPSEY FLOOD MANAGEMENT PLAN

This is a template supplied to local Macleay Valley farmers on the flood plain to assist them in preparing their flood management plan. It could be adapted to suit any farm in any catchment.

Possible Number of Stock:
Flood Height to Trigger Action:
• Kempsey bridge height:
• Other location height:
Action Required:
• **Stay on farm:**
➢ Maximum flood height stock can stay:
➢ Where (mound, paddock etc):
➢ Maximum number of stock that can be accommodated:
➢ Stock feeding plan:
➢ Ration:
➢ Who will do it:
• **Re-locate:**
➢ Where to:
➢ Route:
➢ How (walk, truck):
➢ Who:
Contact Phone Numbers:
• Owner:
• Assistance (neighbour, family, friend):
• SES:
• Livestock transport:
• LH & PA (old RLPB):
• Police:
• Vet:
• Stock feed supplier:
Date Plan Prepared:

Effluent ponds update

Tony Dowman

Technical Specialist, Kempsey

Dairy effluent ponds, while not compulsory, are becoming the preferred option to implement a wet weather management plan for dairy effluent to meet the required 1 on 10 year wet weather event.

The size of an effluent pond depends on a number of farm factors including:

- rainfall and number of wet days, minimum air temperatures, evaporation, and 1 in 10 year weather data,
- cow numbers, milking times, and milk production,
- recycling plans, washdown volumes, storm water diversion, and yard size,
- de-sludging intervals, number of ponds, pond surface area, and pumping capacities.

Also impacting on pond size is the management option chosen. There are three basic options available:

1. Store all effluent and stormwater generated and deal with it when the pond reaches a pre-determined fill height. This requires the largest capacity.
2. Only store effluent and stormwater generated on days when it is too wet to directly apply the effluent to the re-use area. Direct apply on all other days, and empty the pond some time in the future when convenient or the pond reaches a pre-determined fill height.
3. Only store effluent and stormwater generated on days when it is too wet to directly apply the effluent to the re-use area. Direct apply on all other days, and empty the pond at every opportunity when it is possible to irrigate. This option requires the smallest capacity.

Wash-down volumes and re-cycling potential are major factors in determining pond size. The majority of water entering the pond is from yard wash-down, not rainfall.

Rainfall volumes and annual rainfall distribution influence the number of days you cannot irrigate from the pond. Effluent generated on these days must be stored.

Effluent ponds have been known to fail as it is not an exact science dealing with possible future weather events. Increasing herd size and milking times, expanding yards, and adding feed-pads onto existing dairy effluent systems will compromise the current pond's ability to handle the effluent and stormwater generated.

Effluent ponds are designed to be topped in extreme weather events (greater than 1 in 10 years), and this is seen as an acceptable environmental risk in most situations.

Before upgrading existing effluent systems, or building a new system, seek advice from people who can do the required calculations to design an effluent management system to meet yours, and the consenting authority's requirements, as well as protecting the environment. NSW DPI can assist in these calculations, but you will still need engineering advice and at least local council approval before constructing the pond.

Two pond effluent storage system, with the liquid from the second pond used to irrigate pasture.

Pastures after the flood

Neil Griffiths

District Agronomist, Tocal

February floods caused problems for many coastal dairy farmers. Hopefully by now you will be seeing what pastures survived and where work is needed. Here are a few things to consider:

Armyworms are very likely to be a problem. They seem to like kikuyu more than most other pasture types and will be a problem on new kikuyu growth or new sown ryegrass or oats. If you have bulk roughage you can choose to do nothing and tolerate the damage until they run their course, which probably means armyworms until late autumn. Or spray with a registered insecticide such as trichlorfon, chlorpyrifos, carbaryl, diazinon or methomyl. Label directions will say how much to use and withholding period for grazing which is generally between 1 and 3 days for these insecticides. Remember to Follow ALL SAFETY PRECAUTIONS, insecticides are generally much more toxic than herbicides.

Kikuyu poisoning - the cause is still unknown and in the past it has occurred with new kikuyu growth after a dry period. One observation with the last outbreak was that in some cases cows didn't want to eat problem kikuyu, so if you have a situation where the cows obviously don't want to graze kikuyu now may be a time to be cautious and offer an alternative.

Making **silage** from maize or pasture covered in flood mud is a real problem. The mud contains micro-organisms which will spoil the silage! If you have no alternative and must make silage, one suggestion is to use high rates of silage inoculant to have a chance at a good fermentation. With maize you may be able to lift the cutting height above the mud (but below the cob) which will affect yield but could result in high quality silage. If this is not possible it may be better to let the maize go through to grain or make hay from pasture rather than take the risk of bad muddy silage.

There is a Primefact "Pasture options after a coastal flood" available from www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture. It summarises many of the issues to consider including spread of weeds, the need for fertiliser, especially nitrogen which is lost due to runoff, leaching and waterlogging and some sowing options.

Sowing autumn pastures

Neil Griffiths

District Agronomist, Tocal

What, when and how to sow autumn pastures is a major decision at present. What to sow depends on when you want the feed, soil type and drainage. There are many choices but for most it comes down to…….. which ryegrass do I plant?

The major decision is, do you want an early or mid-maturing variety which should have better early growth and is best suited to non-irrigated areas, or a late maturing variety which produces more high quality (leaf) growth in late spring? Rust tolerance is very important for spring growth in more humid coastal areas. When you decide what you want from the ryegrass there are often several varieties which will do the job.

It is a similar situation with oats (more early feed), lucerne and clovers (no nitrogen fertiliser) and other forage choices. Seed price only becomes important when you have several varieties which will do the job you want.

Sowing time is a compromise between sowing early with loss of summer (kikuyu) growth and risk of poor establishment due to hot, dry weather and the desire for early winter feed. Early sowing is very risky with both oats and ryegrass suffering reduced germination if temperatures are over 25°C.

Paddock preparation may involve cultivation if you need to spread lime, otherwise grazing, silage, slashing or a knockdown herbicide can be effective. The important thing is not to waste seed sowing into a thick mat of established grass. Aim to have existing grass less than 5cm high, preferably down almost to ground level when sowing.

If surplus grass is available then making silage is an ideal way to clear a paddock prior to

planting. Depending on feed type it may not be ideal silage but may be a roughage for winter if needed.

If spraying herbicides to suppress kikuyu, beware. Recent trials at Tocal and Taree have shown that label rates saying 1.1 L/ha of glyphosate 450 g/L formulation to suppress kikuyu in New South Wales allowed good establishment of ryegrass but the kikuyu has not recovered 12 months after spraying.

That's one big stack of silage . . . . .

Anthea Young

Livestock Officer – Dairy, Scone

But is it TOO big? Is the face of your silage bunker too wide, or too high? Or is the face too small and your stack too long, taking up valuable space? With a little bit of planning prior to preparing your bunker, you can be guaranteed of having the most efficient chopped silage feedout for your herd size and feedout requirements and equipment.

From the TopFodder project, a few points to remember:

- Aerobic spoilage will increase if the face area of the bunker is too large. For crops that tend to be unstable when the bunker is opened, such as maize, aim to take at least 30cm off the face each day. More stable silages, such as lucerne, can be removed at 15cm/day.
- Higher walls will generally decrease the cost of construction and plastic, and reduce the amount of waste. Compaction will also be better with higher walls.
- The bunker must be at least 1.8 times the width of the tractor used to roll the silage, this will ensure that the centre of the stack is fully compacted.
- A bunker that is too small will result in increased wear and tear on the floor and equipment, and longer time to feedout due to an increased distance between the face and the feedout equipment
- A long but narrow or low pit will lead to increased costs of construction and sealing

How much space do you need in your bunker?

To calculate the size bunker you will need to build for your crop, you need to start with a bulk density for your crop. Density is a measure of how much material you can pack into a constant space. This will vary depending on the crop, the Dry Matter (DM) content, effectiveness of rolling and the particle size once chopped. The following table gives some averages.

Characteristic	Lucerne and other haycrop silage		Maize silages	
	Average	Range	Average	Range
Dry Matter (DM) %	42	24-67	34	25-46
Wet density (kg/m^3)	590	210-980	690	370-960
DM density (kg/m^3)	237	106-434	232	125-378
Particle size (mm)	11.7	6.9-31.2	10.9	7.1-17.3

Source: Muck and Holmes, 1999

Example: To calculate the volume you will need in a bunker for maize silage let's use the average DM density of 232 kg DM/m^3 (from the table above). Now estimate your crop yield – your agronomist will be able to help you with this. Let's say it will yield 18 tDM/ha and you have 20 ha planted.

Step 1: Volume to be stored

Predicted yield:	18t DM/ha x 20ha = 360 t DM
Density:	232 kg DM/m^3 = 0.232t DM/m^3
Volume required:	360t DM ÷ 0.232t DM/m^3 = 1551m^3

Step 2: Feedout rate

How much do you need to feed out per day? This will depend on the ration that you have calculated for your herd. Let's say 300 cows are going to eat 5 kg DM /head/day.

Feedout:	300 head x 5kg DM/head/day = 1500kg DM/day
Density:	232kg DM/m^3
Volume of feed per day:	1500 kg DM ÷ 232kg DM/m^3 = 6.5 m^3/day

Step 3: Bunker size

The area of the face is a combination of the height and the width of the face. Remember that higher walls will allow for better compaction, but your equipment must be able to handle the height of the stack with minimal disturbance to the face. Let's say the height of the bunker is 2.5m. Removal rate from the face for maize is 30cm per day or 0.3m.

Required area of face:	6.5 m^3 ÷ 0.3m depth = 21.7m^2

Maximum width of the bunker:	21.7m^2 ÷ 2.5m = 8.7m

How long will the bunker have to be? Going back to the volume required, we divide the volume by the area of the face to calculate the length of the bunker.

Volume required:	1551 m^3
Area of the face:	21.7m^2
Length of bunker:	1551 m^3 ÷ 21.7m^2 = 71.5m
Dimensions of the silage bunker are:	71.5m long x 8.7m wide x 2.5m high

This is a long distance to have in the one bunker – depending on how many days you are planning to feed the silage out, you may be better to create two or three stacks. If you are filling a feed gap and plan to feedout for 45 days, then only 67.5 tDM will be used (1500 kg DM/day x 45 days). Perhaps 3 bunkers of 24m length each, each storing around 120 tDM, would be better and create less waste and more flexibility for your system.

Your agronomist and dairy officer have access to quick calculators to help you design the best sized bunker for your requirements.

For further information see the Topfodder successful Silage manual available from the NSW DPI Bookstore, or why not put your name down to attend a Topfodder 3 day course.

PROfarm

TOPFODDER SILAGE

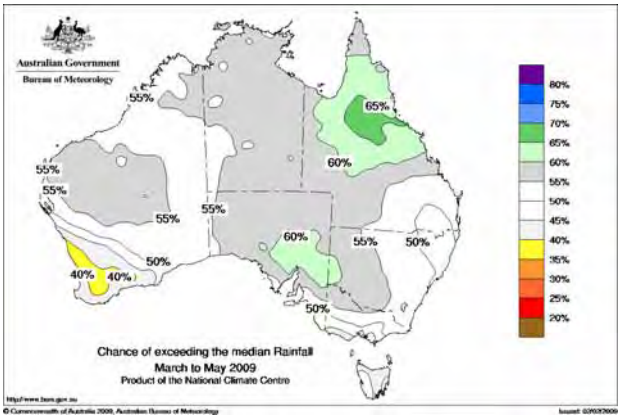
Autumn Rainfall Outlook

Michael Cashen

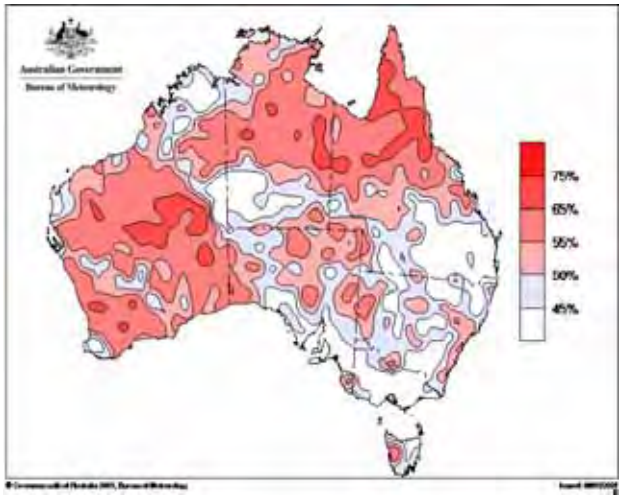
Livestock Officer – Dairy, Deniliquin

With many dairy farmers starting to ready themselves and their machinery for autumn sowing, it is an opportune time to consider the likely rainfall prospects this Autumn, particularly for those with limited access to irrigation. Since the early 1980's the Australian Bureau of Meteorology have been producing rolling three monthly outlooks for rainfall and temperature. The current forecasts are expressed as the probability of exceeding a district's historic three monthly median. This forecast is based on historical statistical correlations between the sea surface temperatures of the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

In the last edition of Dairy News, we showed a Maximum Temperature Forecast map. Below is a similar map, this time for rainfall.



When looking at a forecast such as this we need to know how reliable it is. Unfortunately, predicting rainfall is much less reliable than predicting temperature, as the following map shows.



Historic Ability to Predict rainfall March- May

This map indicates how reliable past predictions have been with red areas showing the highest reliability. In many areas of NSW the reliability has been poor, as shown by the white and grey areas of the map. This needs to be taken into account when reading the current rainfall forecast.

Advances in climate science will see the current statistical product upgraded in the future to a model which will give more certainty across the seasons.

In the next edition of Dairy News we will explore the rainfall outlook for winter, focusing particularly on those farmers in the winter rainfall area of Southern NSW.

Bega annual pasture day

Hayden Kingston

District Agronomist, Bega

Our Annual Pasture Field Day was on in early March and we inspected Southern Farm Supplies perennial grass trial sites at Jellat and discussed the results from the short term ryegrass trial.

In the perennial grass trial that was sown in 2006 the best performing and most persistent grasses after three years are Bealey and Matrix perennial ryegrasses, Advance Max P tall fescue and Hykor which is a cross between ryegrass and fescue.

In the short term ryegrass trial for winter production, Sonik was the best performer with Crusader, Dominate and Hulk (with Agricote) also producing well.

During spring production was fairly even across all varieties. Overall, the analysis of the results showed that the yields of many of the better performing varieties were not significantly different.

For more details on these trials, contact Bega DPI office on 02 64921733.

Save our pastures – and reap the benefits

Anthea Young

Livestock Officer – Dairy, Scone

Wes and Julie Brown of Tamworth are among an increasing number of farmers getting more production from their autumn sown ryegrasses, by growing complementary crops and not grazing at all over the late summer - early autumn period. "I just felt that we were always chasing feed and treading carefully to try to get early feed off but not do damage to it – it was a very fine line to walk", explained Wes (pictured, in front of the his maize crop).

Currently the 178 milkers are being fed a mix of lucerne hay and silage in troughs on a stand-off area, and until the middle of March were grazing a mix of perennial ryegrass and clover at night. The grazing will now cease to allow sowing of all grazing paddocks closest to the dairy. A pit of 275 t of ryegrass and oaten silage will be opened to mix with lucerne hay until the pastures are established. Along with 8 kg of milled barley in the bails, this silage will last about 80 days.

26 ha of ryegrass is sown under solid set irrigation, and 12ha under a lateral move irrigator. Ryegrass varieties sown this year will include Seedforce's tetraploids Emmerson and Adrenalin, and some shorter season diploid varieties (Sultan and Speedy) to ensure early bulk. Some of the solid set area has well-established Bronson and Quartet, but some will need to be resown.

Wes first sowed maize for silage production two years ago, and this year has 12 hectares in production, expecting to harvest 600 tonnes of wet silage (192 tDM). The maize is sown under a lateral move irrigation system, and Wes will sow lucerne into this area after harvest, with the aim of regularly rotating the cropped area in the future. This year, the crop will be harvested and ensiled in mid-March and feedout will start at the end of April, 6 weeks after ensiling. Last year the maize fed the cows for 6 months, with around 3.5 kg Dm/cow/day topping up the grazing and decreasing the amount of grain needed in the dairy bails. "When weather starts to warm up in mid-December or so, we'll go back to one night time grazing and feed the cows more from the feed wagon" said Wes. "The cows eat more silage in the morning than in the evening, and are more likely to graze during the cool of the night".

Lucerne production is a major part of the Brown's farming system, but not for grazing. Lucerne is cut and either baled as hay, or ensiled in round bales or in bulk. Both hay and silage have been inoculated this year to decrease the risk of heating, which has been an issue in the round bales in the past.

Installation of a feedpad during this year will markedly decrease wastage, and will allow the Brown's to more strategically use the nutrients collected during the intensive feeding period. A recent purchase of a Keenan Classic feed wagon with an incorporated bale handler will mean higher intake of all of the ration components and a new shear grab for handling the pit silage should lessen wastage as well. The Brown's also plan to modify their existing dairy to allow for greater cow throughput.

Overall, the new system of management has not only taken the pressure off the ryegrasses and allowed for better establishment, but has also taken the pressure of Wes. "The feed budgeting is done for you – you know how much is in the pit or in bales and how long it is going to last you" said Wes.

"The cows are happier with a more consistent ration each day of the year and there is far less fluctuation in daily milk production. The first grazing on new ryegrasses, which has always involved an on-off grazing technique to try to minimise damage to young plants, will now be easier, as Wes can fill the cows up with conserved feed prior to nipping the tops off the new pastures.

"In the past, we never managed to hold production at 22 L/cow/day at this time of year – it was more like 17 L or less" said Wes. "This year, I am estimating an increase of 600 L/cow over a 300 day lactation, with better components and less pressure on me".

COMING EVENTS

2-4 June	Topfodder silage courses. Courses also planned for Kempsey, Taree & Berry. Register your interest now. Cost $375/person will be reimbursed by FarmReady to eligible farmers.
5-6 August	NSW Grasslands Society Conference at Taree. Contact: Ray Johnston 02- 6552 7299
20, 21 & 22 October	New Generation Dairy Farmers Forum, Opal Cove Resort, Coffs Harbour. Book your relief milkers and plan to be there. Contact Traci Gordon, Phone: 0406 781 553 02 - 6653 5614 Email: tracig007@bigpond.com

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