

### SILLY SEASON

#### Season to Date:

This time of year can often be called the 'silly season'. As pasture growth rates begin to improve, the days start to warm up, and silage and hay making begins. Though the winter seasons seems to have drawn out with ongoing rainfall and cold temperatures, that appears to be changing now, with a few warm days now behind us. The LER is slowly speeding up, as can be seen below.

Leaf Emergence Rates (LER) as of 17/10/16 (Based on current max and min air temperatures)			
Serpentine	Bunbury	Margaret River	Albany
13	12	12.5	12

**Tactics for Spring:** Now is a good time to review your feeding and fertiliser decisions as pasture growth rates are improving. Some questions to consider:

- As the rotation length speeds up, are you set up to graze at the recommended 2.5-3 leaf stage?
- Are you correctly managing your grazing residuals (target 4-6cm), to get the most out of your pasture?
- Have you reviewed your current milk price and grain price to ensure you're making the right feeding decisions? Check the latest hay and grain prices in your region with Dairy Australia's weekly Hay and Grain Report\*, an independent assessment of the grain and hay market, and you can also find figures in the Farmweekly.
- Feed budgeting can be tricky – have you checked out the Dairy Australia feed budget tool? Freely available to all dairy farmers, it can help you plan your forage requirements post spring. \*\*

#### Silage Season:

As your making your silage it is good to be vigilant in checking wrappings and/or covers for holes or openings. Effective sealing is critical to ensure the silage is successful conserved and to prevent storage losses. Any air penetration will result in losses to DM and quality.

- Because pit silage tends to settle during storage, it sinks below its original height, often leaving a depression. If the stack is not well sealed, moisture may seep through into the silage. Ensure you cover sufficiently with tires, soil, or sand bags. Be sure to compact the stack with a roller during and at the end of filling.
- To minimise losses with bulk wrapped round bales only wrap as many bales together as can be used in a 7-10 day feeding period. They can be stacked 1-2 rows high depending on DM content. If they are less than 30% DM (too wet) only stack 1 high, if they are over 35% DM they can be stacked 2 high.
- For individually wrapped round bales target DM levels to a 35-50% range, bales that are too wet are at risk of poor fermentation and greater DM losses.
- For bulk wrapped square bale stacks, only place enough bales for 2-3 weeks in one stack. They can be stacked 2-3 bales high successfully.
- Be sure to check the pre-stretcher is working on your wrapper at the start of wrapping. Once the plastic film is applied to the bale it should be about 1.5 the length it was prior to application (55% stretch).

One other point to consider with silage paddocks in nitrogen fertiliser. Nitrogen applications post cutting can be profitable if you can utilise the excess grass.

#### Upcoming Events:

Western Dairy Annual Spring Field Day - Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016 – more details to come soon.

\* Hay and Grain report available on Dairy Australia website homepage under quick links.

\*\* Feed budget tool available on Dairy Australia website under Pasture & Feeding.



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