

Season to Date

Good falls of rain have continued to drive pasture growth. Cooler periods would have tempered growth rates but the surplus is well and truly in place with most farmers shutting up paddocks. Of some concern with all the disclaimers of course is that the long range rainfall forecast for mid-October and into November is well below average. However there are predictions of a reasonable end to spring and into early summer. Making timely decisions will be important.

Leaf Emergence Rates (LER) Week 2 September 2015 (based on max and min air temperatures).

Albany	Bunbury	Margaret River	Serpentine
11	11	12	11

Pasture Management

The round length is still holding out at around 33 days but is trending quicker. Pastures sampled in late August are showing typical mid-season reductions in crude protein and metabolisable energy compared to early-season pasture but protein levels are still in the 20s. As the pasture growth rates accelerate and the surplus kicks in, farmers tend to speed up the rotation to maintain control. Grazing is set more to the 2.5 leaf stage than the 3 leaf stage. This is OK although I would be inclined to still target the 3 leaf stage and be more aggressive in shutting up. Going any quicker (2 leaf stage) will result in losing out on the extra dry matter that accumulates from the third leaf.

If we accept the 28-day and long range rainfall predictions then we should see good growth for September into October. Using nitrogen at the higher rates (1.5 plus kg N/ha/day) will see good dry matter accumulation in the grazing round. Applications of NKS blends are recommended for paddocks that are shut up. The table below is a guide to how much nutrients are removed in silage and hay.

Table 1 Approximate nutrient removal in hay and silage crops - kg/1 t DM/ha

Product	N	P	K	S	Ca	Mg
Hay	30	3	20	2.5	9	2
Silage	30	4.3	27	2	2.5	4

Conditions could favour higher applications of nitrogen as a single application (60-80 kg N/ha). Sulphur is also important especially on sandier spoils. The recommendation is for a N:S ratio of 3-4:1 in the blend. Potassium applications of around 25-40 kg K/ha are commonly recommended. Consult with your agronomist about your fertilising strategy for hay and silage.

It is advisable to be prepared to capture as much as you can from your pastures as we head through spring into early summer.

Rearing those spring calves

Space is limiting so hopefully more next drop. Remember the 3 Qs for colostrum feeding. **Quality** :- Refers mainly to the amount of immunoglobulins (IgG) in colostrum vital to protect the calf from disease Good quality colostrum has around 50 mg IgG/ml. **Quantity** :- Getting sufficient amounts of colostrum into the calf gut in the small time frame for maximum absorption of IgG. **Quickly** :- The absorptive capacity of the gut decreases quickly in the hours after birth so the recommendation is to feed 12% of the calf weight in two feeds - half within the first 12 hours and half within the next 12 hours.

WD Spring Field Day

We would love to see you at Vasse on **Thursday 17th September** at 9.45 for a 10 am start for what promises to be another interesting look at what's going on currently with research, development and extension in the WA industry. See agenda.