

Seasonal Update:

It seems the weather still can't make up its mind with showers forecast for most of the south west for the next few days. The late rain is making hay drying difficult for those cutting, and for those still making silage paddocks may still be hard to get on. Although silage yields should be good this season, despite the very late start most areas had, and for those already finished silage, hay cuts should be up as the regrowth on those cut paddocks has bounced up quickly in most areas, as you would expect with the current leaf emergence rates below.

Leaf Emergence Rates (LER) (Based on current max and min air temperatures)			
Serpentine	Bunbury	Margaret River	Albany
11	10	10.5	10.5

BCS: The foundation of a good mating:

A good mating program needs to begin with healthy cows. Body condition scoring (BCS) cows is a useful tool to ensure your cows are conditioned correctly for mating. Body condition scoring is a visual assessment of the amount of fat and muscle covering the bones of a cow, regardless of body size. It is not affected by gut fill or pregnancy as liveweight is. In Australia we use an 8-point scale, where 1 is extremely thin and 8 is extremely fat.

Assessing a cow's BCS provides a standardised measure of cows' energy (and protein) reserves at critical times during their lactation cycle, and tells you a lot about a herd's previous level of feeding, likely future productivity, and future feed requirements. By scoring a representative sample of the whole herd or particular group of cows, you can calculate an average herd body condition score and the proportion of cows that are too thin and too fat. This information is highly valuable when making herd nutritional management decisions.

Cows that are too thin are less likely to go in calf as the cow's energy needs will be going towards maintenance and milk production and not fertility, and cows that are too fat that do get in calf, have a much higher chance of dystocia and metabolic disease, such as fatty liver, at calving.

The body condition score targets from the Dairy Australia InCalf program are:

At Calving	At mating	At dry-off
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No more than 15% of cows below score 4.5 No more than 15% of cows above score 5.5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No more than 0.6 decrease in average score of the herd since calving No more than 15% of cows lose more than one score since calving Cows maintain or gain body condition from commencement of mating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cows in desired condition score at calving Cows maintain or gain body condition during the dry period

If a herd's BCS results at a particular time during the lactation cycle are found to be outside the targets recommended above at calving and mating, immediate actions to improve the herd's BCS profile and its subsequent herd reproductive performance should be considered.

Dairy Australia has produced a cow body condition scoring handbook which is a complete guide to monitoring and managing a herd's body condition. You can also visit www.dairyaustralia.com.au/BCS to download the BCS app and more information.

Upcoming Events

Western Dairy Annual Spring Field Day and AGM – Tuesday the 28th of November, Merritt Farm in Boyanup. See over for agenda. RSVP's to: jessica@westerndairy.com.au



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Western Dairy Spring Field Day and AGM

Hosted by the Merritt Family at Elgin Dairies

181 Elgin Road, Elgin (via Boyanup) WA 6237

Tuesday November 28th 2017

9.30am for a 10am start

Including morning tea, complimentary lunch and followed by the new dairy inspection

A rapid-fire morning of really practical information relevant to your farm and business, delivered by the Western Dairy team and friends. The program includes:

- Pasture Variety Trials – what this means for localised pasture information;
- Dairy farm monitor program – how our industry is really performing financially;
- Disease management and surveillance update;
- Effluent system design;
- Order your Farm Safety Kit; and then
- Kick back and hear from the much-loved **Julian Krieg** to check in on your stress levels and a few strategies for managing them!

Lunch, AGM and dairy inspection to follow

The business of the AGM will commence not before 1pm. Minutes of the last AGM, audited finances and motions will be posted on www.westerndairy.com.au

Please RSVP to jessica@westerndairy.com.au by November 17th 2017



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