

Dairy NSW Media Release

Inaugural Focus Farm Report – Cochrane Wogamia Dairy

Farm Location: Wogamia, Longreach near Nowra.

Date: 8 August 2014

Welcome to the first Focus Farm Report for Dairy NSW. The Focus Farm project involves supporting and following the progress of a dairy farming family over a two year period with the aim of optimising farm profitability and business decision making. The project centres on having periodic meetings between the dairy farmers and a support group made up of other dairy farmers and dairy service providers. During these meetings issues that are facing the farm are discussed with close monitoring of farm activities and expenditure. The group members provide guidance through offering their perspectives on the different decisions that need to be made to deal with the everyday and the not-so everyday issues of dairy farming.

Wogamia Dairy, with Dan and Bec Cochrane, is the first Dairy NSW Focus Farm. Dan and Bec began running the farm 2 years ago. They currently have a herd of 370 dairy cows, predominantly Holstein/Friesian with some Illawarra, Aussie Reds, Jersey and crossbreds. The dairy is a 28 swing over herringbone which is 15 years old. The milking area of the farm is 115ha and set alongside a sweeping bend in the upper reaches of the Shoalhaven River. Fifty percent of the farm is under irrigation via a pivot or K-lines. Grazing is predominantly kikuyu in summer, oversown with ryegrass and oats in autumn for winter and spring grazing. Supplementary feeding involves barley and concentrate pellet delivered in the dairy and silage (sorghum, rye, kikuyu, corn), cereal hay, mill run and canola meal delivered via a mixer wagon on a feedpad.

Our first support group meeting was centred around all the support group members getting to know Dan and Bec Cochrane's dairy farm at Wogamia as well as getting to know each other.

On the farm tour we all gained an understanding of the good grass growing capacity of the farm due to the extensive investment in irrigation. Much of the discussion related to pasture management in terms of optimising efficiency with suppression of kikuyu and timely and appropriate pasture sowing procedures in autumn. For example, grazing then mulching and then sowing as well as rolling after sowing to improve early growth, while conditions are still warm, and to increase subsequent yield. The group saw examples of areas that had been effectively suppressed and were able to compare the results with areas where this had not been done. The relative merits of utilising existing stored fodder compared to buying more fodder, on the current inflated market, was also discussed. It was suggested that with the availability of hay in the coming season looking reliable and affordable that cashflow should be preserved by using existing home grown fodder inventories.

With the ever present threat of a dry season discussion also looked not only at pasture management strategies but also culling management. The use of behaviour assessment, pregnancy, cell count status and production levels were flagged as key decision making tools for culling cows when times are tight. The value of tools such as herd recording, pregnancy testing and review of computer records in assisting this process was stressed.

The use of key performance indicators (KPI) will be central to monitoring the progression of the farm over the next 2 years. Whilst we have established some KPIs for the farm below, the group will be considering other useful KPIs that are reflective of a NSW all year round calving system and aspects of modern dairy farming. These will be developed further with the input of the group at the next meeting as well as further discussions on pasture and fodder management.

Since the first meeting there has been a significant rain event and now the farm is in a strong position for pasture growth over the coming seasons with a greater capacity to conserve fodder.

Milking Area: 115ha

Production: July 2014

Cow numbers (Vat Cows)	300
Kg Milk Solids/cow/day	1.93
Kg Milk Solids/ha/day	5.02
Litres/cow/day (in vat)	26.7
Fat %	3.76
Protein %	3.46
BMCC ('000 cells/ml)	196

Grazing and Supplement Feeding (kg DM per cow)

Grain – Barley @ \$0.32/kgDM (\$300/t)	5.85
Pellets @ \$0.53/kgDM (\$500/t)	1.35
Partial mixed ration*	7.27
Total supplementary feed	13.82 (4.5% wastage corrected)
Pasture Intake(kgDM/cow) approx:	7.18
Area in rotation (ha):	115
Rotation length (days):	28
Grazing area (ha per 24 hours):	3

Daily Income over Feed Costs (IOFC)

July Milk Price (\$/L):	0.53
(\$/kgMS):	7.34
Income/cow (\$/cow):	14.13
Purchased Feed Costs (\$/cow/day):	4.85
Total Feed Costs** (\$/cow/day):	5.81
Margin Over Total Feed Costs (\$/cow/day):	8.33

NB:

* Partial Mixed Ration includes Canola meal, Millrun pellet, Maize silage, Sorghum silage and Cereal hay.

**Total Feed Costs includes supplementary, conserved fodder and pasture improvement costs (fertilizer, seed, irrigation)