

## The Current Situation – why things need to change

- 75% of NZ heifers don't make DNZ weaning or mating target weights.
- 1/3 of heifers are culled for failure to cycle or hold
- 1/3 of heifers are out of the herd by the end of the first lactation
- Number of lactations per cow is the strongest predictor of long term dairy profit
- USA confinement dairies average 1.8 lactations per cow. NZ dairies average 2.5 lactations – 5 years old
- Cows hit peak production between 5 and 7 years and can milk and produce a calf until 15 years +.

## What can we do better?

Oat Pasture, Nutrition Determines Genetic Expression



## Balancing soil minerals for better grass growth

- It's ALL about nutrition and nutrition starts in the soil with balanced minerals and well fed microbes
- Aim for Soil Base Saturation percentages of Ca 60 – 75%, Mg 12 – 15 %, K 3 – 5 %, Na 1 – 2%. Trace elements B, Co, S, Cu, Zn, Mn are crucial for enzymes and probably need to be added to your fert
- Adopt a lime, magnesium and traces based fertiliser to increase grass nutrient density and Vit A, D, K<sub>2</sub>
- Stop using Super P. It acidifies the soil and kills beneficial soil microbes. 1000kg Total P on soil test is adequate. Use RPR or guano instead for better results.
- Reduce urea use by 20% each year and only put on liquid foliar N with humic acid and traces
- Turn off the toxic tap – reduce or eliminate chemical inputs such as drenches, antibiotics, herbicides and pesticides. Soil and animals will become healthier.

## Diversifying the paddock species mix

- The more diverse pasture mix leads to greater soil health and mineral content in the forage
- More species means more resilience and access to enhanced nutrition for animals and soil microbes
- Rye Grass is the least nutritious common European pasture grass
- Establish 15 to 30 species in your pastures. Add brome/ prairie grasses, lucerne, fescue, timothy, etc. Try over-sowing in autumn. Allow new plants to go to seed the first year
- Create hedgerows of diverse shrubs for animal browsing.

## Grazing management

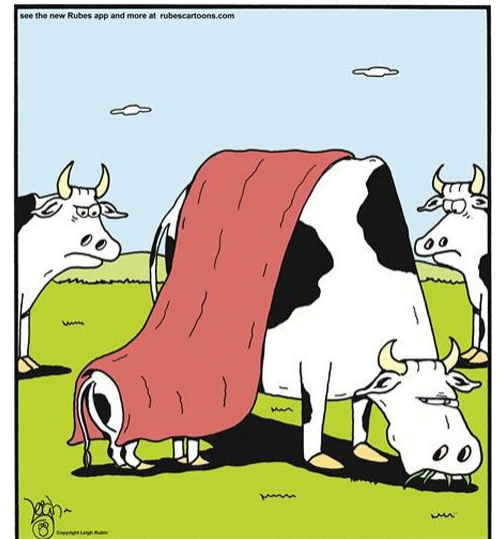
- EXTEND the round! More than that...40 to 60 + days depending on season
- When soil minerals are balanced and available through microbes, the Brix or nutrient density of the pasture stays up even as the grass matures to seed head.
- Consolidate animals as much as you can and try to graze into taller grass each round
- Rule of thumb: graze to only half of what is there and you will be growing valuable plant roots and soil humus content.
- Quality milk with good levels of health enhancing fat soluble vitamins can only come from high Brix, diverse, taller pastures.
- If full feeding is a challenge on grass or on farm conserved pasture feed, it's time to de-stock.
- High crude protein in the grass usually means you're using too much urea. The urea turns to nitrate in low Brix pastures and then to ammonia in the cow's blood. Result is mastitis, infertility, lameness, greenhouse gasses, liver metabolics, high MUN and nitrate leachate.
- DNZ is cautious about housing cows. Be that way as well. Loafing and shade structures are good. Cut and carry quickly reduces feed quality.
- Ruminants need full sunshine to produce Vit D in milk.

## Cow/calf feeding

- FULLY feed your animals. They should have large round bellies most of the time.
- Optimum cow nutrition during dry cow period is crucial for short and long term production and more profit
- Calves naturally drink 7 to 10 times a day, consuming 10 to 12 L a day. Imitate that by providing ad lib access to fresh, whole, non-antibiotic milk for at least 4 months. Skip the calf meal and give them hay and grass access quickly. Four L/ day powdered milk and meal for 10 weeks is clearly not working.
- Hay is the gold standard for healthy cow rumen microbes – make it and then provide it daily.
- Consider ways to leave replacement heifers on their mothers – the Madre Method. The butter fat provided is crucial for a strong immune system and long productive life.

RUBES™

By Leigh Rubin



Even when practiced discreetly, raised eyebrows and disapproving glances still meet with those who dare to udder-feed in public.

## What to add into your supplement mix

- Give calves and cows access to free choice minerals. At a minimum provide sea or rock salt, bentonite clay powder and kelp meal.
- Additional minerals to try: raw humate powder, magnesium mix, sulphur mix, zinc sulphate, monosodium phosphate, copper sulphate
- Apple Cider Vinegar and molasses (esp if MUN is above 20)
- Hay, hay and more hay.

## What to avoid like the Plague

- PKE is hollow feed contaminated by organophosphate pesticides and often by mycotoxins
- Meal made of soy or corn distiller's grain contain GMO inflammatory proteins and toxic glyphosate
- Rumensin is an antibiotic, water pollutant and contributes to development of antibiotic resistant microbes
- Dry Cow Therapy suppresses the cow's immune system and contaminates the soil.

## Glyphosate – worse than we imagined

- Shuts down mineral availability. Is a carcinogen at parts per billion. Takes decades to decompose.
- Causes abortions and functions as an antibiotic
- Don't graze animals on sprayed paddocks. Use cultivation instead. Don't use it as a crop dry down agent.

## Alternatives to antibiotics and CIDRS

True Health's plant tinctures and essential oils blends from Dr P. Dettloff

Help the beneficial soil and rumen microbes recover by using True Health's Alternatives to Antibiotics and CIDRS. Organically certified plant tinctures and essential oils for a truly healthy farm. Created by Dr Paul Dettloff, Senior Consulting Vet Organic Valley Dairies, USA. Ring us for more information.

Ring Phyllis for names of farmers who are successfully using these recommendations.

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