

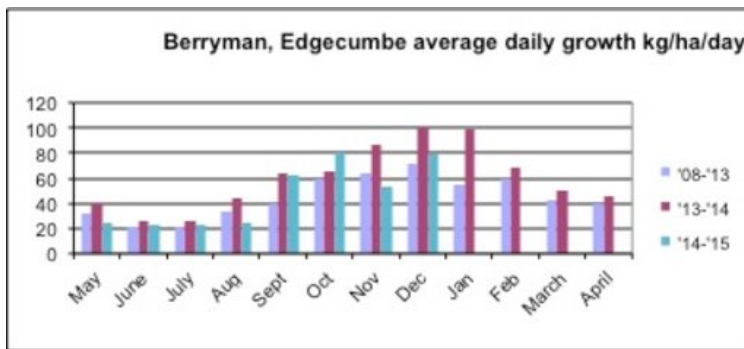


Strong December growth

Healthy natural systems bounce back from short periods of unfavourable conditions and when the pasture fundamentals of physical structure, nutrient availability, and biological activity are in place pasture growth rapidly rebounds from temporary setbacks.

It appears there is also a degree of compensation after an unusually slow growth period, but perhaps insufficient to make up the difference.

November growth from the monitor farms was disappointing; however December figures put both properties back on track for a strong season.



	kgDM/ha/day		
	'08-'13	'13-'14	'14-'15
May	33	40	25
June	21	26	23
July	22	26	23
Aug	34	44	24
Sept	39	64	62
Oct	59	65	80
Nov	63	86	53
Dec	72	101	80
Jan	55	98	
Feb	59	69	
March	42	49	
April	39	45	

The most pleasing aspect at the time of cutting was strong even clover growth throughout the pasture. Soil moisture was good, conditions were warm and settled with grazing intervals of around 25 days.

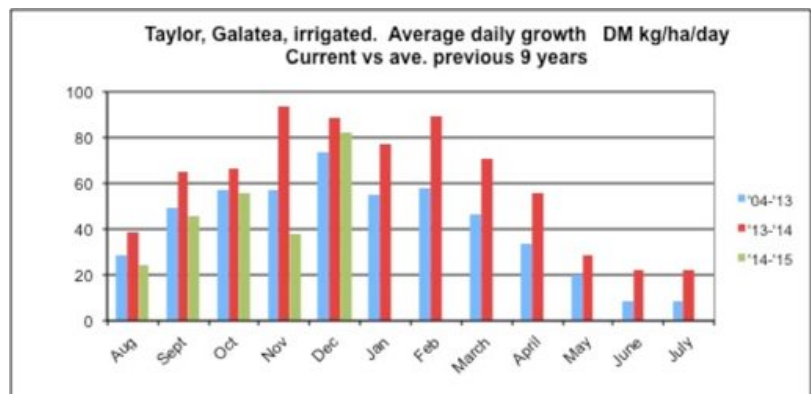
The pasture in the cages, 32 days at Galatea, and 35 days at Edgecumbe, was close to ideal for outstanding performance from rapidly growing animals and high producing dairy cows.

Cover at time of grazing was between 2,700 and 3,000 kgDM/ha, there were only a few clumps left post grazing. Animals were contentedly grazing, production from both properties was close to 2.0kgMS/cow/day with animal condition steadily improving.

A strong clover base, with grass plants in the early stages of seed head formation, provides sufficient protein, energy, and fibre for robust animal health and performance.

Carrying slightly more pasture cover and maintaining a longer than normal interval between grazings are the best management techniques for a season where growth has fluctuated markedly from month to month.

	kgDm/ha/day		
	'04-'13	'13-'14	'14-'15
Aug	28	38	25
Sept	49	65	46
Oct	57	66	56
Nov	57	93	38
Dec	74	88	82
Jan	55	77	
Feb	58	89	
March	47	71	
April	34	56	
May	20	29	
June	9	22	
July	9	22	



A recent report quoted Sir David Attenborough as saying that at the present rate of population increase it would only be a short time before the world was unable to produce sufficient food to feed everyone.

Following is a recent Stuff article by Michael Pascoe, the Contributing Editor for Business Day, an Australian publication.

Contrary to some of the more alarmist environmental views, the world is not short of potentially more productive agricultural land, given sufficient incentive and climate change notwithstanding. Australia alone has millions of hectares of the stuff, if we wanted to use it. The US is so oversupplied it can subsidise people to grow food to burn in cars. Africa remains, by and large, some decades, if not a century, behind the times and if just Russia, Ukraine and Argentina ever became efficient, Australian commodity farmers should consider another career.

Regardless of the where the truth actually is, the future of New Zealand pastoral farming lies with our ability to consistently produce premium quality meat and milk from low cost permanent clover based pastures.

And here's one to ponder

What happens to all the good food we produce? One third of food produced globally per year is wasted! About 1.3 billion tonnes of it, worth NZ\$887 trillion! Our households, even in NZ, send 258,886 tonnes of food waste to landfill every year, throwing out \$751 million worth!

Can clover provide sufficient nitrogen to maximise pasture potential?

The Berryman property has used little nitrogen for the last ten years and pasture production continues to steadily increase, with annual production independently assessed at 30% above district average.

email received 16th December 2014

Hi Coralie,

Just a quick note to tell you the fertiliser I got off you has been AMAZING.

I have the most wonderfully healthy and burgeoning gardens. And where I have used soil for potting mix, the results are spectacular.

Most of my soils are pretty good anyway, but one raised bed is pure horse manure and sawdust from last year - I got a lot out of it last year as everything got stuck into the high nitrogen. I topped it up with more of the same this year, and put on humates and DoloZest, I was expecting some deficiency issues and another nitrogen spike of growth, but instead I have sensible sized plants in good health - I plant seedlings and they do really well (no sulking). It makes me look like I really know what I'm doing! My gardens are great!

Thanks and kind regards
Clare Ryan, Selwyn Huts

Growing ornamentals and vegetables. DoloZest and CalciZest were formulated as soil improvers. Their use will enhance the growth of any plant when used in conjunction with other essential nutrients. The mixes for pasture can (and are) used successfully in flower and vege gardens. Early season potatoes benefit greatly from their addition.

The D word

Droughts are happening more regularly and their effects are worsening if we are to believe much of what's been in the press recently. Droughts do occur and their effect can be highly disruptive, expensive, and unpleasant but they are part of farming and there are simple ways to mitigate their effect.

In the officially declared drought seasons of 2009 – '10 and 2012 – '13 the Berryman property grew 15,070 and 14,066 kgDM/ha respectively. District average growth is around 14,000kgDM/ha in a favourable growing season.

When planning, by going to the end point and working backwards provides a useful perspective. Autumn rain normally arrives by mid-March in the Waikato and BoP, and at the latest by mid-April.

With December being a reliable rainfall month and a genuine 30-day grazing interval being achieved by the end of the month half the farm will be grazed twice with the other half grazed three times by mid-March.

Pastures grown on friable biologically active soil even in the worst of the dry conditions experienced here don't suddenly stop growing. The lowest monthly summer growth figure recorded in the last 10 years is 16.0kgDM/ha/day in March 2013.

This means that sufficient pasture for January in a well-managed situation is a given. In February it may be that some of the base 1400kgDM/ha will be eaten, and in March it may be necessary to provide some supplement to maintain animal condition.

When rain doesn't arrive until April an early dry-off &/or a reduction in numbers is the obvious way to limit the effect. Extra weight will be gained prior to spring and the next season can be approached with real confidence.

Having farmed through 'drought' conditions we fully appreciate the stress on families and the requirement for support in all sorts of ways, but

pasture growth records over the last ten years show no more than normal seasonal variations for our measured properties as compared with other local farms. When rain does arrive pasture recovery will be rapid.

Regards,

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Disclaimer statement

The monitoring data is based on data collected by Eco-Logic Soil Improvement Ltd (ESI). The data is provided for information purposes only and will be updated as new information becomes available.