



Fabulous Food

Much has been made, both here and overseas, of the need for use of fertiliser nitrogen in order to feed the world's growing population.

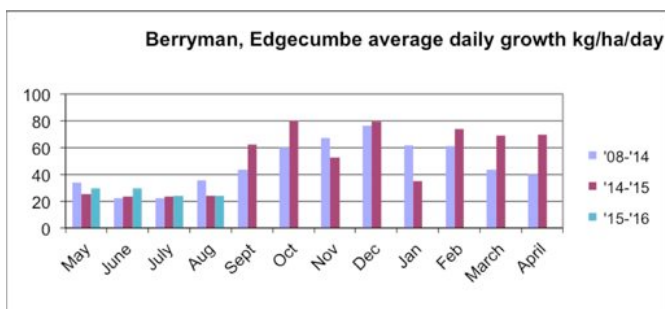
However, nitrogen fertiliser is not a necessity for ever-increasing production from permanent grazed pasture in this country.

To maintain our economy and our reputation it's essential that the New Zealand dairy industry provides highest quality top end products, sold at premium prices, that return a healthy margin to farmers.

The production of top shelf dairy product, returning premium prices, can only be achieved if the milk delivered to the factory is also top quality.

Milk from pasture grown under a Functional Fertiliser programme has been tested and it meets the standards necessary in every respect for the manufacture of finest quality dairy products.

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And not just milk. It's also meat, wool, crops, and vegetables that similarly benefit. Meat grown with DoloZest/CalciZest based programmes has more flavour, is tenderer, and has a better Omega 3/6 ratio.

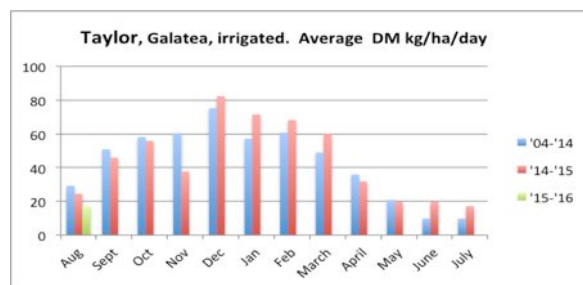
If it's grown in soil there's always a benefit from the inclusion of DoloZest or CalciZest as a component of the required nutrient inputs.

Costs

Some sceptics may cough, but the cost of pasture grown using a Functional Fertiliser total nutrient programme is lower than others when all fertiliser inputs, including nitrogen, are taken into consideration.

With the measurable steady increase in production over time, the cost per unit of feed steadily declines. And with less need for pasture renewal, weed and pest control, and fewer animal ill-health costs, the cost of production gap steadily widens.

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The reasons for rotationally grazing pasture

While pretty well all farmers use rotational grazing systems these days, not all are achieving maximum pasture production, generally due to grazing too low and going round too fast, before sufficient recovery has been achieved.

The recently revisited work, published as far back as 1959 by a Frenchman, Andre Voisin, warned that if grazing periods were so long that cows actually grazed the same pasture twice in the same session, then the recovery or 'rest' period before the next grazing would

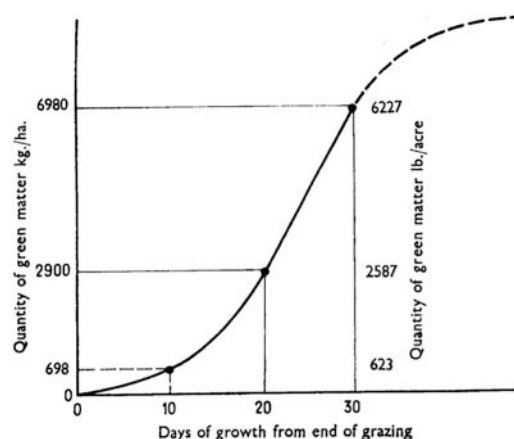


FIG. 5. Growth of grass according to Linehan's experiments.

need to be longer than might be expected, to allow both roots and shoots to recover properly.

It must be remembered that every grazing reduces both shoots and roots, so there is less available to start regrowth. A pugged and grazed out paddock won't just spring back, and the grazing round must be adaptable to give it time to recover.

Voisin found that in paddocks which were 'set stocked' pasture production was about one third of what could be achieved in flexible rotational grazing.

Sticking to a 'fixed rotation round' whatever the weather and temperature just minimises regrowth.

Ideally every paddock should be at a different stage of regrowth, with the most recovered supplying the current session's feed. However, striving for excessive length is not required, as the best quality feed is achieved when pasture is around an average of 15cm long, which means there will be patches where leaf length is longer.

Feed quality in spring

Voisin concluded, from experiments and trials by others, that young grass cut or grazed every week contained too much crude protein and too little fibre for good animal performance. The pasture was also "relatively rich in potassium and phosphorus and relatively poor in calcium".

Spring temperatures can give rise to the illusion of getting greater production from grass regrowth, but this will contain too much crude protein and too little fibre.

Instead of hammering pastures, extra production can frequently be achieved by also feeding high quality hay at this time of the year. If it's being eaten then it's of value, and as soon as there's sufficient fibre and energy available in the pasture, animals will leave it behind.

New facility in North Otago

A purpose built 6-bay shed as a depot for Functional Fertiliser, recently built on the property of Tim & Joyce Fox at Gemmells Crossing near Oamaru, ensures farmers in the region are now able to locally access DoloZest/CalciZest-based total nutrient mixes tailored to their individual farm requirements.

With regulations governing the loss of Nitrate Nitrogen to groundwater coming into play, more farmers are looking to alternatives that allow them to continue to maintain their production with lessened environmental impact.

Regards,



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Did you know that cows graze for only 8 hours a day??

