

### Facial eczema

The prevention of facial eczema with LimeMagPlus and earthworms that I did since 1959 with 100% success is not likely to control facial eczema after the drought because the earthworms will have been curled up in a knot down deep (destivated) during the long hot dry weather, so will not have eaten the masses of drought caused dead ryegrass on which spores grow.

Conditions after this small amount of fine rain over three days (28 mm to 6 am today in Hamilton) are ideal for facial eczema. We hope that you all got, and will get, a lot more rain.

Measure your spore numbers in several places of the farm regularly, and decide on which to graze and which protection system to use.

### Rainfall

From 1955 in central Waikato, autumn rain started in mid March almost every year until 1986 when it didn't rain until the 5th of May, which I was dreading this year.

Profits are low in growing maize silage, or grain to sell. Some maize growers will suffer dreadfully this year because of the poor growth. Shallow cultivation with insufficient LimeMagPlus, Gafsa P fertiliser and elemental sulphur, and side dressing rather than cultivating DAP in with the fertiliser, are causes. Correct amounts more than pay for it with increased production.

### Maize

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Another cause of the lower than usual maize yield is creeping couch grass. It is possible that it has become immune to glyphosate because I've seen it in all the maize crops I've checked? Alternatively, the glyphosate used has become weaker.

Please email me if couch is in your maize or not. Thanks.

Too many plants per hectare for the fertility (and rainfall), is also costly. 90,000 per hectare is mostly best. The higher the number, the smaller the cobs, which is where most of the feed value is. Read the updated Maize Version 3.6 which means it has been updated 36 times.

For decades some maize growers have wished that they had not changed from grazing to growing maize with its slim margins caused by USA 50% subsidised maize imports and the high exchange rate making them cheaper. The cost of reinstalling races, fencing and reticulating water over the whole farm, prevents some.

### Dairying

75% of NZ dairy farms have too many cows even in an average year, so cows are not producing to their potential. Use the 'Dairy cow numbers for max profit' spreadsheet. It takes only 10 minutes to enter the figures.

With today's low payout and high costs, buying any feed can turn your farm into a loss situation, unless just for short periods over short droughts.

### Costs including land value per kg of dry matter are -

Home grown pasture grazed	\$0.25
Pasja, Nutrifed, kale, turnips, etc., grazed	\$0.35
Home grown maize silage fed	\$0.48 On the feed value basis \$0.60
Home grown pasture silage fed	\$0.60
Bought maize silage fed, less fertility value	\$0.50 On feed value basis \$0.62

Use the 'Pasture mineral analysis' spreadsheet to see the mineral levels of maize compared with mixed pasture. You'll see that maize has only half the feed value of most other grown feeds, so the cost of maize is higher than realised. You have to ensile and feed twice as much, and when you have enough better feed, cows fill up on maize and produce less.

Using the 'Costs of Pasture, Silage, Hay, Crops & Nitrogen' spreadsheet allows you to enter your costs to get your exact figures.

### **Milk prices**

In most countries all dairy farmers are on quotas, so their farmers learned that the increase in milk production by others limited their growth. New Zealand farmers who have never been on quota, mostly now know that helping others produce more milk reduces the price they get because the more milk, the lower the payout, which is a reason why farmers don't recommend GrazingInfo to others. Last week a Southland farmer became the first to acknowledge that his neighbour encouraged him to join, so thank you.

### **More fleecing of farmers with high seed sowing rates**

Despite their trial on Scott Farm, Newstead, last year where farmers judged the best rate for ryegrass to be 12 kg per hectare, the DairyNZ web site recommends 18~25 kg/ha of perennial ryegrass and admits it may be too high because 18 kg/ha of ryegrass seeds is 9 million seeds/ha which is 900 seeds per square metre. Further work is planned to investigate if reduced seed rates affect plant survival and long-term pasture production. They recommend 3 to 4 kg of clover seed which is excessive.

Wrightsons, now Chinese owned, recommends 300 to 500 kg of their very good Colosseum lawn ryegrass seed per hectare! I recommend a tenth that amount. It is available from most seed merchants.

### **Pasture sowing and over sowing**

See the best 'Pasture mixes & seeding rates' spreadsheet which allows you to change figures and adjust the mix to suit your area. Also see the suggestions for the best varieties and pasture survival. Using it will save you tens of dollars per hectare in sowing and earn a lot more every year, and get up to two litres more milk per cow per day which is a lot on money.

### **Information from the 'Pasture mixes & seeding rates' spreadsheet**

Broadcasting costs a third of drilling and is far better.

If other ryegrasses are sown with Bealey NEA2, animals will graze Bealey NEA2 to the ground before eating the others, so the farmer will return the animals to the paddock to eat the others, but the animals will graze the Bealey NEA2 even shorter and eventually kill it all. AR37s are the worst because animals don't like them, and is no better at pest control.

The above also applies to the following plants, because most are more palatable than diploid ryegrasses, so get grazed out, so the best are blamed for no endurance.

Order early because the good varieties of grasses and clovers sell out.

### **LimeMagPlus and Gafsa Fertiliser orders**

Use both spreadsheets. Phone me if you need help. Once taught it takes only ten minutes.

### **Lessening drought effects.**

Get your number of cows right for your farm so you don't go into the drought short of pasture.

Grow summer forage crops. Those with them now are doing well without stress.

Use less urea and more LimeMagPlus which grows complete pasture for much longer.

A fertiliser company recommends urea now, but ryegrass with rain will grow very fast using the build up of N in the soil. More N will increase the chance of nitrate poisoning which can kill animals very quickly.

### **Droughts and water**

Have you had your farm water tested? It can cause bad animal health.

Hill Laboratory will courier you the chilli bins, instructions and return courier coupon to do a test? Hill's charge is about \$150.

A farm with water nearly black from high manganese (Mn) from a high bore level and Mn applied with fertiliser and Mn added to a soluble mineral mix caused cows to be dreadfully sick, stressed and nervous, so much so that the staff became stressed and abused the cows. The water had very bad minerals, including manganese, fed as a supplement recommended by a stupid consultant. They blocked the water pipes and polluted the water troughs as do oils. It was the worst I've ever seen. Cows weren't drinking enough water.

### **Updated chapters**

Facial eczema, Maize, Earthworms and others.

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