

DTT Stratford farm

The season

Winter 2018 was drier & warmer than average. Winter rainfall of 507 mm was 107 mm less than average. Soil temperature of 8 degrees C was 1.1 degrees C above average. This resulted in average pasture growth rates over winter being 17 kg DM/ha/day compared to the average of 12 kg DM/ha/day.

Results 2018-2019

	Control	Winter pad
MS/cow	352	355
MS/ha	1140	1150
Days in milk	252	255
Cow LWT June 2018 (kg)	406	402
Cow LWT April 2019 (kg)	420	416
Empty rate	12%	10%
Pasture growth (t DM/ha)	14.7	14.6
Supplements harvested (kg DM/ha)	680	648
Supplements purchased (kg DM/ha)	998	998

For the 2018.19 season there was no difference in Milksolids production, days in milk, cow liveweight & pasture growth between the treatments. The control herd had a slightly higher empty rate (2%) & harvested more supplements/ha.

Economics

Total annual costs of the covered pad are estimated at around \$200/cow which includes wood chips, cleaning and Repairs & Maintenance & depreciation. The small increase in per cow income of \$20/cow & less supplement harvested of the winter pad herd would have resulted in a loss of around \$170/cow for the 2018-2019 season.

This compares to the first season where milk production was 5% greater in cows that used the Winter Pad extensively during winter, and when required during spring and autumn, but the net loss was \$84/cow for season.

A full analysis of the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 season's including production, profitability & an overseer analysis is yet to be completed.