



PASTURE SUMMIT

SOUTHLAND AUTUMN EVENT

WEDNESDAY, 22 APRIL 2026

*Kindly hosted by Driffield Farming Ltd
(Chris Brander, GM), Hamlyn Road, Mossburn*





VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT

PROGRESSION, PASTURE, PROFIT

A very warm welcome to everyone, and a big thank you to **Chris, Alana and the Driffield Farming team** for hosting us today, to share their thinking and their results.

Pasture Summit events are held for farmers, by farmers who believe dairy farming can and should be profitable and rewarding, and that our pasture fed dairy products are best for the consumer and the environment. Central to this is our desire to inspire the next generation of dairy farmers by demonstrating that with the right strategies and execution, profitability, equity growth and land ownership are all achievable.

A big thank you today to our speakers, facilitators and panelists, and everyone involved in organising and running this event. A huge thanks to our Headline Partner **DairyNZ**, to our Headline Sponsor **ASB Bank**, and our other valued sponsors who have generously supported these events, and we ask that you, in turn, support them.

Our host farmers today, have a passion for learning and for upskilling themselves and their staff. They are focused on and are achieving very strong bottom-line financial performance and growth. This day is all about real stories, proven systems, and forward-thinking discussions, with the following highlights:

- **Farmer-Led Insights:**

Host farmers share their goals, journey, lessons learned, and detailed financial and physical results.

- **Benchmarking Excellence:**

Results are compared against regional averages and best-in-class, showcasing pasture-focused, repeatable, highly profitable systems.

- **On-Farm:**

See the host farm operation and engage in Q&A throughout the day.

- **Science Meets Practice:**

Scientists & farm system specialists from DairyNZ, to add a science & research lens to our discussions.

- **Progression & Succession:**

Panel discussion and open Q&A, supporting progression and succession.

Thank you once again for your support. We hope you enjoy the day and we look forward to catching up with you during the event.



Robert Ferris
Chair



Colin Glass
Treasurer



Alistair Rayne
Secretary



VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT

PROGRESSION, PASTURE, PROFIT

- 09:30 - 10:00** **ARRIVAL, REGISTRATION & MORNING TEA**
- 10:00 - 10:05** **Welcome, Introductions and why we are on this farm**
Daniel Woolsey, Pasture Summit
- 10:05 - 10:10** **Orientation & H&S Briefing**
Veronica Oostveen, DairyNZ Senior Area Manager, Central Southland
- 10:10 - 10:15** **Opening Comments**
Aidan Gent, General Manager Rural Banking, ASB Bank
- 10:15 - 11:15** **SESSION 1: FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE & PEOPLE**
Presented by Chris & Alana Brander, Driffield Farming Ltd
Facilitated by Veronica Oostveen, Senior Area Manager, DairyNZ
and Ron Pellow, Senior Farm Systems Specialist, DairyNZ
- 11:30 - 12:15** **SESSION 2: PASTURE & FEED MANAGEMENT**
Presented by Chris Brander & team, Driffield Farming Ltd and
Jane Kay, Principal Scientist at DairyNZ
Facilitated by Alistair Rayne, Pasture Summit
- 12:15 - 13:00** **SESSION 3: COWS & WINTER MANAGEMENT**
Presented by Chris Brander, GM, Driffield Farming Ltd
Facilitated by Veronica Oostveen, Senior Area Manager, DairyNZ
- 13:00 - 13:10** **Key messages & wrap up of morning sessions**
Will Grayling, Pasture Summit
- 13:15 - 14:00** **LUNCH**
- 14:00 - 14:45** **SESSION 4: PROGRESSION & EQUITY GROWTH PATHWAYS**
Panel discussion and open Q&A exploring progression and equity.

Panelists: Brad & Alexa Smith
Matt & Georgie Nilsson
Jon & Birgit Pemberton

Session facilitated by Lynaire Ryan, Pasture Summit
- 14:45** **CLOSE OF EVENT**
Daniel Woolsey, Pasture Summit

Disclaimer: The views presented at Pasture Summit are the opinions of the individual speakers and are not necessarily shared by the Pasture Summit organising committee or any of the sponsors. Given the general nature of some of the views and information presented at Pasture Summit and the fact that every participant's individual circumstances are different, Pasture Summit delegates should not act solely on the basis of material presented at Pasture Summit but should obtain specific advice as to their own circumstances and actions.



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ASB Rural Regional Manager – Lower South Island

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With origins dating back to 1909, LIC has a long history of developing and delivering world-leading innovations for the dairy industry. The co-op continues to be one of the sector's biggest private investors in research and development.

Today the New Zealand-based co-op employs more than 700 permanent staff, swelling to 2000 during the spring peak dairy mating season. LIC also has offices in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Australia.

All LIC profit is returned to its farmer owners/shareholders in dividends, or reinvested for new solutions, research and development.

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The Ministry for Primary Industries' On Farm Support team

The Ministry for Primary Industries' (MPI) On Farm Support team is proud to sponsor Pasture Summit autumn events this year.

On Farm Support offers practical on-the-ground advice and support to farmers and growers. It provides access to the latest agricultural research and regional support, helping to address specific challenges and make informed decisions to enable profitable, productive, and sustainable farming practices.

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With a network of regional advisers, we provide on-the-ground guidance, facilitate collaboration, and connect groups with resources and funding to deliver long-term solutions for communities that have impact.

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HOST FARMER

Chris Brander

General Manager, Driffield Farming Ltd

Chris grew up on a family dairy farm in the Rangitikei in the lower west coast of the north island and has carried that grounding right through his 15-plus years in the industry. After initially completing a building apprenticeship, he travelled through Australia and picked up a job in Terang Victoria dairy farming, before returning home when his father offered him a spot on a dairy conversion in Raleigh NSW running two farms. From there, his career built quickly. He spent time managing in the Central Plateau before moving south, where he has now been leading the Driffield operation for six seasons.

Chris treats the business as if it were his own - deeply numbers-driven, attentive to the 1-percenters, and with a philosophy that production is the outcome of getting people and cows right first. His leadership style blends structure with empowerment: clear parameters wrapped in an environment where his team can grow, make decisions, and develop into future managers. Today he oversees two large units, a strong multi-national team, and a business that has lifted pasture, production and profit under his stewardship.

Chris met his wife, Alana, in Australia, where she is originally from, and together they began their family before returning to New Zealand. Their eldest daughter was born on the coast near Coffs Harbour, where Chris was dairy farming at the time. The family has now made Southland home, raising three children while balancing the demands of a large-scale dairy business.



FARMER PANELISTS



Brad & Alexa Smith

Brad and Alexa live in Northern Southland with their two children. Brad is a New Zealander and has been farming since he was 17. He spent a majority of his career on dairy farms in the North Island with a stint in the UK before moving to Southland in 2010 with the aim of farming large scale herds.

Alexa is from the Isle of Man, has a degree in Biological Sciences and Psychology, and spent her pre farming career in large scale events in the UK, Europe and Middle East. They both spent 3 years farming in the USA before returning to New Zealand in 2018.

Currently, the couple contract milk two 1,100-cow farms over 800 ha for Canterbury Grasslands. They are also equity partners with Graeme and Jan Appleby in a 650-cow farm on the South Coast, which they oversee as owners while employing a contract milker.

Matt & Georgie Nilsson

Matt and Georgie are dairy farmers in Southland with three young children. Matt has been dairy farming since he was at school, during his BCom Ag degree at Lincoln University and full time since graduating.

They started running a dairy farming business together, as contract milkers, when they came home from overseas 10 years ago, while Georgie was still teaching. They moved south to 50:50 a 1000 cow self-contained dairy unit, at Castlerock nearly 5 years ago. Their goal is farm ownership in the next couple of years.



Jon & Birgit Pemberton

Jon and Birgit have 3 school aged children. They have owned a 140ha dairy farm at Brydone since 2014 and are almost at the end of a 5 year lease of a 240ha 800 cow farm.

This season they have expanded the home farm to 260 ha, ready to milk 650 cows next season.



ASB SPEAKER

(Opening Comments)

Aidan Gent

General Manager Rural Banking
ASB Bank Limited

Born and raised in Ruawai, Northland, Aidan maintains an active involvement in his Ruawai farming business. Starting his banking career as a Rural Graduate in Christchurch. Aidan has had roles across Rural and Institutional Banking, Corporate Advisory, Strategy, Product and Transformation across New Zealand and Australia.

Aidan is deeply passionate about the opportunities within the food and fibre sector and helping customers achieving their goals as well as future proof for tomorrow.



DAIRYNZ SCIENTIST

Jane Kay

Principal Scientist, DairyNZ

Jane has been involved in research since 1999 and is recognised internationally for her expertise in climate change, methane mitigation solutions, cow nutrition and ruminant physiology, once-a-day milking, and milk fat composition.

She has published numerous research articles and spoken at a range of international conferences, and is passionate about using research to help farmers make profitable and sustainable decisions. Jane has a deep understanding of farm systems and the challenges farmers face, and how research can be used to address these challenges and contribute to sector change.

Jane has a PhD in animal science from the University of Arizona, USA. She also holds a Master of Science in biological sciences from the University of Waikato and a Bachelor of Biological Sciences from the University of Otago. Jane has always been interested in understanding physiology and completed a Bachelor of Physical Education in exercise kinesiology from the University of Otago.



SESSION FACILITATORS



Veronica Oostveen

Senior Area Manager, Central Southland



Bringing over a decade of experience in the dairy sector to her DairyNZ role since 2024, Veronica understands the needs and challenges farmers experience as a farmer herself. Originally from the USA, Veronica moved to New Zealand in 2010 to study at the University of Otago. She met her husband and they now operate two large-scale farms in Western Southland and juggle a young family. Veronica helps to facilitate events, regional groups, and provides support to farmers in her region through sharing DairyNZ's tools and resources with them. She also networks with other industry professionals to create partnerships and bring a 'whole package' experience to farmers. She believes in the farmer-to-farmer relationship as being integral for knowledge sharing and weaves this into her facilitation at events.



Ron Pellow

Senior Farm Systems Specialist



After gaining a Bachelor of Agriculture degree and later a Master's in Business Administration, Ron worked across New Zealand's dairy sector. He's also been involved in everything from maize to business management and led the Lincoln University Dairy Farm through a significant farm system change. These days, he carries out a wide range of activities, with a key focus on implementing research that drives continual improvements in on-farm efficiency. Ron gets a real buzz working with great farmers across New Zealand – people who are passionate about their family, livestock, the environment, and their community.



Al Rayne

Pasture Summit and Canterbury Dairy Farmer

Secretary of Pasture Summit, proud to be a NZ dairy farmer and committed to a vibrant dairy sector. Raised on a sheep station near Fairlie. Following Lincoln, five years Dairy Extension with discussion groups in New Zealand, then four years extension in Ireland. Herd manager Taranaki followed by sharemilking in Canterbury for seven years, and a growing family. Joined a start-up growth-focused dairy equity partnership, Canterbury Grasslands, whilst sharemilking and have remained active in that. Purchased own farm near Darfield, and over time have grown to 900 cows. Farm goals throughout have been to operate an enjoyable, simple farm operation that grows staff capability, and returns high EBIT.



Lynaire Ryan

Pasture Summit and Agribusiness Education

Lynaire is an agribusiness consultant, having worked for 40 years in the dairy industry. Lynaire is based in Wanaka, and works part time running strategic management and business/financial courses for dairy farmers in NZ, Australia, Ireland, UK and USA. Lynaire enjoys teaching investment principles as well as practising them. She is an investor in Grasslands dairy farm which farms 22,000 cows in New Zealand, and also in sharemarket investment. Lynaire enjoys holidays, skiing, walking, boating and spending time with her husband Richard and family.

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SESSION 1:
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE & PEOPLE

Chris & Alana Brander (host farm) presenting



Facilitated by

Veronica Oostveen
Senior Area Manager
Central Southland, DairyNZ

(People Section)



Ron Pellow
Senior Farm Systems Specialist
DairyNZ

(Financials Section)



NOTES

Business Overview

The operation consists of two adjoining, unirrigated dairy units located in northern Southland. Together, the farms milk approximately 2,100 crossbred cows across around 720 effective hectares.

In 2009, Simon McFarlane converted land originally run as deer units and remains an equity owner in the business today, alongside Mike Davies. Neil Johnson is involved as a non-owning director, providing governance and strategic input.

Both units are run on heavy soils in a high rainfall environment, which strongly influences infrastructure decisions, pasture management, and system resilience. The system has been developed to perform under these conditions, with an emphasis on practical, robust approaches.

<i>Business Objectives</i>	Farming Philosophies:
<i>Honor our shareholders Be good stewards of our animals and land</i>	A disciplined pasture rhythm underpins the whole business - maintaining quality, measuring regularly, and acting early to keep covers in the sweet spot.
<i>Operate with honesty and integrity</i>	
<i>People - everyone treated like part of a family - just because its large doesn't mean it needs to be commercial</i>	Consistency in daily routines matters more than intensity; small, repeated behaviors across the team keep production steady year after year.
<i>Environmental leaders as part of a bigger business</i>	The system favors simplicity and repeatability - clear rules, clean residuals, and straightforward decision-making rather than complex interventions.
<i>Provide a safe, happy and sustainable work environment for our staff - integrated in the community</i>	People capability is central to farm performance, with task rotation, shared ownership, and stable leadership helping the system run smoothly.
<i>Deliver consistent high performance to support growth and sustainable business practices</i>	Feeding and cow condition are managed proactively, reflecting a preference for preventing problems rather than reacting to them.
	Technology is used to support good stockmanship, not replace it - human observation still drives the key decisions.

The key elements of this successful business

1. The people, specifically the development and leadership culture at Driffield.
2. The high pasture harvested, and how that's achieved consistently through very high cow performance and minimal feed substitution.
3. Rather than minimising costs at all costs, the business focuses on driving higher-than-average production per cow and per hectare to offset operating expenses, with disciplined management ensuring the system remains both profitable and repeatable.
4. The incremental improvement of the business over 5 years, with each year focusing more attention to detail on the simplest things but executing those things 100% correctly.

Infrastructure

- 2x 54 Bale Rotary's
- Two barkchip 1200 cow total wintering barns were completed in 2018 and 2019, funded from cashflow
- Four Lely automatic calf feeders, each feeding approximately 130 calves via four teats.



Table 1: Driffield Farming Ltd. Physical Overview Table

	2025/26 Driffield Forecast	2024/25	2024/25 DairyBase Southland Average *	2023/24	2022/23
Effective area (ha)	720	720	242	720	720
Crop Area - turnips	60	60		40	40
Peak cows milked	2,100	2,100	679	2,100	2,100
Stocking rate (cows/ha)	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.9
Total kg MS	1,130,000	1,111,777	307,580	1,102,379	1,038,695
kg MS/ha	1,569	1,544	1,271	1,531	1,442
kg MS/cow	538	529	454	524	494
Kg/MS % LWT	108%	106%	93%	105%	99%
Cow Liveweight (estimate)	500	500	490	500	500
BW	238	222	-	219	158
Fertiliser					
Total N applied (kgN/ha)	190	190	150	190	190
Full Time FTE	13.5	13.5	3.7	13.5	13.5
Cows/FTE	155	155	184	155	155
kgMS/FTE	83,703	82,353	83,274	81,657	76,940
Imported Supplements (tDM/ha)	2.7	2.4	2.7	1.9	1.6
Imported Supplements (tDM/cow)	0.95	0.8	0.96	0.6	0.5
Off farm grazing MAC (tDM/ha)	2.1	2.4	1.6	2.4	2.4
Off farm grazing Youngstock (tDM/ha)	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.1
Pasture and Crop Harvested (t DM/ha)	13	13.3	11.2	13.7	13.4

Milksolids increased from 921,505 total kgMS in 20/21 - Chris' first year on farm to 1,130,000 25/26. An increase of 18.5%

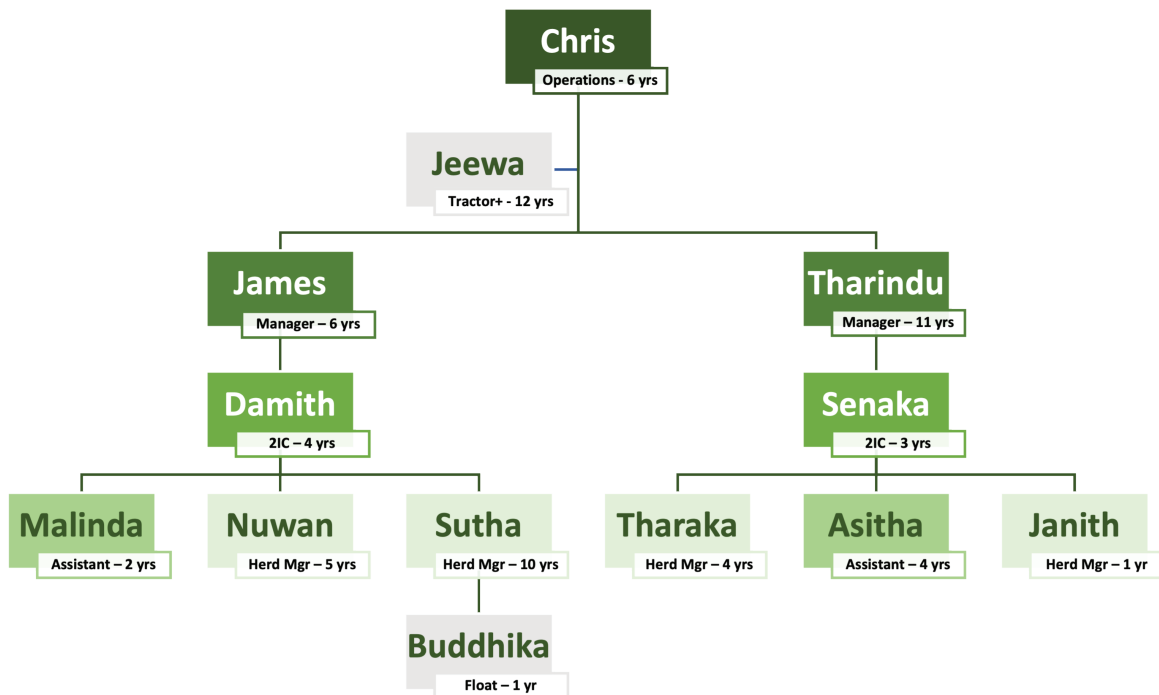
*2024/25 DairyBase Southland average benchmark data is comprised of 90 farms.

Farm Team

6:2 Roster: Farm Structure

- Two farms with a tidy, deliberate staffing structure.
- Each unit has:
 - A farm manager
 - A 2IC
 - A skilled team of herd managers or dairy assistants depending on capability.
- A tractor/maintenance manager works across both farms:
 - Makes paddock-side decisions on mowing, urea, and pasture presentation.
 - Considered one of the four pillars of the business (alongside Chris and the two farm managers).
- Team works on a shared 6:2 roster, rotating tasks so:
 - No one gets stuck hosing yards for weeks.
 - Daily jobs stay varied, fair, and engaging.

Figure 1: Driffield Farm Team Structure



Calf Rearing: Grace with 6 years as a calf rearing manager with Sujane, Shakila, Disha and 2x backpackers.

Team Connection + Culture

- Strong effort to connect as people, not just co-workers.
- During COVID, the team met monthly; still maintain 6–7 shared dinners a year.
- Events include: All staff, partners, children
- These gatherings are funded by selling beefies and calves. Reinforces the idea that, everyone contributes, everyone benefits
- Atmosphere is relaxed, family-oriented, and builds team cohesion.
- Philosophy: when people feel valued, they grow — and so does the business.

People Development + Retention

- Chris strongly prioritises growing people from within.
- Every manager in the last 6–7 years has been internally promoted.
- Many staff have stayed 7–10 years, reflecting high retention.
- Junior staff are encouraged to take training;
 - ITO/AgITO course fees are paid by the business if they pass.
- Workforce is stable, skilled, and deeply familiar with the farm system.
- Staff contribute confidently to daily decisions that impact:
 - Pasture quality
 - Animal health
 - Production outcomes
- Retention is driven by:
 - Treating people well
 - Providing good-quality housing (including homes in Mossburn for families)
 - Maintaining a positive, family-friendly culture

Table 2: Driffield Farming Task Roster

<p>1st and 4th Day AM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up Plant ▪ Milk 1st Herd ▪ Change Gates ▪ Cups off 2nd Herd ▪ Clean the yard <p>During Calving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pick up calves ▪ Help to draft new mums <p>After Calving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spray Thistles <p>*Note</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During summer crop time you may need to move herd from crop in afternoon ▪ Wash VAT depending on truck arrival 	<p>2nd and 5th Day AM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bring in 1st herd and setup lames for next paddock ▪ Check plant setup ▪ Cups off 1st herd ▪ Washing VAT during 1st herd cups off and VAT2 after milking ▪ Milk 2nd herd, colls and peni ▪ Plant was and clean the shed ▪ Fill-up teat spray and dosatron <p>During Calving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Setup bungies to bring springers to the shed ▪ Check around the springers paddock for calves ▪ Bring springers to the yard <p>After Calving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grubbing 	<p>3rd and 6th Day (outside day) AM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bring in 2nd Herd ▪ Send milk person for breakfast ▪ Bring in penicillin herd and setup breaks ▪ Lock herds away ▪ Breakfast ▪ Fencing ▪ Moving K-line <p>During Calving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Check springers and colostrum herds ▪ Bring in colostrum herd and setup break ▪ Give breaks for crop cows ▪ Dusting for colostrums and springers <p>After Calving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ K Line ▪ Checking cows for bloat
<p>PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Check plant setup and cups off 1st herd ▪ Milk 2nd Herd ▪ Plant wash and clean shed 	<p>PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Setup plant and milk 1st herd ▪ Cups off 2nd herd ▪ Clean yard 	<p>PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bring in 1st herd and 2nd herd ▪ Fencing ▪ Other repairs and maintenance ▪ Check and clean bikes ▪ Lock herds away <p>During Calving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Check springers and colostrums ▪ Repair crop fence

** The above is a guide for staff awareness and will perform other tasks on managers request, depending on season*

Financial Performance - 2024/25

- Farm Working Expenses (FWE): ~\$5.93/kgMS, currently (25/26 season) about 26c over budget due to additional feed purchased to buffer the tough spring conditions.
- People Costs: \$1.52/kgMS fully loaded, including management—supported by high staff retention and efficient task allocation.
- Grazing Costs: Approximately 48c/kgMS for young stock on the runoff.
- Animal Health: Circa 39c/kgMS, reflecting strong prevention programmes and targeted lameness management.
- Operating Profit: Solid, well above regional averages for comparable scale systems, helped by good reproduction, high utilisation pasture and crop, strategic imported feed use and strong pasture management.
- Stock Trading: The business typically generates 50–60c/kgMS from livestock sales, with 100+ surplus in-calf cows and heifers marketed in a normal year.
- Break-even: The system remains comfortable at \$7.00–\$7.50 payout, with minimal adjustments required at those levels.

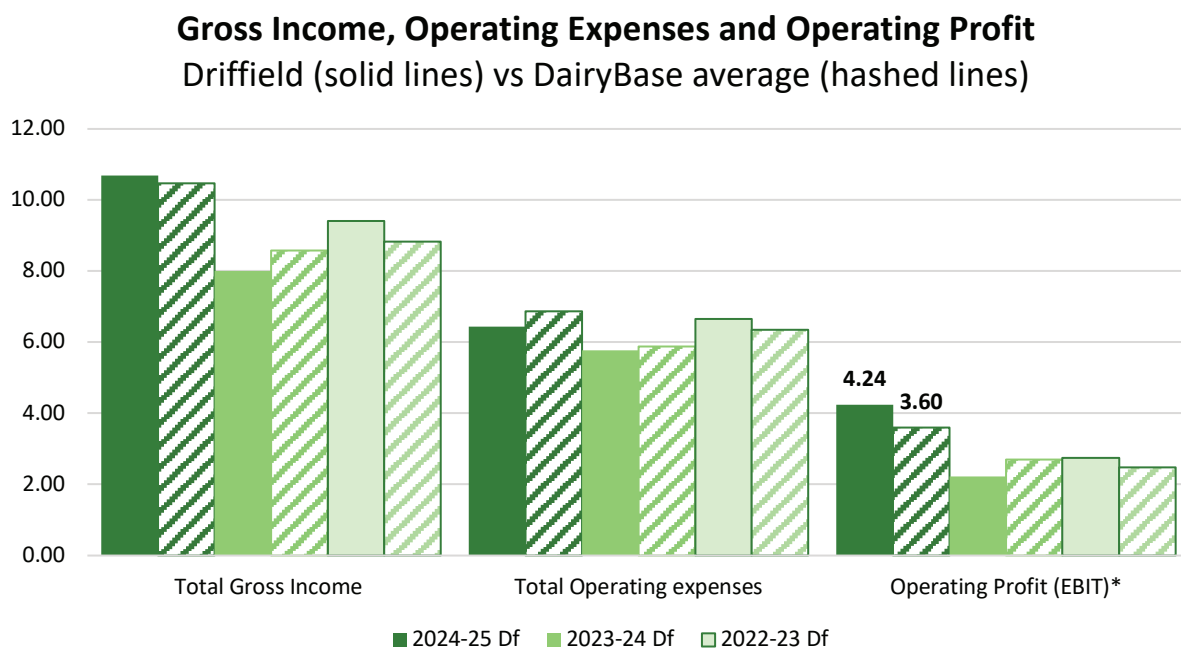
Table 3: Driffield Farming Ltd Profitability 24/25 Season

Table 3 describes the main non-cash adjustments for Driffield Farming Ltd. For benchmarking purposes, financial KPIs include non-cash adjustments (depreciation, livestock and feed inventory, owned support block and unpaid labour).

Depreciation is the main non-cash adjustment for Driffield Farming Ltd (\$0.37/kgMS in the 2024/25 season). An expense is also added for the support block (\$0.15/kgMS). No adjustment was made to livestock values in these accounts.

Cash		Adjustments	Cash + non-Cash	
Cash Income	\$/kg MS		Farm Income	\$/ Kg MS
Net Milk	10.06		Net Milk	10.06
Net Livestock	0.62	+/- change value stock	Net Livestock	0.62
Other Income	0.01		Other Income	0.01
Net Cash Income	10.69		Gross Farm Income	10.69
Farm Working Expenses	\$/kg MS		Operating Expenses	\$/kg MS
Wages	1.52	+ Labour adjustments	Labour Expenses	1.52
Stock Expenses	0.71		Stock Expenses	0.71
Supplementary feed	1.74		Total Supp. Expenses	1.74
Grazing and Support block		+ Owned support block	Total Grazing + S block	0.15
Other working expenses	1.58		Other working expenses	1.58
Overheads	0.37	+ Depreciation (0.37)	Total Overheads	0.74
Farm Working Expenses	5.93		Operating Expenses	6.44
Cash Operating Surplus	4.76		Operating Profit	4.24

Figure 2: Income, expenses and profit expressed per kilogram milksolids



On a milk solids basis, with the exception of 2023-24, income is broadly similar between the DairyBase average and Driffield Farming Ltd. Operating expenses however are lower for Driffield, resulting in higher profit per kgMS. When expressed per hectare, the higher pasture and crop grown (and eaten) on Driffield results in more milk production and much higher income per hectare. Expenses are increasing over time as a percentage of the Dairybase average (on a per hectare basis), but are more than offset by higher income, resulting in more profit per hectare.

Figure 3: Income, expenses and profit expressed per hectare

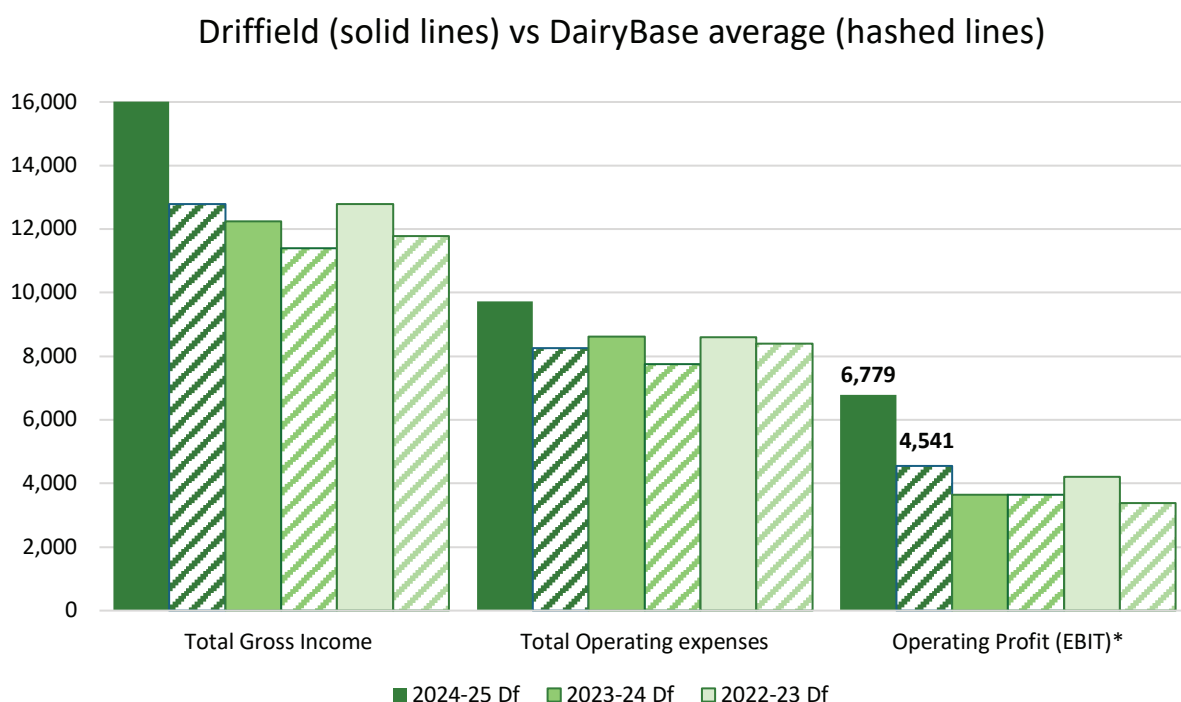
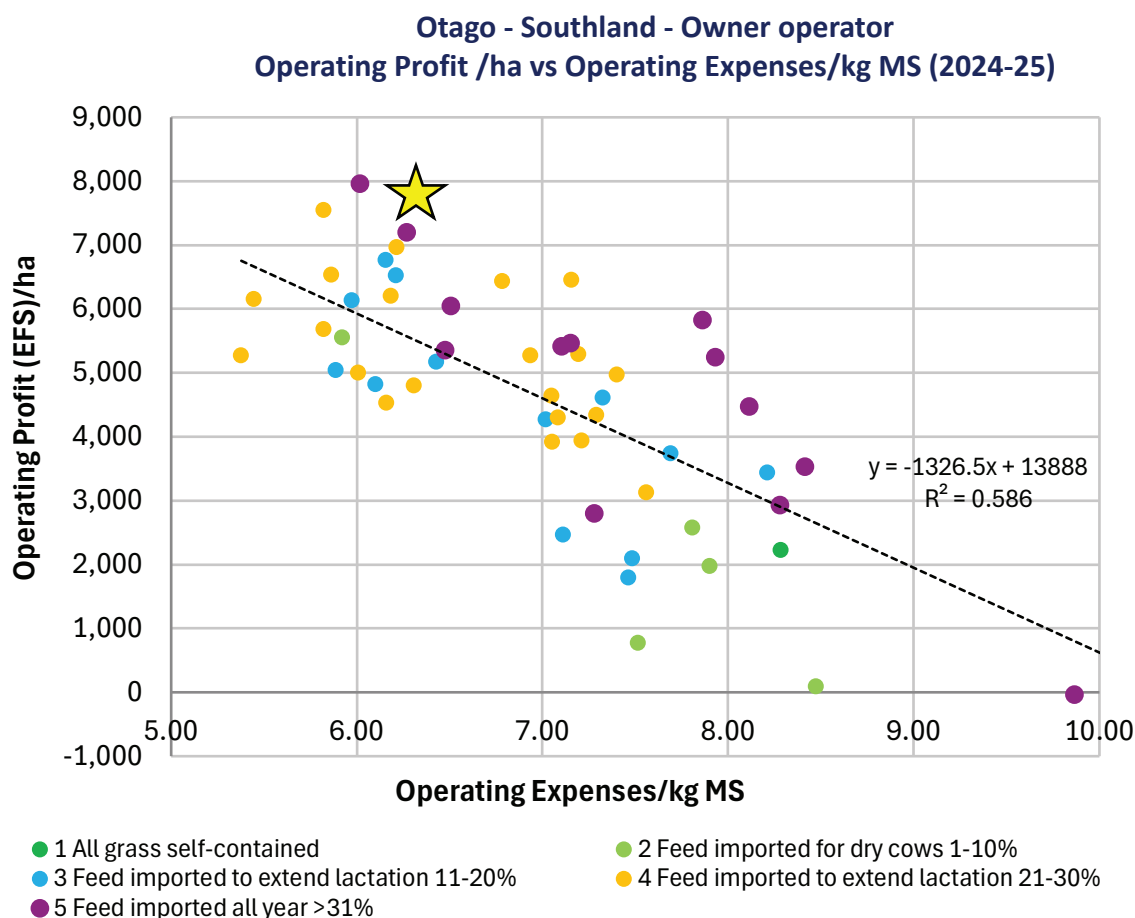


Table 4: Driffield Farming Financial Overview

Driffield Farming Operational Overview vs. Southland Benchmark	2024-25 Season		2023-24 Season		2022-23 Season	
	Driffield Farming Ltd	Southland (44 farms)	Driffield Farming Ltd	Southland (52 Farms)	Driffield Farming Ltd	Southland (59 Farms)
Gross Farm Rev* (\$/kgMS)	10.69	10.47	8.00	8.58	9.41	8.83
Farm Working Exps (\$/kgMS)	5.93	6.56	5.23	5.53	6.05	5.98
Operating Expenses (\$/kgMS)	6.44	6.87	5.78	5.88	6.66	6.35
Operating Profit (\$/kgMS)	4.24	3.60	2.22	2.70	2.75	2.48
Gross Farm Revenue (\$/ha)	16,503	12,788	12,253	11,399	12,797	11,772
Operating Expenses (\$/ha)	9,724	8,247	8,617	7,749	8,597	8,395
Operating Profit Margin %	41%	36%	30%	32%	33%	29%
Operating Profit (\$/ha)	6,779	4,541	3,636	3,650	4,200	3,377

* Gross Farm Revenue includes gains/losses in Milk Futures (where applicable).

Figure 4: DairyBase data comparing operating profit per hectare and operating expenses per kgMS



Otago – Southland DairyBase data reinforces the relationship between operating expenses per kilogram milk solids and operating profit per hectare. Data shown is from the 2024-25 season with Driffield Farming Ltd identified as the star (operating expenses of \$6.44 and operating profit of nearly \$6,800/ha).

Operating Expenses Comparison

Table 5: Driffield Farming Ltd: Operating Expenses Comparison 24/25

	2024-25 Season		
	Driffield Farming Ltd	Southland (44 farms)	Difference
Wages (incl labour adjustments) (\$/kgMS)	1.52	1.24	-0.28
Animal Health (\$/kgMS)	0.39	0.28	-0.11
Breeding (\$/kgMS)	0.19	0.19	-
R&M (\$/kgMS)	0.53	0.57	+0.04
Fertiliser inc. Nitrogen (\$/kgMS)	0.65	0.55	-0.10
Total Feed Expenses (\$/kgMS)	1.89	2.70	+0.81
Supplements made and purchased	1.09	1.62	+0.53
Grazing Off	0.64	1.02	+0.38
Calf feed	0.16	0.06	-0.10

Figure 5: Driffield Farming Ltd - Operating Expenses over time

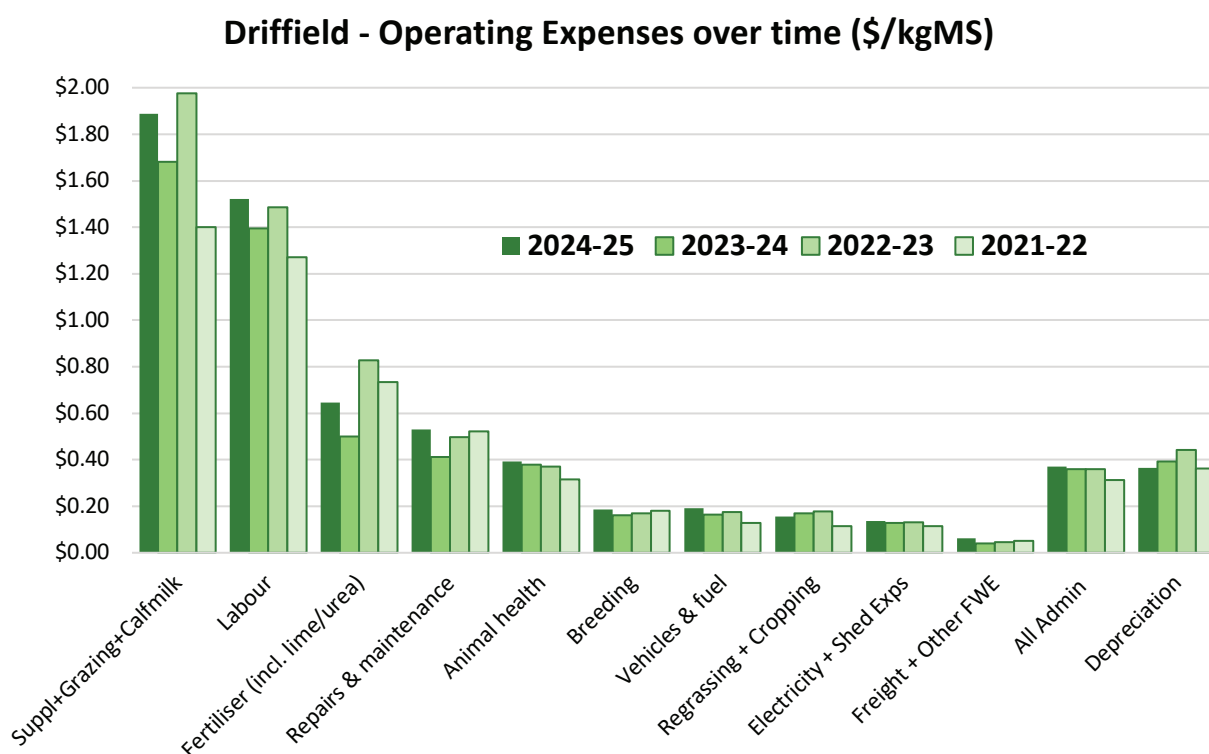


Figure 6: Driffield Farming Ltd and DairyBase Southland Average: Feed, Labour, Fertiliser and Re-grassing expenses per kgMS.

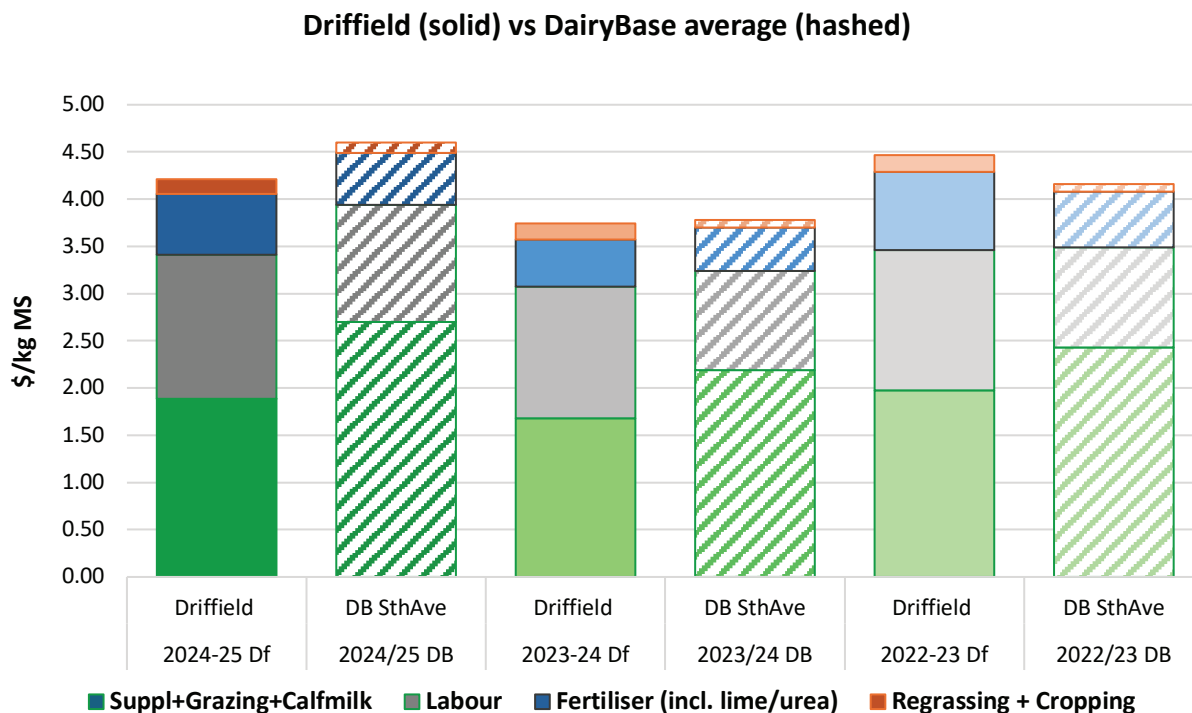


Figure 7: Driffield Farming Ltd and DairyBase Southland Average – General expenses per kgMS.

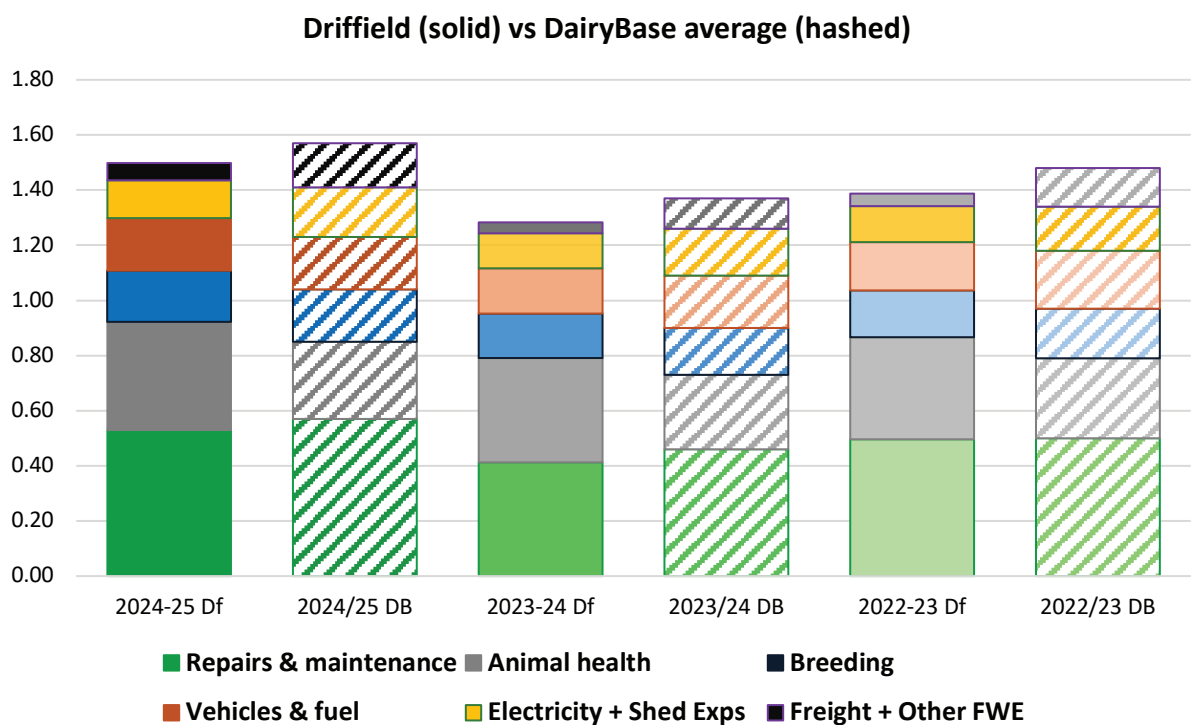
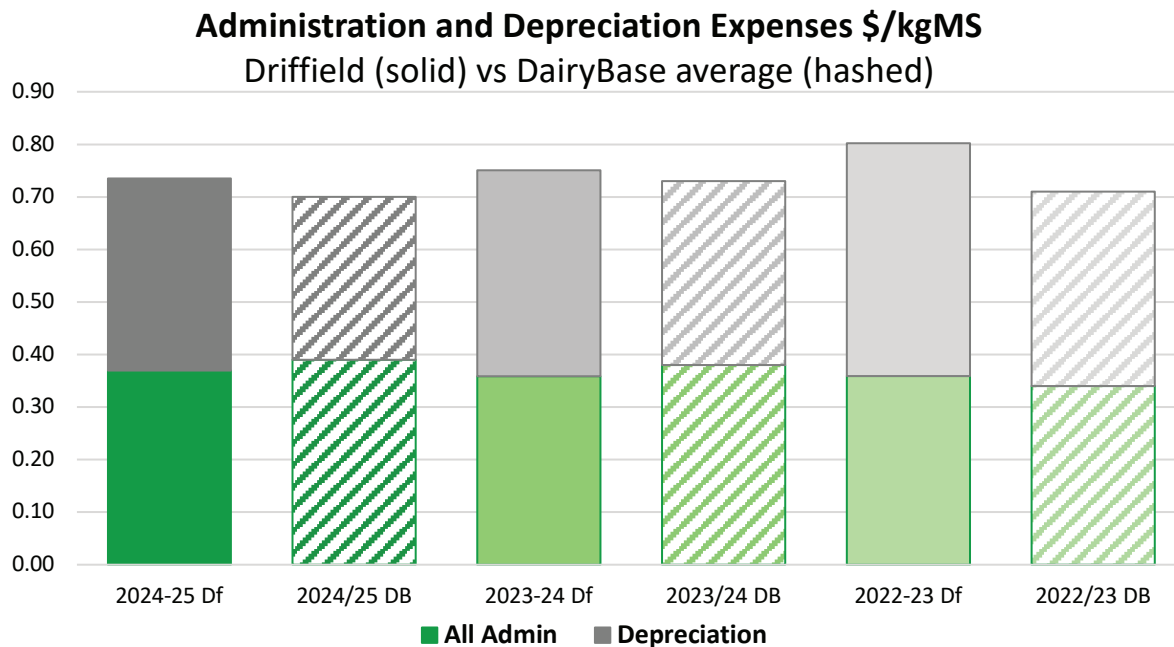
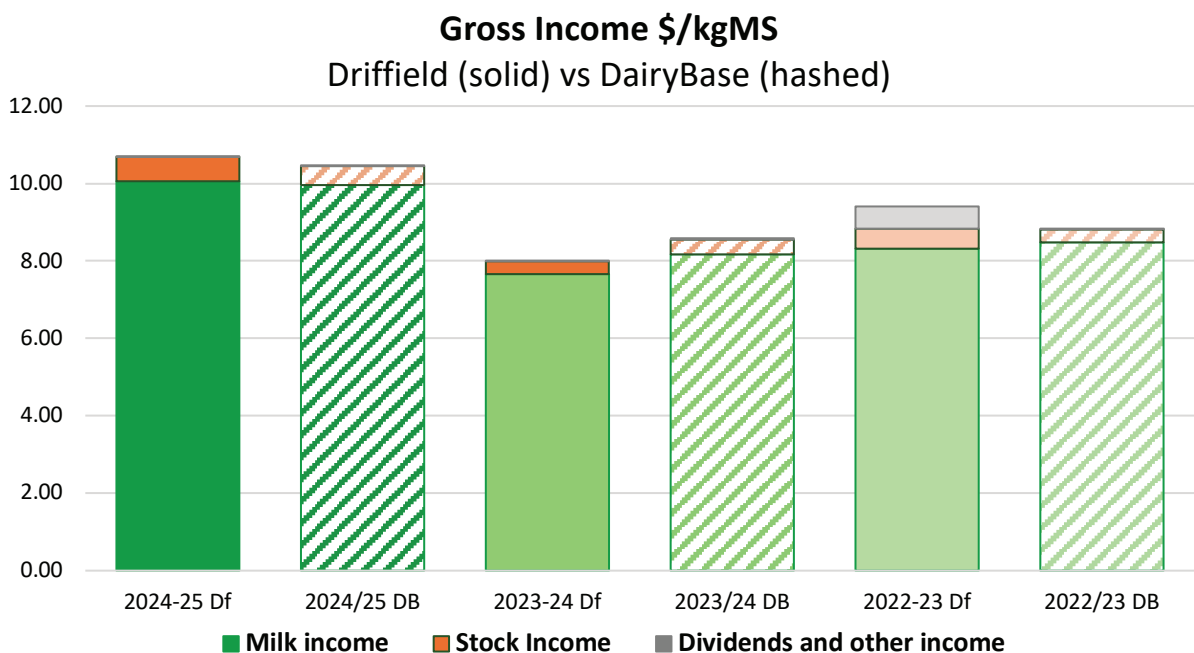


Figure 8: Driffield Farming Ltd and DairyBase Southland Average – Administration and depreciation expenses per kgMS.



Note depreciation is a little higher at Driffield Farming Ltd compared to the Southland DairyBase average, while administration costs are broadly similar.

Figure 9: Driffield Farming Ltd and DairyBase Southland Average – Milk, Stock and other Income



Stock income is generally higher at Driffield, Net impact of milk futures trading is also included in other income.

What's happening at DairyNZ

Dairy Training courses

Dairy Training offers two practical free courses to grow pasture skills.

Pasture and Feeding Fundamentals is a hands-on introduction to the core principles of pasture growth, cow nutrition, and daily feed decisions, ideal for newer team members building their foundation. For those ready to take the next step, Feed for Profit provides more advanced skills in feed planning, allocation, and financial decision-making, helping farmers turn feeding choices into measurable performance gains.

Whether you're starting with the basics or develop your expertise, there's a course to suit every role on farm.

dairytraining.co.nz/courses



Dairy Beef Opportunities

New Zealand's dairy and beef industries are working together on the Dairy Beef Opportunities programme to address a key area of both challenge and opportunity – the management of non-replacement calves that are not required to replenish the dairy herd.

The Programme is a joint initiative with the New Zealand Government to grow the country's dairy-beef sector, create new revenue opportunities for farmers, and strengthen the efficiency and sustainability of the wider livestock industry. It aims to unlock more value from non-replacement dairy calves by strengthening dairy-beef integration and developing innovative pathways for raising them for beef.

The programme is jointly funded by DairyNZ, Beef + Lamb New Zealand, the Meat Industry Association, and Dairy Companies of New Zealand and co-funded by the Ministry for Primary Industries.

dairynz.co.nz/dbo



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dairynz.co.nz/dairybase



DairyNZ events

Find upcoming DairyNZ events near you, including Progressing Dairy events, workshops, field days, discussion groups and more.

dairynz.co.nz/events



Resilient Pasture Programme

The Resilient Pasture Programme was set up to help solve challenges that farmers across Aotearoa are facing – pastures that don't last as long, more pests, and weather that's harder to predict. These challenges are backed up by DairyNZ data.

A collaborative cross-sector programme was launched in June 2025, led by DairyNZ with MPI through the Primary Sector Growth Fund and industry partners Beef + Lamb New Zealand. Its focus is to enhance the resilience and recovery of pastures to climate and weather events in the future.

dairynz.co.nz/resilientpastures



Forage Value

DairyNZ and the Plant Breeding Research Association (PBRA) are committed to working together to understand the root causes of the Forage Value Index (FVI) validation trial result. Our FVI helps farmers choose ryegrass cultivars based on dry matter yield and economic value.

Our research helps to ensure genetic gain in plant breeding, seen in small plot trials, is captured on farm.

dairynz.co.nz/fvi



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*Figures are based on published studies on variable rate strategies performed under NZ conditions and are representative of typical gains expected from variable rate strategies, but actual gains will be farm specific. [†]Where spreader capability allows.

Pasture and Feed Management

Figure 10: Operating profit vs pasture and crop harvested (24/25)

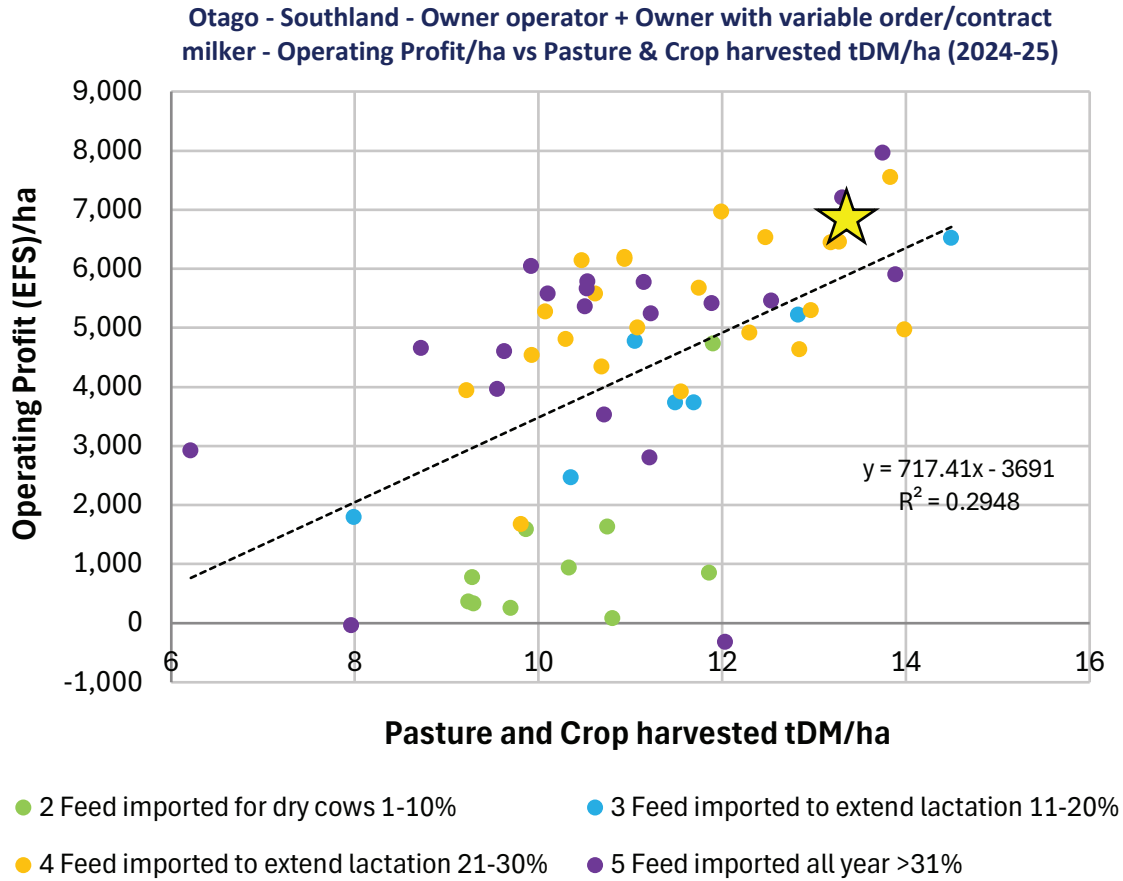
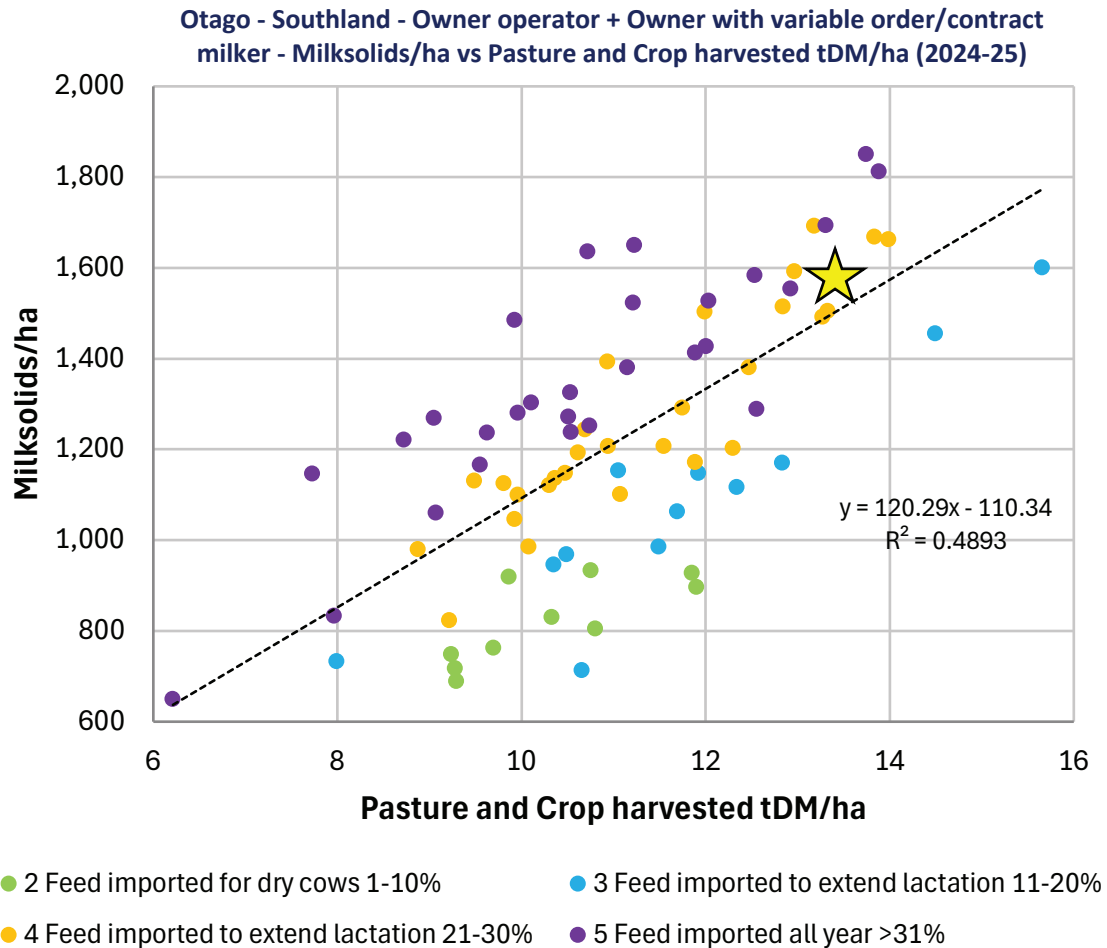


Figure 11: Milk Production per hectare vs pasture and crop harvested (24/25)



Driffield Key practices

Grass first principles.

- Consistently achieving pasture targets
 - high quality pre- grazing covers,
 - consistent post-grazing residuals
- Supplements used to fill genuine feed deficits
 - PK/DDG used to cover spring deficit, fill the gap in SRP.
 - PKE used rest of the season.

Pasture walks every 4 days

- High-frequency assessment to match paddock grazing order to growth rate and pasture quality. Managers conduct their own pasture walks

Residuals treated as a critical indicator

- Clean residuals underpin next round growth and quality, cow performance, and pasture longevity. 23-day round from 19 Sept to dry off end of May.
- 2800 pre-grazing cover target from start of 1st round to end of season

Supplements made on platform: 24/25, 23/24, 22/23 – 200 bales/year for colostrum and penicillin's eaten all in that year. 25/26 season cut 800 bales

Re-grassing/crops

8% of the farm re-grassed annually using all five heading dates (diploids only)

- This gives the farm five seasonal “growth bumps”, flattening supply across the full year.
- Sown as 21kg grass, 4kg clover and 1kg plantain.

Re-grassing decisions made visually and collaboratively

- Managers map damaged areas for stitching,
- Team decides crops/paddocks,
- Records kept of what cultivar went where

No spring re-grassing

- All re-grassing done in Autumn behind turnips. Turnips planted 30th Nov.
- No grass-to-grass re-grassing (protects soil structure and pasture establishment).

Runoff stitched every year to maintain quality and protect winter feed supply.

Autumn crop (turnips) used to fill autumn feed deficit

- Planted 30th November and fed in Autumn
- 4.5kg/cow/day but can be 3.8 to 4 depending on crop yield

Mowing Strategy:

One key operator does all mowing

- Silage: If pre-graze exceeds 2850 kg DM/ha the grass is mown and baled asap. Risk in letting it grow on is in creating a subsequent dip in the feed wedge.
- Pre-graze mowing: If there is a looming dip in the wedge high pre-graze covers (more than 2850 kg DM/ha) can be pre-mown for the cows instead. Only about 5% of all mowing done is pre-mowing for cows.
- Post-graze mowing is reserved for mistakes or when weather factors have affected the residual.

Figure 12: Driffield Farming Ltd: Total Feed Eaten – 3-year comparison

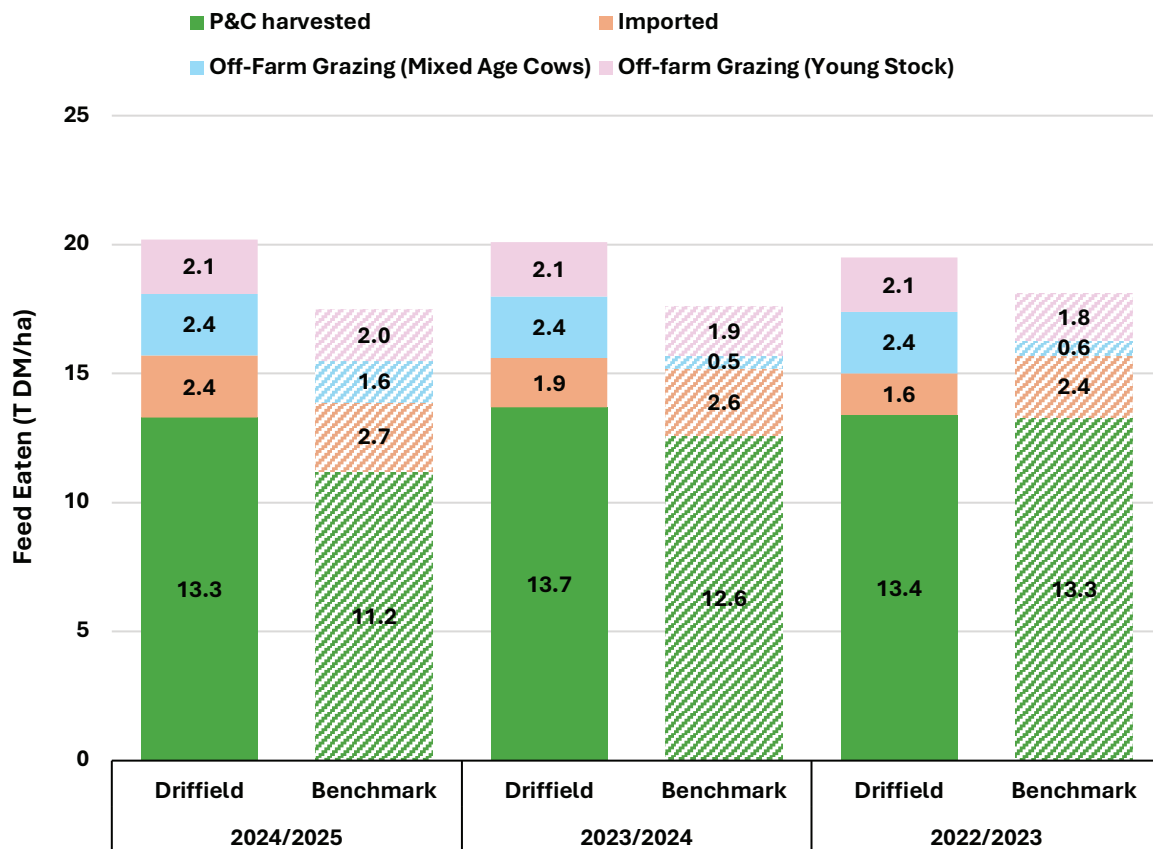


Figure 13: Driffield Farming Ltd Pasture Supply & Feed Demand Graph 24/25

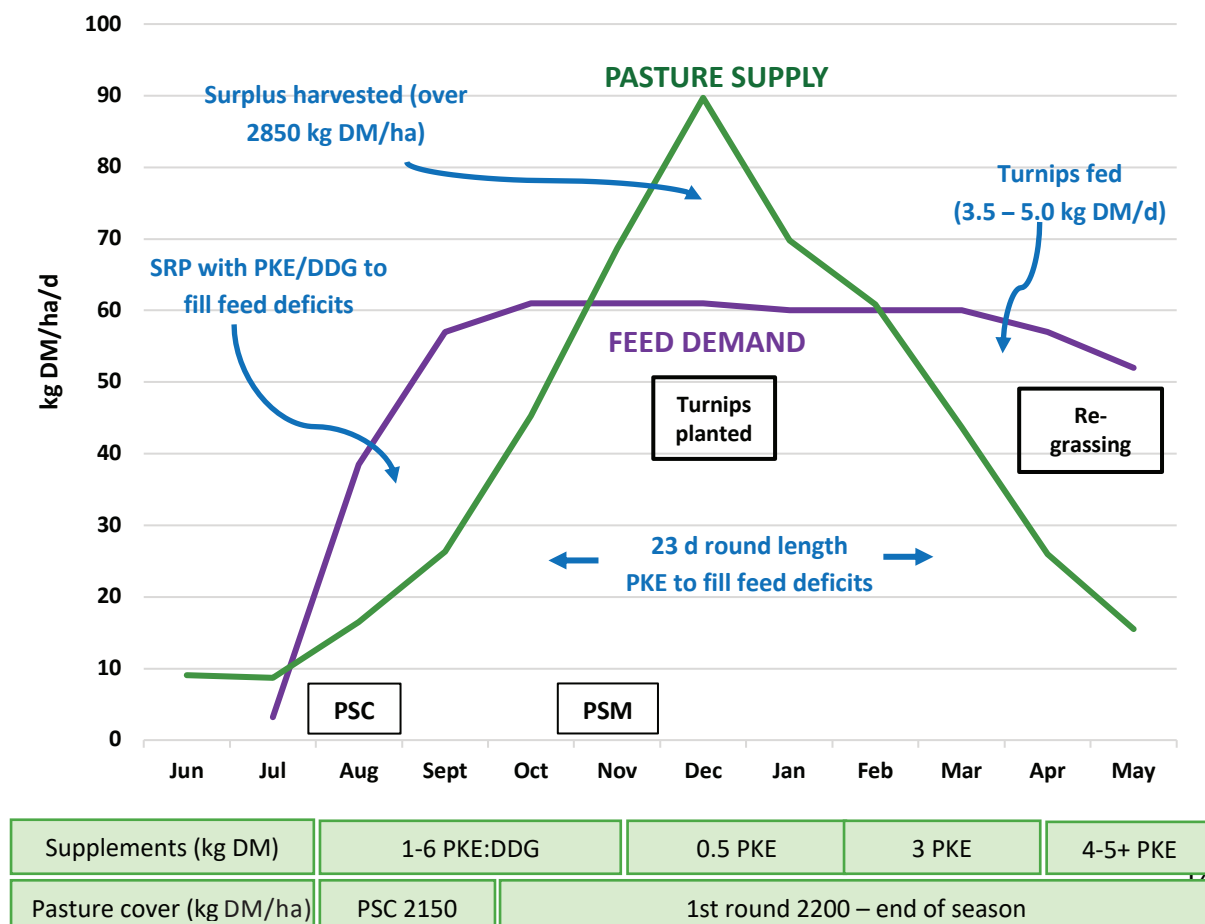


Figure 14: Driffield Farming Ltd: Average Pasture Cover 25/26



Nutrient Management:

Annual soil testing for every paddock

Fertiliser

- No synthetic potassium (K) applied; barn effluent fully substitutes K requirements.
- Total of 280T (2.5T/ha) Super
- Total of 190kg/ha N
- Soil temp above 6-7 degrees to start applying N.
- N rates vary from 15-30 kg N with little and often strategy. Rates depend on the paddock and how many times that paddock has been given N as its season-dependant with wet.



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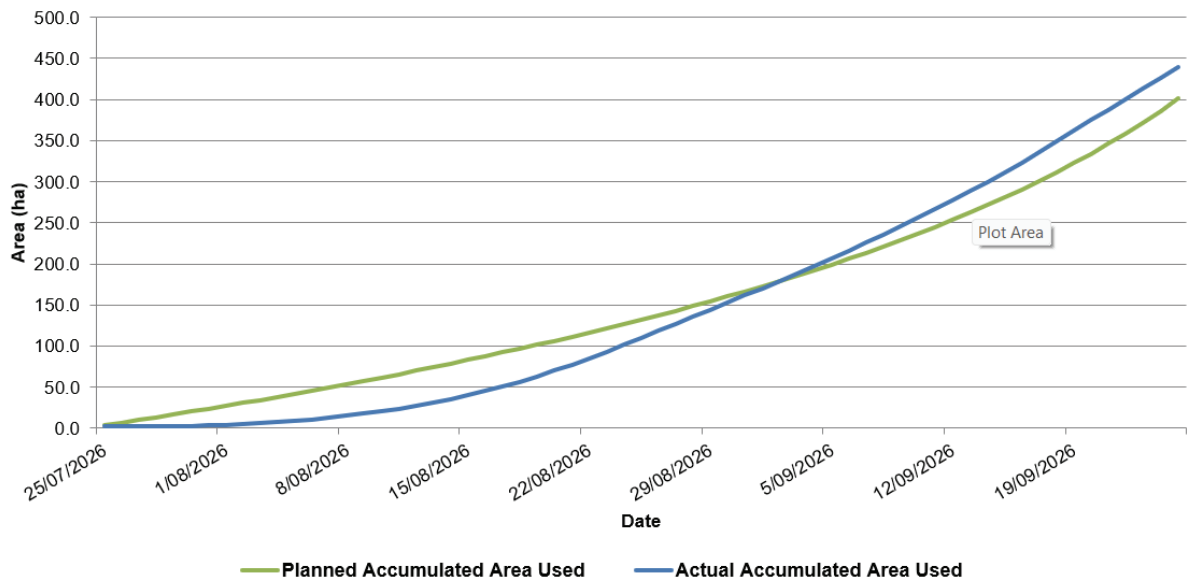


Figure 15: Driffield Farming Ltd Spring Rotation Planner

Spring Rotation Planner - Standard

Farm Name	Driffield	Round Length at	
Effective Area (Ha)	369	Planned Start of Calving	110
Planned Start to Calving	25/07/2026	Balance Date	23
Balance Date	25/09/2026	Average Pasture Cover at	
		Planned Start of Calving	2150
		Balance Date	2200

Area Grazed



Spring Rotation Plan adapted proactively

- Final week of SRP is removed
- Round is brought forward by ~2 weeks, adding the average area into total hectares to keep ahead of growth and prevent covers getting too long



Table 6: Driffield Farming Greenhouse Gas Report – Open Country 24/25 1&2

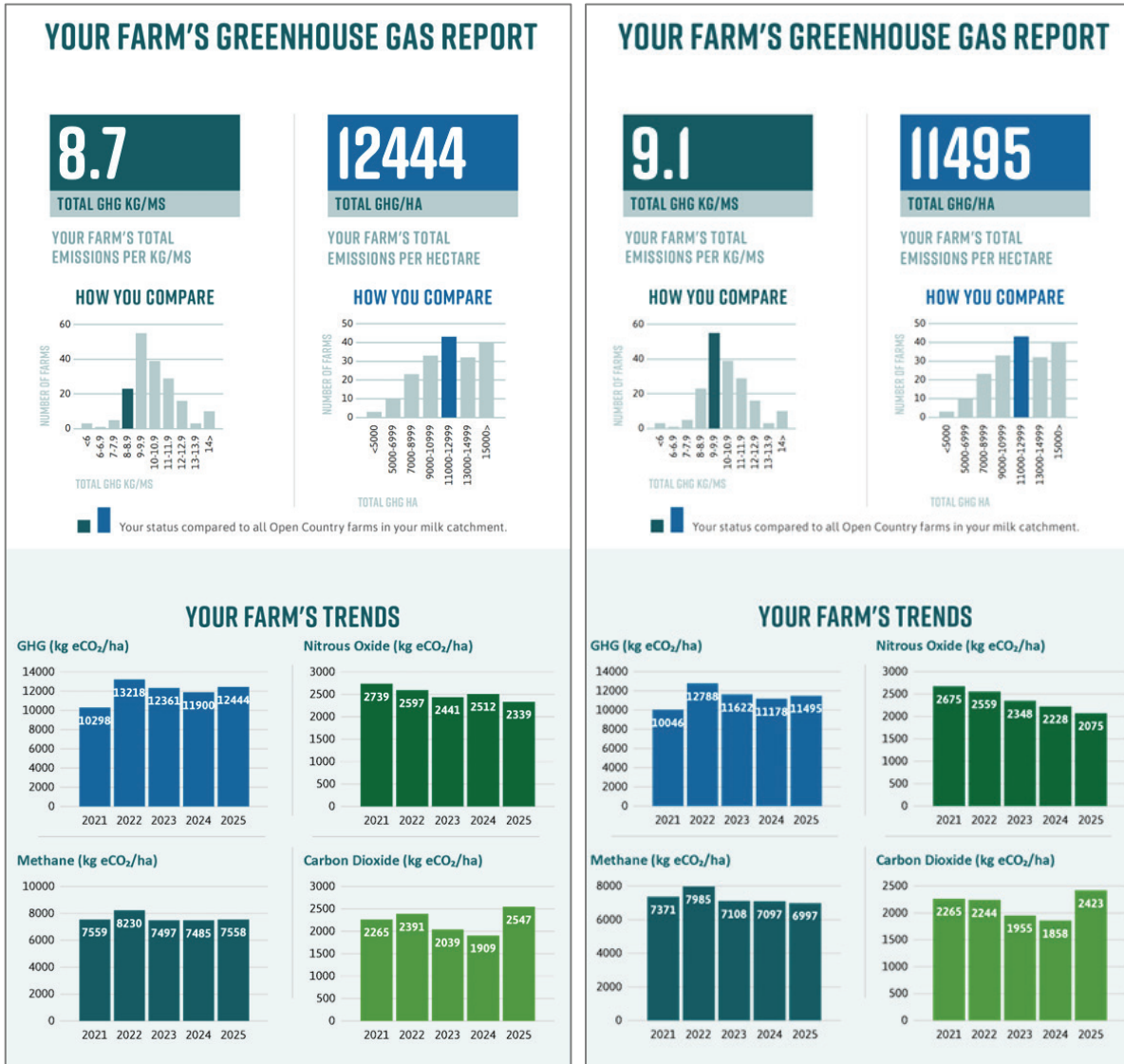
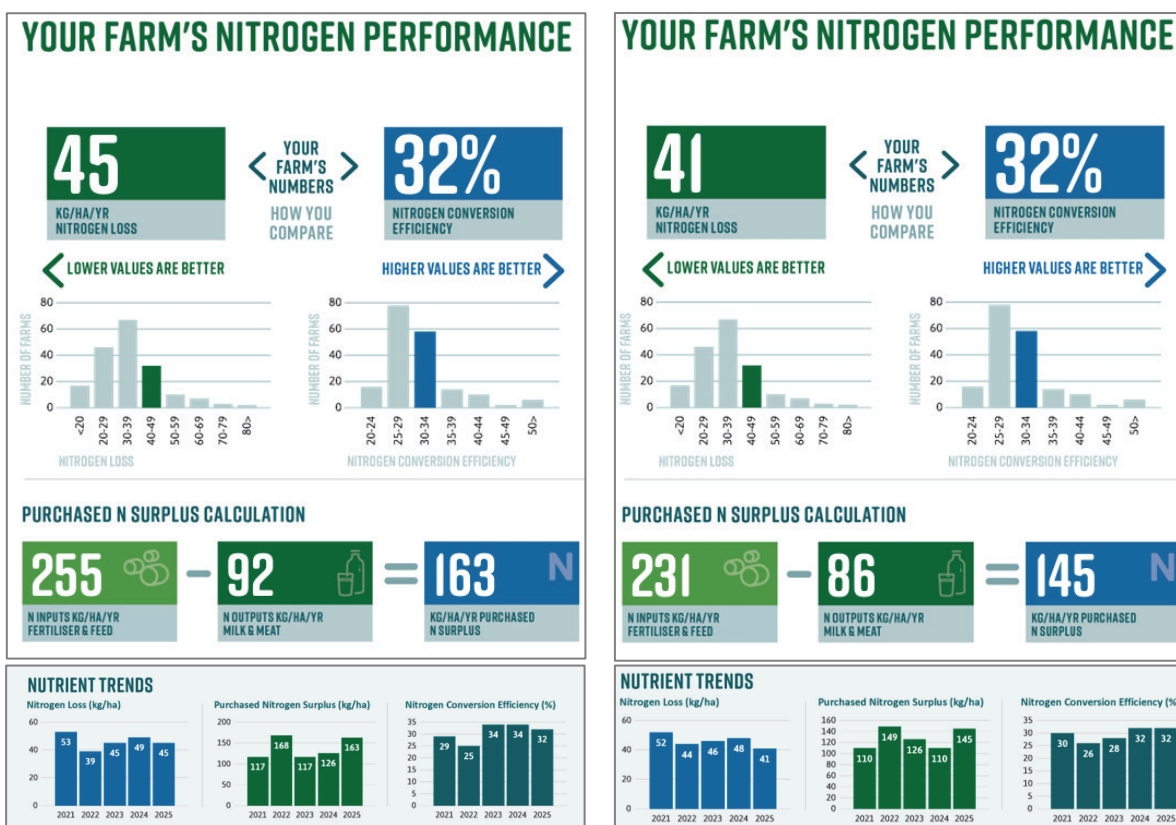


Table 7: Driffield Farming Nitrogen Performance – Open Country 24/25





"I work with Dot to tailor the best plan for my farm."

David van Straalen, Dairy Farmer

We asked David:

How do you make it count?

David: I sit down with my Nutrient Specialist, Dot, and we go over the plan. Some blocks need more, some need less. No point treating them all the same. It means I'm not wasting fert and I get a better result in the long run.

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Breeding, Mating Management and Reproduction Performance

Mating Strategy

Heifers mated 10 days earlier

- Gives them extra time to recover post-calving and re-enter the herd in better order.
- Supports stronger 3- and 6-week in-calf rates.

Clear condition mobbing pre-mating

- Managers walk cows regularly and re-sort condition mobs to prevent light cows being overlooked.
- Early BCS checks on once-a-day cows so none “hide in the group.”

Collars used primarily for heat detection

- Datamars collars installed during COVID staffing pressure—purpose was to protect mating performance.
- Heat alerts remove pressure from managers during the busiest period and improve submission accuracy.

Reproduction Performance

Strong in-calf performance

- Recent results around 76–78% (cows) and very low number of heifer rechecks (37 out of ~540).
- Extra heifers reared provide strategic flexibility to cull more aggressively and lift genetic merit.

Proactive scanning schedule

- Heifer rechecks mid-February; cow scanning aligned.

Repro Results: 2025 Mating

Driffield NBJJ: 75 6wk, 12 MT, 95 3wk sub

Driffield PPQW: 77wk, 11MT, 96 3wk sub

Genetic strategy: no breeding from the lowest 15% PW cows

- Lower-merit cows are not bred; contributes to long-term herd improvement.
- Higher turnover supported by surplus heifers (600 reared this year).
 - DNA everything
 - Jersey to Fresian, Fresian to Jersey
 - Short Gestation after 6 weeks
 - 25/26 Sexed 100 straws – highest BW over 1st-2nd week

Figure 16: Importance of genetic gain

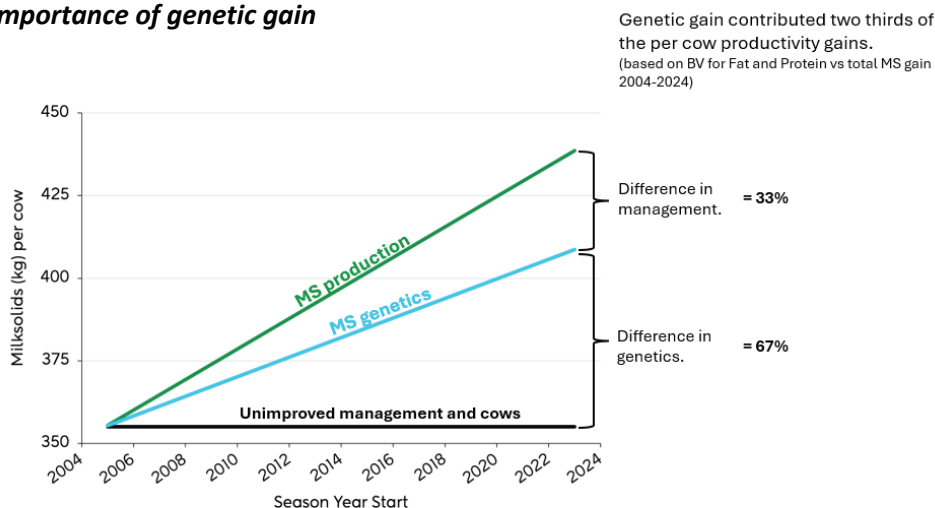


Table 8: Southland: BW Quartiles within herd, BW, BV and additional profit of mature animals

Quartile	BW	Fertility Breeding Value (PR42%)	Milksolids per cow	Liveweight	Additional milksolids vs bottom 25%	Additional revenue vs bottom 25%
Top 25%	194	1.9	547 kg	495 kg	74 kg	\$666
Q2	100	1.5	520 kg	499 kg	47 kg	\$423
Q3	34	1.1	503 kg	502 kg	30 kg	\$270
Bottom 25%	-68	0.5	473 kg	506 kg	0 kg	\$0

Total Cows = 124,470

Top 25% vs Bottom 25%

*\$9.00 payout

- 1.5% better 6-wk in calf rate
- 11 kg lighter
- +74kg MS per cow
- +\$666 per cow
- Greater MS
- Better fertility
- Lighter cows

Data source: DIGAD Jan 2026, Southland herds, mixed aged cows (4-8 years old), must have 3 or more herd tests and born after 2015.

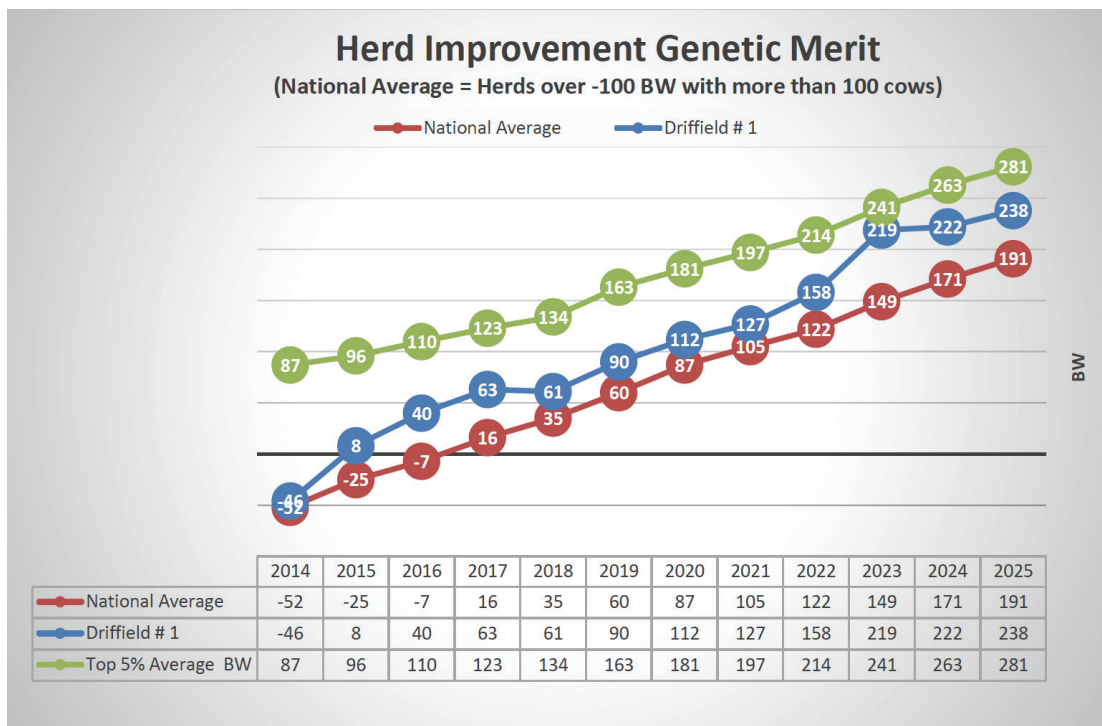
Table 9: Driffield 1 Genetic Gain

Dam gBW Split – 2024-born Replacements Reared

Dam Rank	Yrlings Retained	Avg. Dam gBW	Avg. Sire gBW	Yrlings gBW	Percentage
gBW Q1	66	204.8	330.2	278.7	25.9%
gBW Q2	73	117.4	313.1	239	28.6%
gBW Q3	56	41.1	323.3	194.6	22%
gBW Q4	60	-44.1	339.4	166.8	23.5%
Dam Not in Herd	2	53.2	301.1	136.9	-
Yearlings	0	0	0	0	-

Dam gBW Split – 2025-born Replacements Reared

Dam Rank	Calves Retained	Avg. Dam gBW	Avg. Sire gBW	Calves gBW	Percentage
gBW Q1	91	244.4	350.7	291.3	32.3%
gBW Q2	76	132.9	354.8	241	27%
gBW Q3	78	59.6	327.5	190.8	27.7%
gBW Q4	37	-10.9	336.2	160.7	13.1%
Yearlings	19	234	445.2	341.5	-



*results from Driffield 2 were equal – 2 herd codes are used

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Culling strategy and timing

Cull decisions are made in a clear order, starting with reproductive performance and then refining based on longer-term efficiency:

- Empty cows first
- Followed by age and production, assessed on days in milk
- Then SCC history and repeat mastitis offenders
- Bodyweight trends, with a focus on cows consistently losing or carrying low BW
- Finally, udder conformation and milking efficiency

Culling is seasonally dependent but generally starts in April. Animals are staggered out rather than removed all at once to:

- Optimise schedule and category premiums
- Maintain herd flow and minimise operational disruption

Most cull cows leave the system in mid to late April and remain on the same round speed until departure.

Dry-off Strategy

In the 10 days leading into dry-off, cows are stepped down carefully to reduce milk production without compromising welfare. This is done by:

- Gradually cutting sqm allocation
- Holding total feed intake steady, but shifting to lower-quality feed
- Increasing straw, grazing to lower residuals, and moving to OAD milking

The intention is to dry cows off smoothly, not suddenly, while avoiding excess hunger or stress.

Drying off is carried out at scale, with around 200 cows per day. At this point, attention to detail is critical, particularly around hygiene and technique, to minimise mastitis risk and ensure consistency across staff.

For dry cow therapy:

- Heifers receive teatseal only
- Cows receive blanket dry cow therapy, with this season being the final year
- A move to SAMM is planned and will be implemented following the agreed criteria and process next season with key vet



Wintering Management

Around 1,200 cows are wintered in barns from dry-off through to calving. The barn system allows for controlled feeding, shelter from harsh Southland winter conditions, low walking demand, and consistent body condition score (BCS) gain, while also avoiding soil damage. The heavy soil type makes wintering cows on the dairy platform impractical, reinforcing the need for the off-platform wintering and barn-based system.

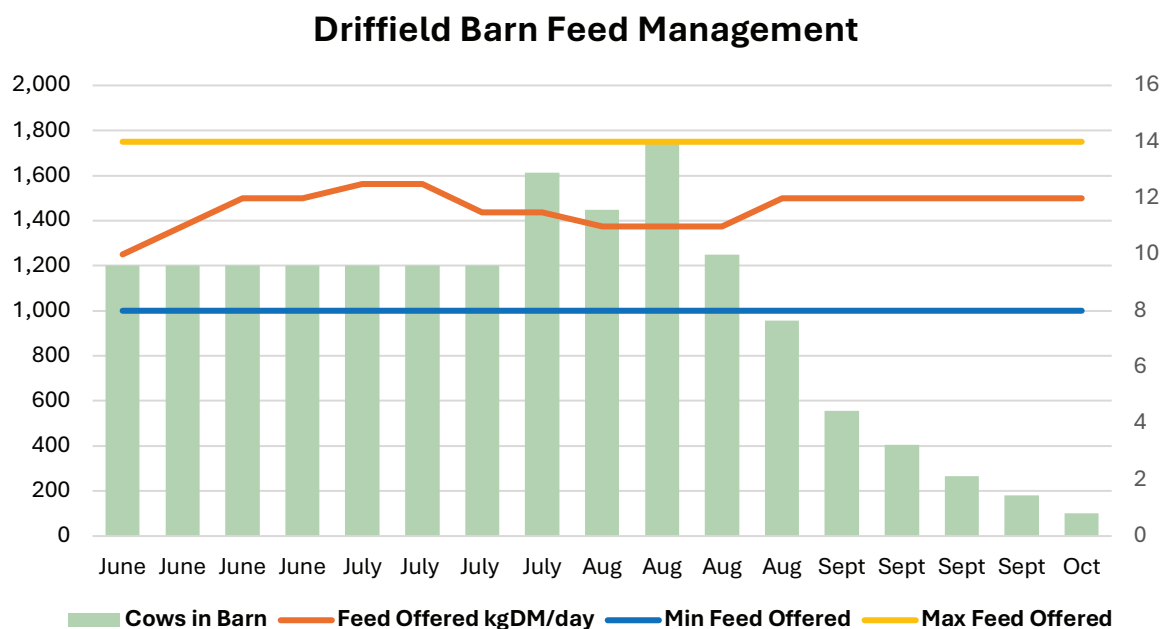
Approximately 500 late-calving cows are wintered off-farm at a runoff on a swede and bale diet (around 7 kg DM swedes : 7 kg DM supplement). These cows return home in September and transition through the barn as early-calving cows finish calving.

High dry matter silage is critical to protecting bedding integrity. Silage is harvested at 50–70% DM, avoiding wet material that can damage bark beds. Approximately 4,000 m³ of bark chip is added each year to maintain cow comfort and bedding performance.

Young Stock Management

- All young stock are grazed off-farm from weaning until first calving. 500 calves reared a year, increased to 600 24/25 season. Heifers return home as R2s on 1 May to the runoff and are wintered on straight pasture.
- In late July, R2s move onto the dairy platform and into the barn to calve.

Figure 17: Driffield Farming Winter Feed Management



Chris works out tDM required from cuts off 180 ha to meet barn requirements – daily charts cows in, feed required and total needed for that day – 1800tDM silage for wintering MAC

BCS Management at Winter

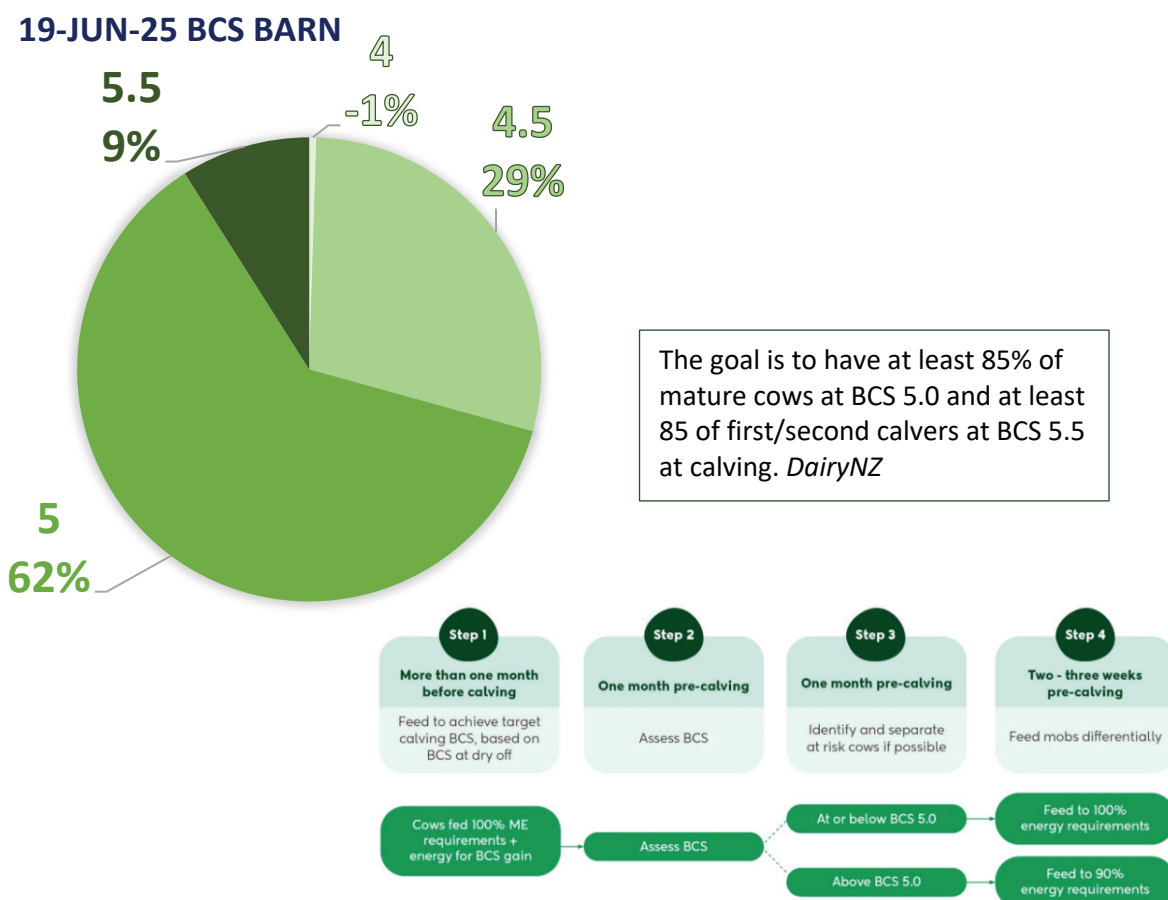
Condition gain targeted over a 6-week window

- Cows typically put on condition efficiently inside the barns while being fed 8-14kgDM/day.
- More cost-effective than feeding 15+ kgDM/day on fodder beet or wet paddocks to achieve the same gain.

BCS monitored closely during wintering

- Managers walk mobs regularly and re-sort cows to ensure the right animals get priority feeding.
- Prevents lighter cows from being “lost” within big groups, especially once-a-day cows.
- BCS to protect over condition cows so they can be fed less

Figure 18: Driffield Farming Jun25 BCS of mature cows



Calving Management

All cows calve in the barns. The barns have total capacity for 1,200 MA cows, with two additional spare bays that can accommodate around 500 heifers, which return in late July. No cows access the dairy platform until they have calved, protecting pasture and soil structure through winter and early spring.

Heifers and mixed-age cows are managed in separate calving mobs, with dedicated, clean bays for heifers. This supports earlier calving (around 10 days) and faster recovery heading into mating. Extra space has been built into the system by design, with one bay per barn kept free to allow flexibility for calving mobs as demand shifts.

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KEY MESSAGES & WRAP UP OF MORNING SESSIONS

Will Grayling, Pasture Summit



NOTES

SESSION 4: PROGRESS & EQUITY GROWTH PATHWAYS

Panel discussion and open Q&A exploring progression and equity growth pathways for young farmers wanting to progress in dairying.

Panelists:

- *Brad & Alexa Smith*
- *Matt & Georgie Nilsson*
- *Jon & Birgit Pemberton*



Facilitated by Lynaire Ryan,
Pasture Summit & Agribusiness Education





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FEEDBACK SHEET

Southland Autumn Event 2026

1) Overall the value I got out of today's event was...

Low	1	2	3	4	5	High
-----	---	---	---	---	---	------

2) I attended the following sessions and got the following value from them.... (please tick only the sessions you attended)

Session	Presenters & Facilitators	Low				High
		1	2	3	4	5
Session 1: Financial Performance & People	Chris & Alana Brander (host farm) Facilitated by Veronica Oostveen, DairyNZ & Ron Pellow, DairyNZ					
Session 2: Pasture & Feed Management	Chris Brander & Driffield Farming team members, Jane Kay, DairyNZ Facilitated by Al Rayne, Pasture Summit					
Session 3: Cows & Winter Management	Chris Brander (host farmer) Facilitated by Veronica Oostveen, DairyNZ					
Session 4: Progression & Equity Growth Pathways	Panel discussion and open Q&A exploring progression and equity growth pathways. Facilitated by Lynaire Ryan, Pasture Summit					
Venue: Hamlyn Road farm venue						
Morning tea and refreshments						
LUNCH - kindly cooked by Fonterra and Farm Source						

3) The best part of the day was

.....

4) Something that could be improved is.....

.....

5) How did you hear about this event? (please tick)

Discussion Group / Consulting Officer	
Word of mouth	
CountryWide / Dairy Country Magazine	
Online	
Promotional Flyer in the mail	
Email from Pasture Summit	
Facebook/Instagram	
X / Twitter	
Rural Professional	
Other (please specify)	

6) Please tick a box that relates to you:

Farm Owner	
Herd Owning Sharemilker	
Lower Order Sharemilker/Contract Milker	
Farm Manager	
Farm Employee	
Rural Professional	
Other (please specify)	

FEEDBACK SHEET

Southland Autumn Event 2026

Please take time to complete the feedback sheet on the overside.

Please deposit your completed forms in the collection box as you leave the farm.

You will also be emailed an online link after the event if you prefer to complete your evaluation electronically.

THANK YOU FOR PROVIDING YOUR FEEDBACK



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