



Gippsland Farmer Forums

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Why move away from ryegrass ?

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Sorting fact from fiction

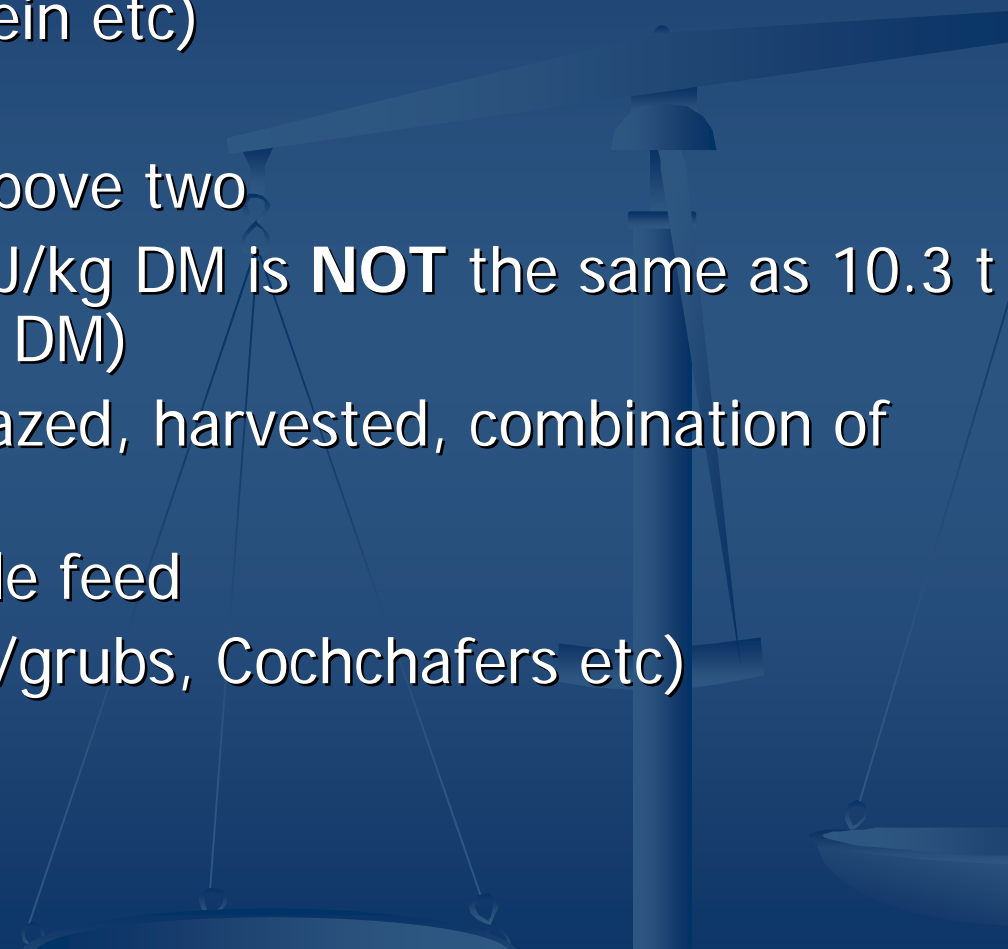
Yields (The Australian Diaryfarmer March/April 2009)

- Dryland ryegrass 13.3 t DM/ha
- Irrigated Lucerne 15 – 20 t DM/ha
- Cereal silage (12 – 18 t DM/ha 8.5 to 9.2 MJ)
- Brassica 9 t DM/ha
- Gippsland Average pasture consumptions = 8.3 tDM/ha (range 5.1 – 14.6 t DM/ha) (Source: 07/08 Dairy Industry Farm Monitor Project)

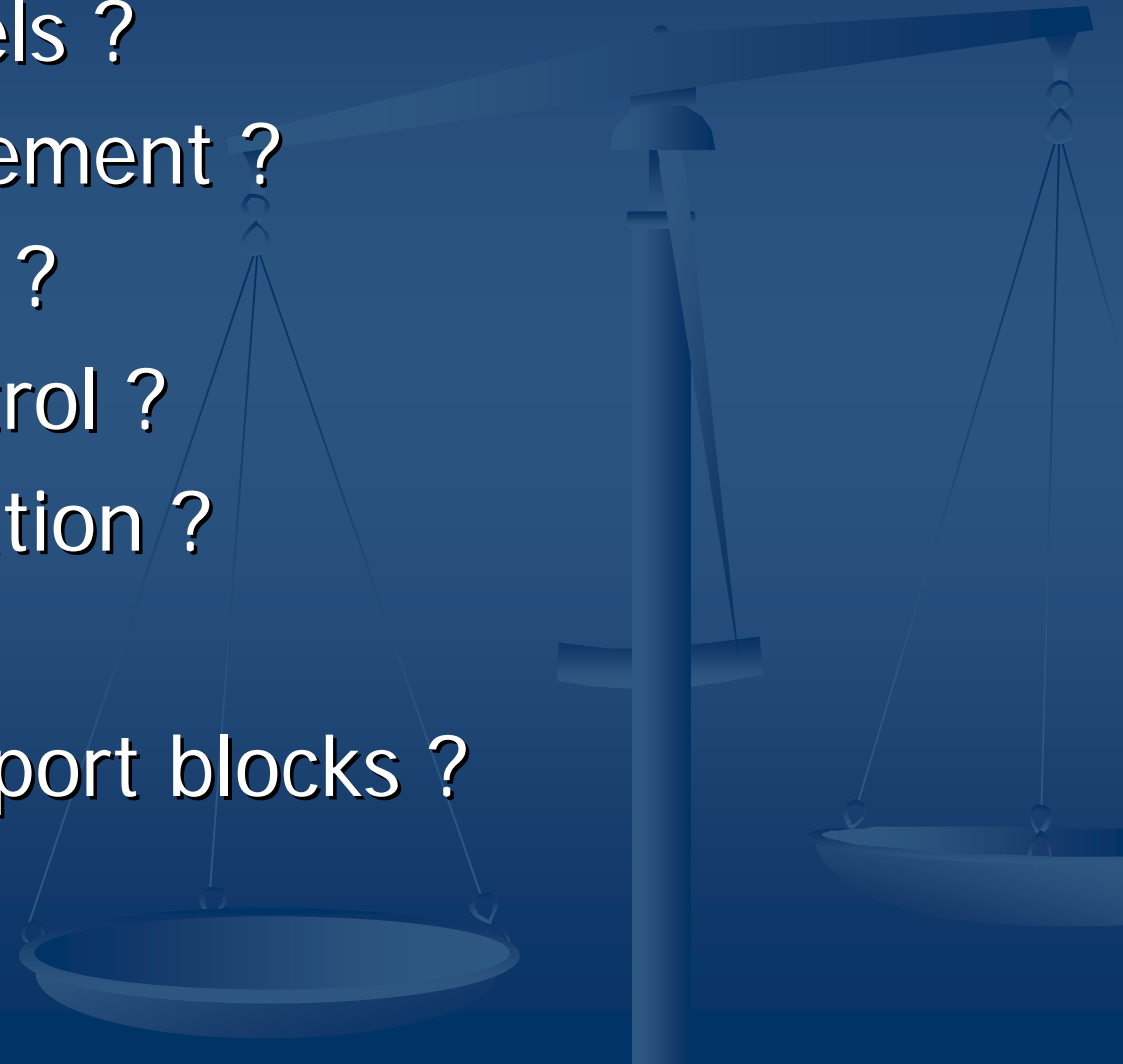
Quotes

- “For every hectare sown, X will potentially deliver you up to \$331/ha more Gross Margin compared to other varieties trialed”
- “How much is your current ryegrass costing you in lost profitability?”
 - More like how much is your current MANAGEMENT costing you in lost profitability?
- “10: 1 return, more protein, more butterfat and more milk” With X vitamin supplement
- What’s fact and what’s fiction?

What are we looking for in a home grown feed?

- Quality (Energy, Protein etc)
 - Yield (t DM/ha)
 - Combination of the above two
(14 t DM/ha @ 8.5 MJ/kg DM is **NOT** the same as 10.3 t DM/ha @ 11.5 MJ/kg DM)
 - Versatility (can be grazed, harvested, combination of both)
 - Timing of the available feed
 - Pest resistant (moths/grubs, Cochchafers etc)
 - Persistence
 - Ease of management
 - Known agronomy
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Identify the limiting factors to your pasture & crop production

- Soil fertility levels ?
 - Grazing management ?
 - Pasture species ?
 - Weed/Pest control ?
 - Ground preparation ?
 - Timing ?
 - Best use of support blocks ?
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So what are the yields and costs?

	Total Yield (tDM/ha)			Feed Test		Cost	
	Grazed	Silage	Total	Grazed	Silage	\$/t DM	c/MJ
Annual Ryegrass	4.2	3.5	7.7	12 ME 23 CP	11 ME 15.7 CP	\$165	1.4
Oats	1.4	5.3	7.1	12.4 ME 28.1 CP	10.2 ME 11.2 CP	\$148	1.2
Lucerne	2.7	1.7	4.4	-	10.4 ME 16.5 CP	\$93	0.84
Triticale	0	8.8	8.8	N/A	9.8 ME 9.7 CP	\$140	3.15
Sorghum	5.7	0	5.7	9.0 ME 8.3 CP	N/A	\$71	0.79
Oat/ARG	2.7	2.6	5.3	11.6 ME 22.6 CP	-	-	-

Notes

- Information from last slide from 3030 Project, Yanakie Partner Farm 2007/08
- Sorghum direct drilled following removal of oat silage (low cost with no spraying, fertiliser etc)
- Sorghum yield varied from 2.1 to 11.8 t DM/ha, average of 4 cuts at 5.7 t DM/ha

Summary

- Don't believe the hype
- Pastures and crops (yield and quality) need to be maximised, on and off the milking area
- Silver bullets and magic potions don't exist
- Stick to what you know best, this is not the time to bring too much risk into your business
- Improve grazing and crop management first (Grazing Pasture for Profit, Soils and Fertiliser course, discussion groups etc)
- Man Power, Horse Power and **COW POWER**
- Get reliable, accurate and sound agronomic information