



CENTRAL REGIONS ADVANCE PARTY

Fodder Beet and Velvet Stags - Laird Farming
Partnership

Introduction

- Farm situated just south of Wanganui. Good climate but can be summer dry and winter wet.
- Mixed cattle sheep and deer
- Maximise production while minimising soil damage - Soil preservation is a high priority.
- The farm grows good, reliable crops of fodder beet up to 30T +/-ha
- Several varieties are grown on farm:
 - ~Lifting: Sale or feed pads for cattle
 - ~Grazing: In-situ.



Introduction cont.

- Velvet as high value enterprise
- Velvet stags on a separate block
- Last 3 years building up herd with good genetics

Stag block “Netherdale” = 101.6ha			
MA	243	3	729
R3	16	3	48
R2	43	2	86
R1	175	1.5	262
Total	477		1125
			11 SU/ha

Aims

- Determine whether fodder beet is a good fit for the velvet operation

Materials and Methods

- Trial started in 2015, but flooding took out fences.
- 2 observations = grazing in situ and lifted.

Fodder Beet in-situ

- 179 MA stags + 43 R2 stags = 222head
- 5.2ha of fodder beet, 25T DM = 130T
- 12.1ha run-off gully paddock, fairly rank poor quality pasture, no other supplements
- Stocking rate ~ 50SU/ha (12-13 stags/ha)
- Mid June to Mid August (60days)



Fodder Beet in-situ

- Stags ate 3/4 crop in 60 days
- Daily allowance = 7.3kg/hd/day
- Daily requirement = 3.5kg/hd/day
- Wastage = 40-50%
- Cost 10c/kgDM = \$43.80/hd wintering cost.
- Velvet weight increase confounded by new genetics coming into herd.



Fodder Beet in-situ

- Returns
 - ~ Saved pasture elsewhere on the block, good early spring feed
 - ~ No additional supplements (large saving)
 - ~ Less labour, no damage from tractor
 - ~ Pugging did occur on cropped area, but saved rest of the block.
- LEARNING: Stags didn't respect electric fence which may have contributed to wastage.

Fodder beet -lifted

- 4ha, lifted in April, 20T/ha. 1/2 sold, rest to stags
- 179MA, 16R3 and 43 R2 = 238 head
- Total offered = 40T
- Eaten in 6 weeks = 4kg/hd/day
- Requirements including weight gain=4-5kg/hd/day
- @ 10c/kgDM = \$16.80/hd over 6 weeks

Lifted cont.

- *Stags settled well after the roar and were in very good condition going into winter.*
- Bulk lifted FB could be spread out and offered *ad-lib* with grass. Stags self regulated intake. Very little wastage. Ability to put in autumn sowing of grass.

Conclusions

- Fodder beet fits well with this system
- Reliable crop, palatable, versatile.
- Wastage needs to be reduced.

