

Managing Feed base in Pasture-Based Systems

Kevin & Brodie Game
Blackjack Holsteins
Bega NSW

Who are we?

- ▶ Kevin and Brodie Game
- ▶ Young family of 3 soon to be 4
- ▶ Kevin began dairying at a young age and completed his dairy apprenticeship in the Bega valley before progressing through management roles on various farms
- ▶ Brodie was introduced to dairy after striking an interest in cattle and agriculture through showing and judging cattle



Where it all began...

- ▶ Purchased 2 Holsteins cows in 2010
- ▶ Single Cow milker
- ▶ Reared bull calves purchased direct off farm and through sale yards
- ▶ Found a market for weaned steers
- ▶ Increased herd to 5
- ▶ Searched for opportunities
- ▶ Worked full time and saved weaner sale profits



Bega Adventure

- ▶ November 2012 moved to Bega to a share farm. Bought our 5 cows and purchased additional cows with savings.
- ▶ Milked ave 220 cows on 300 acres
- ▶ 2013 hit with Theileria & low milk price
- ▶ Get out all together or become leases
- ▶ Continued here until 2016



Where are we now?

- ▶ Moved to new farm in 2016
- ▶ Slowly increased leased area to 1100acres
- ▶ Milking average of 350 cows calving Feb to Nov
- ▶ Employ 2 full time staff



What are we doing?

- ▶ Building asset base whilst paying down debts
- ▶ Focusing on MOFC
- ▶ Working towards 85% of feed being home grown
- ▶ Aiming to maximise opportunities without becoming over-exposed to risk.



How are we achieving it?

► Focusing on MOFC

-For so long we have been very production focused and lost sight of the cost of achieving that production. So whilst it is taking a lot of work we are refocusing to analyse the production we are achieving and how much it is costing to achieve it and focusing on that bottom line.

Game Diet coster and MOF calculator Diet 1
Diet coster

Ingredient	kg fed/cow/day	% DM	Cost/tonne	cost/cow/day
Corn	3	92%	\$495	\$1.49
18% Pellet	3	92%	\$600	\$1.80
Silage Home-grown grass	12	50%	\$120	\$1.44
	8.5 kg DM		120	\$1.02
total feed costs (Inc. Pasture)				\$5.74
DM target/head/day	20 kg DM			
Number of cows	311			
Total production/day	7464 litres			
Current production per cow	24 litres			
Current c/L	\$0.60			
Current income/cow/day	\$14.40			
kg concentrate/head/day	6.00			
Cost concentrate/head/day	\$3.29			
Cost concentrate/tonne	\$547.50			
Current MOF/head*	\$8.66			
Current MOF/farm/day*	\$2,692.45			
Cow breakeven litreage*	9.6 litres			
*includes pasture costs				
(please note all prices are exclusive of GST)				

Game Diet coster and MOF calculator Diet 2
Diet coster

Ingredient	kg fed/cow/day	% DM	Cost/tonne	cost/cow/day
Corn	3	92%	\$495	\$1.49
DDG	3	92%	\$473	\$1.42
Silage Home-grown grass	12	50%	\$120	\$1.44
	8.5 kg DM		120	\$1.02
total feed costs (Inc. Pasture)				\$5.36
DM target/head/day	20 kg DM			
Number of cows	311			
Total production/day	6842 litres			
Current production per cow	22 litres			
Current c/L	\$0.59			
Current income/cow/day	\$12.98			
kg concentrate/head/day	6.00			
Cost concentrate/head/day	\$2.90			
Cost concentrate/tonne	\$484.00			
Current MOF/head*	\$7.62			
Current MOF/farm/day*	\$2,369.32			
Cow breakeven litreage*	9.1 litres			
*includes pasture costs				
(please note all prices are exclusive of GST)				

How are we achieving it?

► Improving under utilised land

-Additional leased country was very under utilised, covered in love grass and had minimal fertiliser history, so we have progressively cleaned this land up and sown it, In order to where possible grow our milking platform and the other areas be used for fodder conservation and young stock.





How are we achieving it?

- Use grain as opportunistic tool

-When grain is at the right price it can be used as a tool effectively to grasp an opportunity of increased production but when the grain price becomes too high i.e. 1kg of grain is worth more than 1L of milk the profit becomes very marginal and any added production gains can be lost.



How are we achieving it?

- ▶ Conserve feed ourselves to maximise quality
 - When we first started farming we were told that it was dead money to have our own machinery sitting in a shed for 9 months of the year outside of 'silage season' and it was just cheaper to pay a contractor.
 - the time at which the contractor can get the farm and the quantity they required are very different to the time and amount we need to obtain optimal quality in our conserved feed in turn costing us more money
 - Volatility of Bega Valley climate emphasised for us the importance of conserved fodder and the quality of such fodder
 - Progressively purchased our own equipment
 - Paying off assets whilst having the opportunity to conserve feed when it was available and at peak quality



How are we achieving it?

- ▶ Breeding for a more pasture based animal
 - Medium framed
 - Structurally correct
 - Good production
 - Health traits
 - Tools we use include- Herd Recording, bull proofs, classification, visual analysis, record keeping and about to begin genomic testing



How are we achieving it?

- ▶ Business Planning & Financial Analysis
 - Budgets!
 - Forward planning
 - Discussions around decisions being made
 - Goal setting
 - Looking after and realising potential of quality staff
 - Spending money wisely (trying to)

Looking Forward

- ▶ Thinking outside the box
 - Green Chop
 - Home-grown & harvested cereal seed
 - Mixing and sourcing own fertilisers and seed
 - Not being afraid to trade in milk stock in accordance with changing seasons and prices



Why are we doing it?

- ▶ We love it.
- ▶ Work together
- ▶ Great upbringing for kids
- ▶ Challenge ourselves
- ▶ Flexibility
- ▶ Wealth creation



Our Philosophies

Love what you do and you never work a day in your life

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There is no such thing as Luck but only management and opportunity

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Perspective is key