Gippsdairy is offering free taking stock sessions to dairy farmers in Gippsland.  This is a session with a consultant on your own farm for the review and analysis of your current situation and give you an action plan.  Sessions are usually up to 4 hours with follow up.  The taking stock program is a good tool to look at your current situation.  If you are interested please contact Gippsdairy and they will give you more information.

Spring Fertiliser

With higher spring pasture growth rates the main 2 nutrients required are Nitrogen and Potassium.  Be careful applying big hits of potassium in spring as the plant will take up more than it requires.  If you want to put out capital Potassium to build soil fertility levels consider doing this after silage and hay has ben cut or in the autumn.  If you follow a rule of thumb of 1. to 1.5 kg of N per day in spring it will give you a pretty good indication as how much you require eg 30 day grazing round will be 30 to 45kg of N (65 to 100kg urea) depending on pasture requirements.  A NPKS blend may be appropriate if you have lower soil fertility.

Summer Crops

With the way the hay and grain market is shaping up with the drought in the north summer crops may be a good option for clients to fill feed gaps.

I have been recommending for some clients to pant 3 brassica paddocks at once around mid October.

One Paddock to a forage rape - 6 to 8 weeks Maturity

One Paddock to a forage rape - 10 to 12 weeks Maturity

One Paddock to turnip - 12 to 13 weeks Maturity

With this program we are basically targeting for the first crop to be available for Grazing just before Christmas.  This would mean you can graze the 2 forage rape paddocks first, then the turnip and then hopefully back to the regrowth from the forage rapes.  If you can irrigate the forage rape paddocks with effluent that would be worthwhile.

If you are looking to plant turnips I recommend Barkant or Mamoth Purple top.  With Turnips sowing rate is critical, don't go to high as you will not have enough space between plants for the bulb to develop to its true potential. Barkant at a max 2kg/ha and MPT at 1.5kg/ha.

In terms of chemical on the brassicas apply Forage Max (brassica only, not mixed crops) for the weeds, Success Neo for the bugs and uptake oil to maximize efficiency.  While these chemicals may seen expensive to buy when you work out the cost per tonne of Dry matter they equate to $10 per tonne.  Not a lot when they have the ability to increase your yield significantly by controlling pests and competing weeds.

I am hearing millet may be short supply and price increased but considering oaten hay will be over $300t I have recommended for some clients to put in a crop of millet specifically for young stock. Sorghums may be another option here but I would want to use a low or nil prussic acid variety.

Fert wise sowing with straight DAP will be a must this year to get the crop up and going and healthy as quickly as possible.  If the crop has emerged well and the season is looking like it will continue an application of a NPKS blend at about 4 weeks post emergence would be a good investment.

Other crops like chicory will have a place.  If people are chasing a mix the headstart blends may fit the bill for someone wanting a 'bit of mix'.

We have a bit of a window coming up for Spring sowing but by late September it is getting too late.  If someone wants to spring sow a paddock for a silage/hay crop oats or a forage barley is your best option for bulk feed.  If they are wanting to thicken up a pugged paddock look to an Italian rye as a good option.

Feel free to forward this on to others if you think it may be of benefit to them.

If you have any questions please feel free to give me a call.

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Regards

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