Wintering in Canterbury

A survey of practices in 2015

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DairyNZ

Context

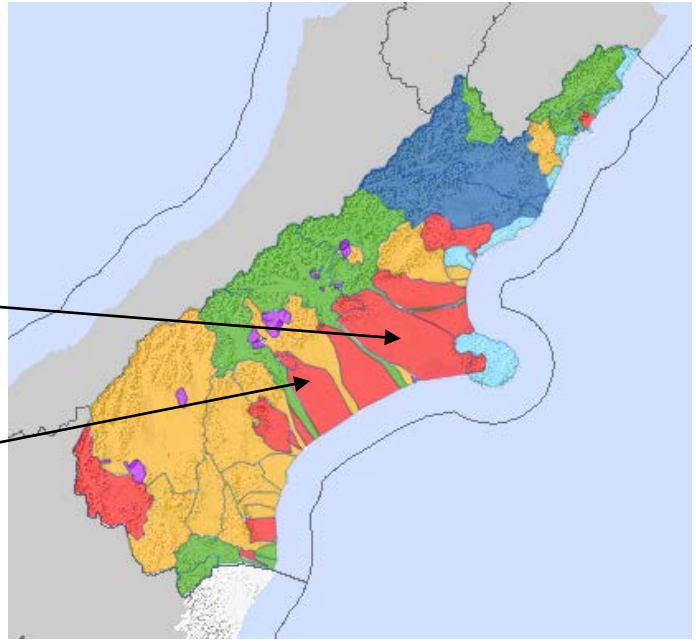
- Restore BCS
- Low pasture growth rates in winter
- Use forage crop and conserved feed
  - E.g. kale, fodder beet, silage, straw
- Risk of nutrient loss to the environment
  - Stocking density
  - Rainfall
  - Stony soils in Canterbury

Regulation

Significant reduction required (red zone)

- Selwyn
  - Dairy 30%
  - Dairy support 22%
- Hinds
  - Dairy 36%

Management zones



Wintering – forage crops

- Planted late spring (Oct/Nov)
- Grazed winter (Jun/Jul)
- Re-sown to pasture or next crop late spring (Oct/Nov)

- Cows can leave the milking platform
  - Support block (managed by dairy farmer)
  - Grazier (contract farmer)

Grazing winter crops

Phone survey

Purpose: quantify prevalence of wintering practices

- 1208 dairy farms in Canterbury
- 779 contacts representing 869 farms
- Contact's address was in Canterbury
- 238 responses received (20%)
- Responses distributed evenly across region
  - Except small zones Kaikoura and Christchurch

Results – location

Wintering site	Percentage of wintering
On milking platform	6%
Off-paddock	1%
Off-milking platform	93%
Support block	68%
Grazier	25%

Most cows wintered off milking platform

High use of support blocks

Catch crops grown on 21% of support blocks

Arable farmer most common grazier

Results - zone

Description		Percentage of cow.weeks
Origin	Within zone	76%
	Outside zone	24%
Destination	Remain on milking platform	6%
	Travel but remain in zone	70%
	Travel to another zone	24%

- One quarter of cows travel to another zone
- Some zones net exporters

Results – feed type

Crop	Percent of count
Kale	46%
Fodder beet	40%
Cereal	2%
Swedes	2%
Other	9%
Supplement	
Straw	37%
Pasture silage	31%
Hay	15%
Cereal silage	12%
Pasture	3%
Other	2%

- Kale most common crop type
- Fodder beet more common on the milking platform

Conclusions

- First set of quantitative data on wintering
  - Can be used to track practice change
- Reliance on grazed winter crops
  - Need options to reduce risk of N leaching
  - Fodder beet and kale management to reduce urinary N excretion
  - Catch crops to mop up urinary N