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A COMPARISON OF TWO WINTER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

FOR DRY DAIRY CATTLE

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Agricultural Science in Animal Science at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

Two management systems for dry dairy cows were studied during the winter of 1975 at No. 3 Dairy Unit, Massey University. The objective of the study was to help develop a system which may reduce the need for supplementation of pasture grown, and at the same time ensure that adequate feed supplies are available over the winter and early spring to meet animal requirements.

The parameters studied were pasture growth rates and recovery, pasture damage through pugging, feed consumption and live weight changes of cows, milk production for the first three months of lactation, and the grass 'cover' on the two farmlets.

In general, the results have shown that each system had its own advantages and disadvantages and these are discussed in the text. It is, however, recommended that while such advantages and disadvantages exist, a grazing system which incorporates the two systems warrants experimentation. In addition, better methods of measuring pasture growth rates and grass 'covers' deserve further investigation.

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