

Learning the 'LessN'

Donaghys LessN® monthly update

FEBRUARY 2011

Happy New Year everybody, and welcome to the first edition of *Learning the LessN* for 2011. I hope you all had a good Christmas and you were able to get some time off over the Christmas – New Year period.

Once again the weather has influenced the fortunes of farmers, but this time for the better! The deluge of rain in the North Island in January was a life saver for the region and follows a period of very dry weather before Christmas. Hopefully this will now ensure the northern regions get a prosperous late summer and autumn, following 2-3 years of very tough conditions during this time.

Speaking of rain, our thoughts go out to all of the Australian people caught up in the horrific floods in Queensland, Northern NSW and Victoria. This recent event highlights how fickle the weather can be and how much it determines our fate, particularly in farming. Less than two years ago, it was record heat waves and bush fires causing havoc in Australia, now it is floods. Surely climate change can't be blamed for both?

The late summer/early autumn period also heralds a time when Facial Eczema and Rust start showing up on farms again. In the North Island, Facial Eczema is a major threat to animal health and farm production, while Rust can be a nationwide problem that reduces quality and palatability of pastures. This month's *Learning the LessN* highlights the products that Donaghys have in their product range to combat these diseases – with the bonus being they are all compatible with Donaghys LessN®!

All the best for the month (and year) ahead.
Nigel Johnston,
Business Manager Biotechnology, Donaghys.



Donaghys LessN® - Farmer of the month



Jason and Tracy Bethune
Ohangai, South Taranaki
190ha, 525 Cows

"We have been using LessN for the entire season with outstanding results. LessN has enabled us to

apply nitrogen in the summer which we have previously been unable to do. The results have kept a steady growth pattern at a time when pastures are normally under pressure. We have completed a number of rounds with the LessN system and all of these paddocks stand out from the part of the farm that has only had spread Urea applied. We have also been pleased with the palatability of the LessN applied paddocks.

Clover growth has been outstanding and far superior to previous years when Urea was spread. We applied LessN to our silage paddocks after baling and the response was

amazing. There was a very strong clover presence and the clover is very robust with big leaves.

At certain times we have also added Donaghys 2,4-D Amine with our LessN with great results. This has meant we have been able to clean up our weeds as well, which has been a big cost saver as we have not had to cover the paddocks twice.

We also applied LessN to our turnip crops with great results. It was like rocket fuel - the best turnips we have ever grown. We also saved time and money by adding insecticides at the same time".



Research Update - LessN – Mycotak Compatibility Trial

With February being a critical time for Facial Eczema outbreaks, it is timely that we review previous research conducted by Donaghys that evaluated LessN’s compatibility with the Facial Eczema prevention product, Mycotak.

The first trial on Mycotak and LessN was conducted in the Waikato in February 2010 on a Te Awamutu dairy farm. The pasture grown by the LessN system was around 24 kg dry matter for each kg of nitrogen fertiliser applied. This is around double the normal expected nitrogen fertiliser response and highlights the significant benefits that LessN can provide to pasture growth. These results occurred with or without the addition of Mycotak, meaning that the addition of Mycotak to LessN has no detrimental effect on the effectiveness of LessN.

At the end of the trial moderate facial eczema spore counts were present in the control and LessN system only treatments, but

where the Mycotak was applied with or without LessN, no spores were evident in the samples analysed. This successfully showed that the incorporation of LessN with Mycotak also has no negative effect on the efficacy of Mycotak.

Table 1: Pasture dry matter grown (kg/ha) and Facial Eczema spore count after treatment application

	Day 0	Day 27	Total DM grown	Dm grown / day	Facial Eczema Spore Count
Control	1298a	3812	2514a	93	25000
U40LN	1387a	4341	2955b	109	30000
U40LN+MT	1366a	4341	2975b	110	0
MT	1385a	3995	2610ab	97	0
F Value prob	0.328	0.078	0.098		
LSD (p<0.05)	114	476	448		
CV	6.1	8.4	12		

U40LN = 40 kg dissolved urea plus 3 L of LessN per hectare
MT = Mycotak® and Mycowet Surfactant

Donaghys LessN® - News Update Prevention better than cure when it come to Facial Eczema



Most farmers in the North Island will know the devastating affects that Facial Eczema can cause. This common disease is caused by the presence of the fungal spore *Pithomyces*

chartarum in pasture between January and May and can significantly affect animal production.

Six weeks protection

While there are a number of solutions to treating the disease, the most effective solution is to eliminate the cause of Facial Eczema first, before the problem escalates. Donaghys Mycotak® is a pasture fungicide which is a proven solution to preventing facial eczema. Spraying Donaghys Mycotak® onto your

pasture will give you up to six weeks protection from Facial Eczema, meaning you can safely graze pastures without the risk of animals ingesting the toxic spores. A repeat application, six weeks after the first, will mean that a farm will be almost totally protected from Facial Eczema for the whole eczema season.

Don't wait until spore counts are high

The optimum time to apply Mycotak® is when Facial Eczema spore levels are at low levels rather than waiting until they are high. If farmers wait until they are high before taking action, it is likely that the stock will have already ingested large amounts of the fungal spores meaning the ill effects of Facial Eczema could still be seen. Early applications of Mycotak® (even before spore levels get high) will mean that pasture is already protected and even if conditions develop which can cause an escalation of spores (warm temperatures with adequate moisture) the pasture will still be protected for up to six weeks.



Mycotak and Myco-RF's compatibility with Donaghys LessN® make them a must to combine in tanks mixes to control Facial Eczema and Rust.

Compatible with Donaghys LessN® to reduce application costs and time

A major advantage of Donaghys Mycotak® is it can be tank mixed with Donaghys LessN® and sprayed on to pasture together. This is a huge advantage to farmers already using LessN, as no separate application is needed to also protect pastures and stock from Facial Eczema. Other pasture products like herbicides and insecticides for controlling weeds and insects, can



also be tank mixed with Mycotak® and Donaghys LessN®, again eliminating the need for separate applications.

Another product that is also compatible with Mycotak®, pesticides, and LessN is Donaghys Myco-RF®. Myco-RF® is a pasture fungicide which controls Rust and Fusarium disease in pasture, resulting in clean, healthy and palatable pasture that contributes to greater pasture and animal production.

Addition of Mycowet® increases rainfastness and reduces water rates.

Both Mycotak® and Myco-RF® should be applied in combination with Donaghys Mycowet®, an Organosilicone Super-spreader which aids in the spreading and foliage deposition of these fungicides. Mycowet® also reduces rainfastness to three hours, and enables water rates for application to be reduced to 50 litres per hectare (aerial application) or 100 litres

per hectare (ground application).

Donaghys Mycotak® provides farmers the opportunity to protect their farms from Facial Eczema before the disease escalates to devastating levels. By taking preventative action now, farmers can be reassured that their stock can safely graze pastures for up to six weeks without the chance of Facial Eczema causing health issues to their stock.

Donaghys LessN® - Tip of the month

Autumn Fertiliser applications

With autumn around the corner, now is a good time to soil test your farm to ensure correct autumn fertiliser applications are made. Like all nitrogen fertiliser based systems, the Donaghys LessN System® requires other key soil nutrients to be at optimum levels for Donaghys LessN® and dissolved urea to work effectively.

The key minerals that need to be at optimum levels are Phosphorous, Potassium and Sulphur. These should be at the following levels to sustain near-maximum pasture production:

PHOSPHOROUS

Soil Type	Target Olsen P
Ash	20-30
Sedimentary	20-30
Pumice	35-45
Peat	25-45

POTASSIUM

Soil Type	Target soil test K
Ash	7-10
Sedimentary	7-10
Pumice	5-8
Peat	5-7



SULPHUR

Soil Type	Organic S	Sulphate S
Ash	15-20	10-12
Sedimentary	15-20	10-12
Pumice	15-20	10-12

Donaghys Territory Manager of the Month

60 Seconds with Kim Sharpe

Territory you cover for Donaghys? South Taranaki.

How long have you worked for Donaghys? 7 weeks.

Favourite part of the job? Meeting new people within the region and building new relationships. Hearing great stories from my clients who love LessN and how it is improving their farming business. Also having products like LessN which can grow the bottom line of their business.

Interests outside of work? Spending time with my family and friends, as my husband would say socialising! Netball, walking/running.

Greatest achievement outside of work? Becoming 50/50 and then working towards farm ownership. We have reached a huge goal and now own a 400 cow farm. Never say never, set your goals and you will find a way to achieve them.

Dream job? Being part of the rural industry as I am now and knowing that the advice and input I give to my client grows their business to its full potential. I honestly believe in the direction Donaghys is taking, this could just be my dream job and I'm not just saying that. This is a great company and I have some wonderful people within my area, what more could I ask for.

If you could change one thing about the New Zealand agricultural industry what would it be? That the payout would remain stable for at least three years. That we have normal weather patterns, lots more rain in the summer to up milk solids and bank balance.



Donaghys LessN[®] - News Update

New 25,000L Mixing Stations to aid large farms

Due to a high demand from mainly large South Island LessN users, Donaghys has decided to bring to the market a 25,000L mixing station. Up to now, 5,000L mixing stations have been the only size available, and while these have proven successful with smaller to medium size farms, they have not always been suitable for larger farms.

The large 25,000L mixing station now means a farmer can mix up 125ha worth of dissolved urea solution in one go, reducing the time spent making up smaller volumes in the smaller mixing stations. With the average South Island dairy farm being 194ha in size, the 25,000L mixing station will enable the majority of the farm to be covered from just one mix.

Like the current 5,000L mixing stations, the 25,000L mixing station is offered free to the user with the purchase of a minimum qualifying amount of LessN. A pump, hoses and fittings are also supplied, enabling quicker and more convenient application of the Donaghys LessN System[®].

With the recent announcement of urea prices increasing by US\$100/tonne, and subsequent rise in New Zealand prices, the use of LessN has an immediate positive effect on a farms

bottom line. As the Donaghys LessN System[®] is based on farmers applying half rates of dissolved urea fertiliser per hectare (40kg) with the addition of LessN at 3L/ha, the cost saving just from the reduction in urea use is significant.

The uptake of Donaghys LessN[®] throughout the country in the past few seasons has been enormous and farmers are really seeing the benefits of following the Donaghys LessN System[®]. Now with the larger 25,000L mixing stations available, the demand for Donaghys LessN[®] will only get stronger.



The new 25,000L mixing stations will enable quicker and more convenient application of Donaghys LessN[®].

Increase in urea price highlights the benefits of the Donaghys LessN System[®]

The recent lift in the urea price to over \$700/tonne has done little to ease farmer's financial constraints.

For farmers using Donaghys LessN[®] the increased urea price does not have the same affect as those spreading urea. In fact, switching to the Donaghys LessN System[®] will provide a significant savings to farmers, even with the urea price increase.

Under the Donaghys LessN System[®] only half the amount urea (40kg) is applied per hectare, compared to traditional spread systems using 80kg/ha. Reducing your urea bill in half has automatic financial benefits, but the advantages of using Donaghys LessN[®] doesn't stop there.

For the average New Zealand sized dairy farm (130ha) self-applying 200kgs N/ha/year, a switch to the Donaghys LessN

System[®] will save almost \$8,000 per year in costs associated with applying nitrogen (including the cost of Donaghys LessN[®]). On top of this, the average dry matter produced under the Donaghys LessN System[®] is 14% greater than traditional spread systems. The overall cost of growing extra dry matter with Donaghys LessN[®] is \$0.11/kgDM vs \$0.18/kgDM for spread urea - that's up to 29% less than spread urea!



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