



managed grazing for dairy profits

Durovec Dairy

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Introduction

Durovec Dairy has been located in St. Louis County, MN for 38 years. Bob and Patty farm with their two full-time and four part-time employees. Durovecs farm 630 acres, of which 500 are owned and the balance rented. They graze 300 of those acres.

During their early years, Bob was intrigued with the New Zealand style of doing dairy, which was based on forages and managed grazing. He felt it was a viable model for northern Minnesota with its cool summers and short growing season.

Herd and milking

The Durovecs milk 180 Holsteins twice a day in a 16-unit parabone pit parlor¹, which was built in 2002. The 1,400lb. Holsteins average 6 years old. They milk around 65 lbs. per day, with 3.35% protein and 4.00% butterfat.

¹ Ron Young and Barry Steevens. 2002. Chapter 11: Facilities Design. In Dairy Grazing Manual. University of Missouri Extension. <http://dairy.missouri.edu/buildings/facilitiesdesign.pdf>; accessed 9/13/2018.

When not being milked, approximately half the herd is in the freestall barn and the other half grazes or are loose housed. Freestall barn cows are fed 17 lbs. of grain per day in addition to baleage. The grazing group gets 15 lbs. of grain per day in addition to pasture. The grazing group is fed baleage during the winter. Heifers are on pasture until freshening, graze during summer months and bale graze during the winter to help renovate low-producing paddocks. Dry cows are fed primarily low potassium hay. Calving occurs year around. Cows that freshen in winter or the heat of summer go to the freestall barn. Cows freshening in spring or fall stay on pasture.

Pasture and land management

Average pasture rest period is around 28 days during the growing season. The herd is given a fresh paddock every 12 hours. Pastures are composed of primarily orchardgrass, quackgrass, Kentucky bluegrass, reed canary grass, red and white clover, alfalfa and birdsfoot trefoil. The Durovecs do not specifically manage to maintain legumes in the stand.

Around 72 acres of annuals are seeded each year, some for grazing and others for baleage. They use a blend of oats, Italian ryegrass and 'Winfred' hybrid turnip.

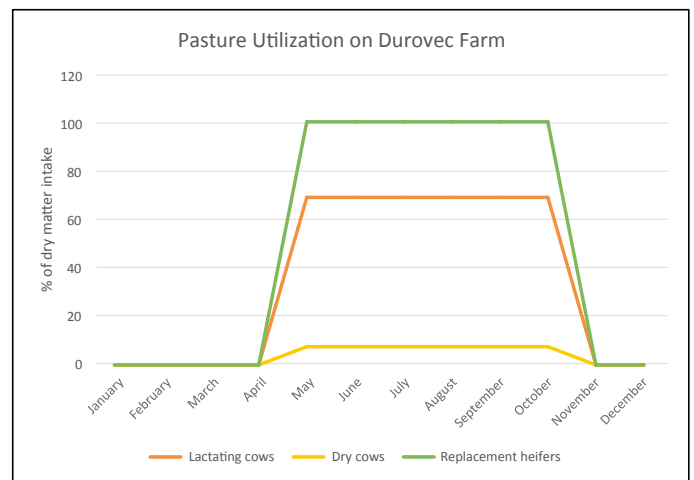
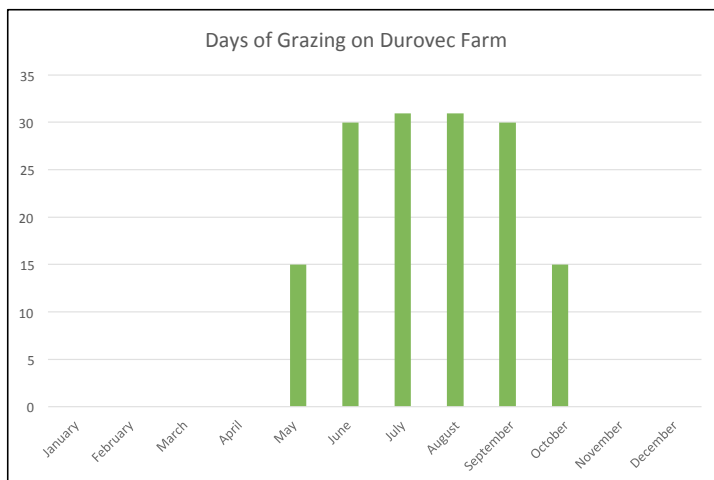
They have also drilled brown mid-rib (BMR) grazing corn into heavy winter use areas to take advantage of the high fertility. Durovecs renovate approximately 20% of their pasture each year by terminating the previous stand,

growing a crop of annuals, and then back to a perennial pasture mix.

Marketing and financial management

Milk from Durovec Dairy goes to Burnett Dairy in Alpha, WI. This is a conventional milk market.

| Monthly Grazing on the Durovec Farm | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|--|----------|---------------------|
| Month | Days of Grazing | % Dry Matter Intake (DMI) from Grazing | | |
| | | Lactating cows | Dry cows | Replacement heifers |
| January | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| February | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| March | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| April | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| May | 15 | 69 | 5 to 10 | 100 |
| June | 30 | 69 | 5 to 10 | 100 |
| July | 31 | 69 | 5 to 10 | 100 |
| August | 31 | 69 | 5 to 10 | 100 |
| September | 30 | 69 | 5 to 10 | 100 |
| October | 15 | 69 | 5 to 10 | 100 |
| November | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| December | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |



Testing Dairy Financial Risk through Grazing and Insurance. 2018. Midwest Perennial Forage Working Group, Green Lands Blue Waters. www.greenlandsbluewaters.net/dairy.html. Study conducted with funding from USDA-Risk Management Agency.

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