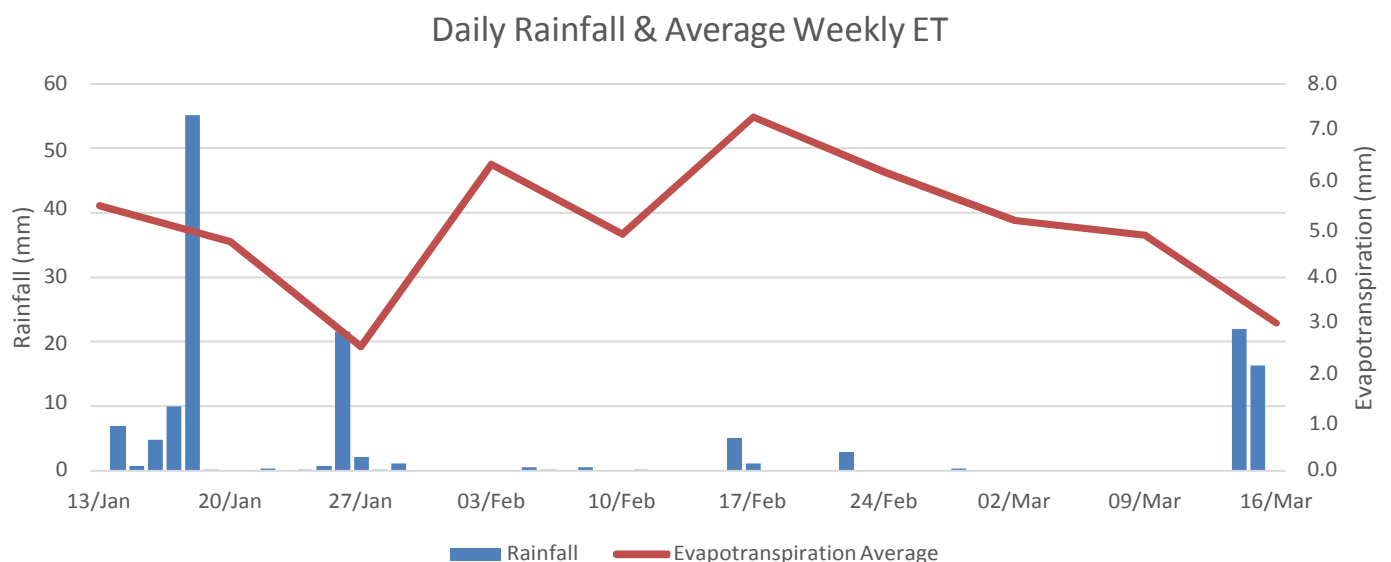
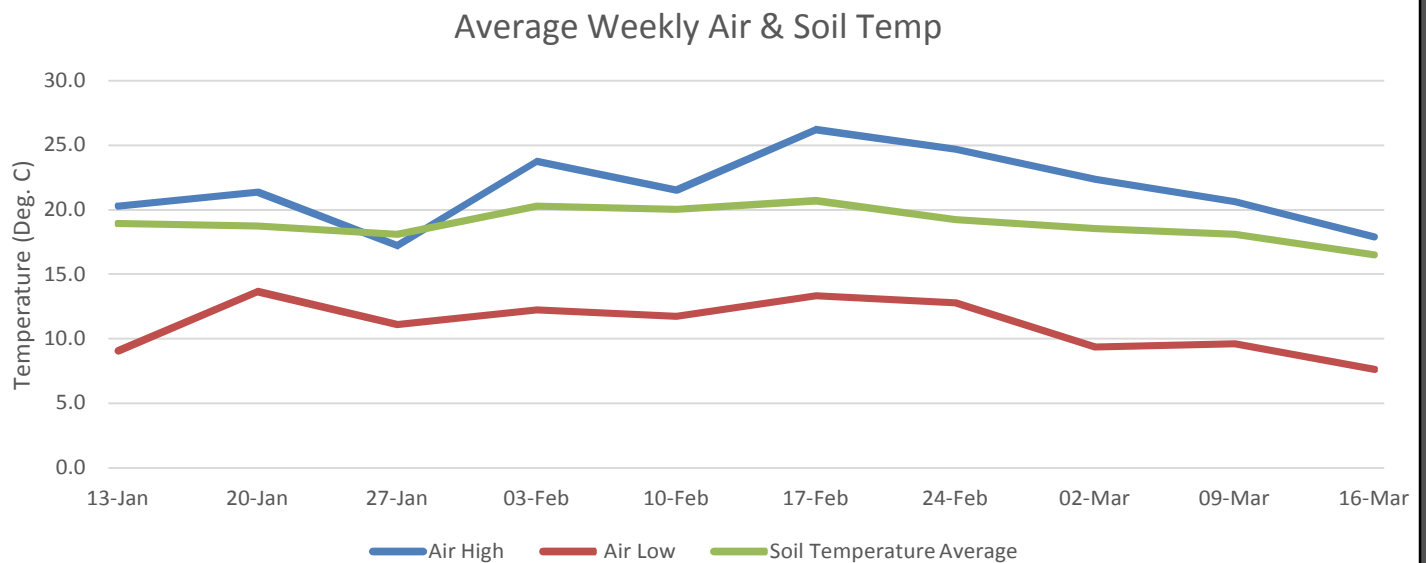
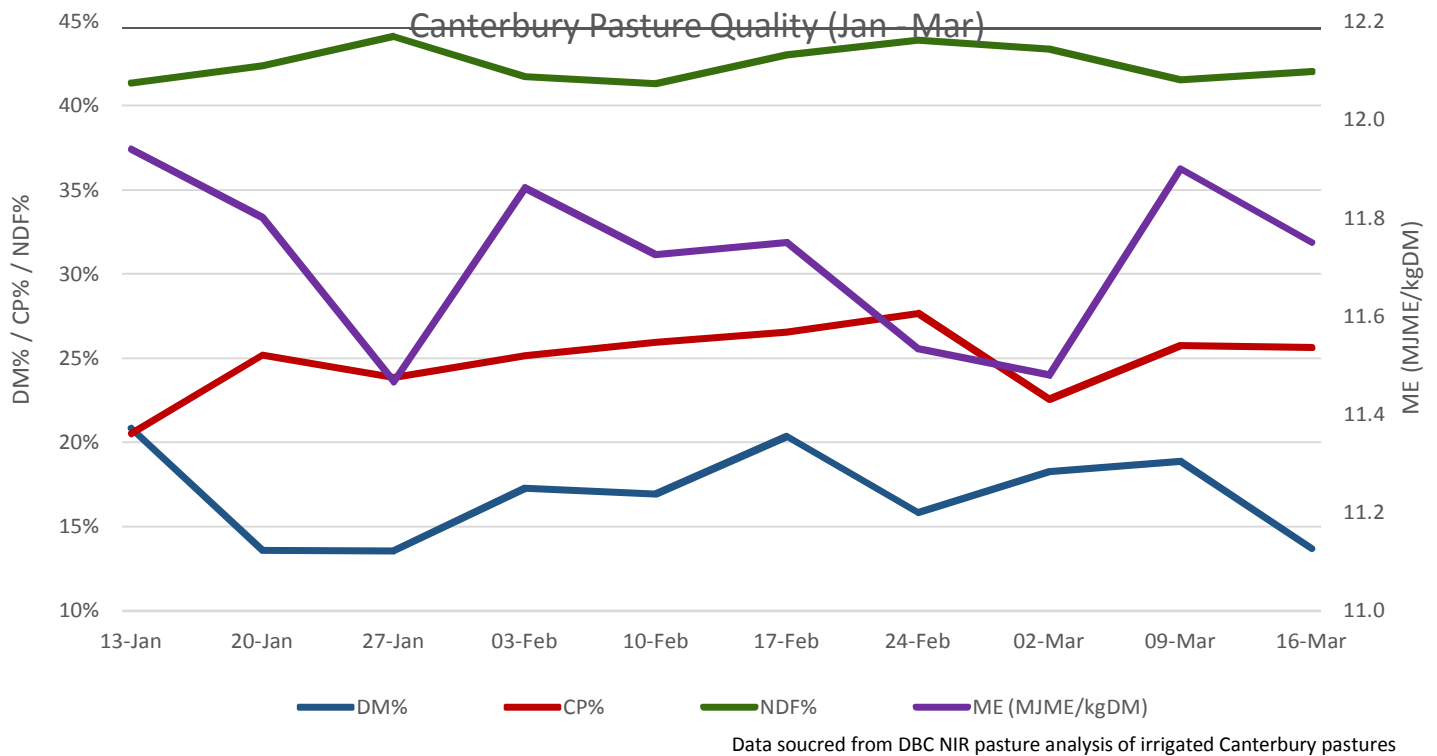


Monthly Pasture Report



Weather Data sourced from Hind Mayfield Irrigation Ltd - Lismore Weather station

Pasture Quality Trend (February 2016)

Dry Matter (DM) (%)

Pasture is back into its vegetative growth; however, growth rates last month were not great. The high evapotranspiration (ET) combined with high soil temperature (over 20°C) meant that the pasture could not get enough water as it started to go into self-preservation mode where production slowed dramatically. We had some welcome rain this week which the pasture will respond well to. However, it is looking like we will have a spell of drizzly, cloudy weather next week. This may produce a similar situation as we had in January with low DM%, low cow intake, high passage rate, and high non-protein nitrogen (NPN) increasing the milk ureas (MU). Keep an eye on manure and cow behaviour. Jumpy cows may be a result of a lack of Mg as high nitrate in the pasture can reduce Mg absorption. Coarse ag salt should be made available *ad lib.* to the cows where the sodium will help balance high N and K and help Mg, Ca and P absorption. With dropping DM%, ensure that cows are content, as the plate meter may be underestimating pasture cover.

Crude Protein (CP) (%)

Similar story to last time, we are back into a flush of vegetative pasture growth, with pastures having finished their reproductive phase. Protein is relatively high when compared with animal production and lower production cows will be struggling with high protein loads. Adding PK or straw to the ration will help dilute the protein, while enabling you to further increase the round length if you have been struggling. If we start getting a run of cloudy and or cold days, then adding some extra PK or molasses will keep energy intake up, preventing rapid drops in production.

Mg, P and Ca absorption are influenced by high nitrates in the pasture. We can see some downer cow issues at this time of year, as such mineral supplementation is important, especially with higher producers. Give us a bell if you want to go through what your cows need, what they are actually getting, and what you can get away with.

Neutral Detergent Fibre (NDF) (%)

NDF has dropped slightly, and is reasonably good at 40-42%. With this flush of pasture that should come with this rain, there may be the chance of NDF going below ideal levels. Count your cows' chews per cud, it should be sitting around 50-60 chews. If it is below, there is a risk of acidosis, especially if fodder beet is going to be part of the ration shortly. Keep straw available to the cows, this will allow them to self-medicate and keep a good level of effective fibre in their rumen.

Metabolisable Energy (MJME/kg DM)

ME has been variable. Sunshine, moisture and heat will increase the ME content of pasture at this time of year, while cloudy days will work against us. Soil temperatures are still holding on, but have taken a dive with this last cold snap we've had. Despite this, the last rain should get a good flush of autumn growth. However, if soil temps continue to drop, production will slow too. Watch over watering, reduce irrigation so you do not water-log soils. Water from a bore is around 6°C, and can rapidly reduce soil temperatures.