

Feed survey summary - as at May 15, 2020

- Gisborne, Wairoa and Hawke's Bay remain significantly affected by drought conditions with little to no rainfall in recent weeks. Parts of Hawke's Bay received 0 – 5mm of rainfall over the first weekend of May.
- North Waikato and South Auckland are below target for pasture cover for this time of year. Rainfall received in late April/early May was highly variable in these areas.
- More broadly across the Waikato region there have been improvements, the region received 70-90mm of rain over the last week. Pasture covers are also closer to the average for this time of year.
- Meat processors are ramping up production across the country, helping ease the pressure on farmers. The majority of cull cow will be finished in the next few weeks and there should be more capacity for beef to be processed.
- Winter grazing availability in the South Island and some parts of the North Island is of concern with many graziers taking reduced stock numbers or pulling out altogether.
- The majority of dairy farmers across the country have dried off their herd.
- Some sheep and beef farmers across the country are going into the winter with very low pasture covers. Many also have higher stock numbers on farm than normal due to recent constraints in culling stock.
- The feed situation has improved across the majority of the North Island since the last report, however, the situation in the East Coast, Hawke's Bay and pockets of the North Waikato remains challenging for farmers in need of feed.
- The feed situation in the South Island is variable with challenges in moving stock, reduced winter crop yields and a lack of winter grazing availability.
- There is some supplementary feed available for purchase, including straw and grain in Canterbury but the situation needs to improve significantly to give farmers reassurance heading into winter.
- Transportation costs have increased due to no back loading and is a barrier to bringing feed up from the South Island.
- There is concern that if the country receives a cooler and wetter than average winter, there may be serious implications on farm regarding feed and possibly animal welfare.