GROWING FEED IS STILL THE CHEAPEST FEED

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With rising costs causing several headaches for producers, a saving grace is a more "normal start" to the season than what we have been experiencing. Setting up paddocks with a winter wedge or to lamb down on enough pasture to reduce the stock movement during this time is easily managed through the application of nitrogen.

With urea priced at near $3/kg N, utilising other nitrogen sources alongside urea, such as SOA, is economically shown to produce the most pasture. Figure 1.

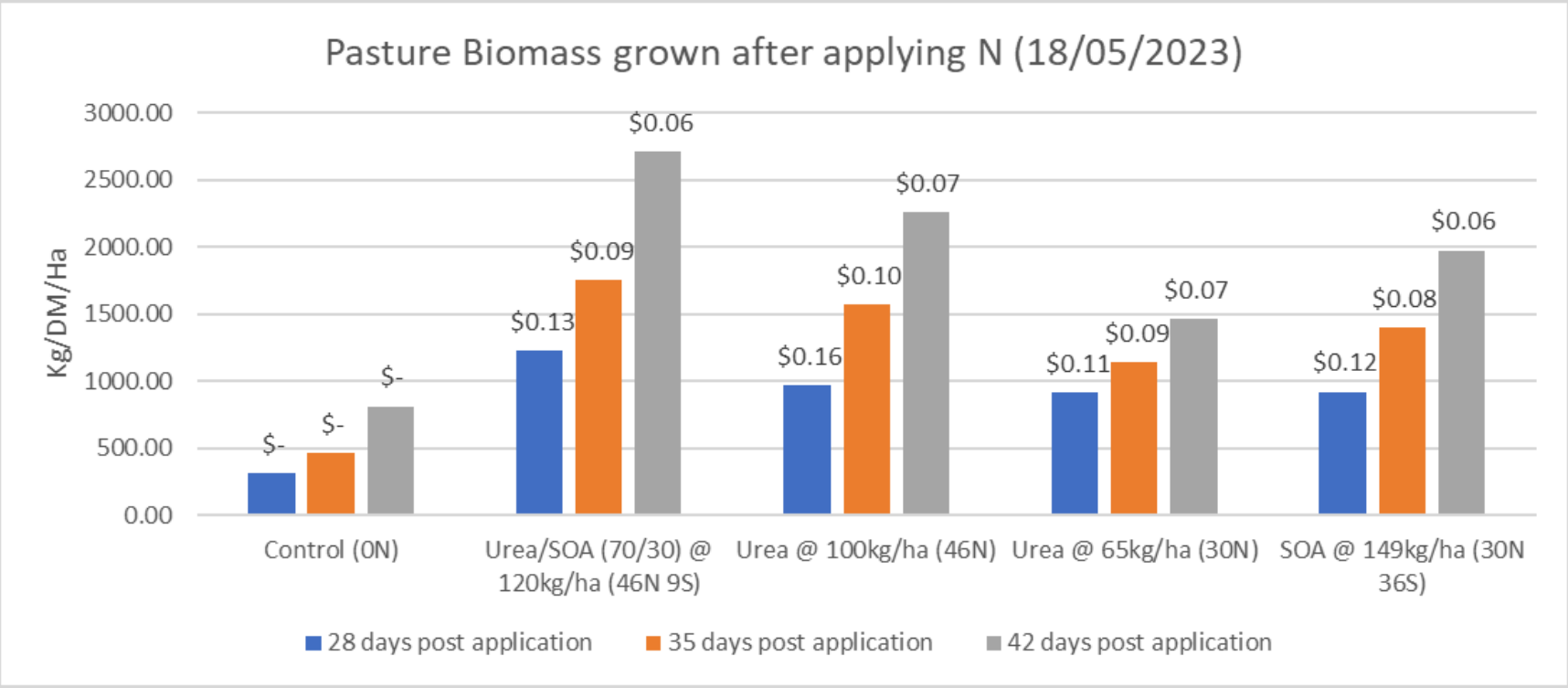

Figure 1. Additional Pasture grown in 42days from differing sources of Nitrogen with $/kg DM highlighted

We can see the lock up period playing a significant role. Shutting the gate for a period of time is sometimes one of the hardest decisions to make, however from figure 1. we can see close to 40% increase in kg DM/ha grown between day 28 and 35 and close to 50% increase in kg DM/ha grown between day 35 and 42.

The $ figure seen in figure 1. Shows the physical costs /kg DM grown. The SOA options show to have the lowest costs per biomass grown, due to the additional biomass produced. The sulphate component aids in the mineralisation of N, particularly as we start heading into winter with cooler soil temperatures. Although not displayed in the figure above, when the cost of production is converted to c/MJ, we range between 0.02c/MJ and 0.05c/MJ. Table 1. shows the cost of buying supplement feed, ranging from 20-100 times more expensive than growing feed with Nitrogen.

Table 1. Cost of supplement feed (c/MJ)

		$/tonne					
		200	**250**	**300**	**350**	**400**	**500**
MJ ME / kg	**8**	2.5	3.13	3.75	4.38	5	6.25
	9	2.22	2.78	3.33	3.89	4.44	5.56
	10	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	5
	10.5	1.9	2.38	2.86	3.33	3.81	4.76
	11	1.82	2.27	2.73	3.18	3.64	4.55
	11.5	1.74	2.17	2.61	3.04	3.48	4.35
	12	1.67	2.08	2.5	2.92	3.33	4.17
	13	1.54	1.92	2.31	2.69	3.08	3.85
	14	1.43	1.79	2.14	2.5	2.86	3.57