



Lyons Systems Research Herd Notes

Background: It is widely recognised that grass-based systems offer a competitive advantage and will predominate in Ireland. However, grazing systems that have been developed to utilise large quantities of grazed grass have in the main been based on low-output per cow. In this scenario, high levels of profitability are possible through avid cost control and comparatively high stocking rates for grazing systems. There are now reasons to consider the development of grazing systems that are based on high-output per cow. These reasons include (i) concerns about increasing dairy cow numbers and environmental emissions, (ii) facilitating farm expansion post EU-milk quota removal for land limited and fragmented farms, (iii) lack of available skilled labour on farms to deal with expanding animal numbers. The rationale for this research is that a high output grass-based spring milk production system can be profitable when built on a foundation of good grassland management and meeting both milk and fertility targets and has a place in a sustainable Irish dairy industry.

For more details on the High Output Systems Research Herd visit <http://www.ucd.ie/agfood/welcomemessage/systemsresearchherd/>.

Lyons Systems Research Herd Notes Week 22/10/2018

Farm Details:

Area available: 17.65 ha
Current Stocking Rate (MP): 3.34 cows/ha
Farm Cover: 817 kg DM
Growth Rate: 35 (34) kg DM/ha/day
Demand: 47 kg DM/ha/day
Average Concentrate Supplement: 4 kg/head/day
Average DIM: 248.5
Cows Milking: 59



Daily Feed Budget: Cows are being allocated 14 kg DM of grass and 4 kg of an 18% in-parlour concentrate.

Grazing Plan: AFC on the 22nd of October was 817 kg DM/ha (range 100 to 1522 kg DM/ha) with a cover/LU of 245 kg DM. Average grass growth was 35 kg DM/ha/day last week. Average grass DM last week was 15%. The final rotation started on the 7th of October and paddocks have started to be closed off for the winter period. A target of 0.51 ha must be grazed per day, with an aim to have 70% of the MP grazed by the 1st of November and the farm being closed, with 100% grazed, by the 17th of November. As of Monday the 22nd of October, 33% (5.93 ha) of the MP has been grazed. The target was 41% (7.21 ha). Pre-grazing covers at the start of last week were high (+2000 kg DM/ha) which slowed down the area grazed and resulted in falling behind the target. However, pre-grazing covers late last week and this week are lower ranging from 1522-1388 kg DM/ha, which will make grazing the targeted area more achievable.

Milk Production: Average production is 15.8 kg/cow/day, as of the week ending 21st of October, at 4.82% fat and 4.07% protein (1.40 kg MS). Average production this time last year as 15.4 kg/cow/day, at 4.72% fat and 4.01% protein (1.37 kg MS). SCC is currently 133,000. Fat, protein and SCC figures are based on milk recording results from the 10th of October.

BCS: BCS of the herd was assessed on Monday (22nd of October). Average BCS was 2.98. Of the herd, 8% (5/59) have a BCS of ≤ 2.5 and 8% (5/59) have a BCS ≥ 3.5 .