



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 30-03-2020

Farm Details:

Area available: 17.52 ha
Current Stocking Rate (MP): 3.14
Farm Cover: 1063 kg DM/ha
Growth Rate: 29 kg DM/ha/day
Demand: 53 kg DM/ha/day
Average Concentrate Supplement: 8 kg/head/day
Average DIM: 49 days
Cows Calved: 57 (out of 60)



Current Daily Feed Budget: In the parlour, cows are being fed with 8kg of 18% crude protein concentrates (increased gradually over two weeks post-calving) and allocated 17kg DM of grass. Grass DM was 19.1%. Estimated grass intake was 15.1 kg DM/cow.

Spring Grazing Plan: The AFC on 30th March was 1063 kg DM/ha (range: 185-2688 kg DM/ha). The average daily growth for the week was 29 kg DM/ha. To date we have 65% of the milking platform grazed and we aim to complete the first rotation on the 7th of April. The cows have been out full-time grazing from the 19th of March. Like most farms across the country this spring, challenging grazing conditions meant we had periods of grazing and periods of housing full-time and providing silage due to above average rainfall in February and early March. The recent dry spell makes grazing the high covers easier to clean out and getting paddocks in good order for the grazing season ahead. So far this year we put out 60 kg N/ha of protected urea and 3 paddocks (3.54 ha) received 2,500 gals/acre of watery slurry. Average soil temperature (at 100 mm) this week was 7.8°C.

Calving: One cow calved this week which means there is currently 58 (of 60) or 97% of the cows calved as of the 6th April

Milk Production: Average production is currently at 35.9 kg/cow. Milk production from this time last year was 32.6 kg/cow.