



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) 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 and sustainable when built on a foundation of good grassland management and meeting both milk and fertility targets and has a place in the 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 18-10-2021

Farm Details:

Area available: 17.43ha
Current Stocking Rate (MP): 3.27 LU/ha
Cover/LU: 169kg DM/LU
Farm Cover: 552kg DM/ha
Growth Rate: 30kg DM/ha/day
Demand: 29kg DM/ha/day
Average Concentrate Supplement: 3kg/head/day
Average DIM: 237 days



Current Daily Feed Budget: Cows are now being offered 3kg/day of an 18% protein commercial concentrate until dry-off. Cows are also allocated 5kg DM of silage, 9kg DM of grass and grass DM is currently 19.3%.

Grazing Plan: The current AFC is 552kg DM/ha (range 60 – 1550kg DM/ha), cover/LU is 169kg DM and growth is 30kg DM/ha/day. Growth levels are holding steady for the last number of weeks due to the mild weather conditions. Average soil temperature at 100mm and rainfall has fallen has risen slightly to 12°C and 3.3mm respectively between 11th-17th October (rain data from the nearby Casement Aerodrome). The final grazing rotation began on Thursday 7th October and to date 8.98ha (52%) of the milking platform has been closed. Housing by night will begin on Wednesday 20th October. Silage is being fed to increase covers as we aim to house the herd at an AFC of 700-750kg DM/ha. Rotation length is set at 40 days in line with Teagasc autumn grazing targets.

Milk Production: Average production from 11th-17th October was 19.4kg/cow at 4.76% milk fat, 4.14% protein, 1.73kg MS and SCC was 69,000 based on milk recording on 14th October. Milk production from this time last year was 18.8kg/cow at 4.69% milk fat, 4.22% protein, 1.68kg MS and SCC was 81,000.