



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 24-08-2020

Farm Details:

Area available: 17.43 ha
Current Stocking Rate (MP): 3.27
Farm Cover: 924kg DM/ha
Growth Rate: 42kg DM/ha/day
Demand: 65kg DM/ha/day
Average Concentrate Supplement: 1kg/head/day
Average DIM: 190 days



Current Daily Feed Budget: From 24th August, all cows will be offered 1kg to counteract the increased amount of concentrates fed earlier this summer during a drought period. The herd have been split into three groups and are being offered a 14% protein concentrate, 12% protein native formulation concentrate or a 12% protein non-native concentrate in the parlour. These diets will be offered as part of our 2020 nutrition trial until the start of the final grazing rotation in October. The herd is also being allocated 20kg DM of grass per day.

Grazing Plan: The AFC on 17th August was 924kg DM/ha (range: 200-1650kg DM/ha) with cover/LU of 283kg DM/cow. For next week (1st September), we are aiming for a cover of 280 kg DM/cow. Currently we are slightly ahead of target. Our pre-grazing cover is 1600kg DM with high grass quality. Due to wet weather forecast and a reduction in concentrate allowance to correct the concentrate budget, we are not planning on taking out bales for the time being. Grass DM for the last week is at 15%.

Milk Production: The average milk production from 17th-23rd August was 25.5 kg/cow at 4.26% milk fat, 3.55% protein, 1.99 kg MS and 84,000 SCC based on milk recording on 20th August. Average milk production this time last year was 21.8 kg/cow at 4.41% fat, 3.56% protein (1.74 kg MS) and 59,000 SCC.

BCS: The latest herd body condition scoring was carried out on Friday 21st August. Average herd BCS was 3.00 with 3.5% of the herd thin (2/57 cows; ≤ 2.5) and 7.0% of the herd fat (4/57 cows; ≥ 3.5).