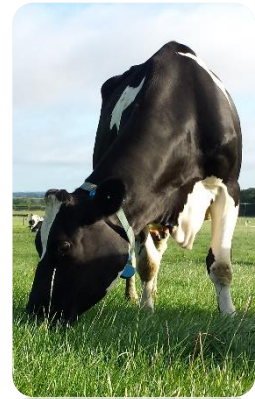Background: The main aim of the **Systems Research Herd** at UCD Lyons Farm is to evaluate the feasibility (including profitability) of a higher input/output grazing system within a limited land holding scenario. The focus is on maximising milk solids output from the existing land holding which involves high output from individual cows and high stocking rates on the MP. This will occur most efficiently through maximising the use of grazed grass/home grown forage in the system and the strategic use of supplementation thereafter. Such a system might facilitate the successful expansion of the farm business without the need to buy or rent extra land, to buy stock, to acquire extra labour or to provide extra cow facilities. For the study purpose, stocking rate and concentrate inputs are fixed. For more details on the Systems Research Herd visit http://www.ucd.ie/agfood/welcomemessage/systemsresearchherd/.

Lyons Systems Research Herd Notes Week 25-09-2017

Farm Details:
Area available: 17.65
Current Stocking Rate (MP): 3.4
Farm Cover: 977 kg DM/ha (287 kg DM/cow)
Growth Rate: 52 kg DM/ha/day
Demand: 47.6 kg DM/ha/day
Supplement: Concentrate 2.65 kg/cow/day
Average DIM: 217 (range 155-248)

Grass Supply:

AFC on 25th of September was 977 kg DM/ha (range 250 to 1914 kg DM/ha). Cows are cleaning out paddocks very well with PGSH of 3.5-4cm being achieved. Growth is steady at the moment as we continue to graze heavy covers.

Feed Budget:
Cows are being fed an average of 2.65 kg of concentrate. Fifty six cows are on 2.5kg with four cows on 4kg as they reached 240 DIM. Grass DMI last week was 14.3 kg at 14% DM on average.

Fertiliser:
Final chemical fertiliser figures for the Milking Platform are as follows:

260 kg/ha (210 units/acre) of Nitrogen; 8.6 kg/ha (7 units/acre) of Phosphorus and 44 kg/ha (36 units/acre) of Potassium.

Milk Production:
Average production is currently 19.5 kg/cow at 4.9% fat and 3.93% protein (1.7 kg MS). SCC is 147,000. Fat, protein and SCC figures are based on milk recording results from the 13th September.

Cow Condition:
Cows were body condition scored (BCS) on Thursday last, September 22nd. The cows are in good condition with an average BCS of 3.0. Within the group we have 4 thin cows (BCS = 2.5) and 5 fat cows (BCS = 3.5).

Breeding Season 2017: The final scan will take place in early October and a full review of the 2017 breeding season will be provided at that stage.