



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 <https://www.ucd.ie/agfood/about/lyonsresearchfarm/lyonsdairyherd/>

Lyons Systems Research Herd Notes Week 04/03/2019

Farm Details:

Area available: 17.59 ha
Current Stocking Rate (MP): 2.79
Farm Cover: 1299 kg DM/ha
Growth Rate: 20 kg DM/ha/day
Demand: 42 kg DM/ha/day
Average Concentrate Supplement: 8 kg/head/day
Average DIM: 19 days
Cows Calved: 49 (out of 60)



Current Daily Feed Budget: Cows are being fed 8 kg of an 18% crude protein concentrate in the parlour (this is built up gradually over two weeks post-calving) and being allocated 16 kg DM of grass. Grass DM was 15% on average last week.

Spring Grazing Plan: The current AFC is 1299 kg DM/ha (range 246 to 2391 kg DM/ha). Average daily growth rate was 20 kg DM/ha this week. Currently there is 43% of the farm grazed, aiming to have 66% grazed by the 17th of March. The current pre-grazing yield is 1386 kg DM/ha. At the weekend, due to wet grazing conditions, cows struggled to graze paddocks out properly and caused mild poaching to the paddock. Cows are now grazing a dry field and graze outs have improved. At this stage, all of the wetter paddocks on the MP have been grazed, therefore if the weather becomes wet, we are in a good position to keep the cows out grazing. Average soil temperature (at 100 mm) last week was 7.9°C.

Calving: Calving started on the 29th of January and there is currently 49 (of 60) or 82% of the cows calved.

Milk Production: Average production is currently 32.4 kg/cow at 4.56% fat and 3.66% protein (2.66 kg MS). SCC is 62,000. Fat, protein and SCC figures are based on milk recording results from the 20th of February.

BCS: Last Friday (1st of March) the herd was assessed for BCS. Average BCS of the milking cows (47/60) was 2.89 with 21% (10/47) with a BCS of ≤ 2.5 and 6% (3/47) with a BCS ≥ 3.5 . Average BCS of the dry cows (13/60) was 3.39 with no cows with a BCS of ≤ 2.75 and 31% (4/13) with a BCS ≥ 3.5 . The 10 thin milking cows are going to be milked once per day until BCS improves.