



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 10-09-2018

Farm Details:

Area available: 17.65 ha
Current Stocking Rate (MP): 3.34 cows/ha
Farm Cover: 960 kg DM
Growth Rate: 67 (67) kg DM/ha/day
Demand: 47 kg DM/ha/day
Average Concentrate Supplement: 4 kg/head/day
Average DIM: 206.5
Cows Milking: 59*



Photo © Zoe McKay

Daily Feed Budget: Cows are being allocated 14 kg DM of grass and 4 kg of concentrate of an 18% in-parlour concentrate.

Grazing Plan: AFC on the 10th of September was 960 kg DM/ha (range 50 to 1840 kg DM/ha) with a cover/LU of 287 kg DM. Average grass growth was 67 kg DM/ha/day since last Friday. Grass quality is good and cows are grazing paddocks out well.

Milk Production: Average production is 20.8 kg/cow/day, as of the week ending the 10th of September, at 4.39% fat and 3.70% protein (1.67 kg MS). Average production this time last year was 18.8 kg/cow/day, at 5.07% fat and 3.93% protein (1.69 kg MS). SCC is currently 120,000. Fat, protein and SCC figures are based on milk recording results from the 29th of August.

Breeding Season 2018: The breeding season started on Monday 30th of April and ended on the 22nd of July. Pregnancy scans are being done weekly at approximately 30 and 60 days post A.I. Pre-breeding, the decision was made not to breed 5/60 for various reasons including lameness, temperament and high SCC, therefore, only 55/60 cows were submitted for breeding. Submission rate in the first 3 weeks was 96% (53/55 cows) with all cows being submitted by week 5. Current scanning data indicates that conception rate to first service is 69% (38/55). Based on a 60-day scan, the 6 week in calf rate is 84% (46/55 cows). To date, 52/55 cows have been confirmed in calf from the first 9 weeks of breeding. The final scan will take place in the week beginning 17th of September.



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Spraying: On the 31st of August, 3.4 ha of the MP (including two reseeded paddocks) were sprayed using Envy at a rate of 1.5 litres of product (in 200 litres of water) /ha. Today, the 10th of September, another 4.1 ha (including the sacrifice paddock) was sprayed with Binder at a rate of 1.6 litre (of product in 200 litres of water) /ha. Weeds being targeted include docks, chickweed, dandelion, dead red nettles and thistles.

*The total cow number has reduced to 59 as one cow died last week (died from consuming wire).