



## 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 11/03/2019

#### Farm Details:

Area available: 17.59 ha  
Current Stocking Rate (MP): 3.01  
Farm Cover: 1323 kg DM/ha  
Growth Rate: 19 kg DM/ha/day  
Demand: 24 kg DM/ha/day  
Average Concentrate Supplement: 8 kg/head/day  
Average DIM: 24 days  
Cows Calved: 53 (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), 10 kg DM silage (74% DMD) and being allocated 8 kg DM of grass. This diet is designed to provide a sufficient daily UFL allowance for 33 kg of milk at 4.4% fat. Cows consumed approximately 95% of their silage allowance and grass utilisation was approximately 80%.

**Spring Grazing Plan:** The current AFC is 1323 kg DM/ha (range 320 to 2605 kg DM/ha). Average daily growth rate was 19 kg DM/ha this week. Grass DM was 15% on average last week. Currently there is 50% of the farm grazed, aiming to have 66% grazed by the 17<sup>th</sup> of March. Since last Thursday, the cows are grazing by day and are housed at night due to the unsettled weather. Grazing conditions will be assessed daily and cows will resume full time grazing as soon as conditions improve. The current pre-grazing yield is 1810 kg DM/ha. Average soil temperature (at 100 mm) last week was 7.9°C.

**Calving:** Calving started on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January and there is currently 53 (of 60) or 88% of the cows calved.

**Milk Production:** Average production is currently 31.0 kg/cow at 4.71% fat and 3.43% protein (2.52 kg MS). SCC is 71,000. Fat, protein and SCC figures are based on milk recording results from the 6<sup>th</sup> of March. There are 10 cows being milked once a day as their BCS is  $\leq 2.5$ .