



## 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 18/03/2019

#### Farm Details:

Area available: 17.59 ha  
Current Stocking Rate (MP): 3.2  
Farm Cover: 1361 kg DM/ha  
Growth Rate: 25 kg DM/ha/day  
Demand: 54 kg DM/ha/day  
Average Concentrate Supplement: 8 kg/head/day  
Average DIM: 30 days  
Cows Calved: 56 (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 18 kg DM of grass.

**Spring Grazing Plan:** The current AFC is 1361 kg DM/ha (range 349 to 3001 kg DM/ha). Average daily growth rate was 25 kg DM/ha this week. Grass DM was 15.6% on average last week. Currently there is 60% of the MP grazed. The aim is to finish the first rotation during the first week in April. Since Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> of March, the cows have resumed grazing full time. The current pre-grazing yield is 2622 kg DM/ha, all paddocks left to be grazed will have heavy covers of >2400 kg DM/ha. It is possible that some of the heavier covers will be cut for silage if growth improves in the next couple of weeks.

**Calving:** Calving started on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January and there is currently 56 (of 60) or 93% of the cows calved.

**Milk Production:** Average production is currently 31.1 kg/cow at 4.99% fat and 3.36% protein (2.60 kg MS). SCC is 98,000. Fat, protein and SCC figures are based on milk recording results from the 13<sup>th</sup> of March. There are 17 cows being milked once a day as their BCS is  $\leq 2.5$ .

**BCS:** Last Friday (15<sup>th</sup> of March) the herd was assessed for BCS. Average BCS of the milking cows (56/60) was 2.75 with 30% (17/56) with a BCS of  $\leq 2.5$  and 2% (1/56) with a BCS  $\geq 3.5$ . Average BCS of the dry cows (4/60) was 3.38 with no cows with a BCS of  $\leq 2.75$  and 50% (2/4) with a BCS  $\geq 3.5$ . The 17 thin milking cows are going to be milked once per day until BCS improves.