

Follow-up on impact of 2026 drought on grass production and fodder supply & advisory support activities

Teagasc Update

**National Fodder and Food
Security Committee**

Fri 16 October 2026

Teagasc, Oak Park, Carlow

Meeting Agenda

- 1) **Opening Remarks**
- 2) **Update on Fodder Availability and Latest Survey Findings (Teagasc)**
- 3) **Update on Grass Growth and Farm Covers (Teagasc)**
- 4) **Discussion on Current Fodder Position and Winter Outlook and messaging (All)**
- 5) **Close**



Grass growth and Fodder Feed Budget Update

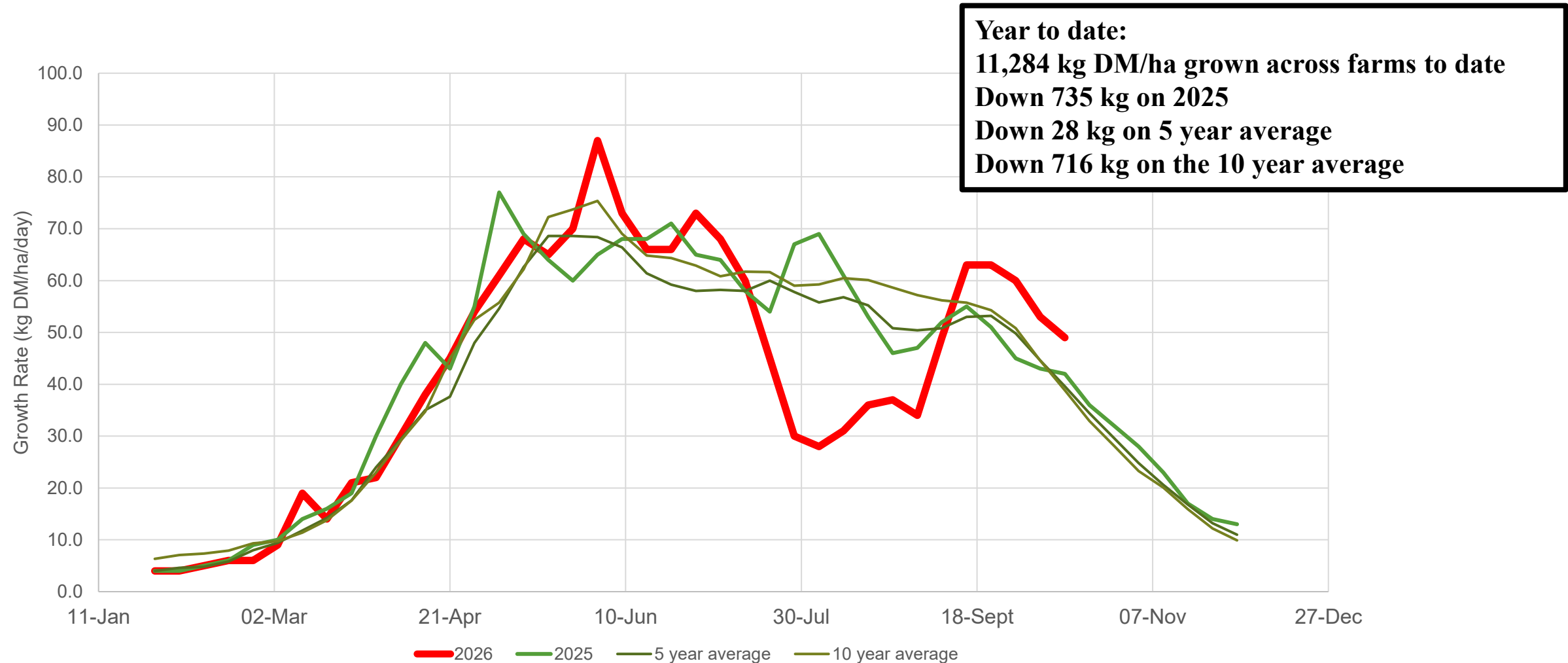
Michael O'Donovan & Caitlin Looney



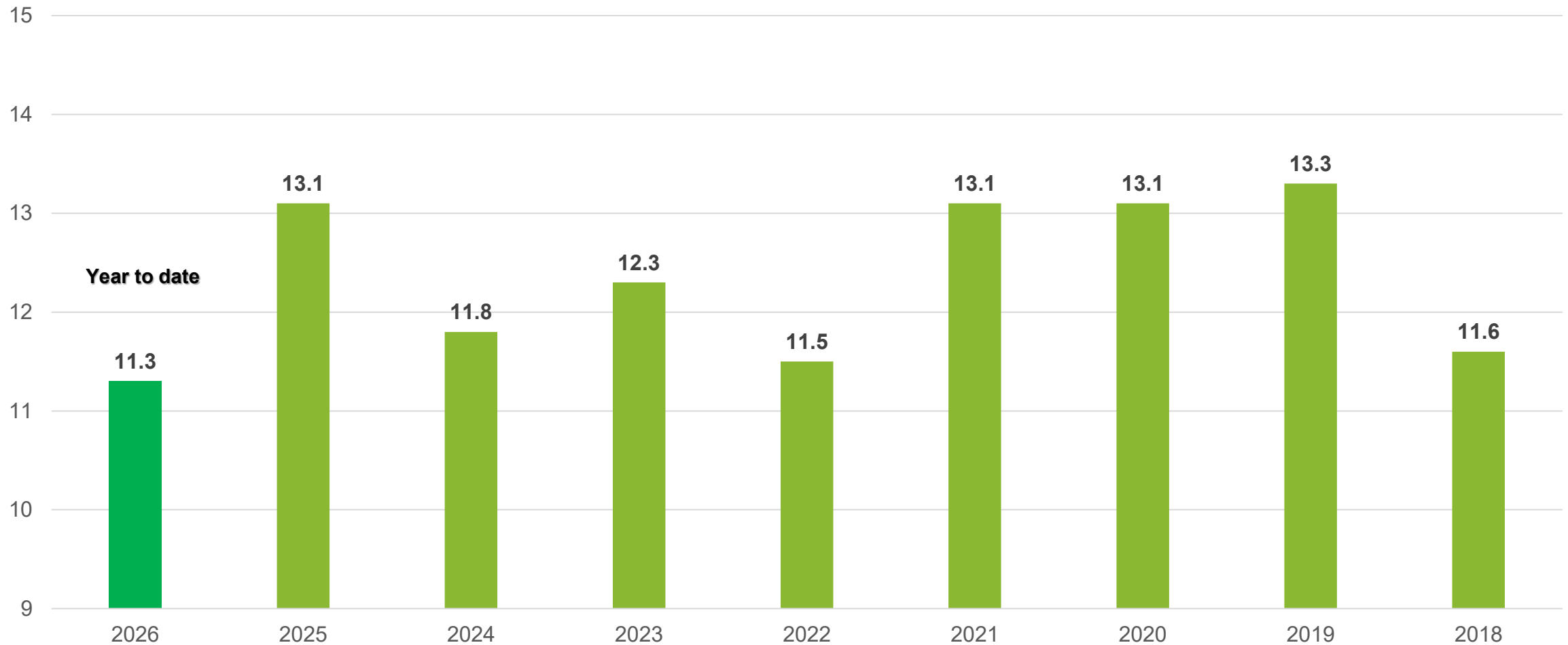
National Fodder Meeting October 2026



PastureBase Ireland 2026 Growth Curve versus 2025, 5 & 10 year average



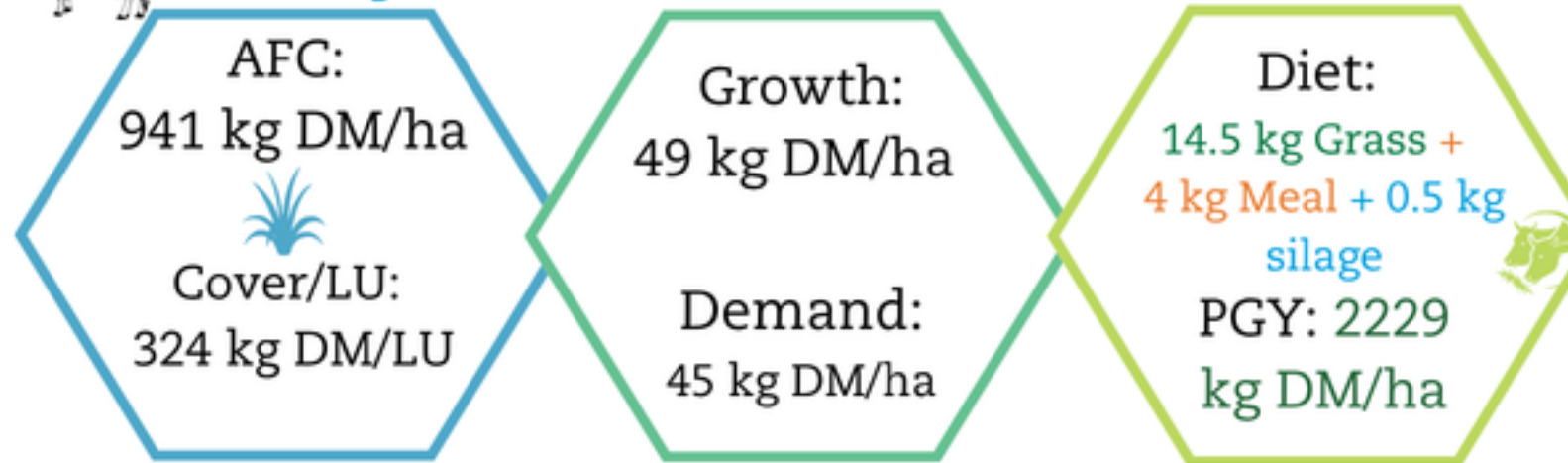
Annual average grass growth on PastureBase Ireland 2025 – 2020



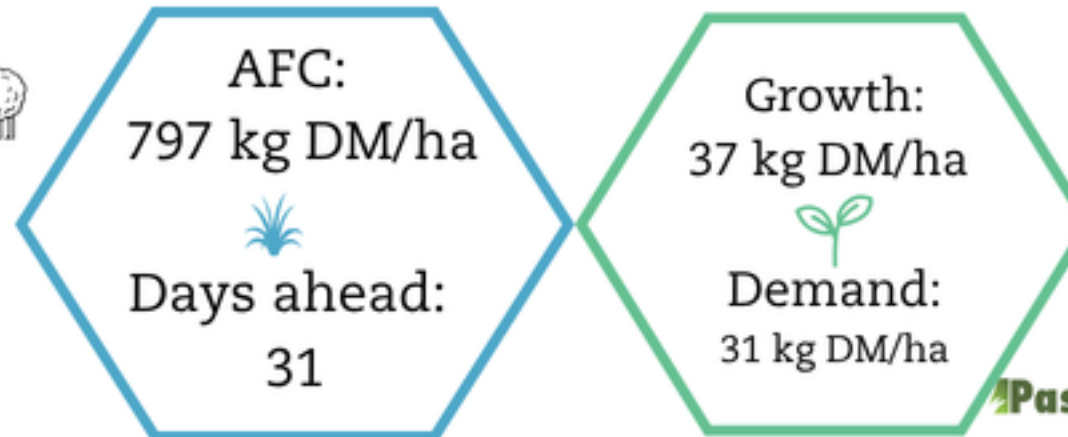
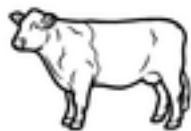
Current Grass Supply on Dairy & Drystock



Dairy Farms - PastureBase Data

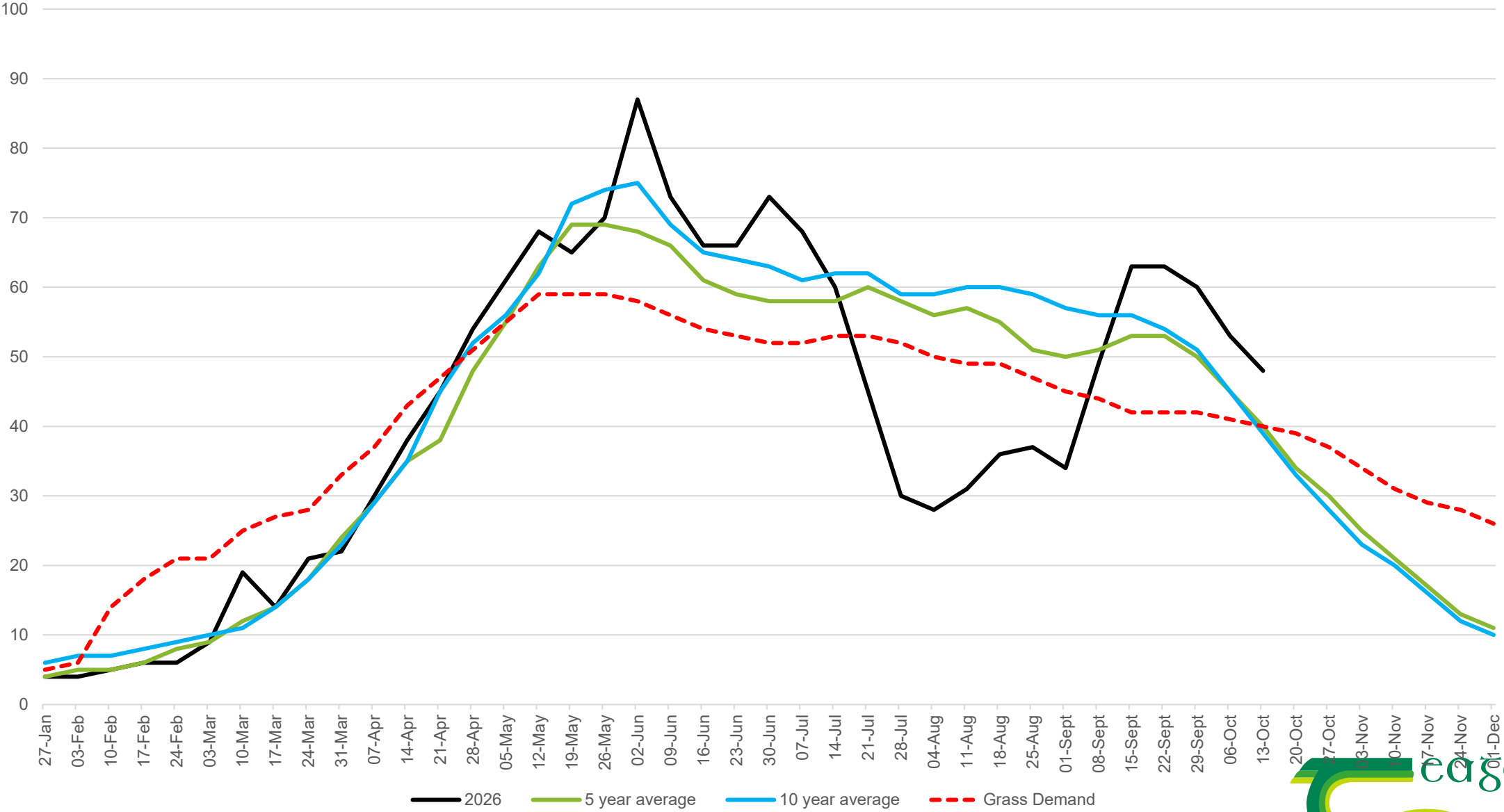


Drystock Farms - PastureBase Data



PastureBase
IRELAND

Grass Growth 2026, 5 & 10 Year Average versus Mean Grass Demand

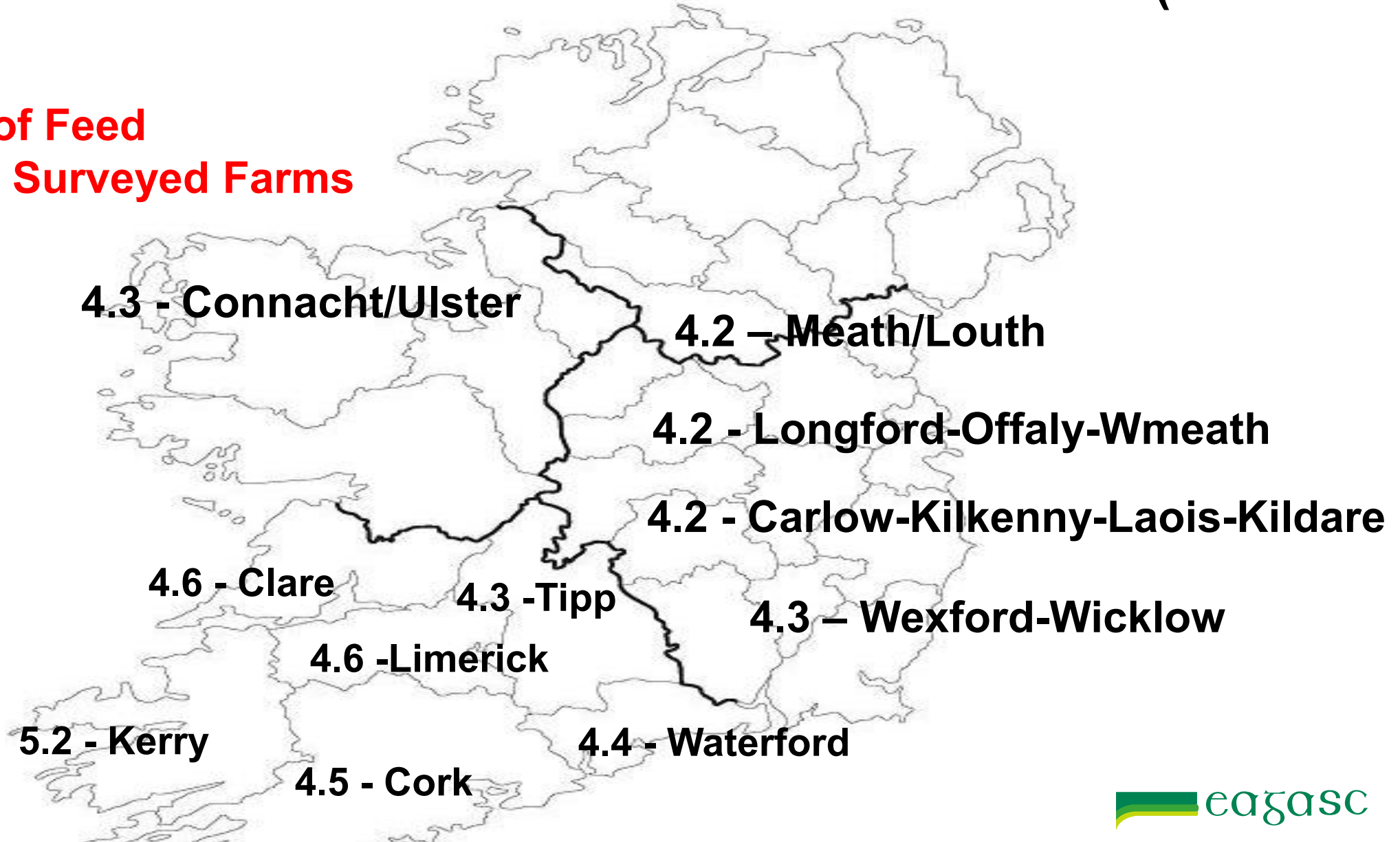


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Current Conserved Feed Availability (Months Feed) - (850

**4.4 Months of Feed
available on Surveyed Farms**



Resilience to reduced growth mid season

Contingency

- Supplementary feeding required
- Summer silage contingency is required
 - (200-300kg DM/LU)
 - High Quality Bale (Grass or Red Clover Silage)
- Other feed options
 - Buy when required
 - Source locally

Timings – grassland management

- Harvest silage early in the season
 - May – 1st cut
 - Allows for earlier second cut & improves contingency
- Early spring reseed (before May 1st)
 - Grow 12+ T DM/ha in the first season
 - Too unpredictable to reseed in summer
- Measure grass
- Grass has the capability to respond fast

Heavier farms need a similar contingency for wetter periods!

- Ballyhaise & Moorepark fed the same silage in 2026 just at diff periods of lactation

Adaptation Strategies on Ruminant Farms in Extreme Weather Conditions such as 2018

Authors – O'Donovan, Patton & Kavanagh

Recommendations

Adaptation strategies will mean that farmers both on heavy and dry land will need to have a feed reserve available of **400kg DM per LU**, over and above normal winter feed reserves

- Ireland needs to become more self-sufficient in animal fodder supply for national herd
- A national fodder budget survey should be completed each July in Ireland to ensure sufficient feed stocks are available in the country
- Teagasc need to continue to promote grassland measurement within PastureBase Ireland to improve grassland production and utilisation on farms
- Grazing, feed storage and feeding infrastructure needs to be improved to allow for better feed management in extreme weather conditions
- Good silage making practices need to be adopted by all livestock farmers
- Met Eireann should make more use of the Teagasc MOST grass growth prediction model to forecast weekly grass growth nationally

Forage Stocks by Region October 2026

Region	Surplus Feed	On Target	5-10% Deficit	10-20% Deficit	>20% Deficit
South East	34.5%	34.5%	18.1%	6.0%	6.9%
Midlands/NE	30.1%	41.7%	17.5%	5.8%	4.9%
North/West	27.4%	47.9%	13.7%	5.5%	5.5%
South West	27.4%	44.0%	16.7%	8.3%	3.6%
Overall	28.9%	42.2%	17.5%	6.2%	5.1%

Weighted mean feed balance: Feed surplus 6% nationally

Forage Stocks 2026 by Livestock Enterprise

Livestock Enterprise	Surplus Feed	On Target	5-10% Deficit	10-20% Deficit	>20% Deficit
Dairy	22.2%	40.8%	22.2%	8.6%	6.2%
Drystock	33.6%	42.3%	16.4%	4.1%	3.6%

Effect of 2025-26 Feed Reserve on Oct 2026 Forage Stocks

Category	Surplus Feed	On Target	5-10% Deficit	10-20% Deficit	>20% Deficit
No Surplus 2025-26	16.0%	39.2%	22.4%	12.8%	9.6%
>10% Surplus 2025-26	39.2%	45.1%	10.8%	2.0%	2.9%