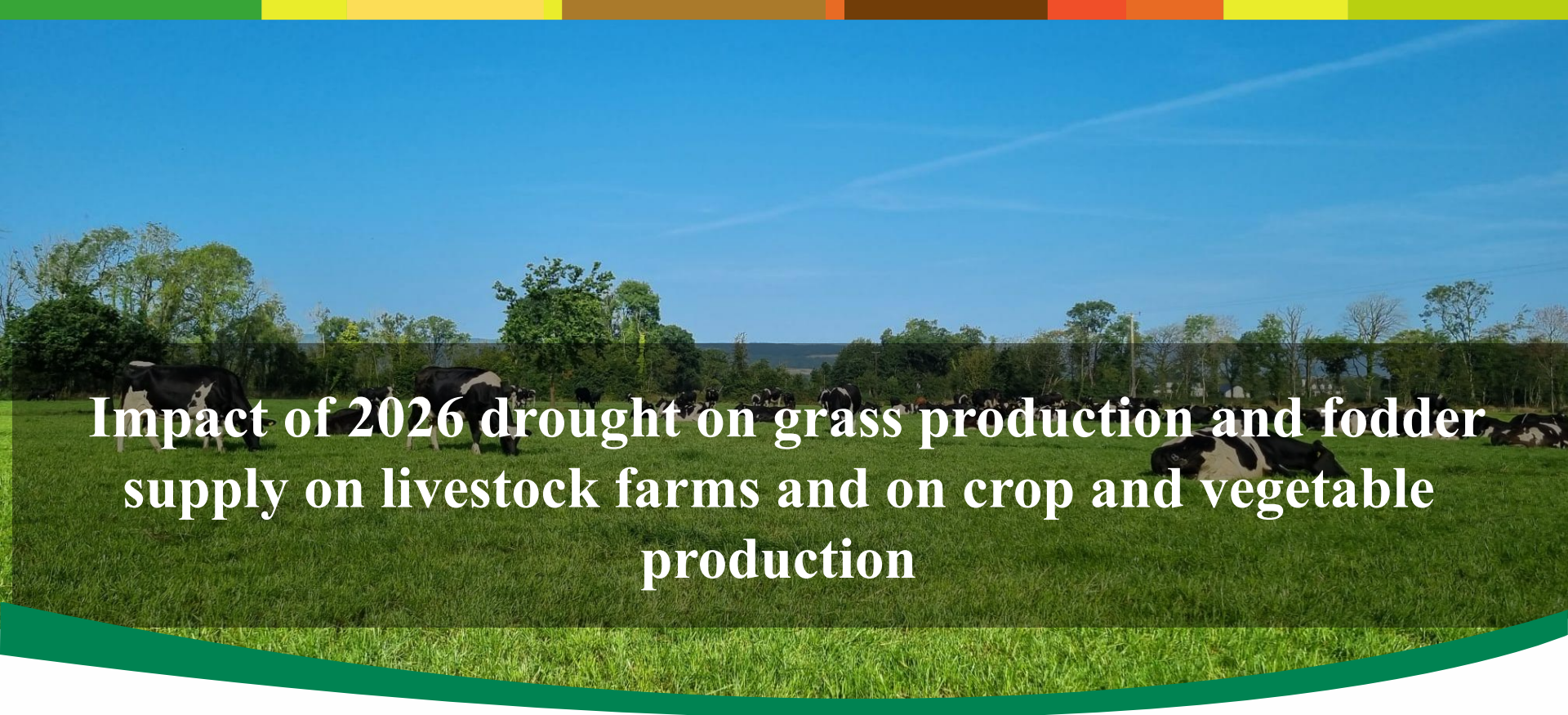
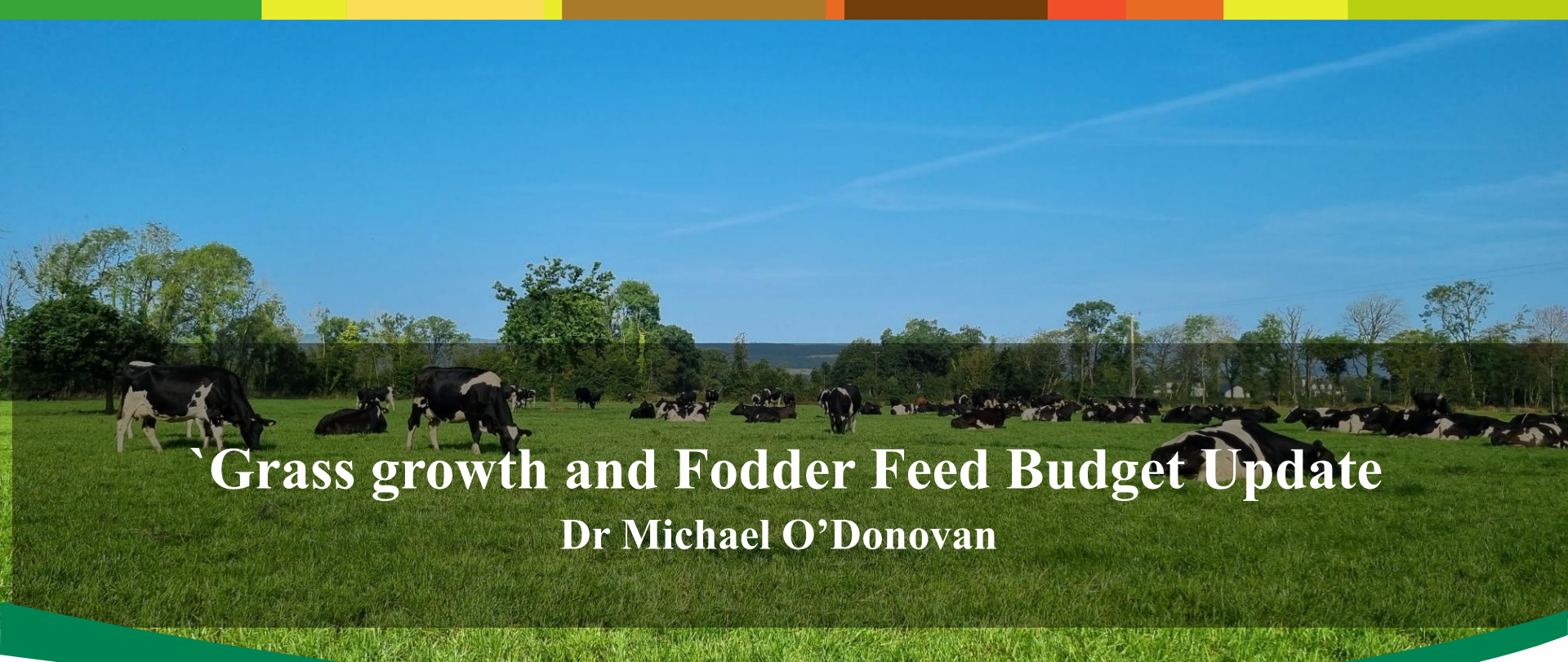




Impact of 2026 drought on grass production and fodder supply on livestock farms and on crop and vegetable production

Context

- The current drought is causing significant challenges to grass growth across a wide area, requiring livestock farmers to need supplementary feed and utilise silage made for winter feeding
- It has also had and continues to have a significant impact on tillage and horticultural production
- Will present analysis of current grass growth and supplementary feeding on livestock farms based on PastureBase Ireland (PBI) data
- Teagasc currently surveying livestock farmers for winter 2026/27 fodder supply
 - Direct entry into PBI
 - Advisor contacts dairy and drystock clients, balanced for scale, location, etc
 - Will present a preliminary assessment based mainly on c. 320 PBI entries
- Will also outline advisory message and supports to farmers
- Will present an overview of impact on tillage and crop production



Grass growth and Fodder Feed Budget Update

Dr Michael O'Donovan



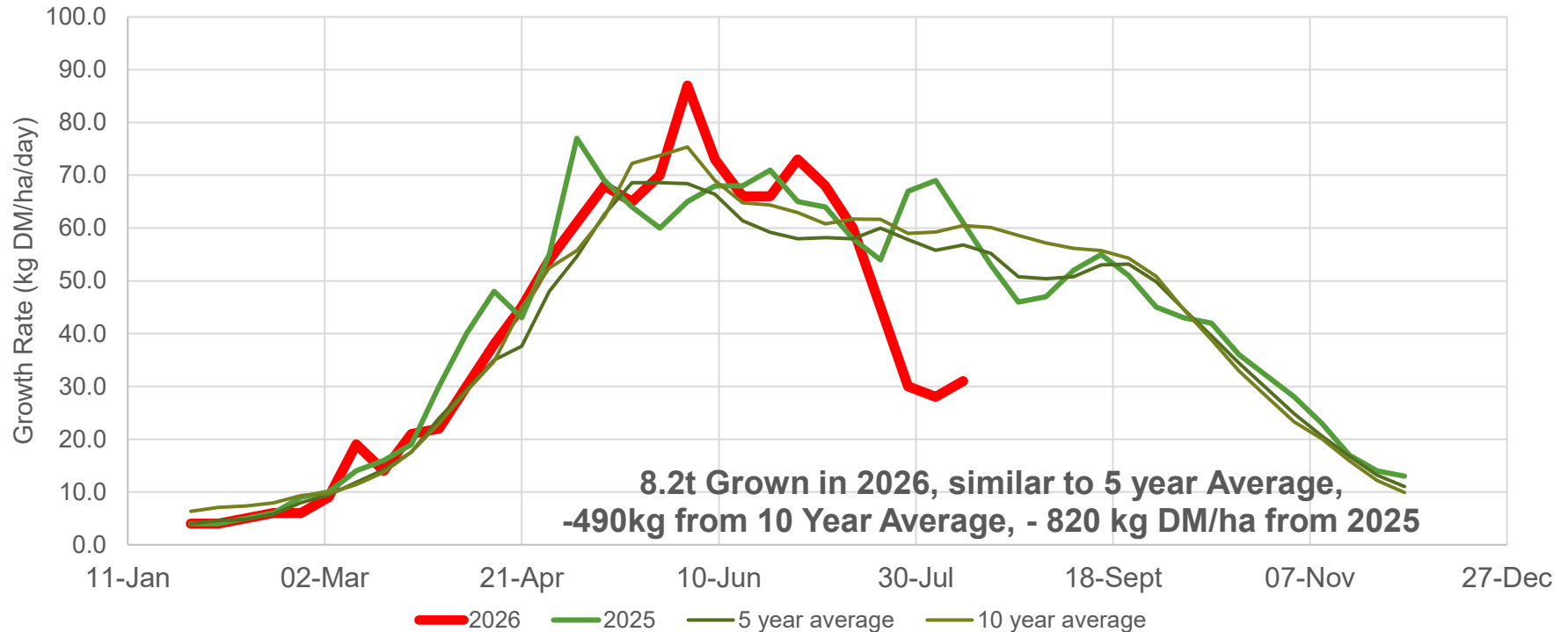
National Fodder Meeting August 2026



Presentation Overview

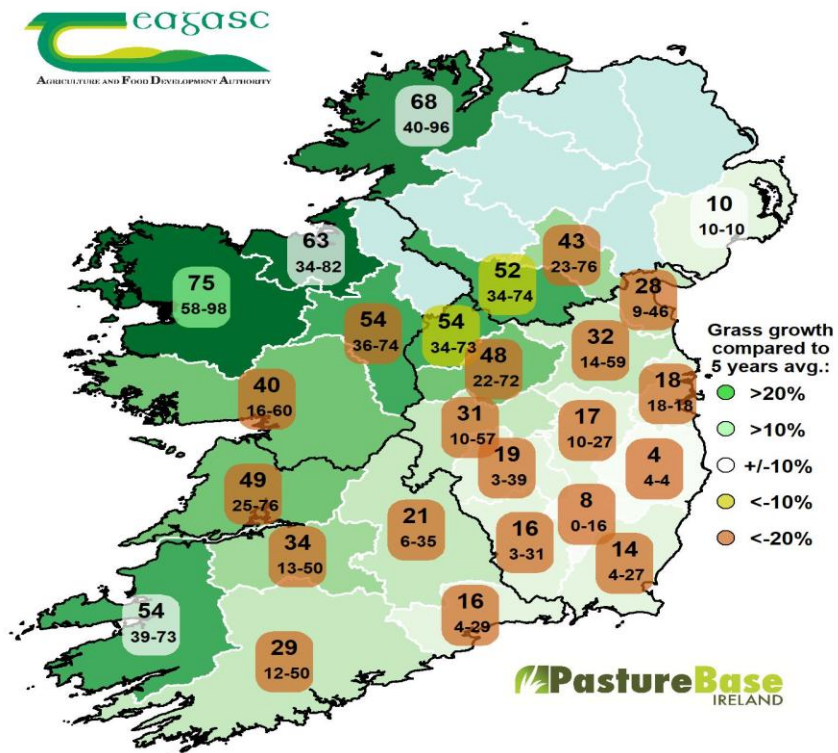
- Current and Predicted grass growth
- Soil Moisture Deficits
- Current grass supply and feeding management
- Fodder budget Assessments

Weekly Grass Growth Curve 2026

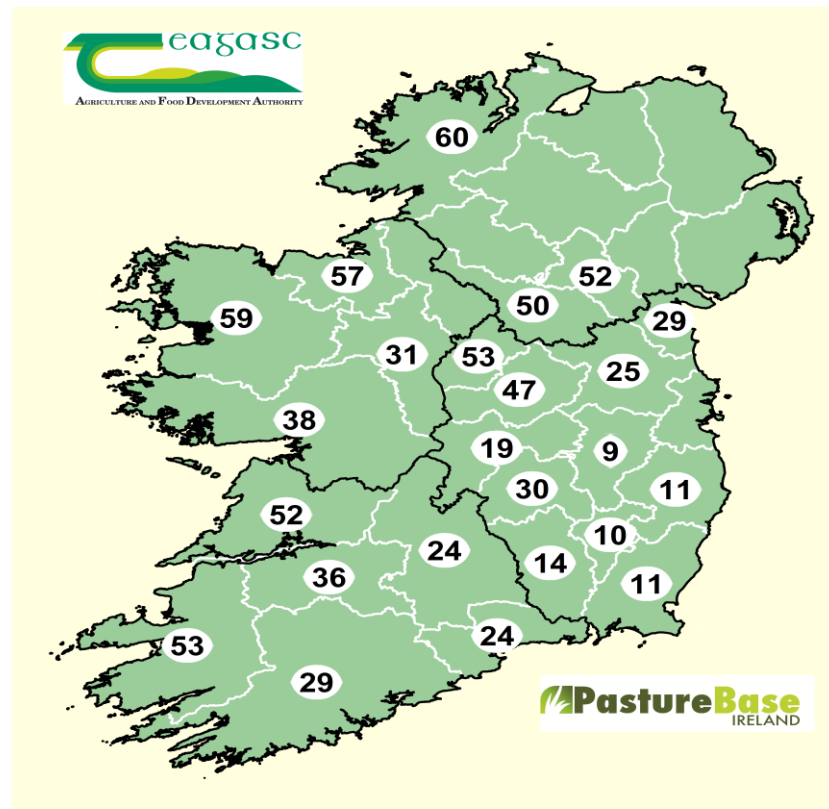


Current (Week ending 16/8) and Predicted Grass Growth (Week ending 23/8)

Current growth
(kg DM/ha/day)



Grass growth predictions
Next week (kg DM/ha/day)

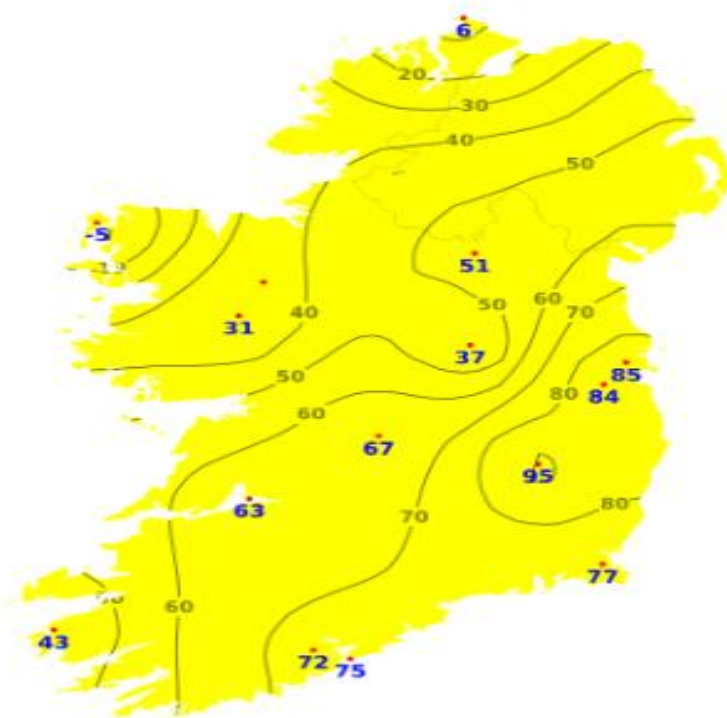


Rainfall (mm) & Soil Moisture Deficit Map

Site	June	July	August
Athenry	126	16	29
Moorepark	81	1.1	24
Johnstown Castle	107	1.5	17
Ballyhaise	110	10.4	29
Oakpark	72	1.5	2.6

7 Stations observed Heatwaves (5 days >25 degrees) in 2026
Moorepark observed a 13 day Heatwave

Thu 13th Aug



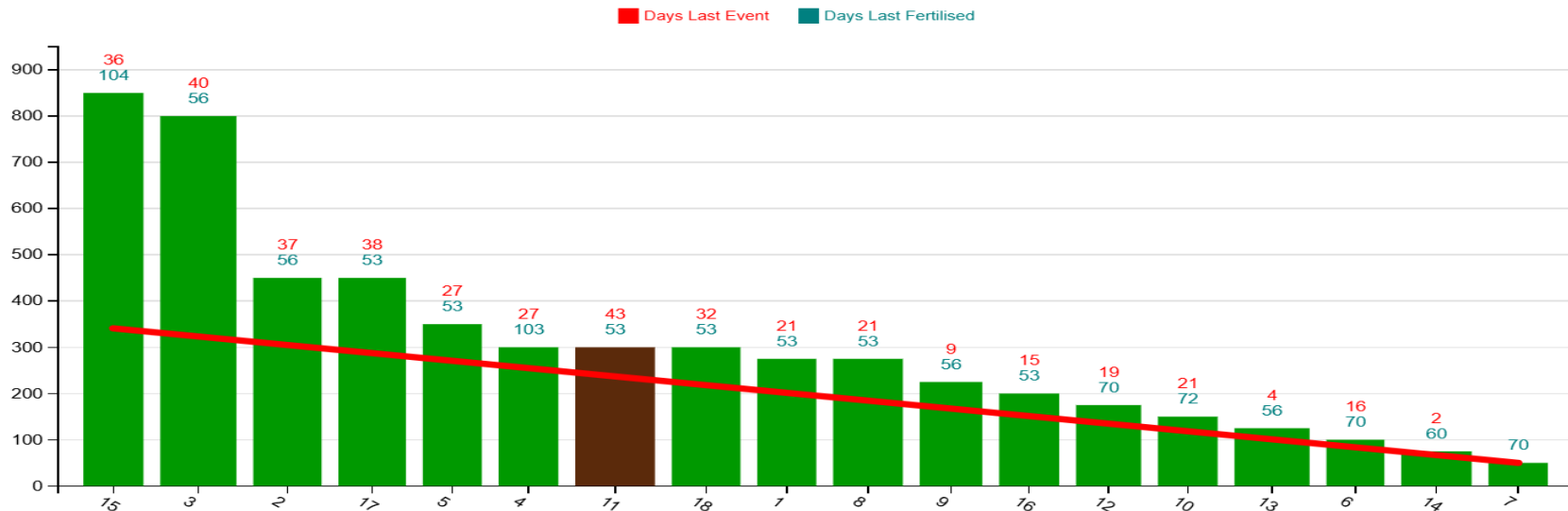
Grazing Management 16/8/26

	Farm Cover (kg DM/cow, Cover per Cow)	Grass growth(kg DM/ha/day)	Grass Demand(Kg DM/cow)	Grazing Stocking rate (Cows/ha)
Munster (1218 Farms)	536 (178)	29	34	3.0
Leinster (396 Farms)	514 (162)	25	36	3.1
Carlow/Kilkenny/Laois/ Kildare/Wicklow/Wexford	408 (162)	14	32	2.9
Connacht/Ulster (273 Farms)	683 (220)	48	45	3.1

Current Feeding levels- 16/8/26

	Grass (kg DM/cow)	Conc (Kg DM/cow)	Silage (Kg DM/cow)	% Diet as Supplement
Munster (1218 Farms)	9.5	4.5	4.0	47%
Leinster (396 Farms)	10.5	4.8	4	46%
Carlow/Kilkenny/Laois/ Kildare/Wicklow/Wexford	9.0	5.0	5.0	53%
Connacht/Ulster (273 Farms)	14	4.1	2.0	30%

Example of Farm Cover & Feeding management on Individual Nork Cork Farm



Farm Cover: **307** **Cover/LU: 101** Growth/ha: **10** Demand/ha: **12** Stocking Rate: **3.03**

	Number of stock	Grass intake	Meal intake	Silage intake	Zero Graze Grass intake
Spring Milkers	100	4	4	10	
Dairy Milkers Group 3	8	0	4	14	

Additional Feeding Costs

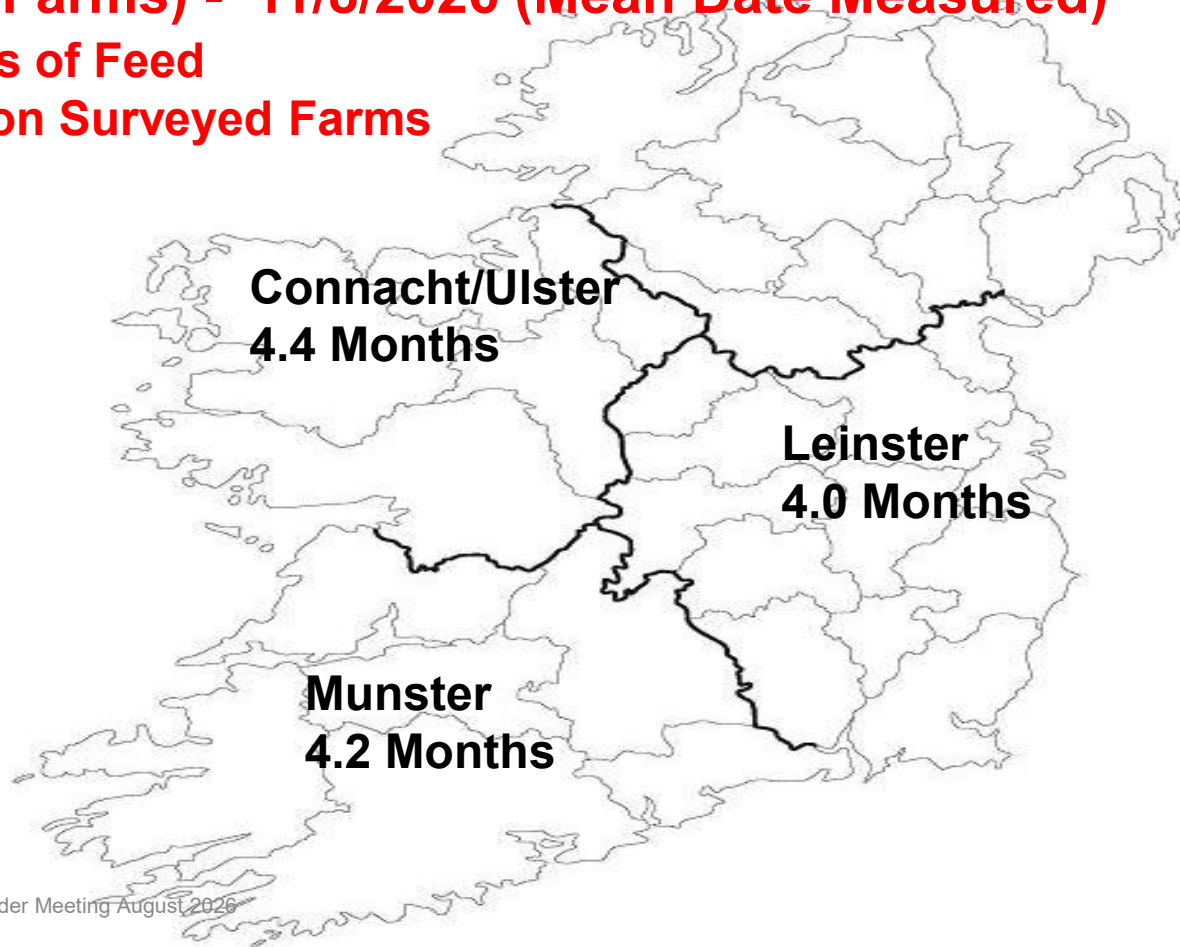
- Grass €95 t/DM, Conc Cost (€350/t), Grass Silage (€250/ton DM) – feed out losses (€315/ton)
- Normal feeding costs (16kg Grass+3kg Conc) – €2.50/cow/day
- Current Feeding levels 9kg Grass (**€0.90/cow/day**) +5 kg Conc – approx. - **€2/Cow/day**, 4-5kg Grass silage - approx. **€1.50/Cow/day**
- Current Feeding Costs approx - **€4.40/cow/day**
- Additional Feeding Costs approx **€1.90+/Cow/day**
- **Additional Costs +€190/day for 100 cow herd - (€1330/week)/€5320/month**
- Worst affected farms additional Costs approx **€3.00/3.50/cow/day**

Fodder Budgets Completed

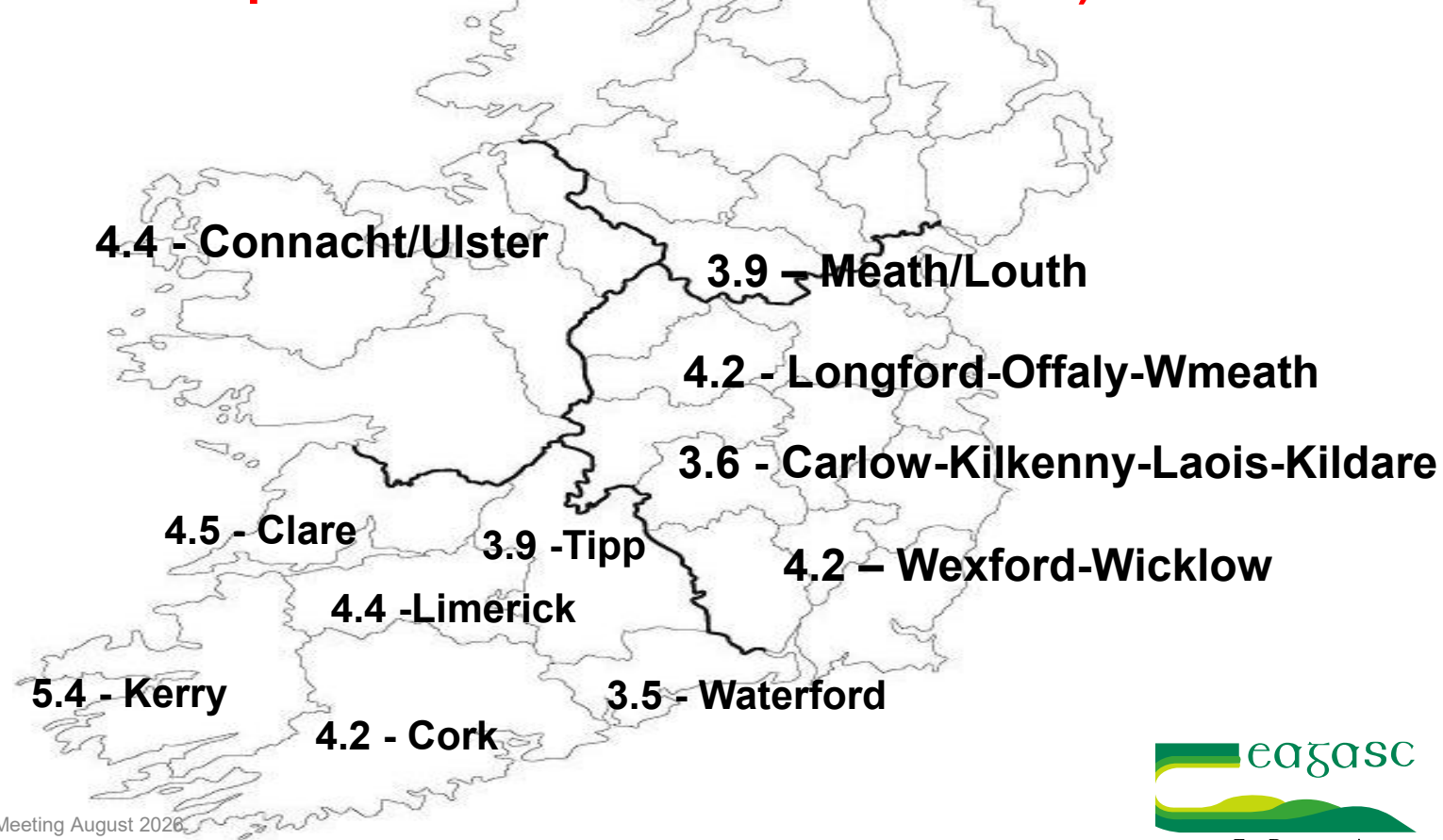
- All Completed in Pasturebase Ireland
- Dairy and Drystock Farms
- 306 farms - 169 Munster, 99 Leinster, 38 Connacht/Ulster
- Feed stocks on the Farm (11/8) with Stock Numbers retained for Winter period

Current Conserved Feed Availability on Farms (306 Farms) - 11/8/2026 (Mean Date Measured)

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

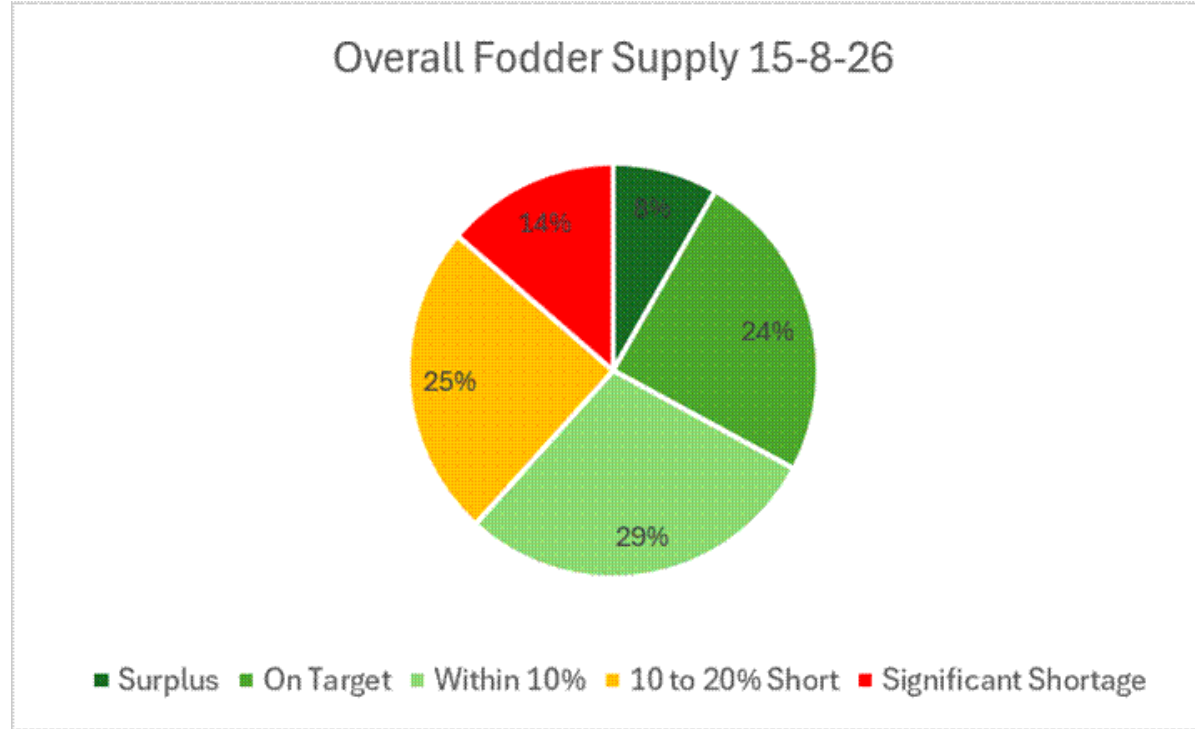


Current Conserved Feed Availability (Months Feed) - (306 Farms quantified on Pasturebase Ireland)



Adequacy of winter fodder supply on farms

(data from wider Teagasc survey through advisers)



Fodder Budget Summary

- Require **5 months** Feed stock at a Minimum, require 5.5 - 6 months in Wetter/Later regions
- Assessments is based on what is in Yards today
- Counties with shortages –
Kilkenny/Laois/Carlow/Kildare/Wexford/Wicklow/Tipp/Waterford/Louth/Meath, Offaly, Westmeath, North Cork
- More New Farm Assessments in next weeks
- Require ongoing monitoring in PBI
- Additional Client Survey on Fodder Supplies on-going

Advisory messages on Farming through the Drought

Tom Curran, Teagasc

Dealing with Drought

Teagasc advisors have been actively working on managing drought conditions and completing fodder budgets with farmers through one-to-one consultations, discussion groups, farm walks, targeted fodder clinics and national and local media since early July.

- **Fodder Budget:**
 - Seek advisor help
 - Complete Fodder budget now
 - Review weekly
 - **Take Action Early,**
 - Identify local sources of additional fodder for purchase where needed
- **Water:**
 - Adequate Supply
 - Clean,
 - Refill Capacity,
 - Additional water to take pressure off wells
 - Grants for solar pumps

Dealing with Drought

- **Feed:**
 - Fill feed gaps with grass, grass silage, concentrate (Max 6kgs) and buffer feeds.
 - Prioritise quality silage
 - Reduce daily demand,
 - Off-load stock (high cell-count, empty cows, cattle fit for selling),
 - Bring in extra land, if available,
 - Short-term grazing agreements locally?
- **Fertiliser & Slurry:**
 - Wait for Rain before spreading Nitrogen/Slurry
 - The sward should be green, tillering and actively growing before spreading.

Dealing with Drought

- Cashflow
 - Allow for additional feed costs
 - Keep an eye on cash in/cash out
 - Prioritise spending on forage purchases
- Winter 2026/2027*
 - Looking ahead
 - Close for third cut where conditions allow
 - Consider Low-Quality Forage options
 - Look at Farm infrastructure for feeding
 - Review Stock Numbers for autumn and winter

A key learning from fodder surveys is farmers need to plan for a reserve of forage over and above winter requirements

* The situation is fluid and must be kept under constant review as there may be opportunities to rectify or partially rectify the situation depending on how the weather comes in the next 4-6 weeks. Advice in regions will vary depending on the severity of the drought.

DAFM fodder meeting August 2026 Crops update

Shay Phelan
Teagasc



Current situation in tillage

- Cereal harvest is approximately 90% complete
- Yields overall are slightly disappointing – likely total harvest below 2M tonnes
- Quality is variable
- Straw yields also low (80-90% of normal) – likely increase in the price
- Autumn drilling of osr and catch crops delayed

Fodder crops

- Soil moisture deficits of approaching 100mm in main east and south east
- Beet, maize yields also likely to suffer
- Beet crops may be left to grow longer into the autumn to increase yields
- Poor leaves on crops may lead to increased losses with leaf pulling harvesters

Potatoes & Vegetables

- Drought and significant SMD have had an impact on all field veg crops.
- Irrigation access is a significant issue €175+ /application
- Crops which have received multiple applications are average
- Access to reliable supply of water is an issue
- Crops with no irrigation are poor and will struggle to meet market specifications
- Dry Matters are very high in potatoes – potential for increased losses at harvest
- Other issues with germination and heat stress (bolting etc.)
- Market gaps which will have financial implications for 2026 & beyond

Solutions?

- **Short term**
- Oats and rye in store – can we increase usage/inclusion rates, ration formulations etc.
- Waste vegetables??
- Straw for silage swaps?
- Catch crops – unless we get rain in the next two weeks will be of limited value
- **Longterm**
- Potatoes irrigation infrastructure??
- Rye more suited to dry conditions

Summary

- Currently, very significant reduction in grass growth on many farms, especially in Leinster and Munster
- Significant supplementary feeding on-going in affected regions with close to 50% of dairy cows' diets consisting of supplementary silage and concentrates (equally split between both) across Munster and Leinster
- Across dairy farms with supplementary feeding information in PBI, supplementation is costing an additional €1.90/cow/day, and up to €3-3.50/cow/day on worst affected farms
- **Preliminary** data from fodder budgets in PBI and the wider Teagasc Fodder Survey shows fodder stocks for next winter are currently less than required, at 4.1 months feed on average across the country, with 4.4 months in Connaught/Ulster, 4.2 months in Munster and 4.0 months Leinster
- **Preliminary** data shows 14% of farms have a significant shortfall in winter fodder supplies (vs 6-10% in a normal year), with a further 25% reporting a 10-20% shortfall. It is worst in the south-east
- Worst-affected counties are Kilkenny / Loais / Carlow / Kildare / Wexford / Wicklow / Tipp / Waterford / Louth / Meath, Offaly, Westmeath, North Cork
- The longer the drought persists, the more fodder stocks will be diminished

Summary cont.

- Current situation requires corrective action on many farms
- An early recommencement of grass growth will provide the best and cheapest option to build up fodder reserves
- Other options include purchase of silage and other fodder crops, cover crops, native grains, review stock numbers, short-term local grazing agreements
- The situation is fluid and must be kept under constant review
- Take action early and seek adviser help
- Main cereal harvest is complete with lower yields. Potatoes and vegetables under significant pressure; irrigation where an option is a big help but is expensive and labour demanding