

Teagasc Dairy Beef Programme

Update, Johnstown Castle

Date of writing: 1st September 2017

Covering period: July-August 2017

Animal performance:

Yearlings

- The yearlings are performing well, averaging 0.91 kg/day for their second season at grass.
- Since their previous weighing, the lows gained 0.95kg/day, mediums 0.79kg/day and the highs 0.36kg/day. The high group were grazing out a stemmy pasture at the time of weighing and were somewhat discontent so some of this difference is probably due to a gut fill effect.
- Yearlings continue to graze covers of ~1500 kgDM/ha.
- There is large variation in yearling weight. From the total herd of 216 cattle the lowest weight was a 'High' heifer at 280 kg, while the highest weight was a 'Low' heifer at 570 kg, both of which were Herefords.



Treatment	21/07/2017, LW		31/08/2017, LW		ADG second season
High	397 kg	385 kg heifers	411 kg	397 kg heifers	0.841
		408 kg steers		425 kg steers	
Medium	411 kg	401 kg heifers	443 kg	433 kg heifers	0.953
		420 kg steers		453 kg steers	
Low	402 kg	388 kg heifers	441 kg	421 kg heifers	0.947
		415 kg steers		457 kg steers	
Average	403 kg		431 kg		0.914



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2017 Calves

- Calves were randomised into their stocking density groups on the 27th July. Groups are balanced for breed, sire, date of birth and weight on arrival.
- Calves are strip grazing low, leafy covers of ~1100 kgDM/ha and continue to be supplemented with 1.3 kg concentrate/head/day.
- Calf weights are very variable in all the stocking density groups. From the entire group of trial calves, the smallest calf weighed 84.5 kg while the heaviest was 242 kg (range of 157.5 kg).
- At the last weighing (31st Aug), the smaller calves from each group were separated from the larger calves. They will graze the rest of the season as two groups on each farmlet in order to avoid competition and to allow the smaller calves to catch up.



	18/07/2017, LW (kg)	31/08/2017, LW (kg)	ADG first season
High	133	155	0.469
Medium	133	156	0.564
Low	133	162	0.673
Average	133	158	0.571

Health:

Yearlings

- A few yearlings are suffering occasionally from lameness. Apart from this there have been no other health issues.

2017 Calves

- Two trial calves have died - one from damaged lungs and one from severe bloat.
- Ringworm is still prevalent throughout the trial calves.
- All calves were vaccinated for pneumonia (Boviplast) and dosed for worms (Panacur) in July.
- Low grazing group received Recocam (anti-inflammatory, 4ml for one day) and Unisol (antibiotic, 5ml for three days) mid-August for respiratory tract infection.
- Parasitology trial began this month with faecal samples taken every two weeks (10 fresh samples per grazing group). The worm count surpassed the threshold of 200epg in two of the groups one month after dosing. The calves will be individually sampled next week and subsequently dosed.

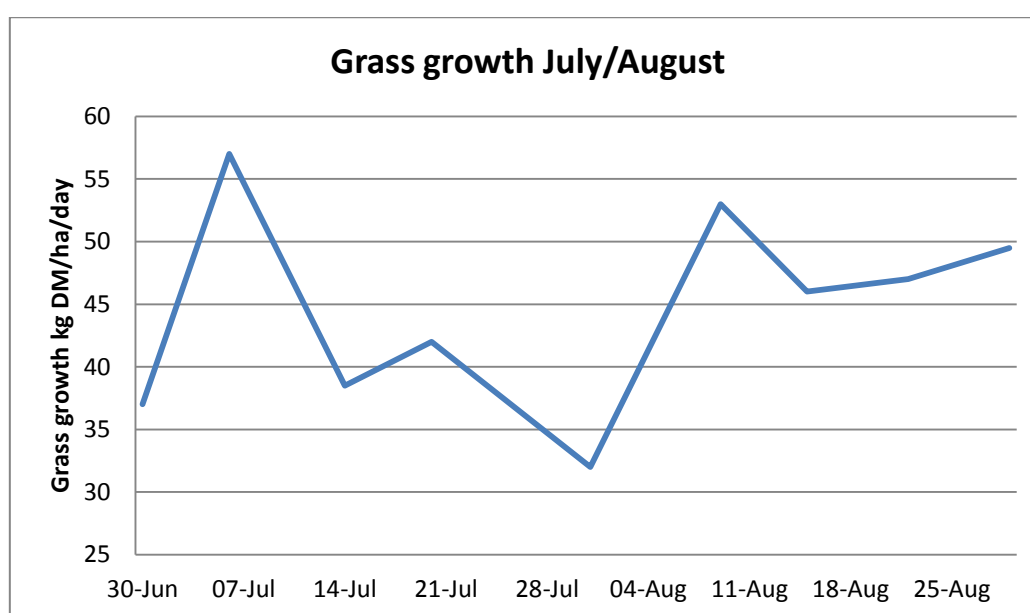
	8 th August	21 st August
High	0	390
Medium	10	255
Low	10	135

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Grassland management:

- The second silage cut was a drawn out affair due to unprecedented bad weather; the first paddocks were cut Tuesday 8th August, with the final paddocks finished Friday 25th August.
- Silage yields averaged 4200 kgDM/ha, with DM of 22%.
- Grass became very tight on the Low farmlet towards the end of August due to the reduced grass growth and the higher number of paddocks being cut for silage and set aside for reseeding. To overcome this deficit, a large paddock used for commercial grazing was grazed by the Low yearlings. This allowed the grass to build back up on the farmlet.
- Grass growth dropped off towards the end of July. However, increased rainfall combined with good soil temperatures (~16°C) saw a rise in growth the beginning of August which has been maintained throughout the month.



- Rotation length was increased to 23 days mid August, then to 25 days the end of August.
- Mid-August the target cover/LU is between 220-250 Kg/DM, reaching 280-300 by the beginning of September. Target average farm cover is ~750 Kg DM/ha by mid-August, reaching ~950 by September. We are behind both of these targets currently, especially on the Low farmlet.
- Reseeding began this week (30th Aug). The grass mix includes high yielding and highly digestible varieties perennial ryegrass such as Abergain and Aberchoice, as well as Dunlace and Drumbo. The mix also contains 0.5kg of white clover. The seeding rate is 15kg/acre.
- Grass seed thrives in moist, warm conditions, requiring soil temperatures of 9-12°C to germinate. The current conditions should give the reseeded ground a great start.

28/08/2017	Cover/LU (kg DM/LU)
High	219
Medium	210
Low	190

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	Ploidy	Maturity group	
Abergain	Tetraploid	Late	3 kg
Aberchoice	Diplod	Late	3 kg
Dunlace	Tetraploid	Intermediate	2 kg
Drumbo	Dilpod	Late	3 kg
Pelleted Crusader	Medium leaved clover		0.5 kg

Average Farm cover, kg DM/ha								
	06 July	14 July	20 July	31 July	09 Aug	15 Aug	22 Aug	29 Aug
High	1003	922	878	815	877	810	848	789
Medium	876	810	861	773	721	679	713	701
Low	1100	994	869	970	778	516	524	631