# Teagasc Dairy Beef Programme Update, Johnstown Castle

## <u>Date of writing:</u> 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019 <u>Covering period:</u> January/February 2019

The dry and mild early spring has allowed the beef farm to build up a good grass cover, considering how low the farm cover was at closing. For the first year in many, the younger cattle were let out mid-February for two weeks, but when the weather broke they had to be returned indoors for a period. A number of the two-year old bullocks have become fit and will be killed before they are due to be turned out in March.

	Jan 2019	Feb 2019
Rainfall (ml)	43.5	61.7
Mean temp (°C)	6.3	7.7
Mean 10cm soil temperature (°C)	5.5	6.1

## **Animal performance:**

## **Older Cattle**

• The remaining heifers were killed on the 14<sup>th</sup> January, averaging 501 kg live weight with 250 kg carcass weight (49.9% KO), O=/O+ conformation score and 3+ fat score.

	Final Live weight (kg)	Carcass weight (kg)	КО%	Age at slaughter	Conf. Score	Fat Score
High	510	249	48.9%	643.6	O=	3=/3+
Medium	515	252	49.0%	643.1	0=/0+	3=/3+
Low	528	257	48.6%	635.3	0=/0+	3+

#### *Heifer performance by Stocking Rate (Average results)*

#### *Heifer performance by Breed (Average results)*

	Final Live weight (kg)	Carcass weight (kg)	KO%	Age at slaughter	Conf. Score	Fat Score
ΑΑΧ	518	251	48.4%	641	O=	3=/3+
HEX	523	254	48.7%	636	O=	3+
LMX	514	254	49.6%	645	0+	3=

- On average the heifers gained 1.23 kg/day over their finishing period, with those that went indoors gaining 1.4kg/day during that short second wintering period.
- The steers are doing well during their second winter; the end of January they were fed 30kg silage and 2 kg concentrates. Towards the end of February, they were cut back to 1 kg in preparation for turnout.
- The bullocks were body condition scored on the 18<sup>th</sup> February and 43 were found to be fit.



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These will be killed early March. The remaining 65 bullocks will be put out to grass with no meal in March when weather permits.

## Steer performance, 2<sup>nd</sup> winter

	11 Jan 19	15 Feb 19	ADG 2 <sup>nd</sup> Winter
High	555	581	0.89
Medium	569	600	1.08
Low	578	586	0.82

## **Yearlings**

- The yearlings are performing well. Their silage allowance was increased to 17kg from 12 kg as the winter period progressed, alongside 2 kg concentrates.
- The yearlings were reduced to 1kg of concentrates (with 17 kg silage) for one week prior to turnout on the 14<sup>th</sup> February.
- At turnout, the yearlings averaged 324 kg (empty weight).
- Unfortunately, due to weather condition, the yearlings were rehoused on the 1<sup>st</sup> march, however it is hoped to get them out as soon as conditions allow.

	09 Jan 19	05 Feb 19	14 Feb 19	ADG 2 <sup>nd</sup> Winter
High	308	330	327	0.79
Medium	305	326	321	0.71
Low	307	320	233	0.75

## **Grass Management:**

- Grass growth for first week in January averaged 8 kg DM/ha/day, with an average farm cover of 975 kg DM/day on the experimental ground.
- The farm was soil sampled and a nutrient management plan with be drawn up.
- Soiled water and slurry was spread on 15 paddocks on the 17 & 18<sup>th</sup> January at a rate of 1800 gallons/acre. Paddocks that did not received slurry received KAN (46%) between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> February at a rate of 65 kg/ha.
- The yearlings were let out to grass on the 14<sup>th</sup> February in groups of 24.
- Fertiliser spreading began yesterday (5th Feb). KAN is being spread at a rate of 65kg/ha on any paddock that has not received slurry.

#### Farm Grazing Days **Total LU** LU/ha Growth/ha Demand/ha Cover Ahead Area Kg Kg На Kg DM/ha/day DM/ha/day DM/ha High 21 32 825 22.32 50.4 2.26 39 29 Medium 38 865 24.26 50.4 2.08 46 Low 988 26.76 50.4 1.88 31 27 58

## Farm cover 22/02/2019



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#### Health:

- Thankfully there has been no major health incidences over the indoor period so far, with no respiratory/pneumonia issues.
- There were two casualties in the older cattle in January; one bullock had to be killed as he was a TB reactor, while another broke its leg and had to be put down.
- A number of yearlings became lame on the slats. They were treated, put on straw for a few days and returned to the slats when they recovered.



