

Teagasc Dairy Beef Research Programme

Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford

Update: June 2020

Although early June had low rainfall levels, with only 23 ml falling before the 16th of the month, the second half of the month received 67 ml of rain, which gave rise to a dramatic increase in grass growth. The high stocking rate group has been suffering in the drought, and we have had to graze some of the silage ground to get them through. The reseed began being grazed 10 days ago. 250 calves are fully weaned; a small group of April born calves that were weaker are still on milk and will be weaned over the next 2 weeks.

	June 2020
Total rainfall (ml)	91.0
Mean temperature (°C)	13.8
Mean soil temperature (°C)	15.8

Animal Performance:

26-month old steers

- The bullocks remain on 3 kg of 14% beef finisher ration per day. They averaged 650 kg mid-June and are due to be weighed and body condition scored next week.
- The steers will be BCS every two weeks going forward, and killed as they reach target fatness. They should be all killed by the end of July.

Yearlings (16-month-old)

- The yearling's growth rate, especially the high SR group, reduced somewhat since their last weighing in May. They averaged 382 kg on the 18th June.
- The high SR yearlings have been entering low covers and grass availability has been lower than the other groups due to the poor growth and dry conditions of May/early June.
- The low SR group has been entering heavy covers of poorer quality grass as growth across the farm was poor and we were afraid to take too much grass out as surplus silage.
- The yearlings were dosed with Albex on the 18th June following FEC. This was their first dose since turnout in March.

Table 1. Yearling FEC results

	Faecal Egg Count, epg
High	100
Medium	200
Low	0

Table 2. Yearling weight and ADG

	Live weight (kg)	ADG second season (kg/day)
High	365	0.80
Medium	398	1.18
Low	385	0.95

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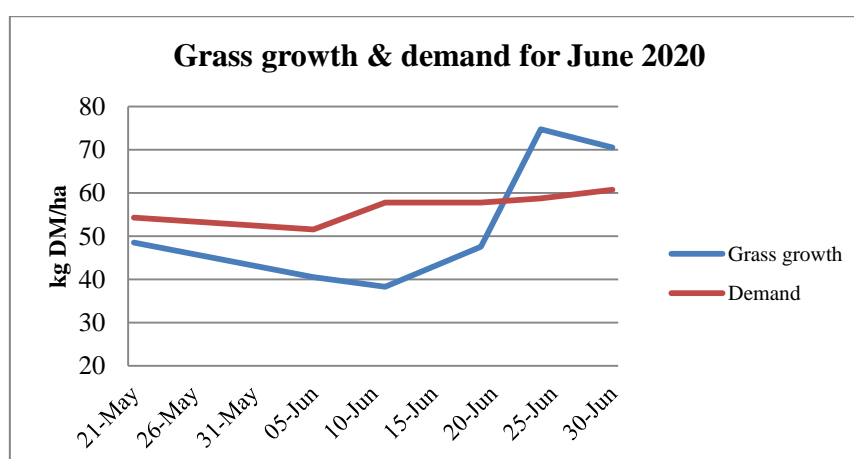
Spring 2020 calves

- 250 calves out of 305 are fully weaned.
- Of the 259 purchased crossbred calves, the calves that have been weaned were weighed on the 17th June and averaged 101 kg at 101 days of age. They were dosed with Albex following FEC (result of 200 epg).
- Unfortunately there have been a number of incidences of pneumonia in the later born calves that have yet to be weaned, and 3 died in June with irreparable lung damage. A group of 30 weak calves were treated by the vet with Synulox and Calvasone for 3 days, and the majority have improved since then. One other calf died in June from meningitis.
- The calves began grazing the reseed in groups of 50 on the 22nd June as the multispecies swards in particular were getting strong (>1500 kg DM/ha).
- The calves are being weighed this week and 180 of these will be assigned to their treatment groups; PRG, PRG+legume and PRG+legume+herb. They will graze their allotted reseeded paddocks in groups of 60.
- The calves were being fed 2 kg concentrates/day, they were reduce to 1.5 kg on the 22nd June, and down to 1 kg/day on the 29th June. The plan is to have them off meal within the next 10 days.



Grassland Management

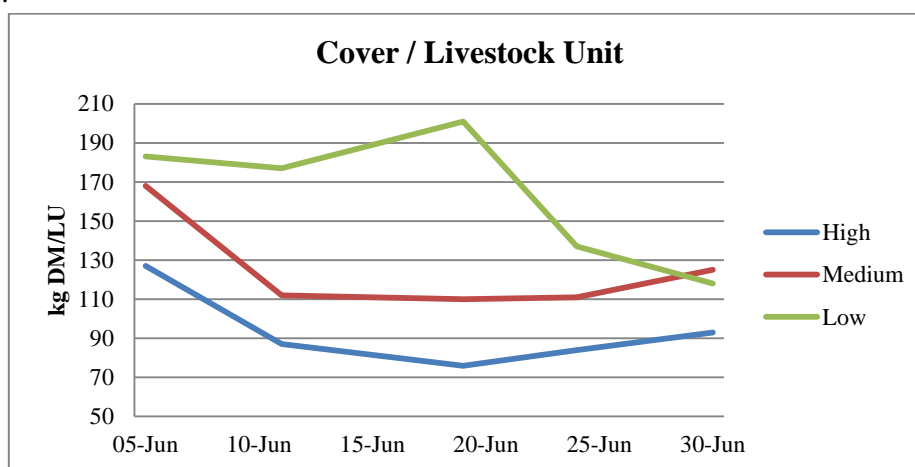
- Due to the drought conditions, grass growth dropped to 38 kg DM/day, with demand remaining at over 55 kg DM/ha.



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- The cover/LU dipped to 76 kg DM/LU in the high SR mid-June and days ahead fell to 7, at this point the cattle were grazing two paddocks that had been set aside for second cut silage. One of these paddocks has been grazed twice during the month of June although the pre-grazing covers were low.



- Once grass growth had picked up, on the 26th June we took one full paddock and two half paddocks out as surplus silage bales from the low stocking density farmlet. The grass yielded 4923 kg DM/ha.
- The silage paddocks have grown substantially over the last 2 to 3 weeks and are now over 3300 kg DM/ha. These will be harvested in 3 weeks' time.
- During the first week of June, a round of KAN was spread across the farm at 65 kg/ha. Once damper conditions arrived, slurry was spread on paddocks post-grazing that had not yet received slurry this year at a rate of 1500 gal/acre to maintain P and K levels across the farm.

Table 3. Farm cover, 30th June 2020

	Farm cover	Growth/ha	Demand/ha	Grazing area	Silage	Total LU	LU/ha	Days ahead
	Kg DM/ha	Kg DM/ha/day	Kg DM/ha/day	Ha	Ha			
High	551	65	67	11.26	4.89	66.4	5.90	8
Med	815	68	77	10.00	7.67	65.4	6.54	11
Low	674	82	64	11.32	8.24	64.4	5.69	11

- The low stocking rate cattle have been grazing heavier covers throughout June of 2000 kg DM/ha on average, the mediums grazed covers of 1750 kg DM/ha while the highs were grazing covers of 1150 kg DM/ha.
- The average with post grazing height was 4.27 cm.
- The reseed began being grazed on the 22nd June, 8 weeks post seeding, with the calves grazing the PRG+clover+herb swards. These paddocks had an average cover of 1760 kg DM/ha.
- Average figures for the botanical composition of the PRG+clover+herb reseed showed that 45% of the DM was PRG, 8% Clover, 23% Chicory, 11% Plantain and 13% of the DM was weeds. After the first grazing the weeds should be outcompeted and the clover content should increase.
- The PRG swards were sprayed with Pastor Trio (1 L/ha) and the PRG+clover swards were sprayed with Clovermax (5 L/ha) and Triad (10 g/ha) on the 12th June.