

Teagasc Dairy Beef Research Programme

Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford

Update: September 2020

In comparison to previous years, rainfall for September was relatively low. Temperatures averaged just below 14°C, which gave way to grass growth levels of approximately 50 kg DM/ha/day. The heifers were increased to 3 kg concentrate/head/day, with the hope to keep them at grass until November, weather and grazing conditions permitting. The calves were housed this month following a series of health implications. Grass, soil and water samples were sent for analysis, as well as dung and blood samples to try to get to the source of the problems that have been experienced this year. Three paddocks were reseeded towards the end of the month once ground conditions allowed for next years' multispecies trial.

	September 2020
Total rainfall (ml)	47.5
Mean temperature (°C)	13.7
Mean soil temperature (°C)	13.9

Animal Performance:

Yearlings (19-month-old)

- The yearlings have been gaining 0.79 kg/day during their second season, and their performance picked up following the wet weather in August. They were grazing covers of ~2000 kg DM/ha over the course of the month.
- The yearlings were weighed on the 14th September 2020 and averaged 441 kg.
- The heifers were built up 3 kg/head/day of 14% beef finisher ration by the 11th September.
- The steers will be housed next month, weather and grass depending, with the intention of keeping the heifers out as long as possible. With farm covers quite low and reducing grass growth, the steers will more than likely be housed early into October to reduce demand.

Table 1. Yearling weight and ADG

	Heifer		Steer	
	Live weight (kg)	ADG second season (kg/day)	Live weight (kg)	ADG second season (kg/day)
High	436	0.83	437	0.75
Medium	442	0.79	447	0.76
Low	430	0.76	456	0.84

Spring 2020 calves

- The calves were weighed on the 15th September and averaged 144 kg, gaining 0.51 kg/day during their first season (only 0.40 kg/day since their last weighing).
- Because of their deteriorating performance and a number of rising health issues, the calves were all housed on straw by the 24th September (aside from a group of 40 FRX calves and a small group of spare calves). A number of healthy calves had become severely dehydrated overnight, and some had acquired pneumonia.

Teagasc Dairy Beef Research Programme

Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford

- Following consultations with our vet, and a visitation from a vet from MSD, grass, soil and water samples were all taken and put through the labs here in Johnstown Castle. The grass and soil samples came back within the normal range for minerals. The water samples from the water troughs came back normal for minerals, but exceptionally high for coliform levels. The water sources were subsequently sampled and came back clear of coliforms. It is unclear whether the coliform contamination (which we suspect is happening in the field from the seagulls that are rampant in Johnstown) has been a cause of the issues that we are having, but it cannot have helped. The dung samples so far have come back clear. We are awaiting some blood sample results, so far they have come back elevated for copper levels.
- The calves were dosed with Albex and given 7 ml of Unisol a week after housing.
- The calves are being fed *ad lib* silage and 1.5 kg concentrates.

Grassland Management

- Grass growth rate across the farm was approximately 50 kg DM/ha/day for September.
- Farmyard manure and soiled water was spread on grazed-out paddocks, and the required lime spread on paddocks that were cut for third cut silage (a lot of lime had been spread in the spring across the rest of the farm).
- The average pre-grazing yield for the month on the stocking rate farmlets was 2020 kg DM/ha.
- It is likely that the bullocks will be housed on the stocking rate trial mid-October in order to try to keep the heifers out as long as possible.
- Three paddocks under the stocking rate farmlets were reseeded at the end of September for the new multispecies trial commencing next year. They were sprayed off, spread with farmyard manure spread, given three runs of the disc, spread with lime, power harrowed, seed sown with pneumatic seeder and rolled.

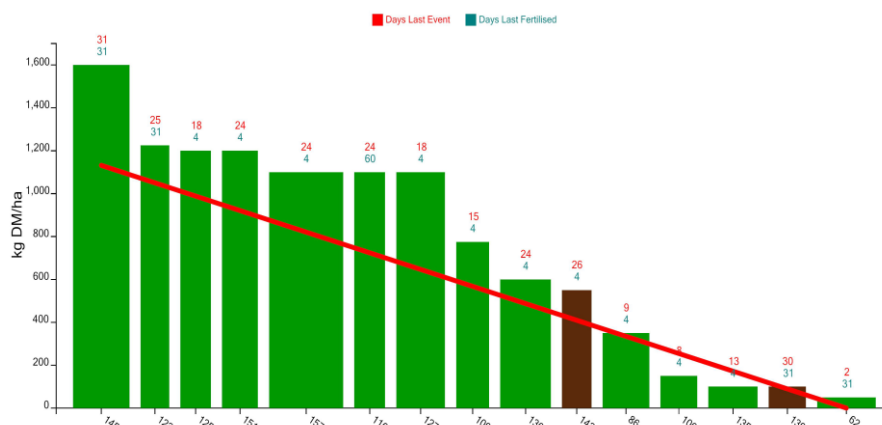
Table 2. Farm cover, 28th September 2020

	Farm cover	Growth/ha	Demand /ha	Grazing area	Silage cut later	Total LU	LU/ha	Days ahead
	Kg DM/ha	Kg DM/ha/day	Kg DM/ha/day	Ha	Ha			
High	742	48	38	15.11	0	50.4	3.34	20
Med	791	38	34	16.52	0	50.4	3.05	23
Low	756	52	33	18.25	0	50.4	2.76	23

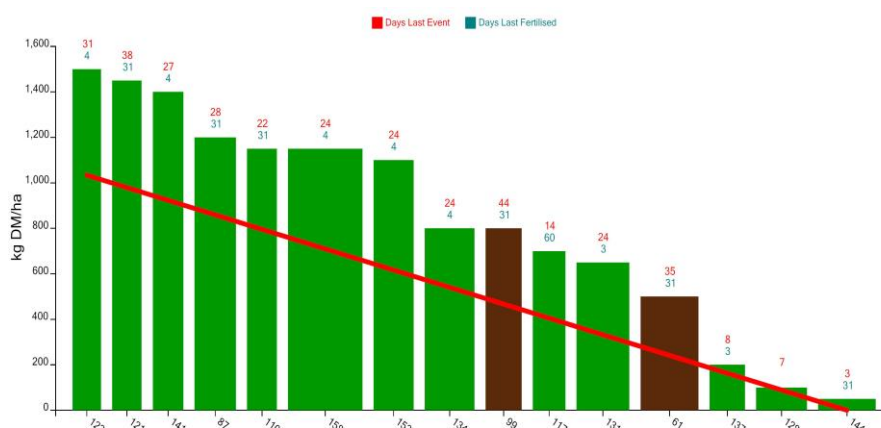
Teagasc Dairy Beef Research Programme

Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford

High Stocking Rate



Medium Stocking Rate



Low Stocking Rate

