

Meeting Grazing Targets in Real World Conditions

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Overview

- Tactics of grazing – spring and summer
- Focus on implementing targets and adapting them to suit your farm
- Lessons from 2024

Spring Grazing Tactics

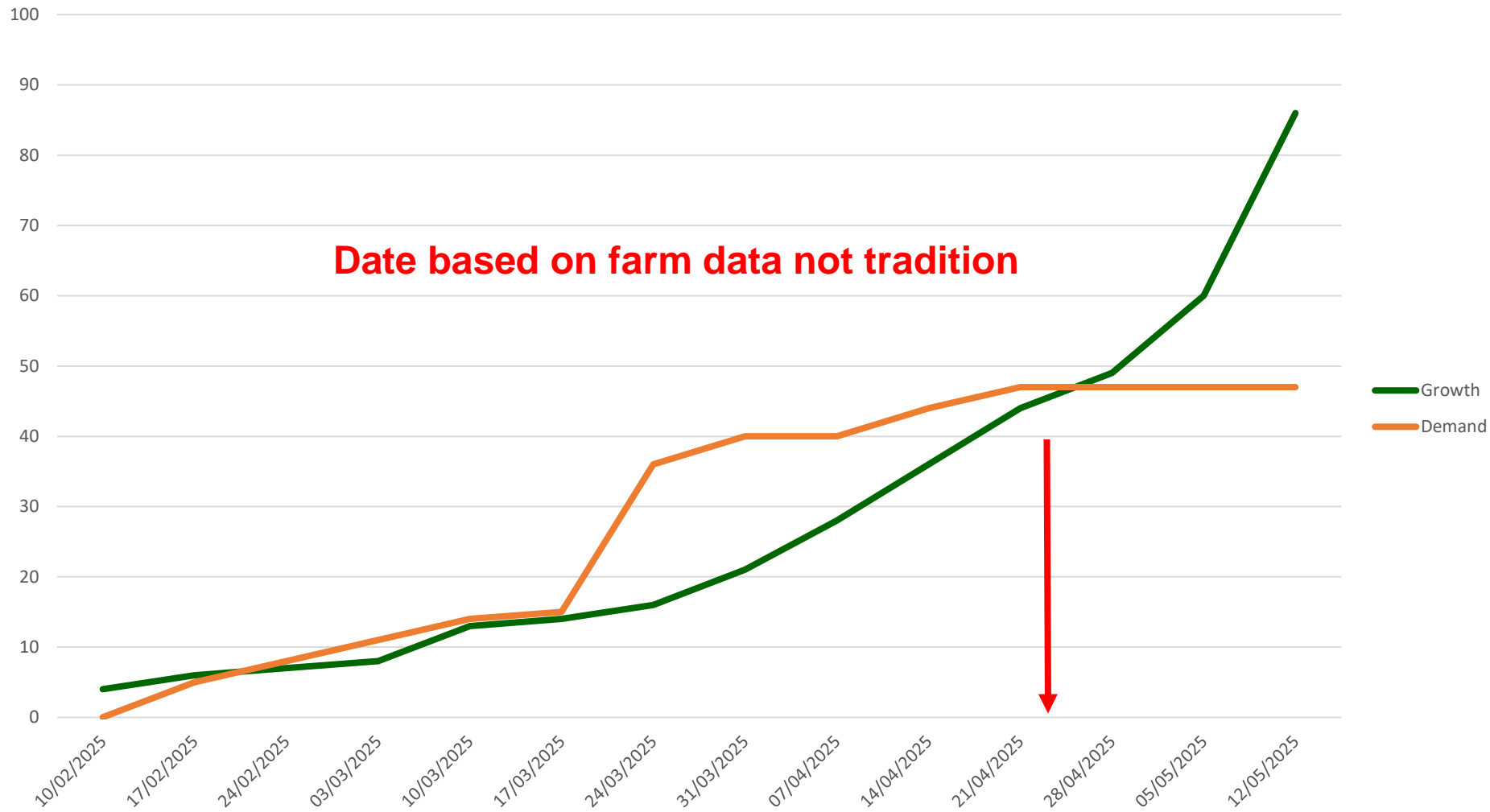
Spring Budget

- Ensuring enough grass in April
- Balance intake and utilisation – increase intake week-on-week

Spring Rotation Plan

- Are the dates right for your farm?
- Do the budget and SRP make sense together??
 - $\text{Area per day} * \text{grass cover} = \text{Grass available} / \text{cow number}$
 - SRP figure should be close to the budget

Spring Growth vs Demand



SRP Ballyhaise

WEEK	TARGET HA GRAZED/DAY	TARGET HA GRAZED BY WEEK END	ACTUAL HA GRAZED BY WEEK END	TARGET %	ACTUAL %
17/02/2025 - 23/02/2025	0.33	2.32		6	
24/02/2025 - 02/03/2025	0.37	4.88		12	
03/03/2025 - 09/03/2025	0.41	7.74		19	
10/03/2025 - 16/03/2025	0.46	10.96		27	
17/03/2025 - 23/03/2025	0.53	14.66		37	
24/03/2025 - 30/03/2025	0.62	19.02		47	
31/03/2025 - 06/04/2025	0.75	24.29		61	
07/04/2025 - 13/04/2025	0.96	30.98		77	
14/04/2025 - 20/04/2025	1.31	40.13		100	

- Based on hitting 45kg growth 20th April
 - Based on long term average - what is it for your farm?
- Use SRP as a weekly guide not a daily allowance tool

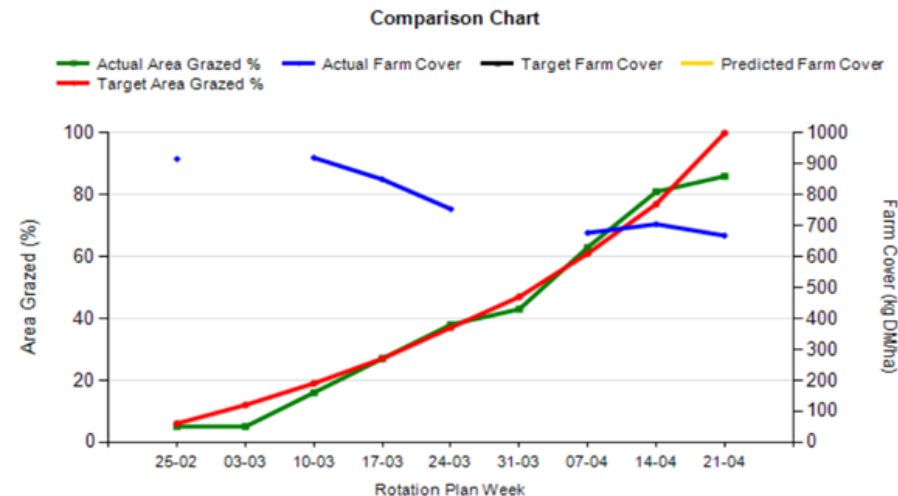
Spring Grass Budget

WEEK START	AREA (HA)	SPRING MILKERS	GRASS INTAKE	MEAL INTAKE	SILAGE INTAKE	TOTAL INTAKE	TARGET COVER (KG DM/HA)	Click to copy Predicted to Target Predicted Cover	ACTUAL FARM COVER(KG DM/HA)	PRED. GROWTH (KG DM/DAY)	ACTUAL GROWTH (KG DM/DAY)	DEMAND(KG DM/HA)	STOCKING RATES(LU/HA)	ACT. COV./ LU (KG DM/ LU)
10/02/2025	40	15	0	4	10	14	↓	1000	1000	4		0		
17/02/2025	40	35	6	4	5	15	↓	1028	1028					
24/02/2025	40	50	6	4	6	16	↓	1033	1033					
03/03/2025	40	75	6	5	6	17	↓	1030						
10/03/2025	40	90	6	5	6	17	↓							
17/03/2025	40	100	6	5	7	18	↓	1000						401
24/03/2025	40	104	14	4	0	18	↓	997					2.6	383
31/03/2025	40	106	15	4	0	19	↓	854	854	21		40	2.65	322
07/04/2025	40	108	15	4	0	19	↓	722	722	28		41	2.7	268
14/04/2025	40	110	16	4	0	20	↓	635	635	36		44	2.75	231
21/04/2025	40	110	17	3	0	20	↓	579	579	44		47	2.75	211
28/04/2025	40	110	17	3	0	20	↓	560	560	49		47	2.75	204
05/05/2025	40	110	17	3	0	20	↓	575	575	60		47	2.75	209
12/05/2025	40	110	17	3	0	20		668	668	86		47	2.75	243

Feeding silage to budget in Feb
Get cows to grass every day
Silage out as budget allows

Comparing plan to actual late March 2024

	Where we wanted to be	Where we actually were
Growth Rate kg day	28	10
Grazing schedule	Fulltime	Out by day
Post grazing residual	4cm	5cm +
Supplement	4kg meal	7kg Silage + 5kg meal
% Area Grazed	60%	58%
Farm cover per ha	700	670



If (When!) the going gets tough

1. Feed the cow

- Retain high quality silage for spring (1-2 bales per cow depending on soil type)
- Alter concentrate quality / quantity based on grass in diet
- Watch BCS






2. Minimise poaching


- Use every tool in the box
- Accept some days will be not ideal (persist at least once a day)
- Don't let perfect be the enemy of good – massive benefit to the cow even if only 3 hours in the day

3. Hit grazing budget targets

- Keep measuring and recording area grazed
- Get as close as you can to targets but if you miss just reset each week
- Be cautious in early spring and be more aggressive as the spring progresses

Mid Season- Don't Change the Target

	=	   						
Target Grass	=	Rotation	X	Stocking Rate	X	Allowance	+	Residual
1400	=	20	X	3.6	X	18	+	100
1750	=	20	X	4.60	X	18	+	100
1400	=	20	X	4.60	X	14	+	100

	
Growth Needed	Mid-season supplement per cow
65	250
83	
65	1050

Removing Surplus Grass Covers

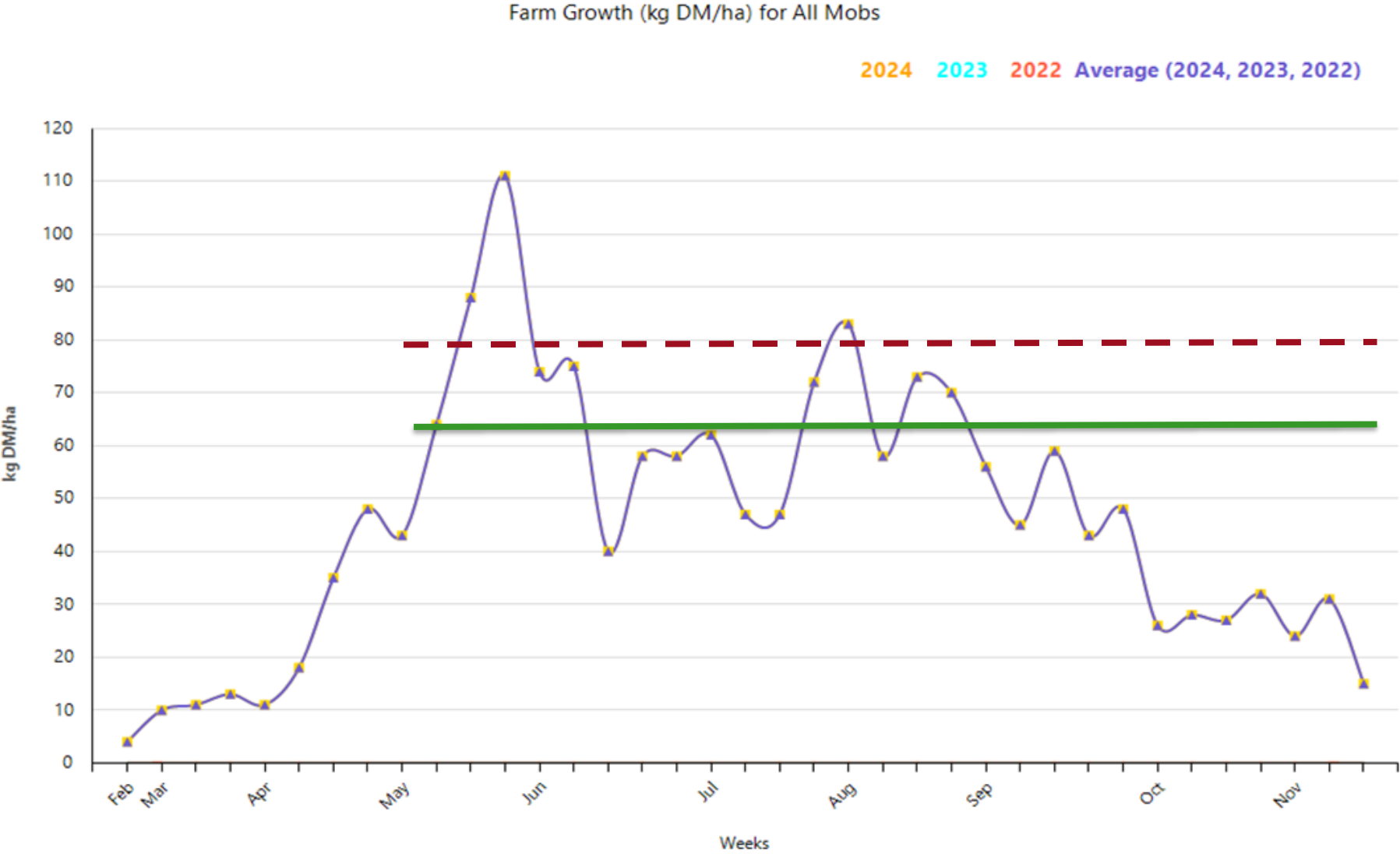


- Surplus covers management essential part of the system
- Stocking the farm “to eliminate bales” is not an ideal tactic
- Which is more work? Removing surpluses or filling deficits?

When to cut?

- Above 3.5 cows/ha immediately. Below 3.5 cows ha can wait
- Ideally 1800 to 2000 covers
- Try to avoid a lot of paddocks at once – often causes deficits later
- Use surplus to correct pasture quality where needed/possible
 - Big part in sward recovery plan after spring 2024

Pasture quality issues on farms June/July 2024



Lessons from 2024

1. Value of grass in the diet in spring
2. Value of having a reserve of high quality feed
3. Value of grass surplus in summer
4. Look after the cow – she pays the bills

