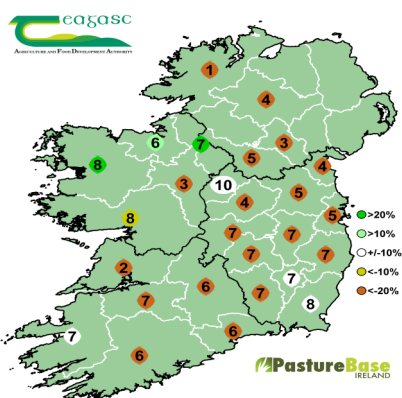


23rd February 2021

**PastureBase**  
IRELAND

AFC	Growth
840 Kg DM/Ha	6 Kg DM/Ha

Grass growth measurement  
Today's grass growth (kg DM/ha/day)



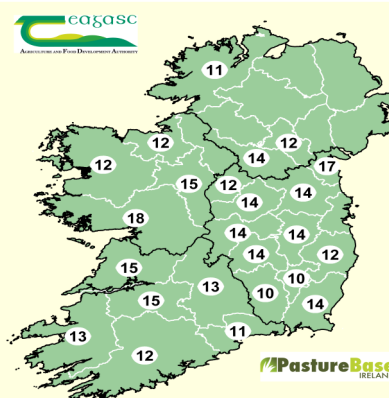
On the left: counties map showing **current** grass growth rates over the last week.

On the right: counties map showing **predicted** grass growth over the next 7 days from farms involved in Elodie Ruelle's MoSt grass growth model (55 farms).

#### Predicted Growth Rate:

Ballyhaise 11 kg DM/ha  
South Wexford 10 kg DM/ha  
Athenry 18 kg DM/ha  
Clonakilty 15kg DM/ha

Grass growth predictions  
Next week (kg DM/ha/day)



### Torrential rainfall on Tuesday brings grazing to a halt but forecast is promising

Up to 80 mm rain in parts of the South West and 40-50mm in other areas of the country on Tuesday have resulted in animals being housed. Up to that many dairy farmers were getting out for **3 hours on-off grazing** when the weather allowed and some drystock farmers were turning out light animals to grass. Ground conditions will be at saturation point after today's rain, so the key over the next few days is to **walk the drier parts of the farm as weather improves** and return animals to grass when ground conditions allow. The wet February has disrupted grazing on many farms so when the weather settles and we move towards the 1st March, sit down and adjust your Spring Rotation Planner and Grass Budget on PastureBase Ireland.

#### Spring N Application

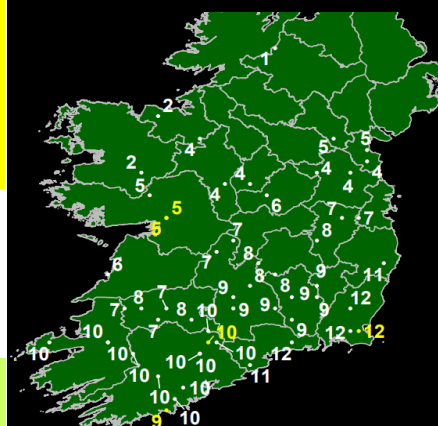
Spring N application (fertiliser N and slurry N) has been delayed on many farms during February, however the weather conditions are set to improve towards the end of February/early March. This should allow many farms to get back on track with fertiliser N and slurry N applications. Before application takes place the following 3 questions should be considered:-

1. What parts of my farm/all of farm are trafficable?
2. Is the forecast favourable?
3. Are soil temperatures 5.5°C and rising on my farm?

#### Grass Dry Matter %

Moorepark, Co. Cork  
15% (1000 Kg DM/Ha)  
Grange, Co. Meath  
21.5% (950 Kg DM/Ha)

#### Rainfall for the week until 2nd March



#### Drier week on the forecast!

Elodie Ruelle's MoSt Prediction model uses data from Met Eireann to predict weather conditions on Irish farms. After Tuesday's rain, much lower rainfall levels are expected around the country for the next week.

#### Early Grazing in Co. Galway

Tim Kelly operates a spring calving Dairy farm in Athenry, Co. Galway and is part of the South Galway Grass10 Group. We visited Tim last week to see how he was progressing with spring grazing on his farm. Click on the link to view the video. <http://bit.ly/TimKellyGrazing>

#### Summary

Targets to be out grazing by the 1st week of February  
Aiming to follow targets on Spring Rotation Planner  
Cows with more milk and cleaner when at grass  
Targets dry paddocks, spur roadways + on-off grazing in wet weather



23rd February 2021

## Strategies to increase the length of the grazing season for spring and autumn calving cows

Soil conditions and inclement weather are two of the biggest limitations affecting the extension of the grazing season on Irish dairy farms.

Over 50% of soils in the Republic of Ireland are classified as Podzols, Gleysols or Histosols. These soils are slow draining and practically impervious thereby preventing full-time turnout to pasture in early spring and late autumn, due to a high risk of poaching damage.

Teagasc Researchers Michael O'Donovan & Emer Kennedy, along with external collaborators Luc Delaby, INRA and Dr. Tommy Boland, UCD completed a project in order to investigate ways in which the grazing season can be extended and therefore increase the proportion of grazed grass in the diet.

Grazed grass is the cheapest feed available and it has previously been shown that as the proportion of grazed grass in the diet increases costs of production decrease.

Trial:- 4 treatments of dairy cows were given access to pasture for **22 hours, 9 hours, 2 x 3 hours and 2 x 4.5 hours respectively.**

For the duration of the trial they were offered on average 1282 Kg/DM/Ha of highly digestible grass (86% OMD).

Main results:

- No significant reduction in milk yield, milk solids yield, body-weight or body condition score was observed when animals were allocated two three hour periods of access to grass compared to cows grazing fulltime.
- By adjusting their grazing behaviour (i.e. grazing bites per minute and grass dry matter intake per bite) cows given two three hour periods of access to grass grazed for 5.9 hours (98% of their time at pasture) resulting in no difference in grass dry matter intake.



### Key Findings

- Cows can be retained at pasture during periods of wet weather without any poaching damage occurring due to the development of on/off grazing technologies which will lead to an increase in the number of days at grass.
- On/off grazing can also be used as a strategy to allow an earlier turnout date on farms with heavy soil.

Treatments (Pasture Access Time)	22 Hrs	9 Hrs	2 x 3 Hrs	2 x 4.5 Hrs
Milk Yield (kg/cow)	22.0	22.6	21.4	21.7
Total Intake (Kg DM/cow/day)	17.4	15.7	16.6	16.3
Grazing Time (mins /day)	540 (9 Hrs)	431 (7 hrs 11 min)	349 (5 hr 49 min)	425 (7 hr 5 min)

### View Grass10 Webinars back!

Have you missed the Grass10 & PastureBase Webinar titled "Getting Familiar with PastureBase Ireland" in early February?

Not to worry as the webinar along with our December and January webinars are all available to view on the Teagasc Grass10 page on the Teagasc website- under the "Webinar" tab. The PowerPoint presentation and FAQs from the webinars are also available to view!

[www.teagasc.ie/grass10](http://www.teagasc.ie/grass10)

### Need help getting set up on PBI for grass measuring in 2021?

Email [support@pbi.ie](mailto:support@pbi.ie) or call 046-9200965



## Planning Your Spring Grazing with PastureBase Ireland

Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March | 7pm

Join the Grass10 & PastureBase team on the night and hear:

- Update on Spring grass supply and February grazing from PBI
- Practical advice on how to make the Grass Wedge, Spring Rotation Planner and Grass Budget work for you on your farm
- Tips and advice from Grass10 team on managing grass throughout March

Hear from special guest's heavy soils dairy farmer **Sean Barry** from Co. Limerick & beef farmer **JP Hammersley** from Co. Tipperary as they discuss how they will manage grass on their farms throughout Spring using the tools on PastureBase



Or visit [www.teagasc.ie/grass10](http://www.teagasc.ie/grass10)



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine

