Grass10 Weekly Update

8th December 2020

AFC	Growth	Grass Dry Matter %
733 kg DM/ha	9kg DM/Ha	13.7% (1200 Kg/DM/Ha)

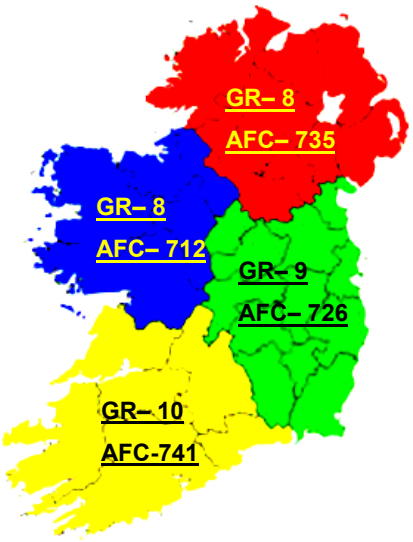
Closing Average Farm Covers 100 Kg/DM/Ha ahead of 2019

Over the last 2 weeks, the majority of PastureBase Ireland users have completed a closing average farm cover (AFC) for their farms. Completing a closing AFC for your farm allows you to accurately measure over winter growth when you walk the farm early next Spring.

In early December 2019, **AFC stood at 639 Kg/DM/Ha** across PastureBase Ireland users. This year on the 8th December 2020 it stands at **733 Kg/DM/Ha** so Irish Dairy, Beef and Sheep farmers have nearly 15% more grass available on their farms as we look towards Spring 2021.

If you are yet to complete a closing AFC, complete **it this week.**

Ensure you have 20 farm walks entered throughout 2020 on PastureBase Ireland to meet your derogation plan requirements. Make sure you have measured at **least once** in November.



Stocking Rate (LU/Ha)	AFC Dec 1st Kg/DM/Ha
2.5	650
3.0	700
3.5	750

With your closing AFC completed see where you are compared to the targets. Target varies depending on stocking rate, calving date, calving rate and land type.

Farmers that are stocked at 3 LU/Ha need to close with an AFC of between **700-750 kg/DM/Ha on the 1st Dec** to have **950-1000 Kg/DM/Ha opening cover on 1st Feb** in an average year when **growth rates are 4kg DM/Ha/Day during the winter months.**

Expected Opening AFC depending on growth

Closing Cover (Kg/DM/Ha)	Growth per day (Kg/DM/Ha)	Opening Cover (Kg/DM/Ha) 1st February 2021– 55 Days
733	3	898
733	4	953
733	5	1008

Complete Your Grass Budget

With closing AFC completed on your farm, complete a grass budget for the first half of 2021 on PastureBase Ireland. A grass budget allows you to map out your grazing and identifying areas where you could be short of grass especially during the important Spring period. Use growth rates for your farm or average growth rates (in table) and expected calving/lambing dates and turnout dates to accurately estimate grass demand for the Spring.

Grass10 & PastureBase Ireland Webinar

Do you want to understand and capitalise on your PastureBase reports such as the **Annual Tonnage Report**, **Farm Cover Report** and the **Farm Summary Report?**

Tune in to our Achieving Grazing Excellence in 2021 webinar this **Wednesday 9th December at 7pm on Zoom**.

Please see advert on the right or click https://bit.ly/PBIWebinar to register.

Link to Promo Video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gY-ruKy4dGE

Have questions ready for our team and Jim on the night!

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Do you want to improve your grassland management in 2021?

If the answer is "Yes" then join a Grass10 Grazing Course in your area. It is a great opportunity to learn to implement better grazing techniques, measure grass and make better grazing decisions with support from advisors and encouragement from other like minded farmers.

Dairy Farmer William Cleary who is the grazing coach for the Nenagh Grass10 Grazing Course in Co. Tipperary discusses in the following video why he joined a Grass10 Grazing Course and what he has learned along the way. https://bit.ly/WilliamClearyGrass10

If you would like to join a Grass10 Grazing course in 2021, click here to register your interest and the Grass10 team will get back to you with suitable courses in your area for 2021. www.teagasc.ie/grazingcourses

New Low Nitrogen Grazing System Project at Curtins Farm, Fermoy, Co. Cork

Brendan Horan, Research Officer, Teagasc Moorepark, Fermoy, Co. Cork

As the pressure intensifies to reduce nitrogen (N) losses from farming, interest in the potential of legume-based and diverse multispecies swards have increased. Building on a strong existing programme on Perennial Ryegrass (PRG) and White Clover (WC) research which has been ongoing at Teagasc, the inclusion of additional grass and herb species such as chicory (*Cichorium intybus* L.) and ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata* L.) in grazing swards has been shown to increase temporal pasture yield stability, enhance animal performance and product character and simultaneously reduce both the requirements for chemical N inputs and in particular urinary N excretion. To date however, there is limited data on the performance of intensively managed diverse pastures under grazing.

The objective of this new project will be to compare the performance of traditional PRG swards supported by 250 kg/ha of applied chemical N fertilisers against 2 low N legume-based systems based a classical PRG WC sward, or a diverse multispecies swards (incorporating 40% PRG, 15% other grasses, 30% legumes and 15% herbs) based on an annual chemical N application of 125 kg of per ha. The new project will implement MACC methods such as using Protected UREA, Low Emissions Slurry Spreading, Low CP feeds, Sexed Semen and use of the Dairy Beef Index.

This project is a collaboration between Irish (Teagasc, UCD, UCC) and French (INRAe and L'Institut de l'Elevage (Idele)) representing a unique opportunity to access an important experimental design based on a diversity of grazing pastures which are common to Ireland and the Western oceanic part of France while developing new analytical measures which will be valuable in both countries for the future. This project will quantify the biological effects of alternative sward and animal combinations on individual animal, sward and total system performance within intensive grazing systems using common methodology. The project will involve a multidisciplinary team and approach, incorporating Teagasc expertise from the Animal and Grassland and Environmental programmes in addition to animal and systems expertise from INRAE.

Sward type	Ryegrass		Grass white clover		Mixed species	
Dairy cow Breed	HF	JFX	HF	JFX	HF	JFX
N applied (kg N/ha/yr)	250	250	125	125	125	125
Concentrate (kg fwt/cow/yr)	500	500	500	500	500	500
Stocking rate (cows/ha)	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75