

Teagasc Notes for week ending Friday 23rd July 2021

Grass growth on the increase – this week, following much needed rainfall grass growth rates have dramatically increased to 60 – 70 kgs DM per Ha per day as per Teagasc Pasture Base Ireland data. With the current semi continental warm weather, grass covers have changed swiftly and farmers need to react to maintain mid-season grass quality ensuring continued good milk solids yield and liveweight gain on farm. Grazing the correct covers is paramount for all stock with liveweight gain of + 0.25 kgs/day possible with livestock grazing covers of 1400 kgs DM / Ha (two fists high) versus higher covers greater than 2,000 kgs DM / Ha (3 fists plus). Over a 200 day grazing year this amounts to 50 kgs extra liveweight at housing time from grazed grass. For dairy farmers, milk yield & milk protein % is greatly influenced by grazing correct grass covers. Milk reductions of up to 4 litres / cow per day have been measured where pre-grazing covers are just too high.

What to do ? 1. Walk your farm immediately and assess grass cover – targets for farmers are 10 days visible grass ahead of stock (which correlates to 160-180 kgs DM per LU) and pre-grazing covers in the 1400-1500 range. 2. Take out surplus grass now as bales – avail of the good weather. It is too early to build up grass for the Autumn time (see targets below). 3. Match grass growth and demand – for e.g. growth predicted = 60 kgs DM/Ha/day and farm stocked at say 3.5 dairy cows per hectare (0.7 ac / cow) = $60/3.5 = 17$ kgs grass available per cow per day – so 1-1.5kgs meal sufficient to match supply & demand. If growth exceeds demand grass cover will increase and on farm production will suffer. Focus more on grazed grass as it is 85% of the dairy cow's diet.

Recent participants at the nationwide **Teagasc Derogation Grassland Management Courses** have learned the important lessons – do you need to complete this **mandatory course** as a derogation farmer? Contact your local Teagasc office to learn of upcoming courses.

<u>Late Summer / Autumn Grazing Targets</u>	Cover/LU	Rotation Length (days)
Mid July	160-180	18-24
1 st August	180	20
Mid August	200-250	25
1 st September	300	30

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