

Shinagh Dairy Farm Report 06-07-2018

Profitable Science Based Farming

Farm Update

63.54 ha are available for grazing. There are 244 milking cows and 58 spring born 2018 dairy heifer calves grazing this. That is a stocking rate of 4.02 cows per hectare, giving a feed demand of 69kg of DM per hectare per day if no supplementary feed was going into the diet.

The herd is milking 18.9 litres at 4.13% fat, 3.73% protein (4.84 % lactose, 160,000 SCC and 6,000 TBC). That's 1.53kg of milk solids per cow per day. Yield has increased since the introduction of ration at milking even with tight rationing of grass. At least this rise in milk is indicating to us that we could reduce the amount of grass being offered a little more until we hold milk yield. We are holding at grazing 1/30 of the farm per day (30 day rotation) currently. Recovery on recently grazed paddocks is very poor.

We are feeding 6kg of ration at milking (3kg at morning at 3 kg at evening milking) and have been offering bale silage after each milking to the herd in round feeders in a stand-off area. We estimate they are consuming about 5kg of silage drymatter per cow per day. The grass is being rationed with a strip wire in order to hold to grazing 2 ha per day. This is keeping us at a 30 day rotation currently. We have brought some of the second silage ground into grazing. It has a cover of 1,200kg/ha. Before we grazed this we sourced 2nd silage ground to rent to fill the gap in winter feed we would have if we reduced our second cut. We have now got a load of palm kernel and are beginning to feed this on top of the bale silage in the silage round feeders in the stand-off area. We are nearly out of bale silage and we do not want to open the silage pit and start using up next winters feed. We intend to go as high as 5 kg of palm kernel per day in order to hold our rotation out at 30 days and to prevent feeding first cut silage. Palm kernel is high in fibre and is a safe product to feed like this, effectively ad lib, without causing stomach upsets.

With our current level of feeding demand is now 31kg/DM/day. We estimate growth is 25kg/DM/day here at the moment.

We are only spreading a half bag of CAN now, as when we get rain there will be a release of nitrogen that is in the ground (mineralisation) as well as bag nitrogen that has not been used by the grass in the last three weeks.

Updates are on the Shinagh website: <http://www.shinaghdairy.ie/>