

Shinagh Dairy Farm Report 15-10-2018

Profitable Science Based Farming

Farm Update

The total farm (78ha) is being grazed. The last of the rented silage was pitted during the fine week. We now have enough silage for this winter. Yes it has cost us more than a normal year, but we were glad to source this growing crop of silage back in Aug. We don't have feed face to feed all the herd at once and therefore supplementing our silage with meal would have entailed a lot of extra work during the dry period, moving groups of cows around to be able to restrict silage intake when supplementing with meal, in order to make the silage stretch.

There are 217 cows milking and grazing. That is a stocking rate of 2.77 cows per hectare, giving a feed demand of 39kg of DM per hectare per day when we are feeding 3kg of ration. We reduced from feeding 6kg per day as soon as we hit our farm cover targets about 10 days ago. Growth has stayed good and we are ahead of our target farm cover at this stage. Growth and demand are matching at the moment so we will gradually reduce our farm cover as growth slows down. Grass growth was 44kg/DM/day here for the last 7 days. Farm cover is 1173kg/DM/ha or 423kg/DM per cow. We are working on getting 2% of the farm grazed each day from Oct 5th to ensure we have over 60% grazed and closed by Nov 5th. This is the area we will be grazing first in spring 2019. We are getting good cleanout on these paddocks and we swapped out of some of the high cover paddocks (2600kg/ha) during the heavy rain as we knew we would not get good graze outs of these high covers in wet conditions.

We have moved the 58 surplus spring born heifer calves to a contract rearer for the winter. This is a drystock farmer in West Cork who will winter these animals for us until next spring. These heifers will then be either sold as breeding heifers or put in calf and contract reared for the summer of 2019 and sold as in calf heifers in the autumn of 2019. Our usual contract rearer has our replacement heifers that are destined to be milked in Shinagh eventually. The in calf heifers from this rearer will be returning to be housed in Shinagh in Nov.

The herd is milking 15.5 litres at 4.96% fat, 4.42% protein (4.70% lactose, 143,000 SCC and 9,000 TBC). That's 1.50kg of milk solids per cow per day.

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