

Shinagh Dairy Farm Report 24-08-2018

Profitable Science Based Farming

Farm Update

The total farm (78ha) is being grazed. Second cut silage area was grazed and is part of the grazing area now. Since the rain grass growth has stayed high averaging 75kg/DM/Ha per day. Silage to cows has been cut out and meals have been reduced to the current 3kg level. This growth has allowed 15 % of the farm to be cut for bales. We will have 90% of our winter feed requirements when the silage that was rented to replace the home ground that was grazed is in the pit. There are 242 cows milking and 56 spring born 2018 dairy heifer calves on the farm. That is a stocking rate of 3.16 cows per hectare, giving a feed demand of 54kg of DM per hectare per day if no supplementary feed was going into the diet. Feeding 3kg per cow per day of dairy ration has reduced our daily demand to 46 kg DM/Ha/day. We need this extra growth over demand in order to build grass for the autumn at this stage and therefore will continue to feed this level of ration. Grass growth was 80kg/DM/day here for the last 7 days. Farm cover is 748kg/DM/ha or 237kg/DM per cow.

The herd is milking 18.8 litres at 4.36% fat, 3.83% protein (4.85% lactose, 182,000 SCC and 5,000 TBC). That's 1.59kg of milk solids per cow per day. They are milking very well and have supplied more milk in Aug to date than the whole of Aug in 2017. We will equal our milk supply Jan to the end of Aug 2017 this year. However we have fed 690kg of ration per cow to date this year. We fed 320 kg of ration per cow for the whole year in 2017.

We have come through a high SCC count outburst. The herd was running at around 150,000 bulk cell count and it started increasing in early Aug. Some clots were also found in the filter at this time. The herd was hand stripped and the offending cows were treated and kept out of the tank, but the bulk count kept increasing and reached a peak of 395,000. The milking machine was tested and the parlour was tested for any stray voltage issues and both were fine. The cows with clots were culture tested and had the normal mastitis bugs present. Cluster dipping was introduced and cows were continued to be stripped to pick up any mastitis cases as fast as possible. Different cows have had to be treated for mastitis during this time. Bulk cell count has now reduced and there are fewer new cases of mastitis appearing. We will continue to dip the clusters after each cow until the bulk counts stabilise at 150,000.

We lost a cow with grass tetany three weeks ago even though the herd was getting magnesium, and we sold a cow whose bag had collapsed, thus reducing the herd to the current 242. Two calves were also sold reducing the number of dairy heifer calves on the farm to the current 56. The herd was clear in its annual TB test. The herd has been vaccinated for IBR and salmonella.

We are spreading 1.5cwt of 19:0:15 fertiliser on this round.

We are a bit anxious re how breeding went until we have the herd scanned next week. On observation there are very few cows showing signs of heat, but one is never sure until after the scan result.

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