

Shinagh Farm Update 15-12-2021

Cows are housed and the farm cover on the 14th Dec is 980kg Drymatter per hectare.

The farm grew 12.96tonnes of drymatter per hectare in 2021 with 170kg of bag nitrogen used per hectare. This is our target to increase the clover content of the paddocks and reduce the bag nitrogen to 150kg/ha eventually. The red clover and grass set on the outside silage this autumn ground will get no bag nitrogen in 2022, which will allow us decrease our bag nitrogen further. The mixed species paddock set in May 2020 which is 30 % clover yielded 13.04 tonnes of grass drymatter with just 93kg/ha of bag nitrogen in 2021. This is giving us confidence that we can grow as much grass as ever, using clover to replace bag nitrogen.

The herd is fully dried off now. 120 cows got just a teat sealant and no antibiotic tube. This was based on these cows being less than 100,000 SCC at each milk recording in 2021 and having no mastitis history.

The herd performance is down on 2020 at 390kg of milk solids per cow, down 45kg per cow on 2020. We are still investigating all the reasons for this drop, but the herd took a drop in production in late April and never fully recovered to the level of 2021 when they produced 436kg of milk solids per cow. The main loss of milk solids came during May and June, and it was a reduction in both litres and protein % which points to less energy intake. Grass covers and supply were good during this period and the cows went and stayed in calf well, which does not indicate an energy intake shortage. The total not in calf was 7.4% after 12 weeks. Total ration fed will work out at approximately 500kg/cow.

All the incalf heifers are housed at this stage, they had been grazing the outside silage ground by day and being housed at night during November.