

Shinagh Dairy Farm Report 11-05-2018

Profitable Science Based Farming

Farm Update

17.91 ha of the farm are now closed for silage.

60.29 ha remain available for grazing. We expect to cut some of this for bale silage when growth exceeds demand. Currently 260 milking cows are grazing on this. That is a stocking rate of 4.31 cows per hectare, giving a feed demand of 73kg of DM per hectare per day. Cows are off ration as there is sufficient grass available. Magnesium and minerals is being fed to cows by adding them to the water troughs, and with additional dusting of paddocks with calmag in wet weather. Grazing ground has got 1.5 bags per acre of ASN (26% N: 14% S) this round. This will be its total application of sulphur for the year. We do it this way to ensure all land gets sufficient sulphur. Applying sulphur with each nitrogen application requires a system to ensure that all ground gets sufficient sulphur.

We have surplus milking cows currently as the plan is to milk the same number of cows as in 2017, which was an average of 232 cows with 239 cows milked at peak. The heifer calves are due to go to the contract rearer next week. They are all weaned and ready to go to grass. They got injected for Blackleg this week

AI started a week ago with the breeding heifers. They were heat detected and bred to AI for the first 7 days and those that have not been bred got an injection of prostaglandin to bring the remainder on heat. 15 heifers out of 55 were bred in the first 7 days of breeding as they showed heat and the remaining heifers have all now been injected with prostaglandin. They will be bred to AI for this synchronised heat and then they will all run with stock bulls to catch any repeats. Usually we get 70-75% of the heifers going in calf to AI. These heifers are all cross bred heifers and they are being bred to easy calving (bulls with a calving survey) high EBI Friesian AI bulls.

We have been breeding the cow herd for 6 days. Submission rates are good so far. We have 79 cows bred out of 260 cows currently milking on the farm in the first 6 days. That is 13 cows on average submitted every day. 260 cows divided by 21day (=12) is our benchmark to check is our submission rate on target. There are 18 cows being milked once a day to help them gain condition and come in heat in the first three weeks. All cows are tail painted as a heat detection aid and this will be kept topped up regularly.

The herd is milking 21.8 litres at 4.11% fat, 3.62% protein (4.84 % lactose, 126,000 SCC and 17,000 TBC). That's 1.74kg per cow per day. Farm cover is 943Kg/DM/ha or 215 kg/DM per cow. Growth estimate of 70kg/DM/day. One paddock has been skipped for bales and will be cut and baled as soon as possible. Ground conditions are still tender especially on paddocks that were grazed in difficult conditions the first time round.

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