



# National Fodder & Food Security Committee

*Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024*

# Agenda

---

- 1) Welcome & Opening remarks (Chair)
- 2) Weather and forecast (Met Eireann)
- 3) Situation update (Teagasc Specialist Teams)
- 4) Roundtable of members (Members are asked to provide summaries of actions being proposed / taken to provide assistance to farmers)
- 5) Summary & Close (Chair)



# National Fodder & Food Security Committee

*Update across Grassland and Tillage farms  
since 29<sup>th</sup> March*

## **Contributors:**

Michael Hennessy, Joe Patton, Pearse Kelly, Alan Dillon,  
Michael O'Donovan, Ciarán Hearn, Stan Lalor

# Tillage Crops Update

- Very little planted in the past 7 days
  - Most very light ground planted
  - <10% of spring crops planted
- Most soil needs at least 7 dry days
- Crop choice –farm specific
  - Low yielding can have a comparable margin to spring barley
- Winter Crops – Critical actions not completed yet
  - Warmer weather will drive growth but ground conditions still poor

# Grazing Management Performance

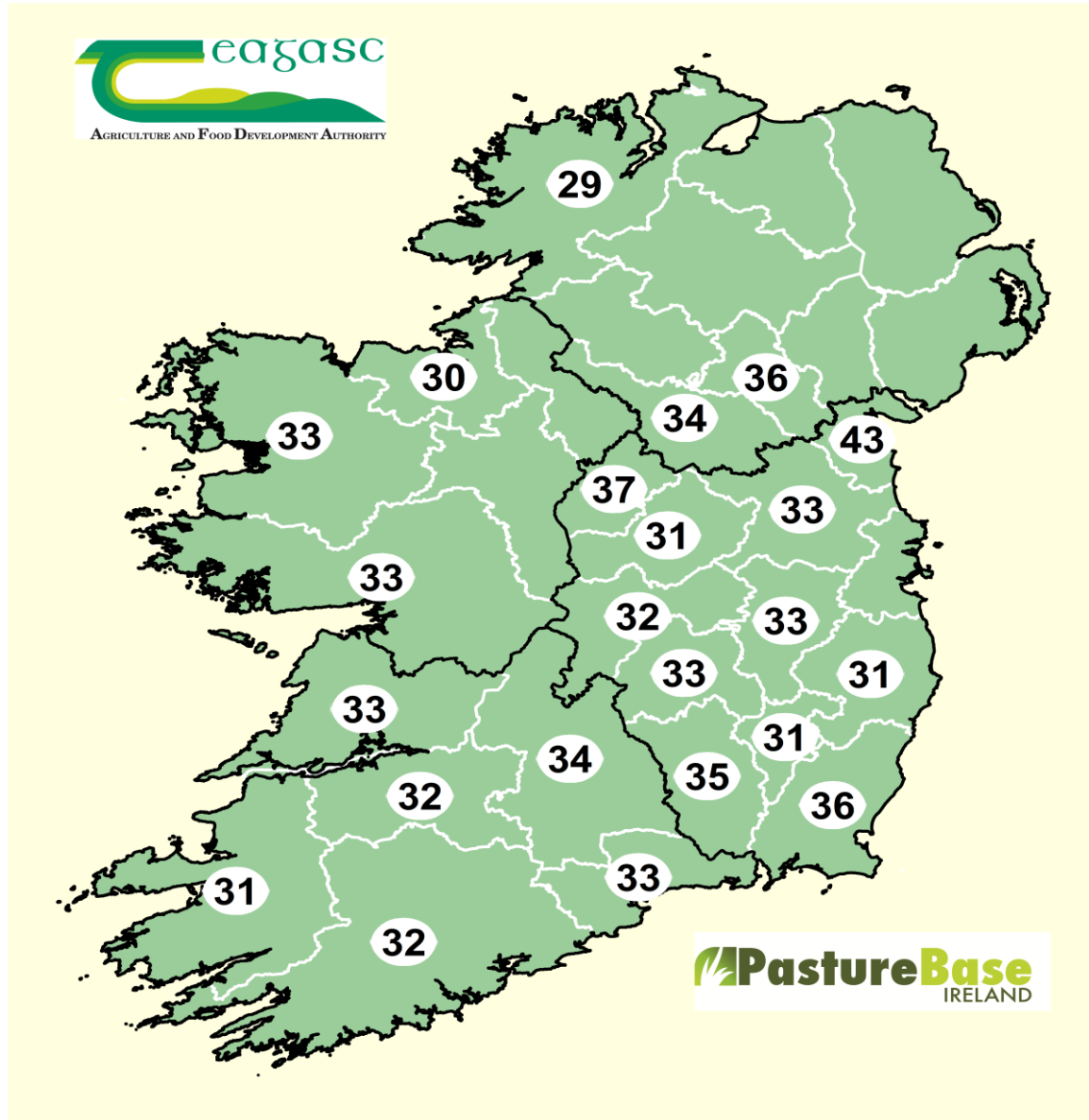
	April 2024	Notes
Farm Cover	849 (2044 – 438)	Farm Cover - is high for time of Year
Grass growth	21	Low for time of year
Area grazed %	65 (113 -0)	Behind – ground conditions
N spread	38kg N - where spread (28chemical and 10kg organic)	Well behind - ground conditions
Feeding	10kg Grass 4.6 kg Concentrate (8 – 2 kg) 4.9 kg Silage (11 – 0 kg)	On/off grazing taking place on many farms
Notes	Fodder getting short on farms – but available Locations Kerry, Cork, Wexford, Waterford 100 mm more rainfall in some areas since start of Year	

# Grazing Management Summary

- Grass wedge – high supply of grass – needs to be managed
- Decisions on grazing lower covers first on farms (1400+)
- % of Farms will need to be harvested for bales to control supply (25-40%)
- Fertiliser - up to date in coming 14 days.
- Fertilise Silage ground for Early Harvest (May 15/20<sup>th</sup>)

# Grass growth predictions

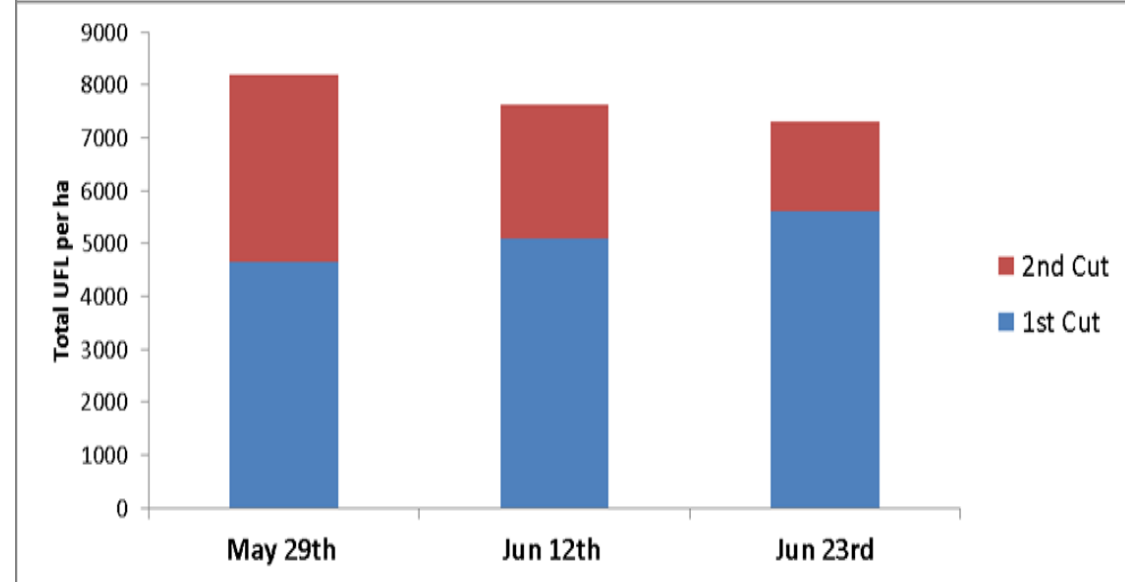
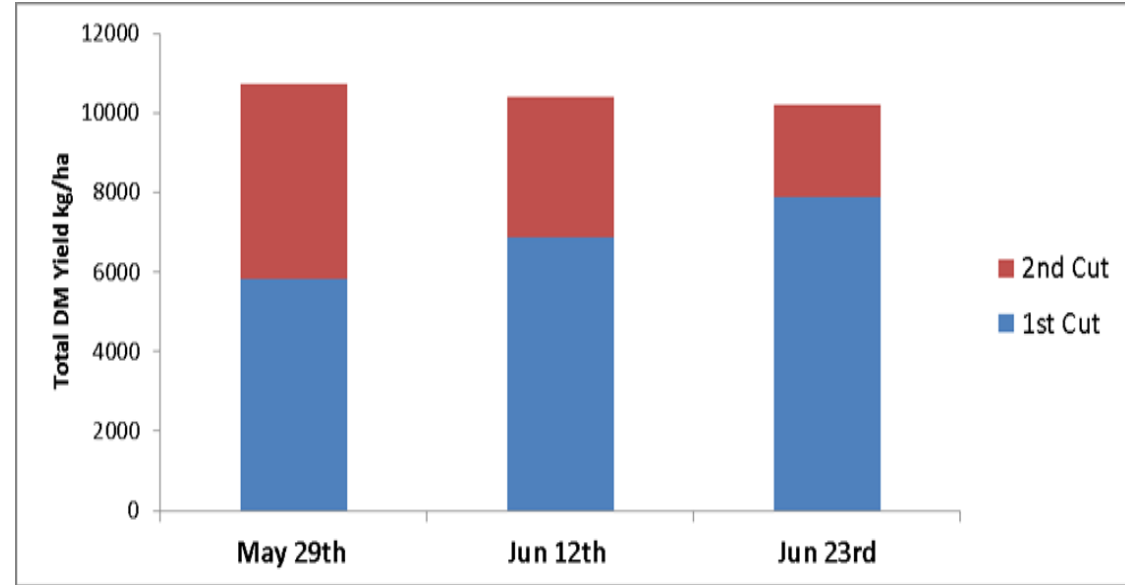
Next week (kg DM/ha/day)



- Grass available – On/off grazing working well
- Nitrogen been purchased and farmers are getting ready when ground is suitable
- Silage harvests will be need to be early this year

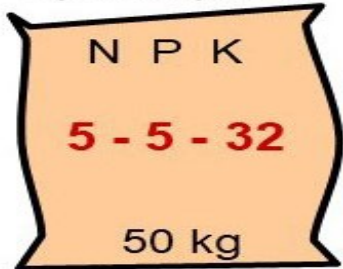
# Silage Fertiliser Recommendations First Cut – Spreading from April 15th - Harvesting – Mid May

	Nitrogen (kg/ha)	Phosphorus (kg/ha)	Potassium (kg/ha)
<b>Grass only</b>	<b>100 (75)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Red clover</b>	<b>50 (25)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>125</b>

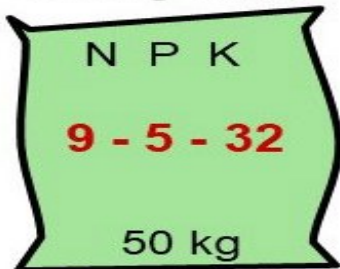


Low Emission Slurry Spreading (LESS) Methods

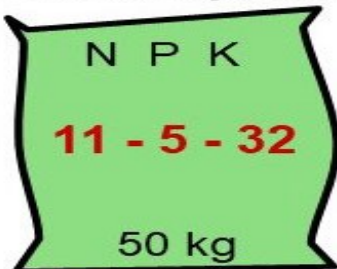
Splash-plate



Trailing Shoe



Shallow Injection





# Dairy Farms

- Grass supply good on farms
  - Farmers trying hard to get cows to grass whenever possible (On/off grazing) - Farms practicing limited access grazing doing relatively well
  - Advisory priority is to support farmers to get grazing (re)started where possible
- Ground conditions – massive challenge – infrastructure is key
- Slurry and Chemical N applications delayed
- Cow performance (reduced milk output in 2024)
  - Lack of grass in diet (Milk protein %)
  - Current conditions + 2023 dry off decisions
- Slurry storage issues
- Good recovery appearing on February grazed paddocks
- Some but limited queries to advisors on fodder to date

# Drystock Farms

- Less silage on farms now since last meeting 10 days ago
  - More silage is now moving from farm to farm
  - Farms in the West and North West now starting to come under pressure for fodder
- No fertiliser spread since the last meeting on either grazing or silage ground. First cut silage yields are inevitably going to be hit now.
- All slurry tanks are now fuller – becoming a real problem on a lot of farms - no where to spread this slurry.
- On some farms silage ground is going to be grazed for a second time as grass utilisation across farms is very poor. This will also impact silage yields.
- Need for the weather forecast for later this week and next week to remain dry.

# Teagasc Helplines

- Two Helplines for farmers now in place:
  - Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April to Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April
  - Open 9.00 am to 9.00 pm
  - Voicemail overnight
- Teagasc National **Crops** Helpline - **059 918 3533**
- Teagasc National **Grassland** Helpline - **059 918 3155**
- Teagasc advisors and specialists
  - advice to assist farmers in making the best decisions to cope with the difficulties caused by the weather
- **Open to all farmers** seeking advice in coping with the ongoing wet weather and challenging soil conditions.

# Fodder Register

- Help connect farmers who have fodder available with those farmers that require it (as requested by the Minister)
- Each Teagasc region - farmers can contact the local Teagasc Advisory office to:
  - register as having feed available, or
  - to enquire if there are farmers on the register from whom they might source feed
- The register is **open to all farmers**
- A full list of Teagasc offices with phone numbers are available here:

<https://www.teagasc.ie/about/farm-advisory/advisory-regions/>

# Other Sectors

---

- Acknowledgement of:
  - Horticulture sector experiencing challenges similar to tillage crops
  - Slurry storage on pig farms
  - Workload & pressure on contractors when weather improves