

Derrypatrick Farm Notes week beginning 02/10/2017

General details

Fourteen heifers and 5 steers were drafted for slaughter this week. On the day of drafting, we hosted a local discussion group in order to facilitate knowledge transfer, provide an update on the performance of the herd and to outline the research programme in place. To add to the visit, the animals drafted for slaughter were on display and this certainly created discussion. Opinion varied throughout the group on whether individual animals were “fit” for slaughter or not. Of the 14 heifers slaughtered this week, there were 8 early- (Angus; **EM**) and 6 late- (Limousin/Charolais; **LM**) maturing heifers and their slaughter performance is presented in Table 1. The 5 steers slaughtered this week were all EM and their performance is also presented in Table 1. All animals had a fat score >2+ whereas 1 EM heifer was over-fat (>4=). There are 19 heifers and 15 steers that remain on farm being offered 4kg concentrate/head/day ahead of slaughter.

	Age (M)	Conf.	Fat	LW (kg)	CW (kg)	KO%
EM heifers	19	R=	4-	569	310	55
LM heifers	19	R+	3=	604	332	55
EM steers	19	R-	3+	672	370	55

Table 1. Slaughter performance 04/10/17

In 2016, weaning was carried out by removing 1/3 of the cows from each group (4 groups of 25 cows) and housing these cows for 3-4 days until settled. Keeping the calves in a familiar group reduces stress that occurs around weaning and has led to little or no animal health issues at weaning in previous years with the Derrypatrick Herd. Weaning will begin for the Derrypatrick Herd next week. Heifer calves from 1st calvers and cull cows will be the first weaned. Bull calves were castrated this week and they will subsequently remain with their dams for an extra week to help reduce swelling following castration. Calves will be offered concentrate supplementation ca. 1kg/head/day around the weaning process.

Before the weather broke (2 months ago in some parts of the country) we purchased Muriate of Potash (0:0:50; MOP) for the Derrypatrick farm. Over the last number of weeks, it appeared that ground conditions would not carry machinery for the remainder of 2017 and this potash would remain in storage. However, despite 14mm of rainfall on 27th September, from 28th September until October 3rd ground conditions improved dramatically with only 5mm of rainfall recorded during this period. On October 3rd a total of 64 acres received MOP at a rate of 1bag/acre with no ground damage inflicted.

Grassland management

- Farm cover: 800kg DM/ha
- Growth: 51 kgDM/ha/day
- Demand: 39 kgDM/ha/day
- Days ahead: 24
- Rotation length: 38 days



Picture 1. FPI sired AAX heifer slaughtered to 351kg R-4- carcass (54% KO) @ 20 months



Picture 2. CH x SI heifer slaughtered to 356kg U-3- carcass (56% KO) @ 19 months



Picture 3. Heifers that remain on farm due to be drafted in the coming weeks



Picture 4. Bull calves ahead of castration