

Derrypatrick Farm Notes week beginning 07/08/2017

General details

Steers and heifers, averaging 17 months of age, were weighed this week and their performance is summarised in Table 1.

(kg)	LW (09/08/17)	Lifetime ADG	ADG since turnout (10/03/17)
Steers	592	1.05	1.19
Heifers	515	0.91	0.93

Table 1.

Steers are 34kg and heifers are 13kg heavier than this stage last year. According to the Teagasc 20-month heifer blueprint, heifers should be 510kg at housing for a 6-8 week finishing period with a target slaughter weight of 565kg. However, if there is sufficient grass, heifers may be supplemented at grass prior to slaughter. Given the current live-weight of our beef heifers and grass quality/supply, heifers will remain at grass and receive concentrate supplementation prior to slaughter. According to the Teagasc 20-month steer blueprint, steers should be housed in mid-September for a 6-8 week finishing period or alternatively, supplemented at grass prior to finishing at a target live-weight of 590kg. Alternatively, the Teagasc 24-month steer blueprint, steers are housed at a target live-weight of 585kg and offered grass silage and concentrates until finish. For the steers of The Derrypatrick Herd, the aim is to finish steers before the second winter. The timing of concentrate supplementation for both heifers and steers, will be determined by grass quality/supply, weather conditions and subsequently, animal performance.

We are now heading for mid-August and autumn grassland management is to the fore. Key targets for autumn grassland management include building rotation length in mid-August of 24-28 days to 35 days by mid-September. Now that the entire farm is available for grazing, following the harvest of second-cut silage, the rotation length will gradually increase as will target pre-grazing sward height. Last week, we experienced grass growth of 80 kg DM/ha which is double current herd demand. The decision was made to remove 8 paddocks (22 acres) as surplus bales. The reason for this is to maximise grass quality for as long as possible into the autumn and as mentioned above, the target now is to increase farm grass cover over the coming weeks.

Grassland management

- Farm cover: 700kg DM/ha
- Growth: 80kg DM/ha/day
- Demand/ha: 42kg DM/ha/day
- Days ahead: 15
- Fertiliser following grazing: CAN (1bag/acre)

Weekly planner

- Power-wash & disinfect sheds
- Spread CAN to help build grass supply
- Identify level of clover establishment in paddocks
- Assess re-seed for the requirement of post-emergence spray



Picture 1. Paddock reseeded 5 weeks ago with variety Abergain



Picture 2. Weeds emerging in reseed that will receive post-emergence herbicide next week



Picture 3. Clover establishing well in most paddocks



Picture 4. Important to be vigilant of bloat in cattle with current weather conditions and grazing clover