

Derrypatrick Farm Notes week beginning 11/09/2017

General details

The final pregnancy scan for 2017 was carried out this week and the results are presented in Table 1. One of the current projects being carried out on the herd is the comparison of progeny performance from sires selected on maternal or terminal traits. In order to maximise the reliability of sire details, the decision was made to use 100% AI. With that in mind, we are happy with our 76% 6 week in-calf rate and 87% 12 week in-calf rate following a 12 week breeding season. All heifers conceived within 8 weeks of the breeding season with only 3 calving outside the first 6 weeks. The 3 heifers that failed to conceive have joined the beef heifers for finishing. Perhaps the most pleasing figure is that 91% of cows conceived within the first 60 days of breeding. There were 12 empty cows identified following the final scan. No reproductive issue was detected with these animals and 3 were seen bulling within 10 days of completing the breeding season. Blood will be sampled from these animals to identify any possible issues. These cows will be fattened at grass this autumn and culled.

| Table 1 | No. | In-calf | Conception 1 st serve (%) | 6w in-calf (%) | 12w in-calf (%) | AI per conception |
|----------------|-----|---------|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Cows | 94 | 82 | 54 | 74 | 87 | 1.6 |
| Heifers | 21 | 18 | 87 | 83 | 86 | 1.5 |

This week we hosted a Grass10 event where over 100 people attended, despite the poor weather leading up to the event. Over the course of the event, key management issues such as autumn grassland management, soil fertility and grazing infrastructure were discussed. In the 5 days leading up to the event, there was 30mm of rain recorded in Grange. While we may not have received as much rainfall as other parts of the country, particularly the west, the heavy soil-type of the farm has resulted in difficult grazing conditions. This was also discussed with those in attendance and the management around this during the autumn.

Beef heifers and steers are currently being offered 4kg/head/day at grass.

Drainage has commenced this week across 2.5 acres of the farm. It is hoped the drainage of this 2.5 acres will reduce the water retention in 8.5 acres of the farm. This particular area was unable to be grazed prior to first cut silage this spring and is prone to water logging. Deep drains will be put in place with reseeding carried out next spring.

Grassland management

- Farm cover: 900kg DM/ha
- Growth: 53 kgDM/ha/day
- Demand/ha: 42 kgDM/ha/day
- Days ahead: 25
- Rotation length: 36 days

Weekly planner

- Manage heavy covers and ground conditions accordingly
- Gradually increase concentrate supply to beef heifers and steers



Picture 1. Reseeded paddock on day heifers were moved



Picture 2. Reseeded paddock 15 days post first grazing



Picture 3. Board indicating paddock cover at recent Grass10 event (Source:IFJ)



Picture 4. Grazing conditions are difficult following recent rainfall