

Derrypatrick Farm Notes week beginning 18/09/2017

General details

Drainage was completed this week across 2.5 acres of the farm and in total; 970m of drainage has been put in place. Since the completion of the drainage project, there has been a constant flow of water from the outlet pipe as seen in picture 4. The deep drains consisted of 100mm pipe with one foot of stone backfill used prior to soil backfill. Four of these drains are joined to one outlet pipe that is carrying the water to the nearby ditch. The area in which the drainage has been carried out was not trafficable with livestock until early June this year.

In order for the Derrypatrick farm to grow more than the 13t of grass DM/ha grown in 2016, improvements are required around soil fertility but also, early spring and autumn grassland management. We are currently using the autumn grazing guidelines <https://www.teagasc.ie/animals/beef/grassland/grassland-management/> to extend our grazing season while ensuring there is grass on the farm for early turnout next spring. As you will see below, our current rotation length is 38 days and we appear on target, albeit, in challenging grazing conditions. We will begin closing paddocks around the 7th-10th of October and target 60% of the farm closed by the end of the first week of November to boost grass supply next spring. However, there is no point in growing this grass if we cannot utilise it, hence the necessity to complete the drainage on this area of this farm.

Faecal samples were taken from all calves on the farm this week, prior to their second treatment for worm control, in order to characterise the effectiveness of their initial treatment for worm control. As recommended by the Levamisole based product used, all calves were treated this week, three weeks after their first treatment. Calves are currently creep-grazing ahead of cows to ease the weaning process that is due to be carried out within the next 3 weeks.

Grazing conditions have deteriorated this week as 25mm of rain fell over the last 6 days, 17mm of which fell on Wednesday. In order to maximise grass utilisation and minimise ground damage, current grazing management being implemented includes; strip and block grazing.

Grassland management

- Farm cover: 967kg DM/ha
- Growth: 43 kgDM/ha/day
- Demand/ha: 42 kgDM/ha/day
- Days ahead: 24
- Rotation length: 38 days

Weekly planner

- Castrate all male calves
- Weigh/BCS beef heifers and steers



Picture 1. KDZ SI replacement heifer in-calf to RMK 534kg (01/09/17)



Picture 2. Calves returning to pasture following faecal sampling



Picture 3. Drainage on the Derrypatrick farm



Picture 4. Flow of water from the outlet pipe following drainage