

Derrypatrick Farm Notes week beginning 21/08/2017

General details

Herbicide application appears to have been successful in the weed control in the reseeded paddocks (Picture 1 & 2). Weeds present in these paddocks included chickweed, docks and thistles to name a few and the herbicide was selected to combat the emergence of the named weeds. The interval from herbicide application to grazing is 7 days for the product used and therefore, these paddocks were safe to graze on Tuesday of this week. Reseeded paddocks are currently carrying a cover of 1,000 kg DM/ha. In reseeded swards, the target pre-grazing cover is 1,000-1,400 kg DM/ha. Grazing was delayed due to the rain that fell early this week, however, ground conditions were suitable for grazing on Thursday and the beef heifers were chosen to graze one of the reseeded paddocks. The beef heifers were selected for grazing these paddocks as they are the largest group with the lowest live weight and will therefore graze these paddocks quick with minimal damage, weather permitting.

Recent rainfall and broken weather has led to increased vigilance for animal health in both cows and calves. Grass tetany, caused by a blood magnesium deficiency, is a potentially fatal issue for cows during damp, cool conditions while cases of pneumonia in calves may also occur during this weather. The combination of low night temperatures and rain showers throughout the week had us on high alert for any potential issues. Swards that contain a high percentage of leafy material increase the passage rate of grass through the digestive system of cows and to add to this, periods of excess rainfall result in a reduced grass intake in both cases, nutrient absorption is negatively affected. Magnesium is supplied through the water system for The Derrypatrick stock however; visits to the drinking trough may be limited in periods of heavy rainfall. As autumn grassland management is implemented, pre-grazing covers will rise, resulting in swards containing more stem and less leaf and therefore slow down the digestive system of cows aiding the prevention of grass tetany. As highlighted on a number of occasions, we are establishing clover in 50% of the farm this year and this requires pre-grazing covers of 1,100-1,300 kg DM/ha. When cows are entering covers as low as this, we will supply an additional form of roughage i.e. hay to decrease the passage rate and aid nutrient absorption and help prevent any cases of grass tetany.

Grassland management

- Farm cover: 718kg DM/ha
- Growth: 70 kgDM/ha/day
- Demand/ha: 42 kgDM/ha/day
- Days ahead: 17
- Fertiliser following grazing: CAN (1bag/acre)

Weekly planner

- Spread CAN to help build grass supply
- Weigh beef heifers and steers
- Vigilant of animal health during period of broken weather



Picture 1. Weeds yellowing and dying back as a result of herbicide application



Picture 2. Weeds yellowing and dying back as a result of herbicide application



Picture 3. Fertiliser (CAN) being spread to help build autumn grass supply



Picture 4. Doudou (LM2321) sired calf gaining 1.26kg/d since birth