

# Derrypatrick Farm Notes week beginning 23/10/2017

## General details

This week, cows were penned according to BCS. The reason for this, is feed the cow herd appropriately and ensure cow are in a BCS of ~2.5 at calving, next spring. While the majority of cows were in target BCS (2.75-3) at housing, there were ~12 cows that were behind target i.e. BCS 2-2.5. Cows in BCS 2.5-3 will be offered second-cut silage to appetite while thinner cows will be offered first-cut silage to appetite and 1kg of concentrate until in a BCS >2.5.

During the recent weaning process, as animals were in the yard, an injury to a weanling heifer occurred and resulted in a period of lameness. Veterinary advice was to give the heifer a few days to see if there was improvement, however, the injury worsened and the vet then advised for the animal to be put down due to a fracture of the fetlock area. Despite always trying to minimise injury to man and animal, unfortunately, accidents are inevitable. Weanlings and newly purchased heifers remain at grass and are being offered 1kg of concentrate per head per day.

Beef heifers and steers were weighed and assessed for slaughter this week. Their performance over the last 30 days has been severely hampered by the weather and is nowhere near the desired performance of >1kg/day during the finishing period. In total, 2 heifers (564 and 584kg) and 7 steers averaging 650kg, all 20 months of age, were drafted and will be slaughtered next week. There are 17 heifers and 8 steers for slaughter remaining on farm and these animals have been housed for the final finishing period. These animals will be offered 1<sup>st</sup> cut silage (73% DMD) and 6kg (3kg morning and evening) of a barley-based concentrate ahead of slaughter in the coming weeks.

Last week, we purchased 7, February/March 2017 born weanling heifers targeted for breeding next May. All 7 heifers were Simmental cross with an average; weight of 340kg, date of birth of February 19<sup>th</sup> and replacement index of €125. Upon arrival, heifers were quarantined from the rest of the herd, blood sampled for disease profiling, vaccinated against respiratory diseases e.g. IBR and treated for ecto- and endo- parasites e.g. lungworm. These heifers were purchased ahead of the TB test that took place on farm this week. Thankfully, the TB test was all clear and we can now purchase the remaining number of heifers (~23) required for breeding next May.

## Grassland management

- Farm cover: 1039 kgDM/ha
- Growth: 43 kgDM/ha/day
- Demand: 21 kgDM/ha/day
- Days ahead: 20
- Percentage of farm closed: 60%

## Weekly planner

- Monitor newly housed stock
- Be vigilant of potential ground damage while stock remain at grass



Picture 1. Weanling heifers at grass



Picture 2. Weanling steers at grass



Picture 3. Weanling replacement heifers purchased last week



Picture 4. Two exceptional heifers not fit for slaughter

