

Derrypatrick Farm Notes week beginning 31/07/2017

General details

The first pregnancy-scan for The Derrypatrick Herd was carried out 7 weeks after the start of the breeding season on the 20th of June and resulted in 31 animals in-calf from the 35 presented for scanning. The second scan was carried out 9 weeks after the start of breeding on the 07/07/17 and resulted in 30 animals in-calf from the 32 presented. This week, the third pregnancy scan was conducted and 39 animals were presented for scanning and from this, 32 were deemed in-calf. While we were content with the results of our first two scanning events, the attitude of always wanting to do better had us slightly disappointed with the results from scanning event number 3. However, it must be considered that the method for breeding in 2017 was 100% A.I. and despite the best efforts of any person or heat-detection aid, animals may not be seen expressing heat. The 7 animals not in-calf after the third scan were provided ample opportunity to go in-calf with an average of 2.3 inseminations per animal. The outlier here was a cow that received one insemination and noticed expressing heat 3 days after the breeding season finished, 32 days after her first insemination. Of the remaining animals not in-calf, 3 have been observed expressing heat following the end of breeding, 2 had been previously scanned empty and subsequently failed to conceive, despite hormone treatment, while 1 heifer was scanned as being reproductively sound however, failed to conceive.

In summary to date, 93 animals have been scanned in-calf from a possible 102 (some animals yet to be scanned) meaning a pregnancy-rate to date of 91%. Conception to first service is disappointingly low at 50% however, if pregnancy rate after the final pregnancy scan (mid-September) remains at 91%, our heat detection rate would be an excellent 90%, according to previous reports from Michael Diskin

<https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/animals/beef/High-reproductive-performance-in-beef-herd.pdf>. Conception to first service of >60% would have been expected as the interval from calving to first service was an average of 63 days. However, our lower than expected conception to first service may be a result of a high number of; 1st calvers (n=30), that are under more pressure than mature cows post-calving, and replacement heifers (n=21), the majority of which were bred on their first cycle, in the herd.

Grassland management

- Farm cover: 736kg DM/ha
- Growth: 53kg DM/ha/day
- Demand/ha: 41kg DM/ha/day
- Days ahead: 14
- Fertiliser following grazing: CAN (1bag/acre)

Weekly planner

- Weigh heifers and bullocks
- Power-wash & disinfect sheds
- Identify level of clover establishment in paddocks



Picture 1: Example of bull calves that currently weigh 202kg, ADG of 1.14kg/d since birth



Picture 2: Example of heifer calves that currently weigh 193kg, ADG of 1.08kg/d since birth



Picture 3: Example of 17 month old steers to be weighed next week



Picture 4: Example of 17 month old heifers to be weighed next week