

Teagasc Dairy Beef Programme

Update, Johnstown Castle

Date of writing: 1st Nov 2018

Covering period: September/October 2018

The good weather of September and October meant that all cattle have remained at pasture up until the end of October. It is hoped that the calves will stay out for another week or so. Growth rates are low but good for the time of year. The first group of 2017 born heifers were killed on the 19th October, with another group expected to be fit early November.

The second cut of silage was cut on the 24th September. This late cut meant that grass had become very tight for grazing over the last few weeks. Because the land is heavy and cattle usually don't get out in Johnstown until the latter end of March, even though the farm cover became extremely low, it was decided that we would try to keep the cattle out as late as possible in order to save on winter forage, especially considering the year that has passed.

	Sept 2018	Oct 2018
Rainfall (ml)	84.4	72.7
Mean temp (°C)	12.8	10.3
Mean 10cm soil temperature (°C)	13.7	10.4

Animal performance:

Older Cattle

- The cattle are performing well at grass. The heifers were being fed ~4kg of concentrate/head/day at grass in September, which was increased to 7kg/head/day mid-October.
- 22 heifers were killed on the 19th October. These averaged 258 kg CW, with an O= conformation and 3+ fat score.
- The remaining heifers and the steers were housed on the 25th October. The heifers averaged 468 kg while the steers averaged 493 kg.
- The heifers are being fed 9kg conc., 2kg straw and 16kg silage (fresh weight).
- The steers are being fed 3.5kg conc., 3 kg straw and 15kg silage (fresh weight). This is because we are tight for silage on the farm, in a normal year the steers would be on ad lib silage only. The first and second cut silage will be tested and the diet may be changed depending on the resulting quality. The aim is to have the steers doing 0.6 kg/day indoors.

Heifer performance

	4 th Sept	9 th Oct	18 th Oct	25 th Oct*	ADG 2nd Season
High	399	457	459	461	0.87
Medium	425	450	459	474	0.87
Low	440	470	494	470	1.00

*22 heifers killed by the 25th October, mostly from low group.

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Steer performance

	4 th Sept	9 th Oct	25 th Oct*	ADG 2nd Season
High	467	482	489	0.90
Medium	457	473	489	0.91
Low	447	484	502	0.95

Weanlings

- The calves are still at grass, currently receiving 2.4 kg conc./head/day. They will be kept out for another week, as long as weather and grass conditions allow. The grass is becoming very tight, especially on the medium farmlet.
- The calves were dosed for worms, given pour on for flies, weighed and divided into their stocking density groups on the 6th September.
- They were most recently weighed and dosed on the 16th October and averaged 223 kg.

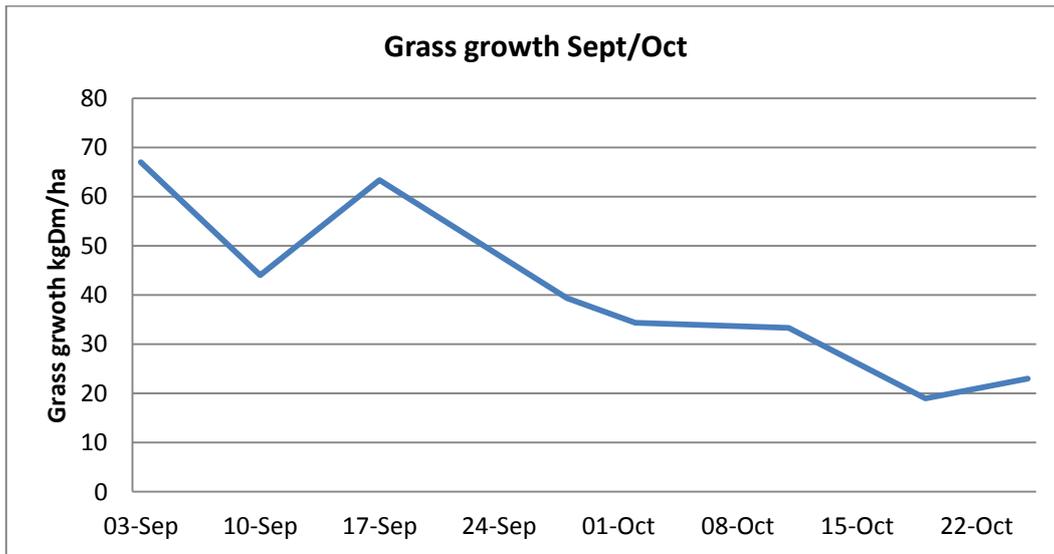
	6 th Sept	21 st Sept	16 th Oct	ADG 2 nd season
High	188	193	223	0.81
Medium	189	193	224	0.80
Low	190	196	222	0.81

Grass Management:

- Because almost 40% of the farm was set aside for a late second cut, grass became very tight on the farm in September and some of the paddocks had to be released back for grazing on the medium stocking density farmlet. These were strip grazed as the cover was very heavy.
- The silage was cut on the 24th September. 21 experimental paddocks were cut and pit into a fresh pit. The paddocks yielded 3800 kg DM/ha on average with 17% dry matter.
- Grass growth remained good for the time of year and regrowth on the silage paddocks was strong early in October. Most of the silage after grass has now been grazed by the calves.
- Pre-grazing yields for September averaged 1150 kg DM/ha at 17.5% DM, whereas these reduced to 850 kg DM/ha for October at 15.8% DM.
- The latest farm cover was taken on the 25th October. Grass demand was reduced to 14 kg DM/ha on average across the farmlets following housing of the older cattle.
- Average farm cover was 336 kg DM/ha, which is lower than desired. It is hoped that the reduced demand will allow some build-up of farm cover before closing.

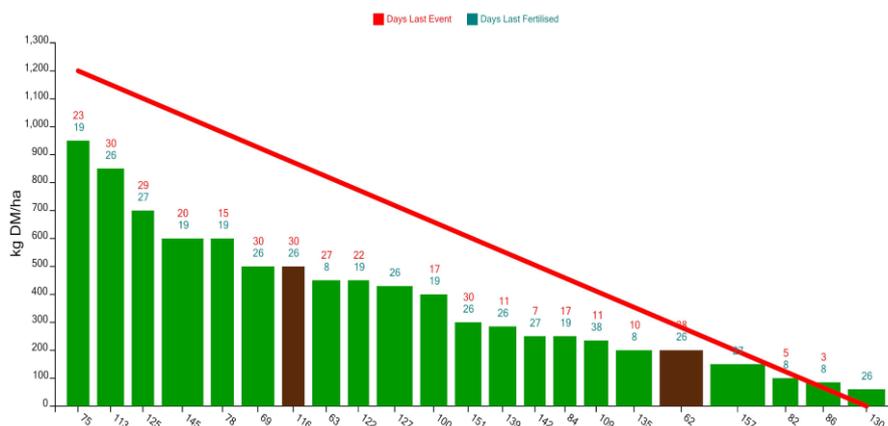
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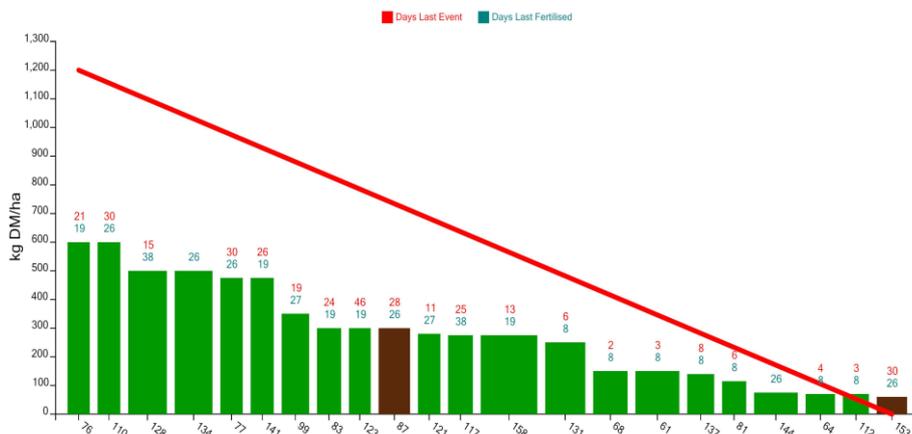


Farm cover 25/10/2018

High stocking density



Medium stocking density



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Low stocking density

