

Curtins Farm Walk Notes Tuesday 07-04-09

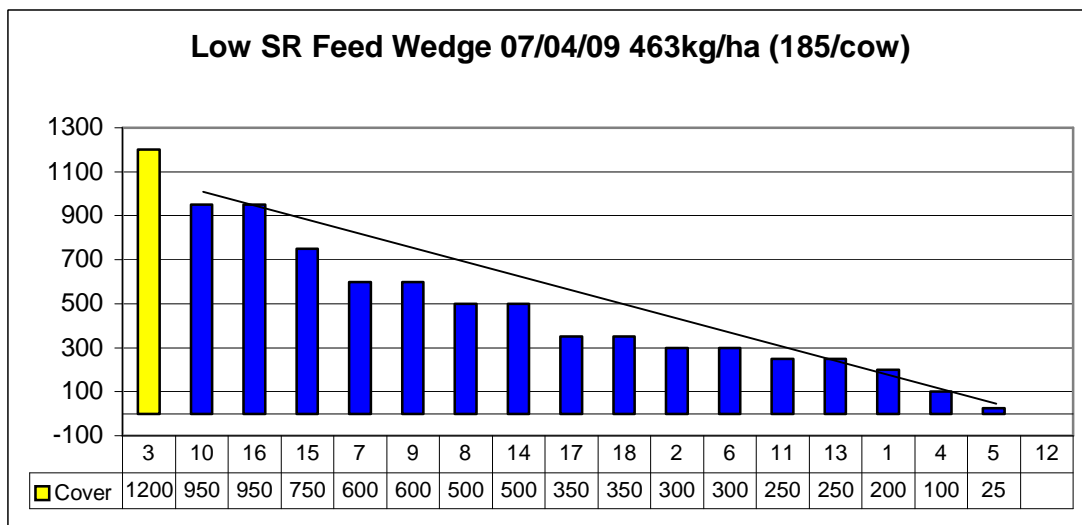
Low Stocking Rate Group (2.5 HF Cows/ha)

Critical Issues

- 1) Maintain post-grazing height at 4cm
- 2) Identify any surpluses and maintain pre-grazing yield at 1000kg

Situation

Figure 1. Farm Feed Wedge 07/04/09



- 1) The ideal pre-grazing yield for this group is 900kg if their allowance is 17kg/day and the rotation length is 21 days. As can be seen in the wedge Block 3 has a cover of 1200kg. This block has been skipped and will be cut for silage in 4 weeks.
- 2) With Block 3 closed for silage and Block 12 removed for reseeding the stocking rate has now increased to 2.8 cows/ha, which means our ideal pre-grazing yield is now 1000kg.

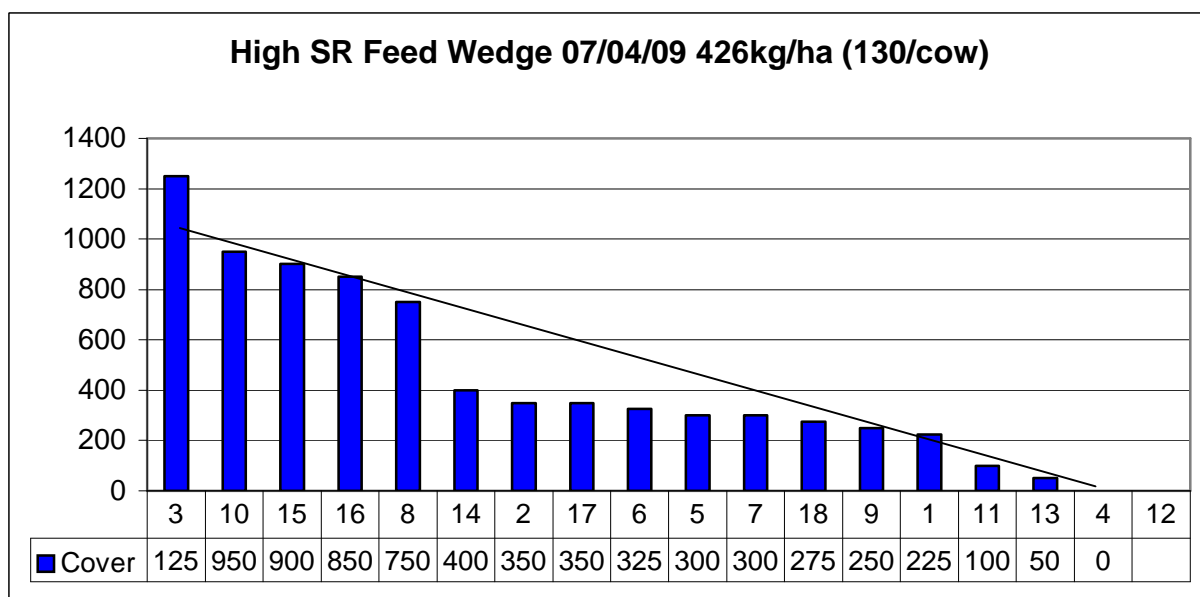
High Stocking Rate Group (3.3 HF Cows/ha)

Critical Issues

- 3) Maintain post-grazing height at 3cm
- 4) Maintain pre-grazing yield at 1050kg

Situation

Figure 1. Farm Feed Wedge 07/04/09



1. Cover per cow dropped from 163kg/cow last week to 130kg/cow this week. This is exactly where we want to be at this time, in anticipation of high growth rates.
2. However, we have a very uneven wedge. On a 20 day rotation length with an allowance of 15kg/cow our ideal pre-grazing yield is 1050kg. We will achieve this target for the next 7 days but thereafter our pre-grazing yield will be a lot less (approx. 700kg in Block 14).
3. We have two options to address this issue; i) do nothing and continue as we are and finish the second round after 16/17 days or ii) put in supplements now which will slow down our rotation and allow our low paddocks to catch up to the target line.
4. We have chosen the latter option and are currently feeding 3.5kg supplement/cow.
5. Because the second half of the wedge is so flat it is likely that it will all grow at the same time and we will have surpluses in two/three weeks.

Whole Farm Situation

1. Average soil temperature for the past week was 7.9°C, last week 7.3°C.
2. Total rainfall for the week was 19mm.
3. Average weekly growth this week was 41 kg/day, average for the last 3 years was 38kg/day. As soil temperature is increasing the expectation is that growth rate could hit 50kg/day this week.
4. Dry matter was 14.5% on Monday.

5. Total N application per hectare to date is 43kg N/ha (38% of farm has received slurry)
6. Cows have been tail painted for pre-breeding heat detection.
7. Block 12 was sprayed with glyphosate last week and has since been grazed. This block will be reseeded next week. The grass variety Bealey will be sown along with Crusader clover using a one-pass.
8. Latest milk quality test results from the milk processor are; Fat 4.41%, Protein 3.48%, Lactose 4.7%, SCC 207k, TBC 20k, Thermoturic 2600, Sediment A.
9. Critical Short-term Actions:
 - a. Allocation is on 36 hr basis and cows move to fresh pasture once the desired post-grazing height is achieved. Cows are moved between milking if necessary.
 - b. As soon as weather conditions allow, spread lime and sow grass seeds in Block 12.

EXPERIMENTAL PROGRESS REPORT AS AT SUNDAY, 06/04/09

Objective: To compare the biological efficiency of alternative calving date and stocking rate combinations for Irish spring calving pasture-based production systems

Herd Details	EBI (€)	MILK SI (€)	FERT SI (€)	CALVING SI (€)	HEALTH (€)
Average	112	59	45	20	-3

(November 2008 ICBF)

Calving Date Group Stocking rate Group	Early Calving			Late Calving		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
Stocking rate (cows/ha)	2.51	2.92	3.28	2.51	2.92	3.28
Mean calving date	8/2	8/2	8/2	1/3	1/3	1/3
Ear-tag Colour	White	Blue	Orange	White	Blue	Orange
Band Colour	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Blue

WE 15/3/09 Details:						
Area allocated (m ² /day)	2400	2000	1800	2400	2000	1800
Farmlet cover (kg DM/cow)	191	158	130	188	166	135
Pre-herbage mass (kg DM/ha)	1200	1350	1250	1200	1350	1250
Residual grazing height (cm)	3.9	3.4	3.33	4.05	3.6	3.55
Diet (kg DM/cow/day)						
Grass	17	16	15	17	16	15
Silage	0	0	0	0	0	0
Concentrate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Milk solids (kg/cow/day)	1.97	1.75	1.69	1.46	1.28	1.33
Milk yield (kg/cow/day)	25.63	23.21	22.41	20.18	17.43	19.65
% Fat	4.27	4.24	4.22	3.85	4.1	4.02
% Protein	3.45	3.35	3.39	3.37	3.32	3.27
Bodyweight (kg)	503	480	476	492	475	480
Condition Score	2.94	2.8	2.73	2.92	2.83	2.75

Cumulative:						
Milk solids (kg/cow)	102	102	98	71	68	74
(kg/ha)	256	298	321	178	199	243
Milk yield (kg/cow)	1263	1284	1215	915	856	942
% Fat	4.7	4.68	4.66	4.36	4.6	4.71
% Protein	3.48	3.33	3.5	3.48	3.43	3.34
Days in milk	54	59	58	50	53	54
Total supplement fed (kg/cow)						
Concentrate	155	155	155	70	70	70
Silage						
Conserved silage (kg DM /cow)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Farmlet area (hectares)	9.17	7.87	7.01	9.17	7.87	7.01
Number of cows calved	23	23	23	20	20	20
Number of cows in group	23	23	23	23	23	23

NB: These are raw data that have not been statistically analysed and, therefore, no definite conclusions can be drawn from them.