

Curtins Farm Walk Notes Monday 20-04-09

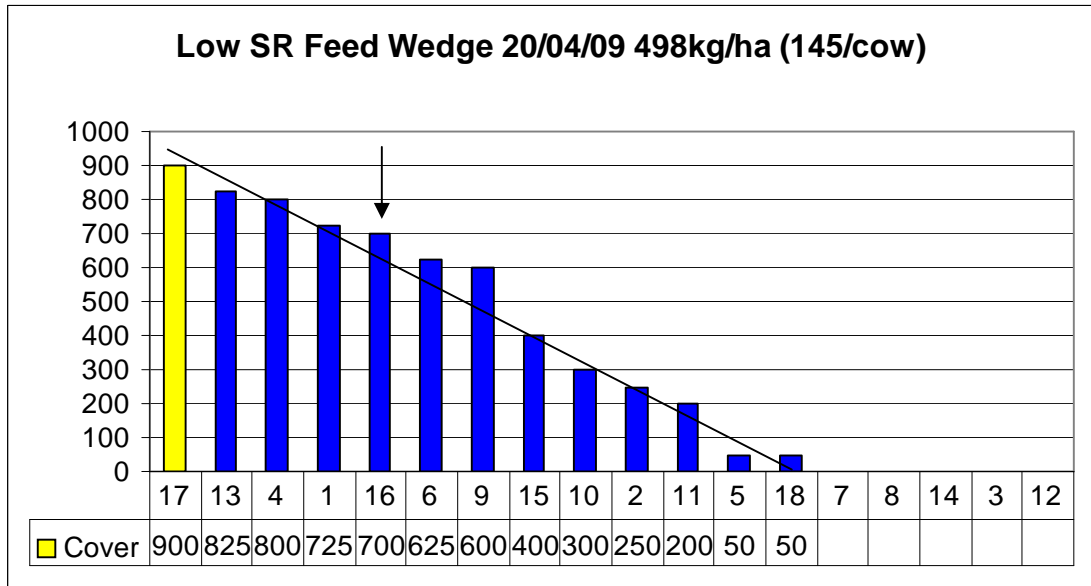
Low Stocking Rate Group (2.5 HF Cows/ha)

Critical Issues

- 1) **Maintain post-grazing height at 4cm**
- 2) **Identify any surpluses and maintain pre-grazing yield at 950kg**

Situation

Figure 1. Farm Feed Wedge 20/04/09



Block 17 (in yellow) is partly grazed

- 1) As can be seen from Figure 1. we have a very even wedge and target cover line is almost on target. For this reason, no surpluses have been taken out this week. However, surpluses are building and it is likely that block 16 will be skipped prior to grazing in 5 days time.
- 2) The ideal pre-grazing yield for this group is 950kg if their allowance is 17kg/day. Stocking rate is now 3.43 cows/ha.
- 3) Block 3, (1st block closed) will be cut for silage next week, the other have been topped up with 23 units of urea/acre and will be cut in 14 days.

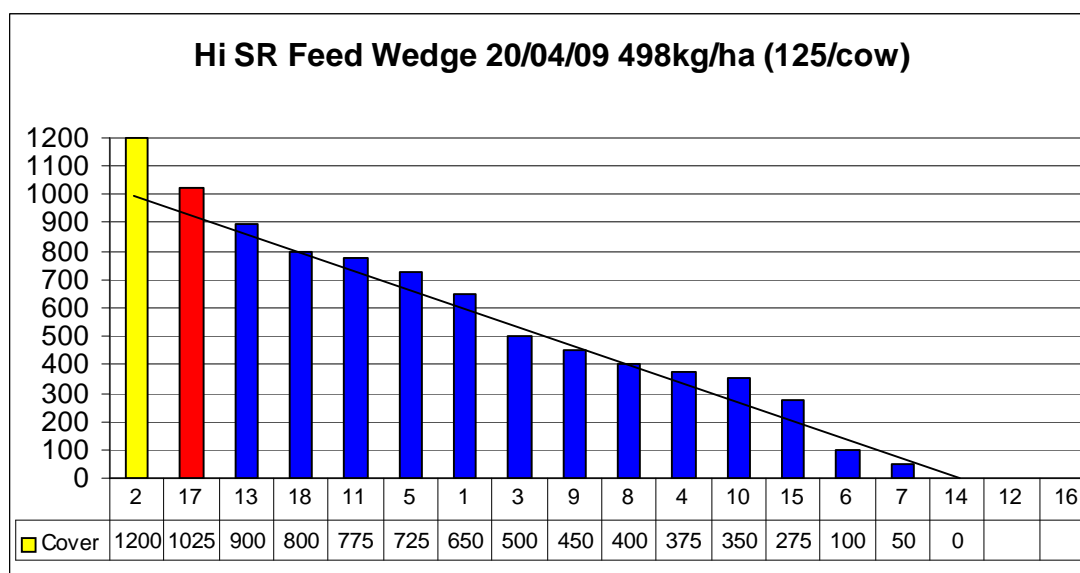
High Stocking Rate Group (3.3 HF Cows/ha)

Critical Issues

- 3) **Maintain post-grazing height at between 3 and 3.5cm**
- 4) **Maintain pre-grazing yield at 1000kg**

Situation

Figure 2. Farm Feed Wedge 20/04/09



(Block 2 is partly grazed, Block 17 has been skipped for silage)

1. We have a perfectly shaped wedge but pre-grazing yield is higher than target. As block 2 is being grazed this cannot be skipped so we block 17 has been chosen. The cows will go into Block 13 on Wednesday morning, by which time there will be a cover of at least 1000kg in it.
2. With this extra block closed, stocking rate is now 3.97 cows/ha. with a 17 day rotation length and 15kg allowance the ideal pre-grazing yield is now 1000kg.

Whole Farm Situation

1. Average soil temperature for the past week was 10.3°C, last week 8.7°C.
2. Total rainfall for the week was 8.5mm.
3. Average weekly growth this week was 40kg/day, considerably lower than expected. Average for the previous 3 years was 53kg/day. As soil temperatures are increasing fast and mild weather is forecast the expectation is that growth rate should be close to 70kg/day this week.
4. Dry matter was 14.5% on Monday.
5. 15 units urea/acre is being spread after grazing
6. Breeding season commenced on Monday 20th April.
7. Block 12 is being reseeded today. The grass variety Bealey is being sown along with Crusader clover using a one-pass.
8. Latest milk quality test results from the milk processor are; Fat 4.2%, Protein 3.3%, Lactose 4.87%, SCC 218k, TBC 10k, Thermoduric N/D, Sediment A.
9. Critical Short-term Actions:

- a. Allocation is on a 24 hour basis and cows move to fresh pasture once the desired post-grazing height is achieved. Cows are moved between milking if necessary.
- b. Cut silage before the base begins to turn white. This reduces the lag period between cutting and growing, thereby increasing growth and allowing aftergrass back into the grazing rotation faster.

EXPERIMENTAL PROGRESS REPORT AS AT SUNDAY, 19/04/09

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	Early Calving			Late Calving		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
Stocking rate Group						
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

Week Details:						
Area allocated (m ² /day)	2400	2000	1800	2400	2000	1800
Farmlet cover (kg DM/cow)	125	150	145	133	160	141
Pre-herbage mass (kg DM/ha)	900	925	1200	900	925	1200
Residual grazing height (cm)	3.48	3.08	3.12	3.61	3.11	3.53
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)	1.74	1.56	1.39	1.44	1.63	1.5
Milk yield (kg/cow/day)	23.6	21.3	20	20.4	21.0	19.7
% Fat	4.04	3.96	3.88	3.65	4.46	4.25
% Protein	3.4	3.39	3.35	3.36	3.25	3.38
Bodyweight (kg)	489	481	460	490	487	475
Condition Score	2.94	2.8	2.73	2.92	2.83	2.75

Cumulative:						
Milk solids (kg/cow)	127	125	112	92	95	95
(kg/ha)	319	365	367	231	277	312
Milk yield (kg/cow)	1600	1587	1429	1205	1203	1212
% Fat	4.51	4.57	4.46	4.20	4.63	4.27
% Protein	3.45	3.36	3.48	3.48	3.47	3.3
Days in milk	68	68	70	59	57	60
Total supplement fed (kg/cow)						
Concentrate	165	174	170	117	120	122
Silage	63	111	119	20	37	43
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	22	23	22
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.