

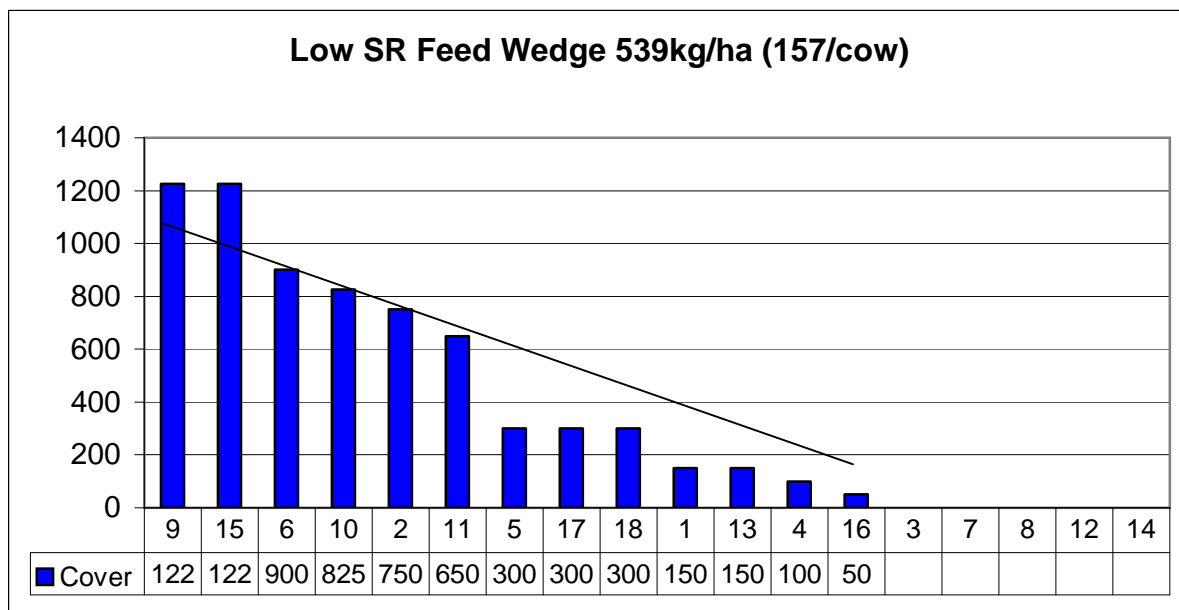
**Low Stocking Rate Group (2.5 HF Cows/ha)**

**Critical Issues**

- 1) **Maintain post-grazing height at 4cm**
- 2) **Identify any surpluses and maintain pre-grazing yield at 1050kg**

**Situation**

**Figure 1. Farm Feed Wedge 27/04/09**



- 1) As can be seen from Figure 1. we have an uneven wedge with target cover above the line in the first two paddocks and below the line in the second half of the wedge. This has meant that no blocks can be skipped for silage this week.
- 2) The ideal pre-grazing yield for this group is 1050kg if their allowance is 17kg/day and rotation length is 18 days. Stocking rate is 3.43 cows/ha.
- 3) Due to lack of suitable weather, no silage has been made yet. It is unlikely any silage will now be made until early next when blocks 3,7,8,14 will be cut and baled.
- 4) Severe rain over the weekend and again last night has made grazing difficult. Cows are currently grazing block 9, utilisation is poor and post grazing height has risen to >5.5cm. To try and overcome this, on/off grazing is being used, cows are on 12 hour allocations in square blocks and cows are only let out when it is not raining.

**High Stocking Rate Group (3.3 HF Cows/ha)**

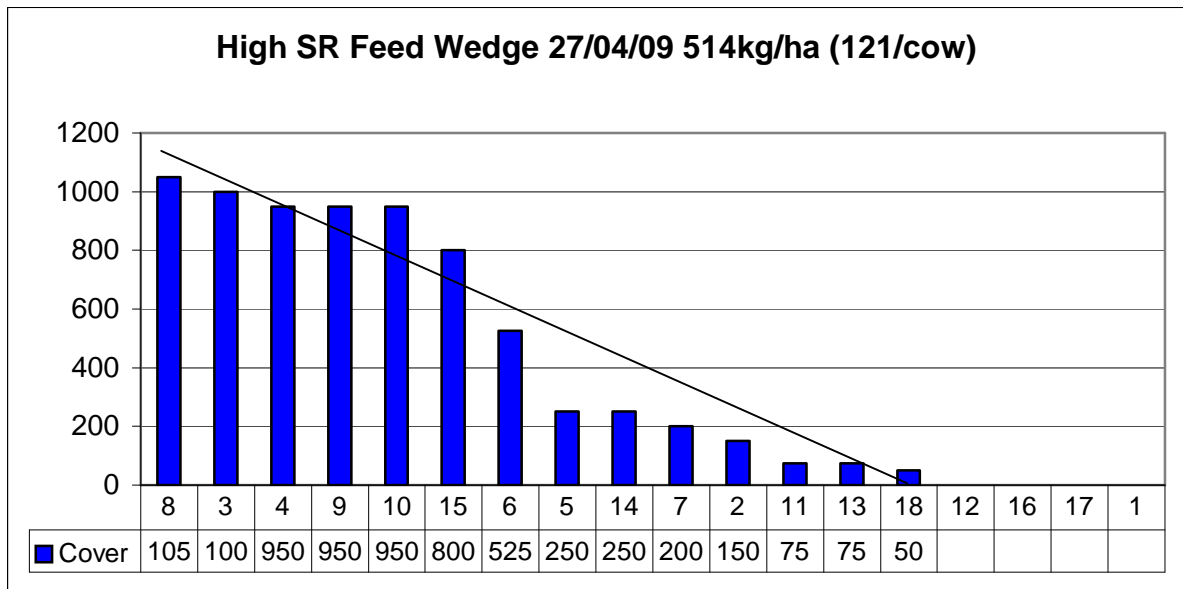
## Critical Issues

3) Maintain post-grazing height at between 3 and 3.5cm

4) Maintain pre-grazing yield at 1150kg

## Situation

Figure 2. Farm Feed Wedge 27/04/09



1. Block 1 had a cover of 1225kg so was skipped and will be cut for silage next week. Like the low stocking rate, we have a step in the second half of the wedge but we are not unduly worried about this as we are above the target line on a number of paddocks and growth is 71kg while demand is 63kg so the expectation is that the lower covers will catch up.
2. With this extra block closed, stocking rate is now 4.24 cows/ha. With an 18 day rotation length and 15kg allowance the ideal pre-grazing yield is now 1150kg.
3. Cows are currently grazing block 9. Block 8 is next and should have the desired cover on it by the time the cows go in to graze.
4. As ground conditions are poor, corrective action is being taken to help minimise damage; on/off grazing (2 or 3 hours grazing when its not raining), 12 hour grass allocations, square blocks, single cow tracks to the back of paddocks and selecting dry paddocks for grazing (once block 8 is grazed cows are going to block 15 because it is a drier field) are all being used to minimise damage. We are also grazing blocks that are likely to be cut for silage in the future so if we fail to graze out properly now, we will select them paddocks for silage next time there is a surplus, thereby correcting the residual with the mower.



**Plate 1. Cows walking in single file to back of paddock**



**Plate 2. Cows grazing in square blocks, grazing residuals have risen.**

### **Whole Farm Situation**

1. During this period of on/off grazing, 3kg of concentrates are being fed per cow/day to maintain dry matter intakes.
2. Average soil temperature for the past week was 10.6°C, last week 10.3°C.
3. Total rainfall for the week was 40.5mm.
4. Average weekly growth this week was 71kg/day, average for the previous 3 years was 67kg/day. As soil temperatures are increasing and mild weather is forecast the expectation is that growth rate should be close to 80kg/day this week.
5. Dry matter was 13% on Monday.
6. 15 units urea/acre is being spread after grazing in dry weather
7. Breeding season commenced on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April.

8. Latest milk quality test results from the milk processor are; Fat 4.2%, Protein 3.3%, Lactose 4.87%, SCC 218k, TBC 10k, Thermotolerant N/D, Sediment A.
9. Critical Short-term Actions:
  - a. Use all available techniques (as discussed above) to minimise poaching.
  - b. Suspend fertiliser spreading until weather improves.
  - c. Cut silage once weather improves. Cutting silage before the base begins to turn white 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, 26/04/09**

*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
	(€)	(€)	(€)	(€)	(€)
<b>Average</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>-3</b>

*(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

<b>Week Details:</b>						
Area allocated (m <sup>2</sup> /day)	2400	2000	1800	2400	2000	1800
Farmlet cover (kg DM/cow)	157	138	121	164	145	120
Pre-herbage mass (kg DM/ha)	1225	1000	950	1225	1000	950
Residual grazing height (cm)	4.67	4.30	3.55	4.88	4.22	3.85
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)	1.65	1.45	1.43	1.65	1.53	1.54
Milk yield (kg/cow/day)	22.9	20.6	19.9	23.1	22.7	22.9
% Fat	3.93	3.81	3.97	4.08	3.57	3.99
% Protein	3.31	3.29	3.24	3.37	3.2	3.34
Bodyweight (kg)	505	480	459	497	493	503
Condition Score	2.92	2.84	2.74	2.96	2.88	2.90

<b>Cumulative:</b>						
Milk solids (kg/cow)	138	135	123	112	106	111
(kg/ha)	346	394	403	281	310	364
Milk yield (kg/cow)	1767	1673	1576	1474	1322	1420
% Fat	4.43	4.45	4.42	4.21	4.42	4.45
% Protein	3.42	3.35	3.44	3.35	3.43	3.49
Days in milk	75	75	77	63	62	62
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.**