

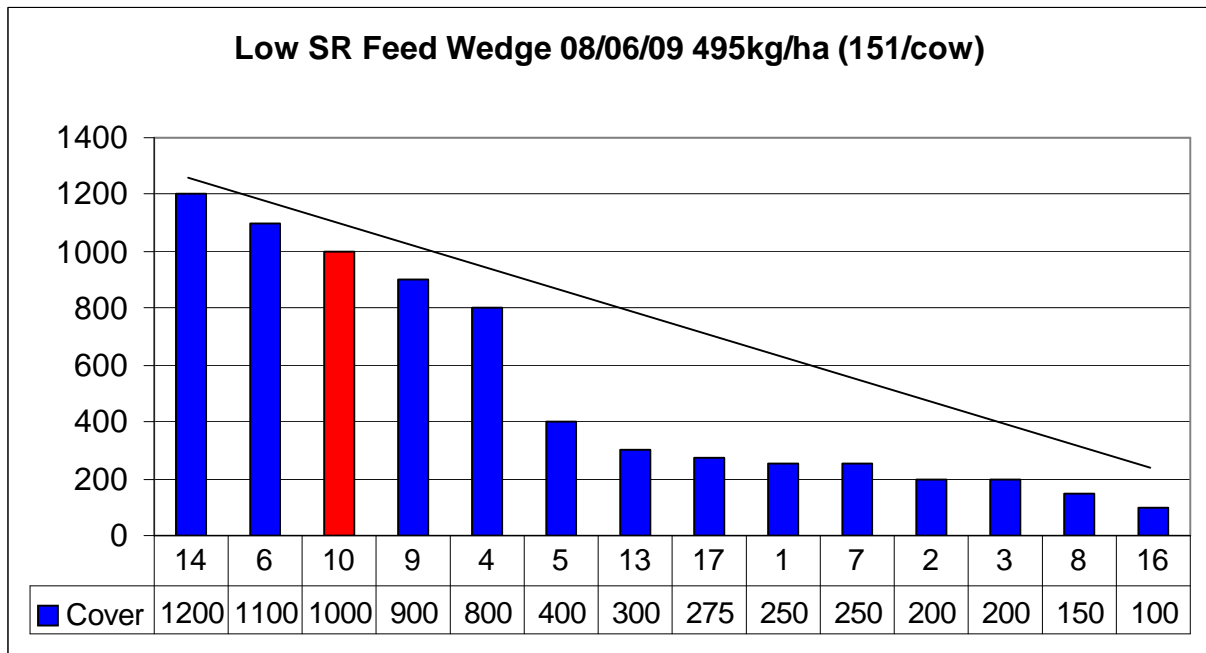
Low Stocking Rate Group (2.5 HF Cows/ha)

Critical Issues

- 1) **Maintain post-grazing height at between 5 – 5.5cm**
- 2) **Identify any surpluses and maintain pre-grazing yield at 1028kg**

Situation

Figure 1. Farm Feed Wedge 08/06/09



- 1) Block 11 has been skipped for silage. Blocks 15 and 18 were skipped last week but were not cut. We have decided to top up these 3 blocks with 30 units of CAN and cut in 15 days time. There are two reasons for this; firstly, the weather forecast is mixed until after the weekend so it will be next week at the earliest before they could be cut. Secondly, they look visibly stressed and are not growing. By topping up with CAN at least they will be growing while we are waiting for the weather to come right.
- 2) As can be seen in figure 1, there is a sharp step in the wedge. This is because the 5 blocks that were cut for silage last Monday are now back in the rotation. The re-growth on these blocks is lower than we would have liked because the mower cut lower into the base than the cows are grazing so we have lowered the growing point and there was a yellow base after mowing.
- 3) Cows are currently grazing block 10, so the pre-grazing yield in block 14 should be up to the target line by the time the cows enter. We should be going into block 5 in 7 days time, if growth over the next 7 days is 80kg the pre-grazing yield on this block will be 960kg. At these growth rates, we would be comfortable to be in a 14 day rotation for

this group next week which would bring target pre-grazing yields back to 1028, so block 5 will be close to target at 960kg.

- 4) Stocking rate is currently 3.27 cows/ha. Rotation length will be held at 18 days for this week and 14 days next week. Ideal pre grazing yield for this week is 1250kg ($3.27 \times 18 \times 17 + 250$).
- 5) 38% of the herd's silage requirement is now made.

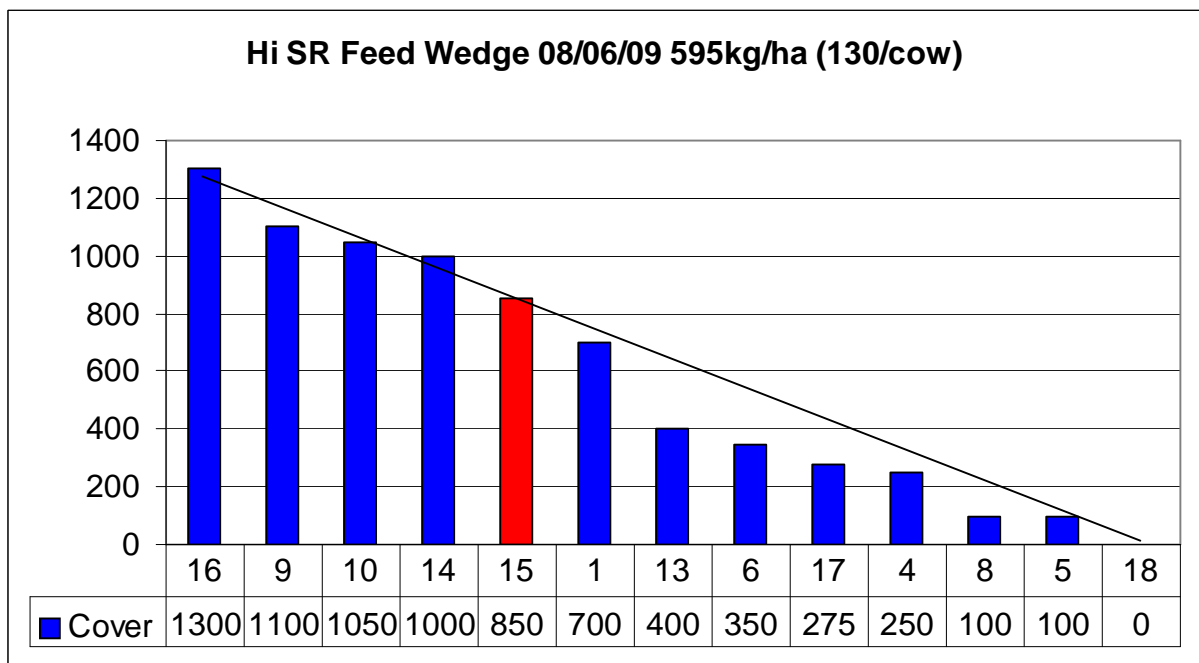
High Stocking Rate Group (3.3 HF Cows/ha)

Critical Issues

- 3) **Maintain post-grazing height at between 3 and 3.5cm**
- 4) **Maintain pre-grazing yield at 1250kg**

Situation

Figure 2. Farm Feed Wedge 08/06/09



1. Blocks 2, 3, 7 and 11 were skipped last week but have not been baled yet. They will be cut as soon as weather conditions allow, probably early next week. These blocks were selected either because the cover was too high (i.e. >1250kg) or because the grass quality was poor. By selecting fields with poor quality pastures we are ensuring that milking cows are only eating the best quality grass available on the farm.
2. This group are given an allowance of 15kg, are on an 18 day rotation and stocking rate is currently 4.58 cows/ha so ideal pre-grazing yield is 1236kg ($15 \times 4.58 \times 18$)
3. 16.3% of the herd's silage requirement is now made.

Whole Farm Situation

1. Average soil temperature for the past week was 15.14°C, last week 14.6°C.
2. Total rainfall for the week was 13mm.

3. Average weekly growth this week was 60kg/day, average for the previous 3 years was 58kg/day. The reason for the reduced growth this week was because the re-growth in the blocks cut for silage is slower than the growth in our grazed blocks (39kg versus 100kg)
4. Dry matter was 17% on Monday.
5. 30 units of CAN with 5 units Sulphur is being spread per acre after grazing. 112.6kg N/ha have been spread up to the 1st of June. We could get away with less nitrogen at the moment but we want to maximise growth as we will be short winter feed for the high and medium stocking rate treatments.
6. Breeding season commenced on Monday 20th April.
7. Latest milk quality test results from the milk processor are; Fat 3.81%, Protein 3.28%, Lactose 4.75%, SCC 310k, TBC 10k, Thermoduric N/D, Sediment A.
8. Critical Short-term Actions:
 - a. Cows are on 24-hour allocations and move to new pasture as soon as desired post grazing height is achieved. Cows are moved between milkings 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. At the moment, we are cutting silage after 3-4 weeks of growth with pre-cutting yields of approximately 1800-2200kg.
 - c. Achieve a high submission rate now to ensure compact calving next Spring, regular monitoring of cows and using tail paint will help us to achieve this.
 - d. Graze block 12 which was reseeded in April. Even though the cover is very small (<150kg) it is important that it is grazed now to encourage tillering of the grass plant and allow sunlight to reach the clover shoots.

EXPERIMENTAL PROGRESS REPORT AS AT SUNDAY, 08/06/09

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	9/2	12/2	11/2	26/2	24/2	22/2
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)	130	133	151	131	122	159
Pre-herbage mass (kg DM/ha)	1200	1300	1050	1200	1300	1050
Residual grazing height (cm)	4.5	4.4	3.7	7.0	3.9	3.8
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)	1.47	1.30	1.26	1.49	1.31	1.37
Milk yield (kg/cow/day)	19.6	17.8	18.0	20.1	18.7	19.8
% Fat	4.13	4.01	3.76	3.99	3.74	3.78
% Protein	3.45	3.37	3.28	3.40	3.29	3.21
Bodyweight (kg)	515	498	463	520	515	481
Condition Score	2.83	2.72	2.73	2.91	2.85	2.73

Cumulative:						
Milk solids (kg/cow)	206	184	178	181	164	187
(kg/ha)	517	537	584	454	479	613
Milk yield (kg/cow)	2709	2412	2360	2439	2219	2460
% Fat	4.20	4.32	4.19	4.00	4.09	4.26
% Protein	3.40	3.34	3.37	3.42	3.33	3.33
Days in milk	118	114	115	100	103	105
Total supplement fed (kg/cow)						
Concentrate	215	224	220	167	170	172
Silage	63	111	119	20	37	43
Conserved silage (kg DM /cow)	380	250	163	380	250	163

Farmlet area (hectares)	9.17	7.87	7.01	9.17	7.87	7.01
Number of cows calved	23	23	23	23	23	23
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.