

## Curtins Farm Walk Notes Tuesday 16-02-10

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

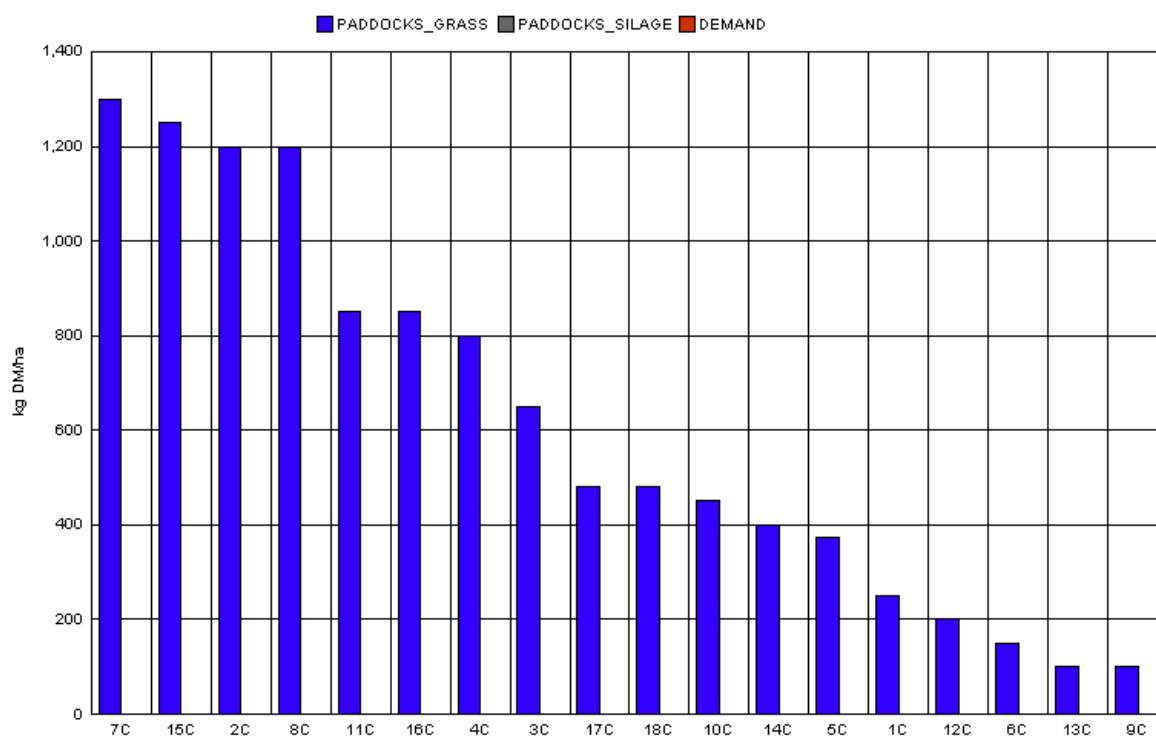
#### Critical Issues

- 1) Maintain post-grazing height at between 4 – 5cm
- 2) Achieve high grass intakes

#### Situation

**Figure 1. Low Stocking Rate Feed Wedge**

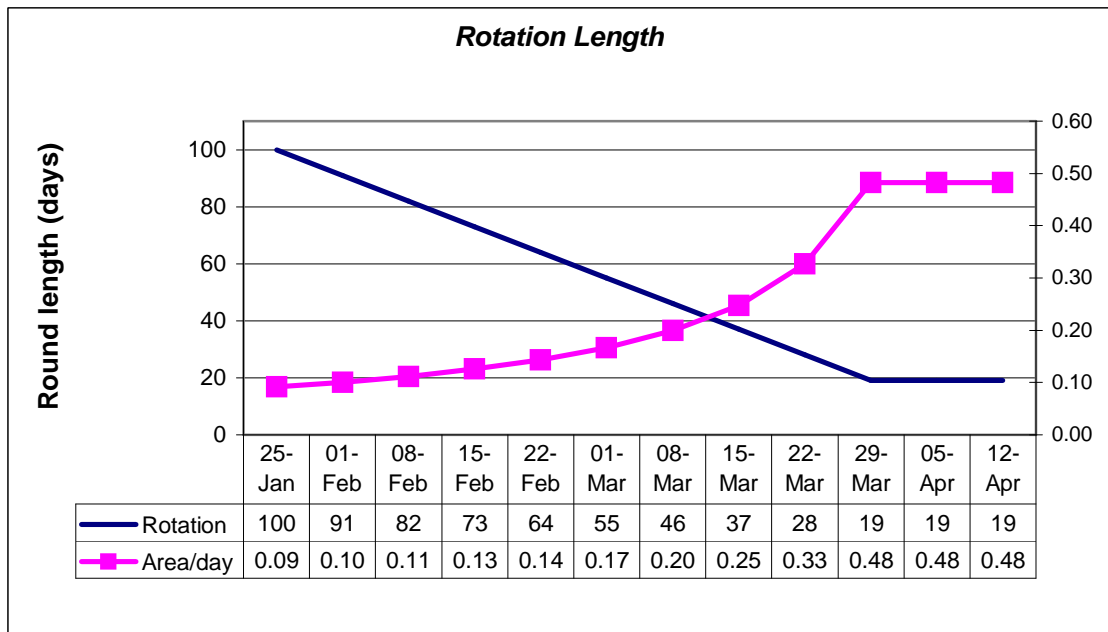
| Teagasc, Dairy Production Department, Moorepark  |                        | GrazePlan - Grass Measurement Report   |           |
|--|------------------------|--|-----------|
| Group :  | TEAGASC RESEARCH FARMS | Treatment :  | 3         |
| Client :   | CURTINS-A. BRENNAN     | Date Produced :  | 16-FEB-10 |
| Date :   | 15-FEB-10              |  |           |
| Rotation Length :<br>Grass Allocation /cow (kg grass dry matter/LU) : 12<br>Concentrate Fed (kg/cow) : 4<br>Silage Fed (kg DM/cow) : 0<br>N Application Rate (units/acre) :<br>N Application Rate (kg/ha) :<br>Residual Height : 3.5<br>Total Livestock : 23 |                        | Farm Cover (kg DM/ha) : 632<br>Farm Cover (kg DM/LU) : 251<br>Current Monthly Fertilizer Rate (kg/ha) :<br>Stock Rate (LU/ha) : 2.52<br>Growth Rate :<br>Farm Demand (kg DM/LU/day) :: 140<br>Target pregrazing yield (kg DM/ha) : |           |



**Table 1. Revised Spring Feed Budget for Low Stocking Rate**

| Week     | Grass Cover (kg dm/ha) | Cover per LU | Growth (kg dm/day) | No. of Cows |
|----------|------------------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 09/02/09 | 647                    | 259          | 6                  | 10          |
| 16/02/09 | 636                    | 254          | 12                 | 15          |
| 23/02/09 | 626                    | 250          | 14                 | 18          |
| 02/03/09 | 599                    | 240          | 15                 | 21          |
| 09/03/09 | 545                    | 218          | 17                 | 21          |
| 16/03/09 | 486                    | 194          | 21                 | 21          |
| 23/03/09 | 438                    | 175          | 23                 | 22          |
| 30/03/09 | 378                    | 151          | 27                 | 22          |

**Figure 2. Spring Rotation Plan for Low Stocking Rate**



- 1) 52% of the herd is calved. Grazing commenced on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January and 14.8% of the farmlet was grazed by Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February, 35% will be grazed by the 1<sup>st</sup> of March.
- 2) Farm cover is 632kg/ha (Figure 1) which is on target based on the revised spring budget, (the budget was revised to take into account the lower than expected opening farm cover and lower growth rates due to the cold weather).
- 3) Grass allocation is based on the Spring Rotation Plan (Figure 2). This group is being allocated 0.13ha/day, pre-grazing yield is 1400kg and 250kg residual is left after grazing. Therefore, grass intake is approximately 12.4kg/day. Concentrate supplementation is at 4kg/day.

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

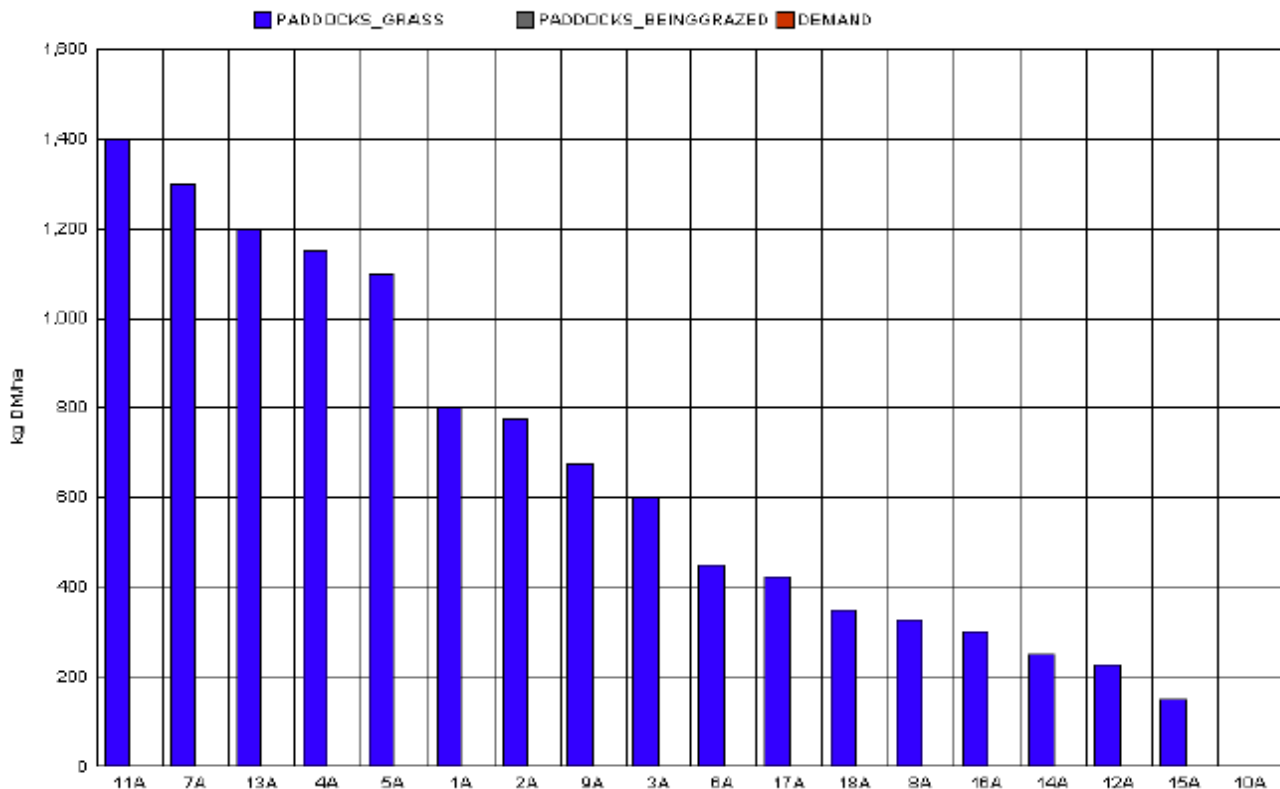
### Critical Issues

1. Maintain post-grazing height at between 3 and 3.5cm
2. Avoid poaching
3. Achieve high grass intakes

### Situation

Figure 3. High Stocking Rate Feed Wedge

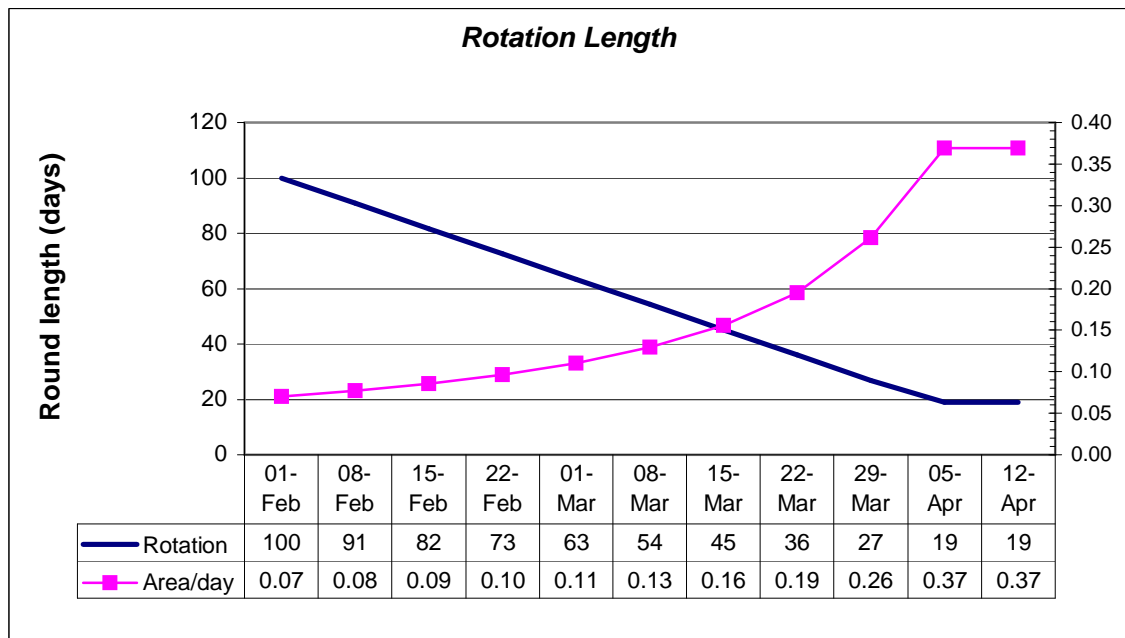
| Teagasc, Dairy Production Department, Moorepark |               | GrazePlan - Grass Measurement Report      |           |
|---|---------------|---|-----------|
| Group : TEAGASC RESEARCH FARMS                  | Treatment : 1 | Date Produced                             | 16-FEB-10 |
| Client : CURTINS-A. BRENNAN                     |               |   |           |
| Date : 15-FEB-10                                |               |   |           |
| Rotation Length :                               |               | Farm Cover (kg DM/ha) :                   | 644       |
| Grass Allocation /cow (kg grass dry matter/LU)  | 12            | Farm Cover (kg DM/LU) :                   | 196       |
| Concentrate Fed (kg/cow) :                      | 4             | Current Monthly Fertilizer Rate (kg/ha) : |           |
| Silage Fed (kg DM/cow) :                        | 0             | Stock Rate (LU/ha) :                      | 3.30      |
| N Application Rate (units/acre) :               |               | Growth Rate :                             |           |
| N Application Rate (kg/ha) :                    |               | Farm Demand (kg DM/LU/day) ::             | 150       |
| Residual Height :                               | 3             | Target pregrazing yield (kg DM/ha) :      |           |
| Total Livestock :                               | 23            |   |           |



**Figure 4. Revised Spring Feed Budget for High Stocking Rate**

| Week     | Grass Cover (kg dm/ha) | Cover per LU | Growth (kg dm/day) | No. of Cows |
|----------|------------------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 09/02/09 | 610                    | 186          | 6.0                | 10          |
| 16/02/09 | 602                    | 184          | 13.0               | 15          |
| 23/02/09 | 603                    | 184          | 15.4               | 18          |
| 02/03/09 | 585                    | 178          | 16.8               | 21          |
| 09/03/09 | 535                    | 163          | 18.7               | 21          |
| 16/03/09 | 477                    | 145          | 23.0               | 21          |
| 23/03/09 | 428                    | 131          | 25.0               | 22          |
| 30/03/09 | 361                    | 110          | 29.5               | 22          |

**Figure 5. Spring Rotation Plan for High Stocking Rate**



- 52% of this herd is calved and grazing commenced on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February, 10 days later than planned. 9.5% of the farmlet is now grazed, the target for this time was to have 15% grazed. At current rate of progress, only 19% will be grazed by the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, whereas the target is 30%.
- This target is based on the theory of having a sufficient proportion of the farm grazed in February to ensure sufficient re-growth before the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> round in early April. While we are conscious of the fact that this will not be achieved we feel that it is the lesser of two evils, as it will allow us to allocate a larger area than planned in March, when the farm cover will be low. The alternative is to cut concentrate and increase the area grazed now, which will bring us back up to target area grazed but will reduce the farm cover further. As growth rates are currently very low across both the grazed and un-grazed

paddocks we feel that aiming to graze more area now will have a very limited benefit. Either way, it is likely that high levels of supplementation will be needed in March as farm cover is expected to drop dramatically once the high covers are grazed, (see feed wedge) unless growth increases dramatically which is unlikely to happen within the next 2 weeks.

3. Farm cover is 644kg/ha which is well behind our original target.
4. Cows are on 4kg of concentrate. Pre-grazing yield is 1400kg and residual is zero. Grass is allocated based on the Spring Rotation Plan (Figure 5), currently 0.09ha/day, therefore grass intake is approximately 10.5kg/day.

### **Whole Farm Situation**

1. Average soil temperature for the past week was 9.51°C, last week 7.34°C.
2. Total rainfall for the week was 85.5mm.
3. Average weekly growth this week was 2kg/day, average for the previous 3 years was 11kg/day.
4. Dry matters were 20% on Monday morning.
5. 23 units urea/acre was spread on 70% of the farm on 1/02/10 while 2500gls/acre of watery slurry was spread on the remaining 30%.
6. 2500gls of slurry is being spread on grazed paddocks.
7. Latest milk quality test results from the milk processor are; Fat 4.59%, Protein 3.37%, Lactose 4.71%, SCC 396k.
8. So far 4 cows have been treated for mastitis, 1 cow is lame and 2 cows had retained afterbirth.
9. Critical Short-term Actions:
  - a. Cows are currently on 12-hour allocations.
  - b. Stick to the Spring Rotation Planner
  - c. Monitor cows closely for signs of ill health and treat early.