

Curtins Farm Walk Notes Tuesday 23-02-10

Low Stocking Rate Group (2.5 HF Cows/ha)

Critical Issues

- 1) Maintain post-grazing height at between 4 – 5cm
- 2) Avoid Poaching
- 3) 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		Date Produced 23-FEB-10	
Client : CRT - Aidan Brennan		Effect of stocking rate and calving date on animal performance	
Date : 22-FEB-10		Treatment : Low SR	
Rotation Length : Grass Allocation /cow (kg grass dry matter/LU) : 12 Concentrate Fed (kg/cow) : 4 Silage Fed (kg DM/cow) : 0 N Application Rate (units/acre) : N Application Rate (kg/ha) : Residual Height : 3.5 Total Livestock : 23	Farm Cover (kg DM/ha) : 718 Farm Cover (kg DM/LU) : 285 Current Monthly Fertilizer Rate (kg/ha) : Stock Rate (LU/ha) : 2.52 Growth Rate : Farm Demand (kg DM/LU/day) :: 120 Target pregrazing yield (kg DM/ha) :		

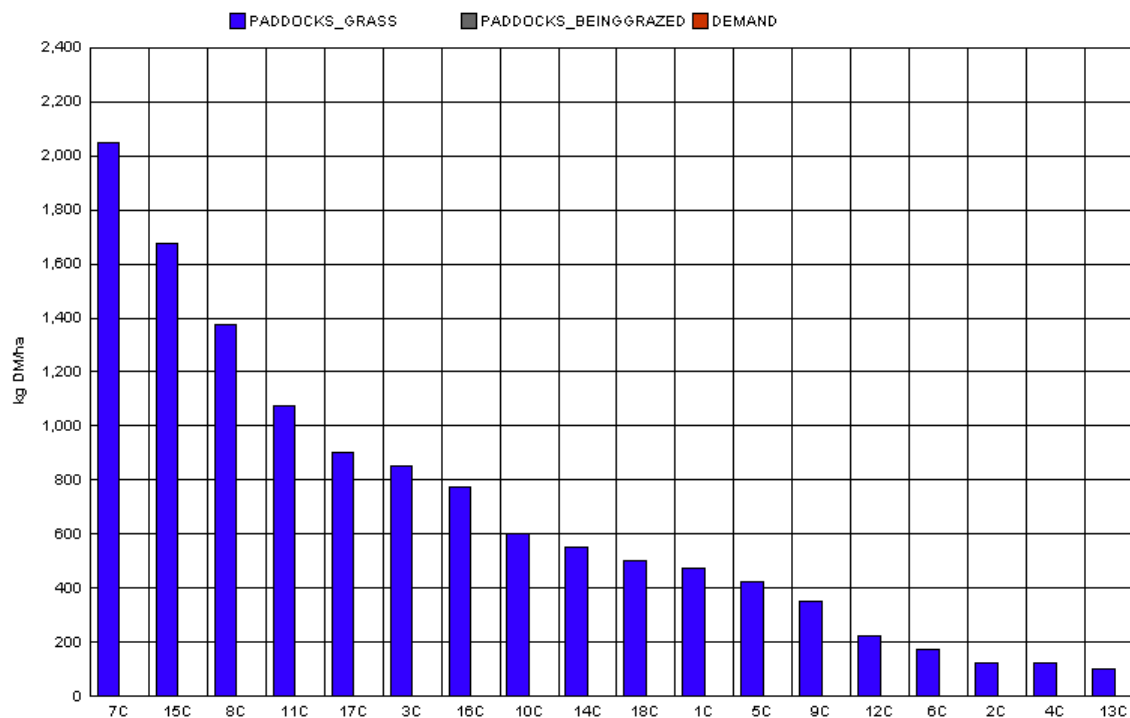
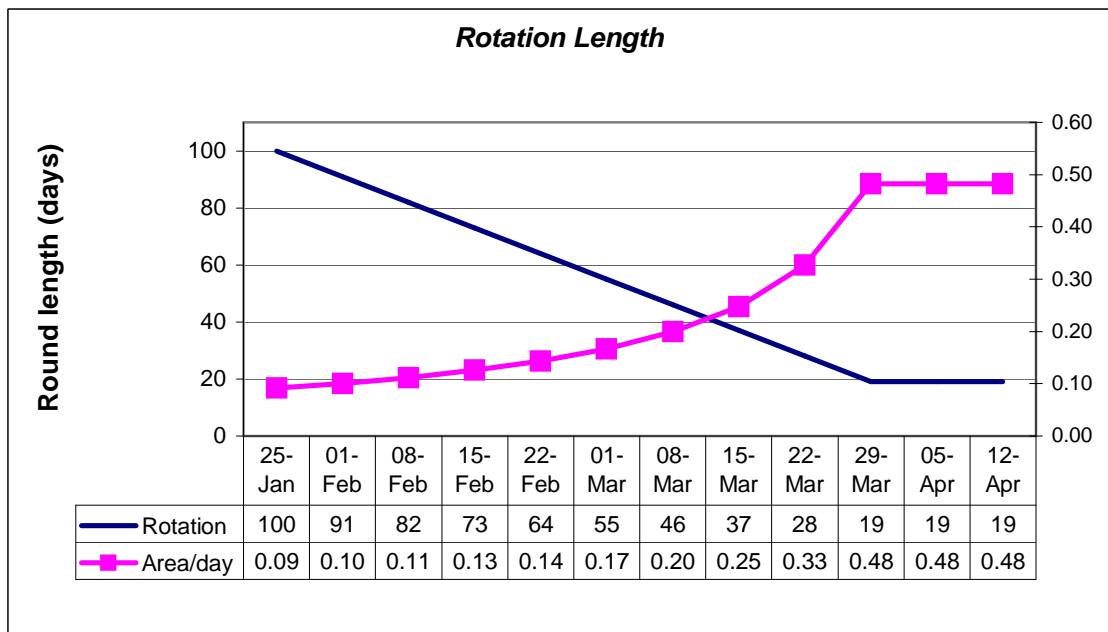


Table 1. Revised Spring Feed Budget for Low Stocking Rate

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) 61% of the herd is calved. Grazing commenced on the 31st of January and 25.4% of the farmlet was grazed by Tuesday 22nd February, 35% will be grazed by the 1st of March.
- 2) Farm cover is 718kg/ha (Figure 1) which is an increase on last weeks figure and is above 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.
- 4) Cows are currently grazing block 8, pre-grazing yield is 1400kg and 200kg residual is left after grazing. Therefore, grass intake is estimated to be 11kg/day, [(1200kg allowance*0.13ha)/14 cows calved]. Concentrate supplementation is at 4kg/day.

- 5) 15kg is a satisfactory intake at this time, for this reason, area allocation will not increase this week inline with the spring rotation planner. There are two reasons for this; firstly, as the pre-grazing yield in the next paddock is high at over 2000kg the amount of grass per square meter allocated is increasing anyway. Secondly and more importantly, there is a big hole in our feed wedge so if we can slow down the rotation now while still allowing reasonable intakes we can extend the period of high pre-grazing yields.

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		Date Produced	23-FEB-10
Client : CRT - Aidan Brennan		Effect of stocking rate and calving date on animal performance	
Date : 22-FEB-10		Treatment :	High SR

Rotation Length :		Farm Cover (kg DM/ha) :	652
Grass Allocation /cow (kg grass dry matter/LU	11	Farm Cover (kg DM/LU) :	198
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) ::	116
Residual Height :	2.8	Target pregrazing yield (kg DM/ha) :	
Total Livestock :	23		

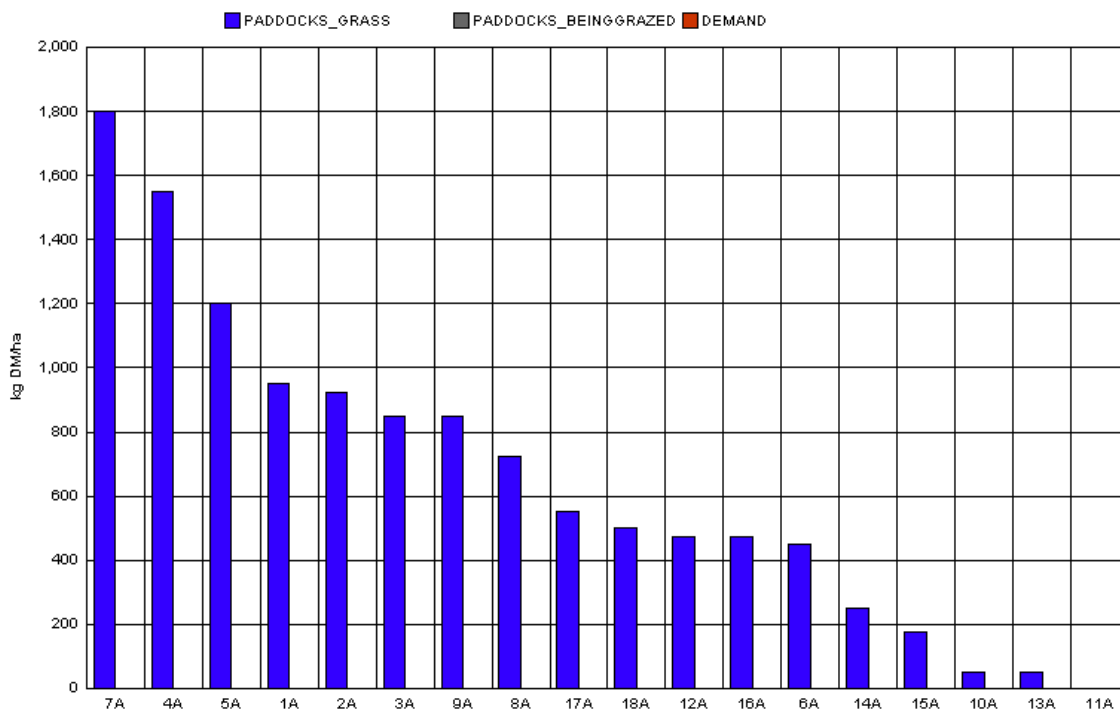
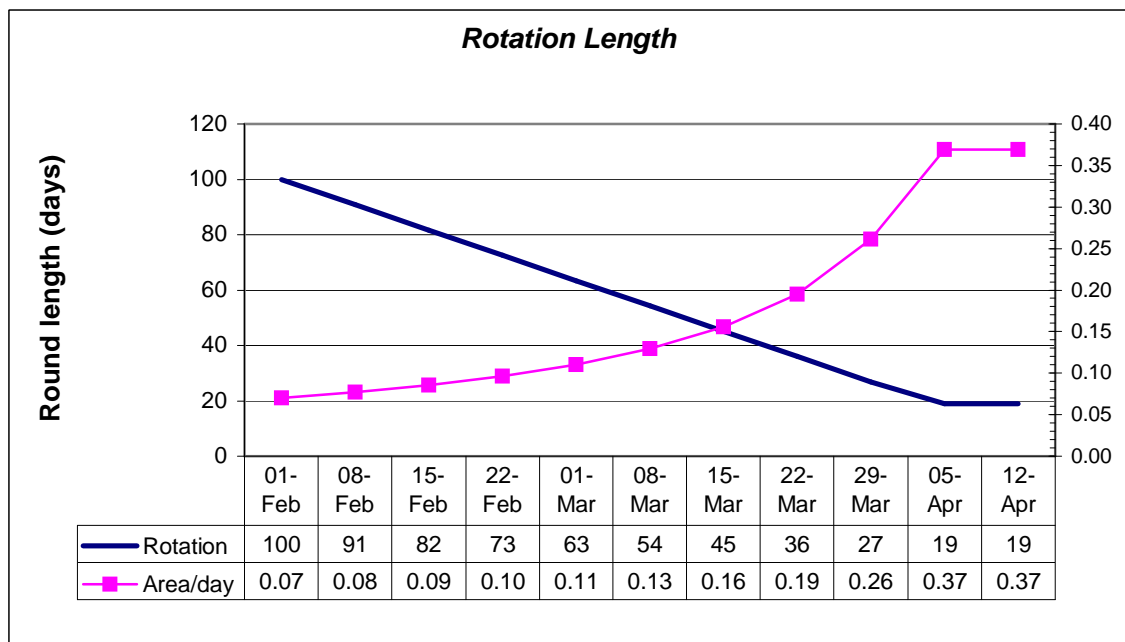


Figure 4. Revised Spring Feed Budget for High Stocking Rate

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



1. 65% of the herd is calved and grazing commenced on the 10th of February, 10 days later than planned. 18.4% of the farmlet is now grazed.
2. Pre-grazing yield is 1800kg and area allocation is 0.09ha/day. Therefore, grass intake is estimated to be 10.8kg [(1800kg*0.09ha)/15 cows calved]. 4kg of concentrate is being fed so total intake is approximately 14.8kg which is satisfactory for this time.
3. Farm cover is 652kg/ha which is well behind our original target.
4. For the same reasons as outlined for the low stocking rate treatment, above, area allocation will not increase this week, instead, we will hold off on increasing area until we hit the low covers as predicted in the feed wedge, Figure 3.

Whole Farm Situation

1. Average soil temperature for the past week was 1.3°C. (There was an error in last weeks report)
2. Total rainfall for the week was 5mm. (There was an error in last weeks report)
3. Average weekly growth this week was 19kg/day, average for the previous 3 years was 20kg/day.
4. Dry matters were 30% 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 4.72%, Protein 3.39%, Lactose 4.71%, SCC 171k.
8. 1 cow was treated for a kidney infection and stomach upset this week. 2 cows with retained cleanings were washed out. No other health issues were observed.
9. As we are expecting a grass deficit in the coming weeks we are trying to preserve silage stocks. For this reason all dry cows are now on a diet of 6kg soya hulls and 4kg of wheaten straw.
10. Critical Short-term Actions:
 - a. Cows are currently on 12-hour allocations.
 - b. Avoid poaching, we are not back fencing at the moment but if weather deteriorates we will.
 - c. Monitor cows closely for signs of ill health and treat early.