

Curtins Farm Walk Notes Tuesday 16-03-10

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 16-MAR-10	
Farm : Curtins Farm		Effect of stocking rate and calving date on animal performance	
Date : 15-MAR-10		Treatment : Low SR	
Grass Allocation /cow (kg grass dry matter/LU) : 10 Concentrate Fed (kg/cow) : 6 Silage Fed (kg DM/cow) : 0 N Application Rate (units/acre) : N Application Rate (kg/ha) : Residual Height : 3 Total Livestock : 20	Farm Cover (kg DM/ha) : 342 Farm Cover (kg DM/LU) : 156 Current Monthly Fertilizer Rate (kg/ha) : Stock Rate (LU/ha) : 2.19 Growth Rate : 20 Farm Demand (kg DM/LU/day) :: 22 Target pregrazing yield (kg DM/ha) : 810		

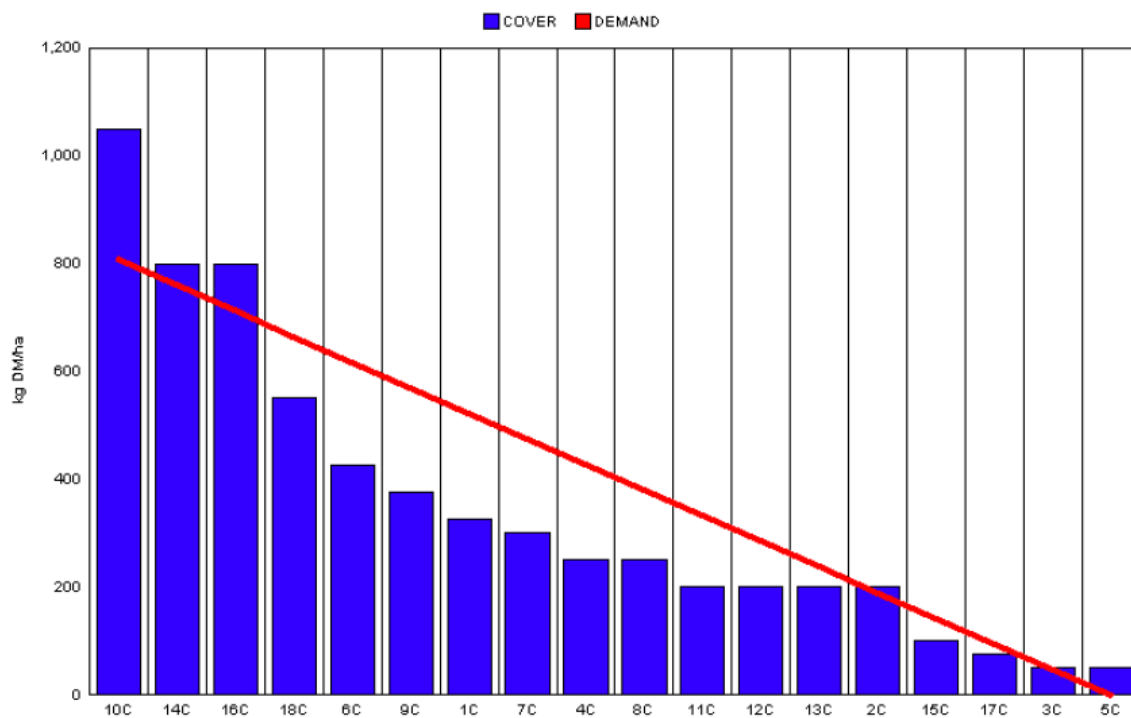
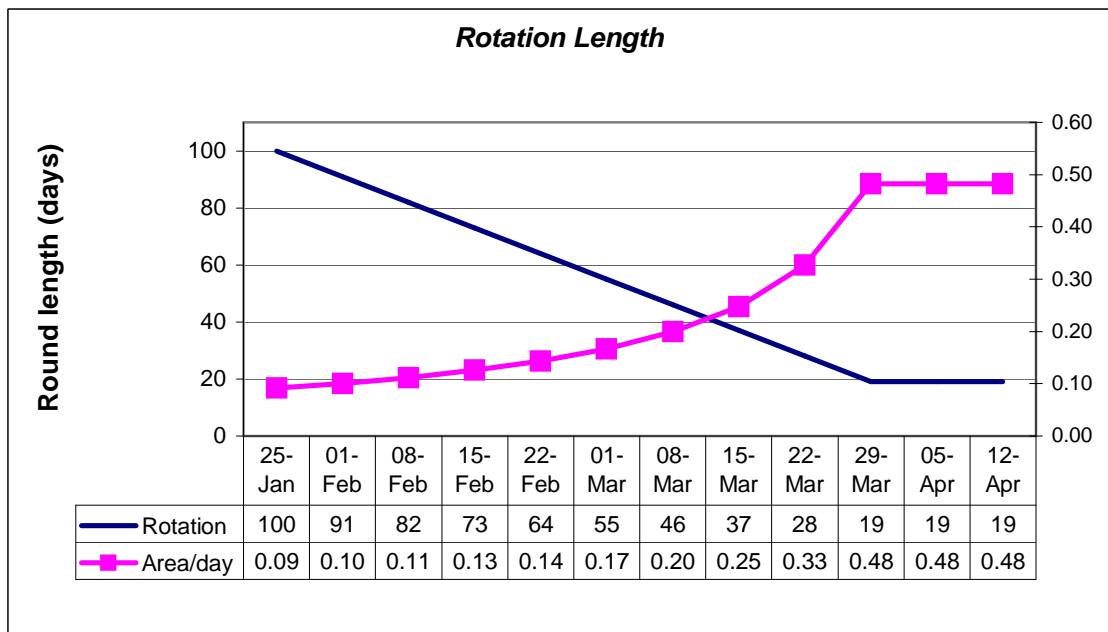


Table 1. Revised Spring Feed Budget for Low Stocking Rate

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) 87% of the herd is calved. Grazing commenced on the 31st of January and 66% of the farmlet was grazed on the 16th of March.
- 2) Farm cover is 342kg/ha (Figure 1) which is below 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 currently being allocated 0.25ha/day.
- 4) Cows are currently grazing block 16, pre-grazing yield is 800kg and 0kg residual is left after grazing. Therefore, grass intake is estimated to be 10kg/day, [(800kg allowance*0.25ha)/20 cows calved]. Concentrate supplementation is at 6kg/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		Date Produced 16-MAR-10	
Farm : Curtins Farm		Effect of stocking rate and calving date on animal performance	
Date : 15-MAR-10		Treatment : High SR	
Grass Allocation /cow (kg grass dry matter/LU)	6	Farm Cover (kg DM/ha) :	336
Concentrate Fed (kg/cow) :	6	Farm Cover (kg DM/LU) :	130
Silage Fed (kg DM/cow) :	4	Current Monthly Fertilizer Rate (kg/ha) :	
N Application Rate (units/acre) :		Stock Rate (LU/ha) :	2.58
N Application Rate (kg/ha) :		Growth Rate :	19
Residual Height :	2.8	Farm Demand (kg DM/LU/day) ::	15
Total Livestock :	18	Target pregrazing yield (kg DM/ha) :	572

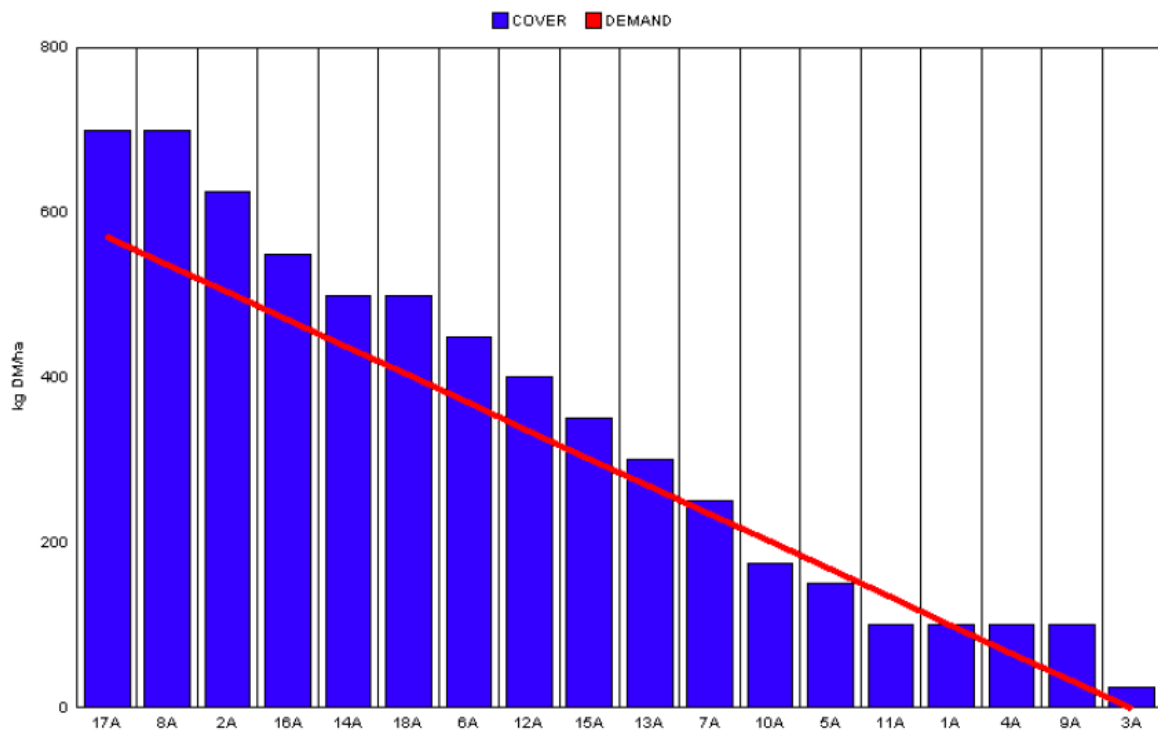
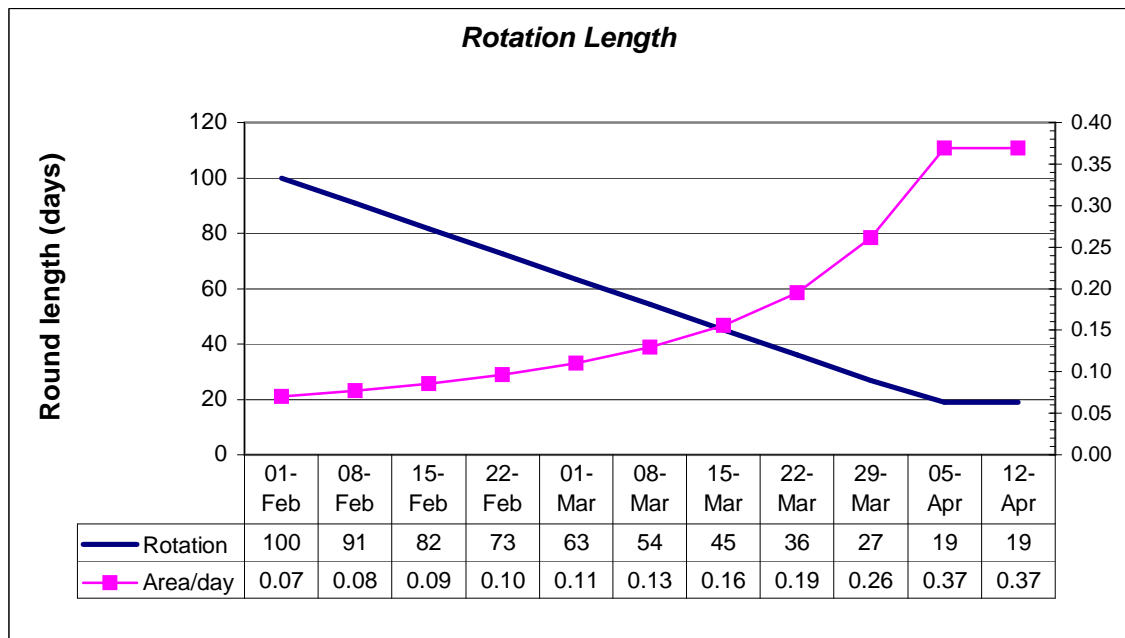


Figure 4. Revised Spring Feed Budget for High Stocking Rate

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



- 78% of the herd is calved and grazing commenced on the 10th of February, 10 days later than planned. 48% of the farmlet was grazed on the 16th of March.
- Pre-grazing yield is 700kg and area allocation is 0.15ha/day. Therefore, grass intake is estimated to be 6kg [(700kg*0.15ha)/18 cows calved]. 6kg of concentrate is being fed along with 4kg of high quality bale silage.
- Farm cover is 336kg/ha which is well behind our original and revised target.
- Cows are on 24-hour allocation of grass. They get fresh grass after evening milking and go back to the same section after morning milking and are then brought indoors for silage once the desired residual is reached, usually around 12pm.

Whole Farm Situation

1. Average soil temp for the week was 3.4° C. Total rainfall was 0mm.
2. Average weekly growth this week was around 19kg/day.
3. Dry matters were 26% on Monday morning.
4. 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%.
5. 20 units of urea/acre is being spread on pastures that have been grazed and have received slurry, approx. 30%. The remainder is getting 40 units/acre.
6. Latest milk quality test results from the milk processor are; Fat 4.3%, Protein 3.37%, Lactose 4.7%, SCC 266k.
7. Freshly calved cows are on 4kg of concentrate for 5 days after calving, this is then increased to 6kg thereafter.
8. 1 cow was operated on this week, she had a right displaced abomasum. 2 cows were lame.
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 getting silage are on 24-hour allocations while cows not getting silage are 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.