

Curtins Farm Walk Notes Tuesday 23-03-10

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 24-MAR-10	
Farm : Curtins Farm		Effect of stocking rate and calving date on animal performance	
Date : 22-MAR-10		Treatment : Low SR	
Grass Allocation /cow (kg grass dry matter/LU) : 6 Concentrate Fed (kg/cow) : 6 Silage Fed (kg DM/cow) : 4 N Application Rate (units/acre) : N Application Rate (kg/ha) : Residual Height : 3 Total Livestock : 23	Farm Cover (kg DM/ha) : 279 Farm Cover (kg DM/LU) : 111 Current Monthly Fertilizer Rate (kg/ha) : Stock Rate (LU/ha) : 2.52 Growth Rate : 22 Farm Demand (kg DM/LU/day) :: 15 Target pregrazing yield (kg DM/ha) : 559		

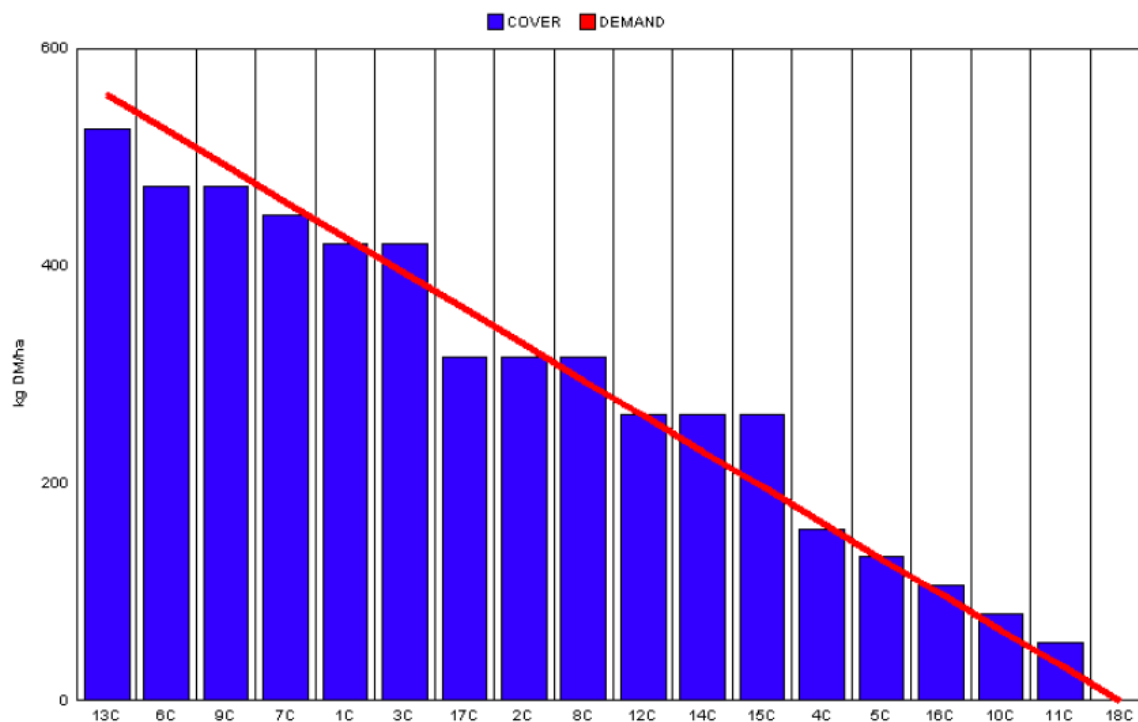
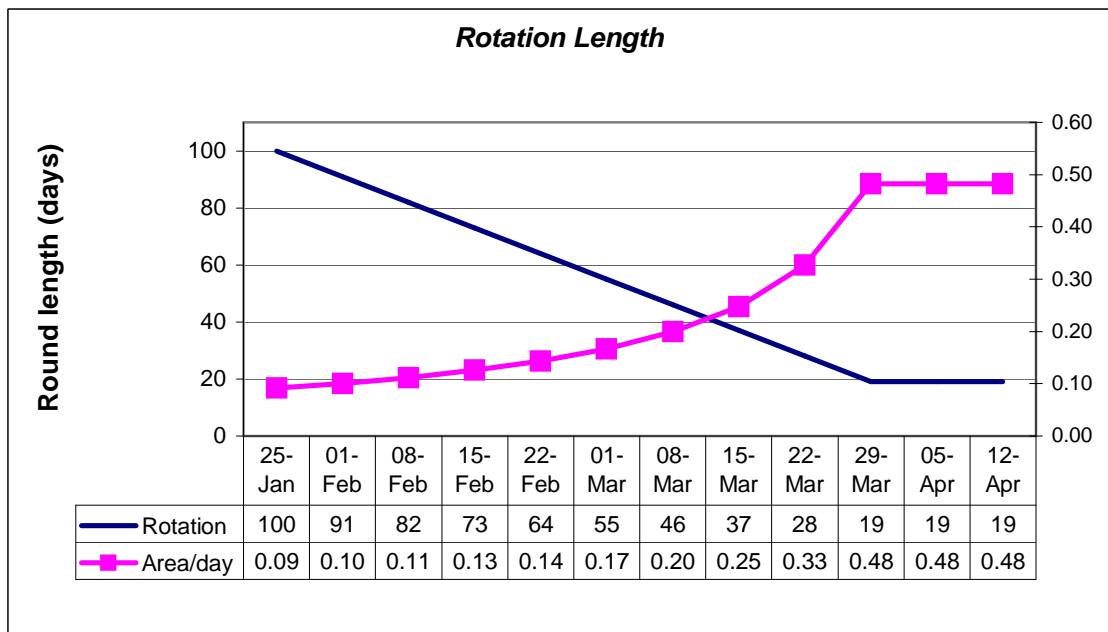


Table 1. Revised Spring Feed Budget for Low Stocking Rate

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 85% of the farmlet was grazed on the 22nd of March.
- 2) Farm cover is 279kg/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 0.33ha/day.
- 4) Cows are currently grazing block 6, pre-grazing yield is 500kg and 100kg residual is left after grazing. Therefore, grass intake is estimated to be 6.6kg/day, [(400kg 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 24-MAR-10	
Farm : Curtins Farm		Effect of stocking rate and calving date on animal performance	
Date : 22-MAR-10		Treatment : High SR	
Grass Allocation /cow (kg grass dry matter/LU)	6	Farm Cover (kg DM/ha) :	369
Concentrate Fed (kg/cow) :	6	Farm Cover (kg DM/LU) :	112
Silage Fed (kg DM/cow) :	4	Current Monthly Fertilizer Rate (kg/ha) :	
N Application Rate (units/acre) :		Stock Rate (LU/ha) :	3.30
N Application Rate (kg/ha) :		Growth Rate :	27
Residual Height :	2.8	Farm Demand (kg DM/LU/day) ::	20
Total Livestock :	23	Target pregrazing yield (kg DM/ha) :	732

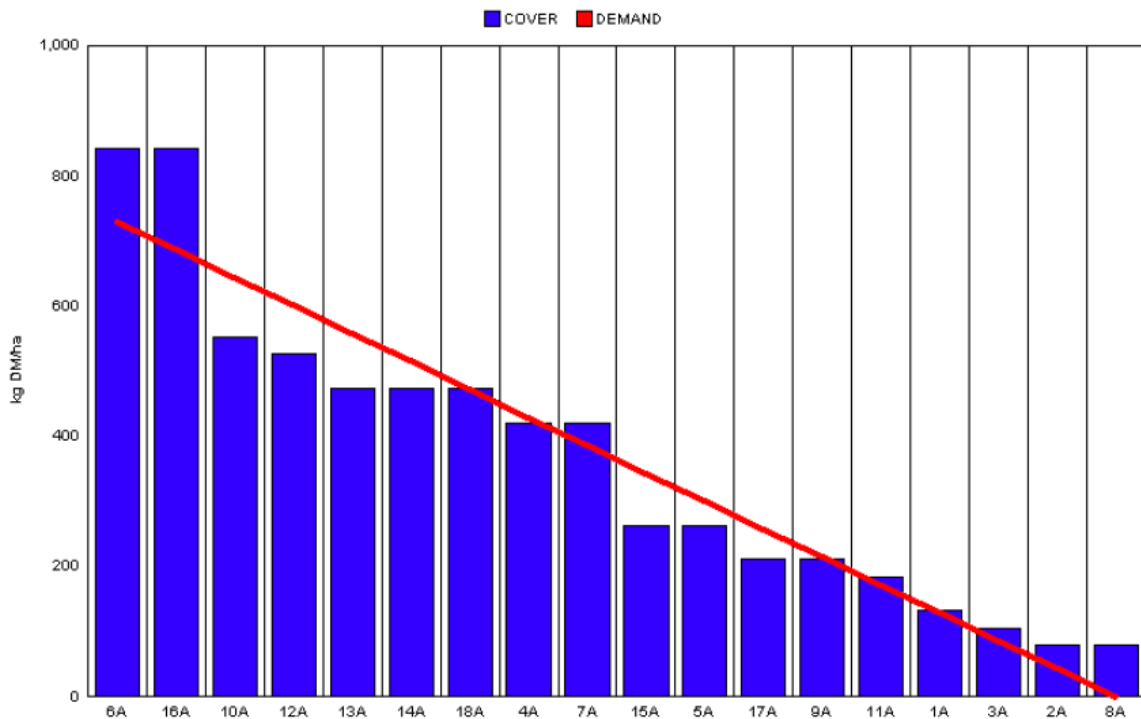
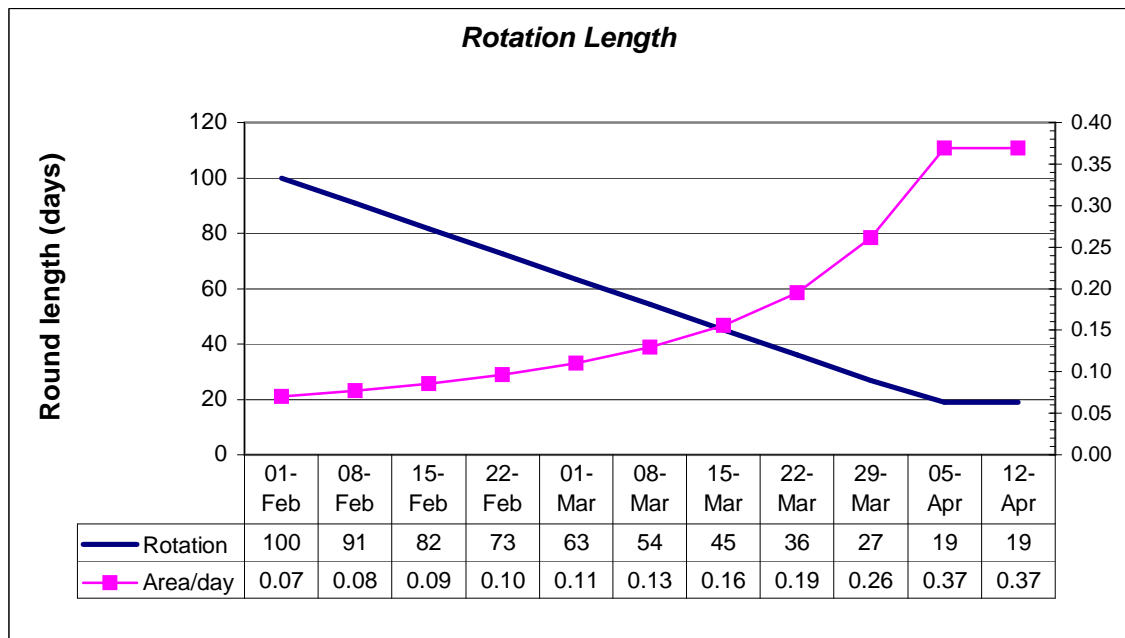


Figure 4. Revised Spring Feed Budget for High Stocking Rate

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. 66% of the farmlet was grazed on the 22nd of March.
- Pre-grazing yield is 600kg and area allocation is 0.19ha/day. Therefore, grass intake is estimated to be 6kg $[(600\text{kg} \times 0.19\text{ha}) / 18 \text{ cows calved}]$. 6kg of concentrate is being fed along with 4kg of high quality bale silage.
- Farm cover is 369kg/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 10° C. Total rainfall was 10.7mm.
2. Average weekly growth this week was around 24.5kg/day.
3. Dry matters were 20% on Monday morning.
4. So far this year, the farm has received 60 units of nitrogen/acre, in the form of slurry and urea.
5. Latest milk quality test results from the milk processor are; Fat 4.64%, Protein 3.30%, Lactose 4.76%, SCC 321k, TBC 18k.
6. Freshly calved cows are on 4kg of concentrate for 5 days after calving, this is then increased to 6kg thereafter.
7. 4 cows were treated for mastitis this week.
8. 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.
9. Critical Short-term Actions:
 - a. Cows getting silage are on 24-hour allocations..
 - b. Avoid poaching, we are back fencing and will move to 12 hour grazing blocks if weather deteriorates.
 - c. Monitor cows closely for signs of ill health and treat early.