

Johnstown Castle Winter Milk Herd- Weekly Management Notes - 21/05/18

- The past couple of weeks has seen a huge improvement in the weather. Rainfall for all of May so far has been just 26.8mm, with average soil temperatures of 11.4°C. Better grazing conditions has allowed us do a good job on cleaning out paddocks, we've probably pushed the cows a little bit harder than ideal, but this was necessary in order to get good cleanout & ensure better quality for the next couple of rounds.
- Growth rates have been just ok, we haven't got that explosion of growth that we normally would around this time, although the last couple of days has shown signs of that burst. Swards seem to be "thinner" than usual with lower than normal tillering, –as a result of the wet ground & some surface damage I imagine. We had to maintain concentrate feeding levels at ~3kgs for the past few weeks (this probably helped the cows when pushing them hard to tidy up plots). A small amount of surplus grass was taken out last week (2400kgs/ha). We plan to harvest main 1st cut silage tomorrow, we're a little disappointed that this hasn't bulked more over the 2 weeks, but at this stage it needs to come out in order to ensure quality for winter milking cows – hopefully the lighter 1st cut will see fast recovery and good 2nd cut yields.
- Fertiliser is going out @ 30kgs/N/ha every 3 weeks. We have applied straight Ps & Ks where required over the past few weeks (can't use compound fertiliser N due to nitrogen trials).
- Cow performance has been quite good over the past couple of months, but this has come on the back of higher feeding levels than we would have liked. Fertility performance of the autumn herd was very good, with overall empty rate of 7% after 12 week breeding period. Spring breeding has been going well, just coming up to 3 weeks in & we should have more than 90% served by then.

	<i>This week (21/05/18)</i>	Autumn Calving Herd	Spring Calving Herd
Production	% of Herd Milking	100%	100%
	Milk Kg	22.1	27.1
	Fat %	4.65	4.18
	Protein %	3.72	3.39
	Milk Solids kg	1.85	2.05
Intake	Grazed Grass kgs/dm/cow (estimate)	18 kgs	17kgs
	Silage kgs/dm/cow		
	Maize silage kgs/dm/cow		
	Concentrate in TMR –		
	Parlour concentrate kgs/dm/cow	1.5	2
Totals	<i>Lactation to date per cow</i>	Mean calving date 11 th October	Mean calving date 25 th Feb
	Days in Milk	221	85
	Milk kg	5672	2250
	Milk Solids kg	446	168
	Concentrate Fed	1158 in parlour (1613 total)	358

