

Johnstown Castle Winter Milk Herd

Weekly Management Notes - 07/01/19

- The weather has been very good over the past few weeks – unseasonably mild with low rainfall since the Christmas period. Our total annual rainfall for **2018** was **1147mm** which despite the dry summer is significantly higher than our average of 1060mm. The month of December had high rainfall of 180mm – mostly coming in the first half, December was also very mild with the average soil temperature coming in at **7.8 °C** (over 2°C. above average). The high soil temperatures has left the farm looking very green, hopefully if we can avoid too much harsh easterly winds, we'll be able to get out grazing before the end of the month & utilise some of the nice grass that seems to be available (grew ~6kgs/dm/ha/day in December)
- On the cow production side, the herd have been very consistent over the past 3-4 weeks, we're happy with performance (see table below), given that silage quality was lower than our 75% target and the mastitis issues we had in early December which seems to have settled down a bit. We mainly just have a couple of cows with recurring cases now, it's looking like these might be difficult to cure and they might be better moving on. One case of pneumonia with an autumn milker too.
- The spring herd have all been dry since before Christmas and we'd be very happy with how they've maintained body condition on their diet of 5kg oaten straw, 4 kg Silage 2.5kg dairy blend, we'll probably keep them on this diet for another 10 days or so, before moving back to an all silage diet pre-calving, we should have adequate silage at this point.
- About 75% of the autumn calves are now fully weaned off milk replacer (target weaning @ 100kgs); these are now on excellent quality baled silage ad-lib (intakes of silage probably less than 2kg/dm/day) along with 2.5kgs of 18% calf nut. The remaining 25% still on milk are mainly a few November calves and a couple of earlier born small calves. We had some really good news before Christmas with one of our bull calves testing very high on genomic EBI, he since been purchased by NCBC & moved to a rearing station, if everything goes to plan we'll be looking at him in a catalogue by this time next year.
- We're well into the breeding season at this stage, with 4 weeks gone, all bar one of the heifers have been served, submission rate with the cows was slightly below our 90% target, the 12% not served after 24 days were handled, 1 not cycling, 1 dirty & one with a cyst with the remainder short cycled to bring them in over the next couple of days.

	<i>This week (07/01/19)</i>	Autumn Calving Herd	Spring Calving Herd
Production	% of Herd Milking	100%	0%
	Milk Kg	28.6	
	Fat %	4.59	
	Protein %	3.47	
	Milk Solids kg	2.29	
Intake	Grazed Grass kgs/dm/cow		5 kgs Straw
	Silage kgs/dm/cow	9.5 kgs	4 kgs
	Maize silage kgs/dm/cow	5.0 kgs	
	Concentrate in TMR –	2.8 kgs	2.5
	Parlour concentrate	6.0 kgs	
Totals	<i>Lactation to date per cow</i>	Mean calving date 10 th October	Mean calving date 25 th Feb
	Days in Milk	89	290
	Milk kg	2515	6570
	Milk Solids kg	204	512
	Concentrate Fed	522kg in parlor (677kgs total)	1292