

Johnstown Castle Winter Milk Herd

Weekly Management Notes - 28/01/19

- We've had a very good January weather wise, with below average rainfall & above average temperatures for much of the month (total of 57.6mm rain for the month so far), soil temperatures are back over the last week (5.1°C), I expect they'll be back a lot more over the coming week if we get the weather that's forecast. With some good covers of grass available and excellent grazing conditions, we decided to go out by day with the autumn herd on the 11th January, we have been grazing by day for most days since and have near to 20% of their area grazed at this stage, we fully expect to be back in fulltime when conditions deteriorate, but it was a good opportunity to get some area grazed off & reduce winter feed demand, obviously we're well ahead of our original spring rotation planner (planned start of grazing 1st feb), but we'll keep grazing when conditions allow up to 40-50% of the farm (1st March?), we can adjust at this stage depending on conditions and available cover. We have a cover of ~700kgs/ha on the autumn herd at present, good growth over the past few weeks ~12kgs/day, but with a demand of ~ 20kgs, we'll be eating into the cover fast.
- The conditions allowed us to get slurry out on some of the paddocks grazed in November which were carrying the lower covers, along with the fields we've grazed in January. Fertiliser Nitrogen is going out on the remainder of the farm at 28kg/N/ha.
- Cow production remained very steady over the last few weeks, we're into 110 days of lactation, so we won't be surprised if there's a bit of a drop, cows are on an expensive high quality diet indoors so a slight drop in yield isn't of concern when they go to grass - the benefits are in getting the farm set up for the 2nd round of grazing, savings in winter feed, better general cow health and lift in milk protein.
- A lot of the spring herd are beginning to "spring up", just the one early bird heifer calved so far (E.C.D 5th Feb), all the spring cows have switched to a full silage diet with pre-calver minerals dusted on silage. We'll be hoping to go to grass with these cows as they calve down – at least by day & possibly day & night if conditions allow or alternatively two grazing bouts, it'll be a fortnight before we have a decent mob of spring cows to graze.
- Breeding of the autumn herd has gone well, numbers of return cows seems to be low enough at this stage – but its early days yet, all maiden heifers were served by AI in the first 3 weeks, with a sweeper bull running with them for a further 4 weeks. All bar one of the autumn cows have been served and we're finished breeding to replacement sires at this stage & have moved to short gestation beef breed straws.

28.01.19 Plot 35 Autumn Cows grazing by day PGY 1500, estimated intake 7kgs/cow, super conditions Today



28.01.19 plot 13, Grazed 11/01/19, slurry 17/01/19, well cleaned out by definite signs of re-growth



	<i>This week (28/01/19)</i>	Autumn Calving Herd	Spring Calving Herd
Production	% of Herd Milking	100%	0%
	Milk Kg	28.7	
	Fat %	4.39	
	Protein %	3.50	
	Milk Solids kg	2.25	
Intake	Grazed Grass kgs/dm/cow	7kgs	
	Silage kgs/dm/cow	4.0 kgs	11 kgs
	Maize silage kgs/dm/cow	2.5 kgs	
	Concentrate in TMR –	2.8 kgs	
	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	110	290
	Milk kg	3120	6570
	Milk Solids kg	250	512
	Concentrate Fed	646kg in parlor (861kgs total)	1292