

Heavy Soils Programme

Farmer comments on Spring 2018 (18th April)

Ballingree, Cork

Calving has gone good, only 2 left to calf. Should be out of silage by Wednesday (18th) but have bales bought, but considering we had half a pit left over last year, a bit of thinking to be done on stock numbers and how much more grass we can grow, had been thinking of keeping 135 cows but thinking now of pulling that back to 125, 15 acres of first round left to graze, should be starting second round Sunday (22nd). Slurry tanks full, everywhere has got fertilizer once and 2/3 of the farm has got it twice

Doonbeg, Clare

Out full time here since Friday (13th). Before that only nine 3hr grazing's done. 12mm rain Monday night meant cows were housed fulltime again. Grazing ground well damaged. About 70% of farm has received fertiliser. The rest none so far, still too wet to travel. All fertiliser applied is with quad on contract. Cows in over 6 mths now. 234 bales bought to date and also feeding fodder stretcher. Between pit and bales we have about a fortnights feed in the yard. Cows are getting 8 kg meal in the parlour with the last 6 weeks. Going forward hoping to source at least 200 bales from farmers I bought off this year. I just think there is 2 much deficit to be made up this year. Will also look at sourcing fodder beet or sugar beet delivered into the yard. The fodder stretcher has worked very well and stock are in ok condition considering the length of time they are inside. We have options at least looking forward. Been a very costly spring, severe on both cow and man. Don't want to see another one like it for a long time to come. Onwards and upwards and we'll try and drive on.

Athea, Limerick

Calving went well. Was under pressure with slurry at end of February. Got some out before the snow. Tanks filled up again since, so travelled with dribble bar and cord last week on milking platform. Urea out end February with quad, 18-6-12 out on grazed paddocks with quad. Silage fertilizers out last week with quad!

50% grazed to 1st April (3hrs max). 70% grazed 16th April. Probably 10 days from 2nd round. Damage done on most paddocks but nothing too excessive. Need a dry spell to graze 2nd round. Still plenty pit silage left.

Will cut extra silage on heifer out-block to replenish stocks and will buy some hay.

Stradone, Cavan

Calving went ok a few problems at the start 81% calved in 6 weeks so happy. Still ok for silage for another week or so but fingers crossed won't need it

1 bag urea out 3 weeks ago, really greening up the farm at the moment

Castleisland, Kerry

With 95% of cows calved and only 30% grazed and little or no grass in the diet it's a struggle to keep protein up at this critical time pre breeding with expensive feed. As silage stocks are almost exhausted we were waiting patiently for the new moon on the 16th of April and a chance that the weather might change, but it wasn't to be after Monday's night's rain. The entire milking platform has got 33 units of urea just before the snow in early March and there has been no opportunity since to get more nitrogen. The nitrogen has held farm cover at 1130kg/Dm which is high but will all be needed to replace silage stocks, the plan is to try and get more nitrogen and 18-6-12 out before this weekend on all grazing ground and silage ground.

It will be a big challenge to place silage stocks, maybe it's time that Teagasc should research alternative crops like Rice that will grow at low ground and air temperatures! We have the Water!!

Rossmore, Tipperary

All is good here looking forward to the good weather that's supposed to be coming our way and a bit of respite that might come with it. Calving went very well this year, very little problems and down to my last cow. I was tidy on silage and knew I was going to be, so I fed a lot of meal through the dry period and am still feeding 3kgs in the middle of the day to the milkers, which all creates extra work. I bought 80 bales and 26 ton of pit silage. Slurry was a struggle all the way through, spreading a load here and there, tanks are full up again now. I got very little fertiliser out, land was just too wet. I have four days grazing done. My plan is to close extra ground for silage; I'm after taking an extra 21 acres to help make up a reserve.

Kiskeam, Cork

Long "Spring "

Calving went well with 82% calved in 6 weeks, 4% left at April 15.

Grazing very much on/off, about 5% grazed by Mar 1. Then a long break indoors before we started grazing again Mar 20. Some damage done, but overall got on ok, though clean out was not great.

70% grazed by April 15. Best covers (of what's grazed) only about 700.

40 units Urea spread late February. About half the farm has got extra 2 bags 18-6-12.

30% farm got slurry.

Had to purchase fodder (about 150 tons). Quality of silage varied, so production has taken a hit! For much of April cows getting almost 8 kg's meal.

I will need to plan to make extra silage this year.