

### College Fact:

On the 4th of September 2017, 143 registered to begin their full-time Certificate in Agriculture Level 5 course.

### Important Dates

Ballyhaise College Open Day October 6th 2017.

## Ballyhaise hosts artistic exhibitions for Heritage Week

Ballyhaise College played host to the artistic talents of Joe Doherty and Jackie O'Neill during Heritage week from the 19th to the 27th of September. Noel Monahan launched the event on Saturday the 19th of August, while local musician Lisa O'Neill provided music inspired by Ballyhaise. The event was organized by the Cavan County Councils heritage and arts offices in conjunction with Creative Ireland to celebrate the unique history and heritage of Cavan.

Pictured Below: Artwork on display in the Analee Room (left)



The beginning of the Lady's Walk Art Trail (right)



Ballyhaise College Newsletter Issue 04 September 2017

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# Ballyhaise College Newsletter



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## The effect of stocking rate and grazing season length on milk production

Preliminary results have been made available from a study ongoing in the Ballyhaise Dairy Research herd into the effects of stocking rate (expressed in livestock units per hectare) and extended grazing on milk production. Although preliminary results show improved milk quality from shorter grazing seasons and lower stocking rate, the study aims to examine the impact on farm profitability, grassland management and cow health which will shine more of a light on the potential advantages and disadvantages these

management decisions could have for farmers in the Border Midlands West region.

|             | Extended grazing, 2.9 Lu/ha | Extended grazing, 2.5 Lu/ha | Late turn-out, 2.9 Lu/ha | Late turn-out, 2.5 Lu/ha |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Yield (kgs) | 14.2                        | 14.4                        | 14.2                     | 14.9                     |
| Fat (%)     | 4.46                        | 4.81                        | 4.82                     | 4.67                     |
| Prot (%)    | 3.68                        | 3.85                        | 3.76                     | 3.76                     |
| MS (kg)     | 1.15                        | 1.24                        | 1.21                     | 1.25                     |
| SCC         | 150                         | 150                         | 150                      | 150                      |



## Forestry

Over 200 private forest owners attended a Talking Timber event held at Teagasc, Ballyhaise College on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> August. This timber marketing event was organised by Teagasc, in conjunction with the Forest Service (DAFM) and IFFPA (the Irish Forest and Forest Products Association). It allowed private growers whose plantations were ready for thinning an opportunity to engage with foresters, timber buyers and harvesting contractors.

The day began with an outdoor demonstration organised by the IFFPA. John Ryan of Murrays Timber Group demonstrated to participants the quality of timber required by Irish sawmills and the best way to ensure such quality. This was followed by a short conference with presentations from Kevin O'Connell, Teagasc, the Forest Service (DAFM) and Bill Stanley, Coillte representing the Timber Industry Brexit Forum. John Sherlock a private forest owner from County Meath gave an overview of the Northeast Forestry Owners Group pilot project on forest certification.

Topics discussed between owners and timber buyers on the day included:

- Methods of selling timber - standing, at roadside, delivered in, by weight or by volume.
- VAT issues
- Marketing of sale – Thinning type, species, measurements, quantity, maps, tendering options
- Carrying out a harvest – quality of the work, payment, timber security



Pictured to the left: Kevin O'Connell, Forestry Advisor speaking to attendees at the Talking Timber event

## Beef

### Grassland

Grass growth has been excellent over the last few months leading to surplus paddocks being taken out of rotation and baled. Heavy rainfall in September has led to poor grazing conditions. As a result of bad weather, weaning of suckler cows began last week to allow prioritisation of grazing for weanlings. All calves were creep fed 1kg concentrate/head per day for the previous 3 weeks. Weaning is being carried out in batches of 5 cows and will continue over a four week period. The weanlings will be grazed in two groups by separating the bulls from the heifers. The early calving cows that are weaned were housed and fed straw and grass silage.

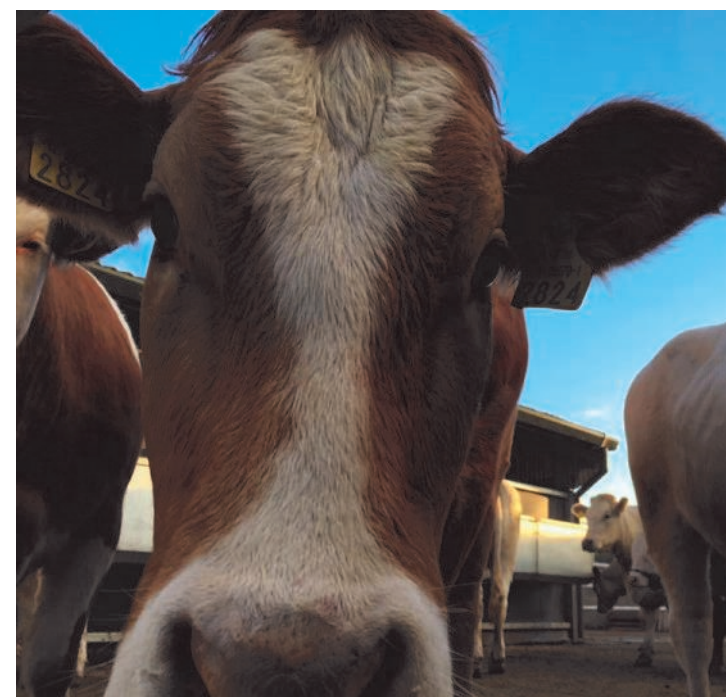
The priority over the coming weeks will be to begin closing paddocks around the 7th-10th of October and target 60% of the farm closed by the end of the first week of November to boost grass supply next spring. The challenge will be to graze out paddocks sufficiently.

### Finishing cattle

Finishing heifers and bullocks were weighed and housed. The heifers had an average live weight of 600 kgs and the bullocks averaged 656kgs. Concentrates were offered gradually to both groups. The heifers are being fed high quality silage and 4 kgs of 12% crude protein ration and the bullocks 5.5kgs of 12% crude protein. All of these animals will be sold by end of November.

### Scanning

65 cows were served with 60% of these to AI and the remainder to the stock bull. All animals were scanned and five were reported not in calf, therefore there will be 60 cows calving down next spring. The empty cows will be fattened at grass this autumn and culled.



### Animal Health

All cattle housing was power-washed and disinfected in preparation for winter housing. 57 calves received their BRSV P13 vaccination to prevent pneumonia. All cows and in-calf replacements will be given their vaccination for IBR in the next ten days. All finished animals were treated for worms and fluke before they were housed.



## Dairy

**Farm Details as of 18th September:**

**Area available: 40 ha**

**Farm Cover: 1175kg DM/Ha**

**DM 16%**

**Growth for last 7 days: 57 kg DM/ha per day.**

**Demand: 40kg DM / ha**

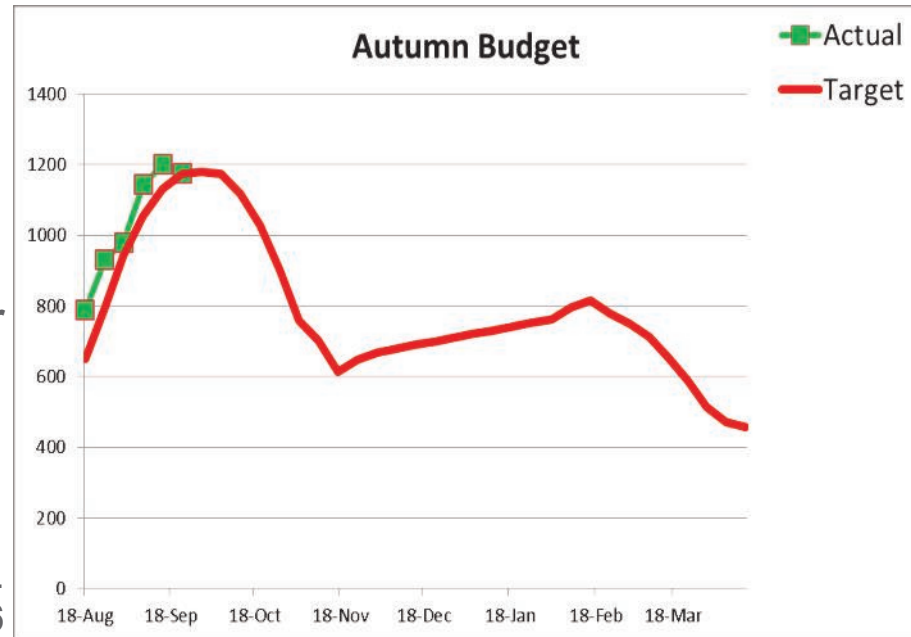
**3kg of a 13% protein ration fed per day.**

### Grass Supply

Grass growth is 57kg DM / ha this week. We have increased rotation length to 36 days. Demand is 40kg DM / ha. Average farm cover is 1175kg DM / ha, this is on target. We are grazing cover of 2200kg DM / ha and post grazing height is 4.5cm.

### Grazing conditions

Conditions have deteriorated with recent heavy rainfall. Grazing conditions are challenging and we are using 12hr allocations to minimise poaching as much as possible.



### Supplements

Cows are being fed 3kg of a high energy (0.95 UFL), low protein (13%) ration, 2% cal-mag. To date we have fed 284kg of meal and 55kg DM of silage per cow to milking cows.

### Milk Production

Average production 13.9 litres per cow, 5.09% fat, 4.09% protein, (1.31kg MS), SCC 150,000.

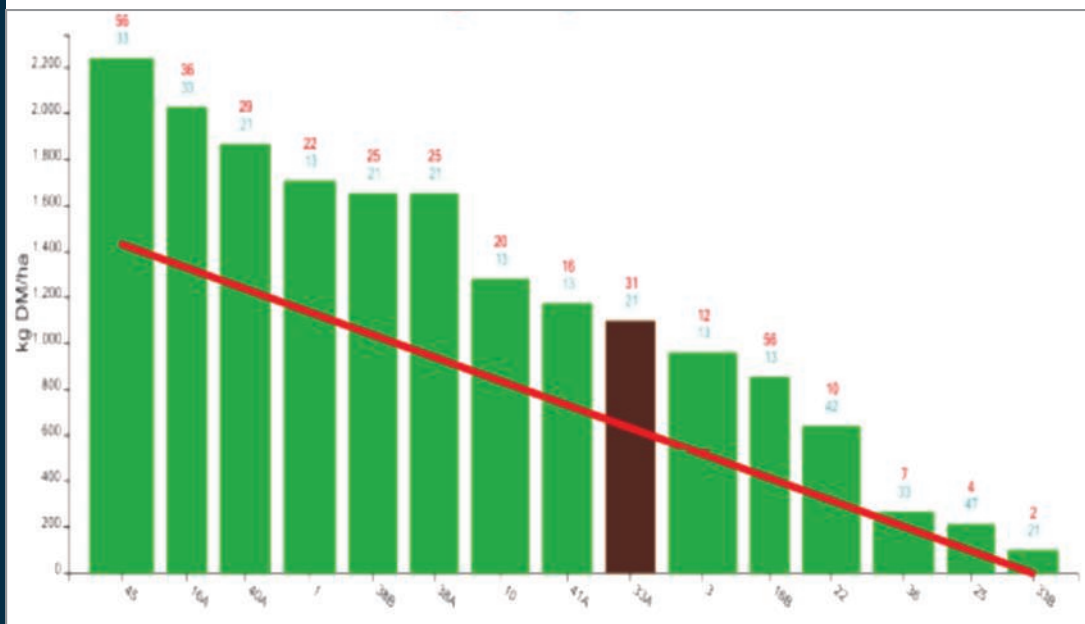
### Total Grass Production

To date 13.15 tonne DM / ha of grass has been produced. 131 tonnes DM of silage has been conserved.

### Breeding

Cows were scanned this week – empty rate was 9% in 11 weeks of breeding, 75% in calf in 6 weeks.

Maiden heifers were also scanned – 68% conception to first service, 4% empty in 7 weeks.



## Sheep

### Grassland Management

Grass growth remained relatively high for the first three weeks in September with grass surpluses building. Very heavy rainfall has made ground conditions difficult, two paddocks with high covers had to be grazed instead of taken out as bale silage leading to high post grazing covers. Nitrogen was spread on all paddocks except recent reseeds that were too wet. A grazing plan was established to ensure that 20% of grazing ground will be closed by mid-October.

### Replacement Ewe Lambs

65 ewe lambs were selected as replacements (20% replacement rate) mainly based on breed, lambs growth rate and mothers maternal traits. All ewe lambs were vaccinated for both enzootic abortion and toxoplasmosis, as well as receiving their primary clostridia vaccination. Ewe lambs were sheared the last week in September, faecal egg counts for this group increased significantly averaging 900 eggs per gram which warranted dosing.

### Ewe Management

All ewes were body condition scored in mid-August and early September; any thin ewes were separated and allowed to graze high quality pasture. All ewes and rams were dipped the first week in September. The ewes were put on a high plane of nutrition from mid-September to improve ovulation rates. Two teaser rams were introduced to the flock two weeks prior to planned turn out of fertile rams to compact the lambing season.

### Ram Management

Fertility testing carried out on rams mid-August confirmed suspicions that a Suffolk ram was infertile. Consequently two double five star Suffolk ram lambs were purchased at the Sheep Ireland Multi-breed ram sales. All rams have received 300g of concentrates a day since late August to ensure they are in good body condition (target BCS score 4) at mating.

### Factory Lamb Performance

Drafting of factory lambs has been excellent with 96% of lambs drafted by the end of September. Creep was introduced to remaining ram lambs at the start of September due to very heavy rainfall impacting on performance. These lambs responded well with only two rams remaining at the end of September. Creep was introduced to factory ewe lambs in mid-September and these lambs are expected to be finished the first week of October (14 lambs in total).