

Grass10 summer targets



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Knowledge Transfer

- Target a pre-grazing yield of 1,400kg DM/ha and a farm cover of 160-180kg DM/LU (10-12 days ahead). You have to measure grass to know these figures for your farm. Once you have these figures, you can make better management decisions.
- Try to keep to a 20-day rotation and this should ensure that cows graze the magic 1,400kg DM/ha. A growth rate of 65-70kg DM/ha/day for 20 days = 1,300-1,400kg DM/ha.
- Avoid longer rotations (>20 days). Longer rotations result in: less grass grown/ha; grass of poorer digestibility; less grass utilised per ha; and, poorer cow performance. Every 4% reduction in grass digestibility will reduce milk solids yield by 5%.
- Target six grazings from early April to early August.
- Meet residuals of 4cm every rotation – otherwise stem will hit production on the following rotation.
- May is the month when grass growth peaks; grass supply can change fast. How you respond to grass growth is the key. Make sure that you are aware of how farm cover is changing on your farm.
- If there is surplus grass on the farm, remove for bales. Where surplus bales are cut, make sure to replace high potassium (K) off-take with slurry or a high K compound fertiliser.
- Use protected urea as your nitrogen (N) source both to optimise grass growth and reduce emissions.

Planning for next winter

A kind winter and early spring resulted in a plentiful supply of grass on farms this spring. But many dairy

farmers were glad of the early spring as fodder supplies were tight. It would be easy to forget the fodder shortages of last year. Now is the time to make a plan for your winter fodder supplies. Start by estimating the amount of fodder required for a 'typical' winter (this could be three, four or five months, depending on location/rainfall levels/soil type) and for the expected numbers of various stock to be carried.

Table 1: Establishing winter feed requirements for dairy cows and replacements.

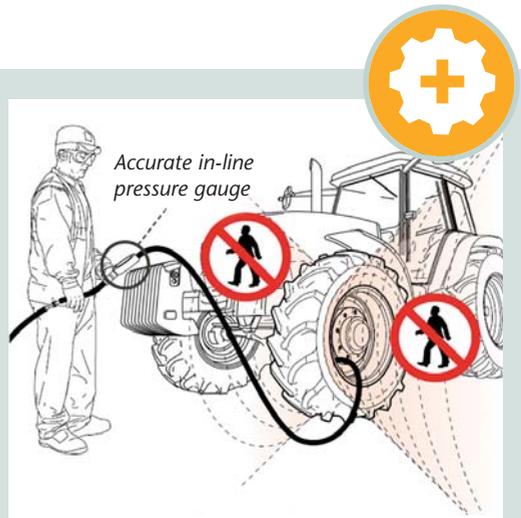
Stock	Winter feed required per month (tonnes)	No. of animals	No. of months	Feed required (tonnes)
Cows	1.6			
0-1 year old	0.7			
1 to 2 year old	1.3			
Total (normal winter)				
Additional feed				
TOTAL REQUIRED				

In addition, Teagasc recommends that every farmer should estimate the quantity of additional feed (buffer feed) needed (Table 1). Factors to consider include overall farm stocking rate, soil type, and grass growth potential on the farm and rainfall levels for the region. A useful figure to have is 400kg DM or two bales of silage per cow in reserve *in addition to* typical winter requirements.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Fill tyres with care

Vehicle and machine tyre maintenance is critical for safety. Tyres should be inspected on a weekly basis for inflation pressure and damage. Use a reliable pressure gauge for inflation and always know the correct pressure. If a tyre side wall fails during inflation an explosive force is released at an angle of up to 45 degrees. Use a clip-on coupling to connect the airline to the tyre valve and also use a long hose to keep out of the explosion trajectory.



It's all about the teats!



Good teat disinfection after milking is essential; it reduces new mastitis infections by 50%. It does this by killing the bacteria that are left behind after milking. It also improves teat skin condition, which means there are fewer cracks and areas for bacteria to lurk in. Teat skin doesn't possess any glands, which means there are no protective oils produced. This is why the skin can become dry and damaged quite easily, and why the emollient in teat disinfectant is so important.

The goal should be to cover all the skin, on all of the teats, of all of the cows, all of the time! The only part of the milking machine that comes in contact with the cow is the liner, so

the whole teat surface touched by the cluster liner needs to be disinfected; a drop of teat disinfectant at the end of the teat is not enough! How do you know if you're getting good coverage?:

- look at teats after spraying; it can help if you use a product that's clearly visible on the teat skin after it's been sprayed on – all sides of the teat barrel should be covered;
- calculate the volume used per milking; you need to allow at least 15ml/cow/milking – so for example, if you're milking 100 cows you should be using at least 1.5L of teat spray at each milking; and,
- wrap a paper towel around the barrel of the teat, then carefully remove and examine the pattern. A patchy picture indicates poor coverage of the teat, while a 'solid' block means teats have been well covered.

For more information, see 'CellCheck Farm Guidelines for Mastitis Control - Guideline 7, 26' and 'Management Note 1'.



To check coverage, wrap a paper towel around a teat after disinfection.



A patchy picture indicates poor coverage of the teat.



A 'solid' pattern means teats have been well covered.

The Dairy Edge

The Dairy Edge is the Teagasc dairy podcast. A new episode is released weekly. Each episode features an interview with either a Teagasc expert or a dairy farmer on a timely and relevant topic. The podcast is free and is available on iTunes (accessible from your iPhone), Android phones or on the Teagasc website: <https://www.teagasc.ie/animals/dairy/the-dairy-edge-podcast/>.

Diary date

Moorepark Open Day 2019
Irish Dairying: Growing Sustainably
Wednesday July 3
 8.30am-5.00pm
 Teagasc Moorepark,
 Fermoy, Co. Cork

Steps to avoiding milk residues

Chlorine residues such as trichloromethane (TCM) and chlorate continue to cause problems for the marketing of Irish milk products (TCM for lactic butter and chlorate for infant formula). David Gleeson, Teagasc Moorepark, has identified in **Table 2** steps to minimise chemical residues in milk.

Table 2: Minimising chemical residues in milk.

✗ Don't stock pile chemicals; regular delivery of cleaning products to farms is advised.	✓ Choose registered products with the recommend level of chlorine (<3.5%).
✗ Don't re-use a detergent-steriliser solution more than once.	✓ Store chemicals out of direct sunlight.
✗ Don't add chlorine to rinse water.	✓ Ensure that the correct volume of detergent-steriliser is used.
✗ Don't dip clusters in chlorine.	✓ Rinse the milking plant immediately after the wash cycle is complete.
✗ Don't reuse rinse water.	✓ Use adequate volumes of water to rinse the plant (14 litres per milking unit is recommended).
	✓ Avoid teat disinfectants that contain chlorine dioxide/chloride.
	✓ Consider alternate disinfectants to chlorine such as peracetic acid.

Making high-quality grass silage

Silage digestibility depends mainly on how much leaf and how little stem, seed-heads and dead vegetation are in the harvested grass. Properly preserved silage will retain the feed value of the grass from which it was made. So what should you do during May to ensure that you make high-quality silage?

1. Monitor the grass crop twice a week, observing its growth stage, checking for yellow/dead material at the base of the crop and lodging.
2. Plan to harvest your first cut dry cow silage by June 5 at the latest (preferably earlier depending on weather conditions and crop maturity).
3. If silage DMD of over 72% is required then aim to harvest intermediate heading-date

ryegrasses as seed-heads start to emerge, and late heading-date ryegrasses a few days before seed heads emerge (mid to late May).

4. A rule of thumb is that a silage crop uses two units a day of N. However, the crop can be cut earlier if weather conditions are dry and sugar levels are good. Test a sample rather than "waiting for the N to be used up".
5. Successful wilting will greatly assist silage preservation and reduce effluent output. Aim for a wilt of at least a half day and not more than 1.5 days of good drying conditions.
6. The majority of grass will not need an additive, especially if it is well wilted or has adequate sugar content.
7. Fill the walled pit or clamp quickly, and then rapidly seal the grass from air.
8. Ensure that effluent channels are in good order and channel all effluent quickly from pits or clamps to a suitable storage tank.