

Teagasc Johnstown Castle
Teagasc/ABP Dairy Beef Research Programme

Update: 10-08-2018

With over 50ml of rain in July, 5ml last week, and more rain forecast for the coming weekend, grass growth has jumped enormously over the past fortnight. The average soil temperature for July was 19.8°C, which has dropped slightly to 17.8°C so far for August. 37 % of experimental ground was closed off for silage two weeks ago. This was dressed with fertiliser (KAN at 185kg/ha) when it was closed and has since received slurry also. We are hoping to get a good (very late) second cut of silage to reduce our silage deficit for the upcoming winter period.

Animal Performance:

26 Month steers

- The remaining 68 steers were killed on 31st July. They averaged 658 kg liveweight.

Results of kill 31st July

	No. animals	Liveweight (kg)	Carcass weight (kg)	Fat score (1-15)	Conformation score (1-15)
Angus	19	660	333	8.8 (3+)	4.7 (O=)
Hereford	15	675	337	8.6 (3=/3+)	4.5 (O-/O=)
Limousin	22	644	330	7.3 (3-)	5.8 (O+)

Total results from steers killed July 2018 (not statistically analysed)

	Liveweight (kg)	Carcass weight (kg)	Fat score (1-15)	Conformation score (1-15)	Age at slaughter (days)
High	664	333	8.5	5.1	877
Medium	687	349	8.8	5.7	877
Low	674	346	8.1	5.4	878

Yearlings

- The High SD yearlings had to be fed silage at grass for 7 days while the grass recovered and growth resumed. They were fed 1-2 bales of silage a day.
- From today all of the older experimental cattle will be on a grazed grass only diet once again.

Calves

- The calves are being fed 2.5-3 kg of concentrates per head per day. Now that better quality grass is becoming available, it is hoped to reduce this level down to 2kg/day.
- The calves were sampled on the 2nd July and their faeces sent for testing. The results showed very low levels of worms and some coccidiosis, which was not surprising as we had treated a calf for coccidiosis only a few days previous.

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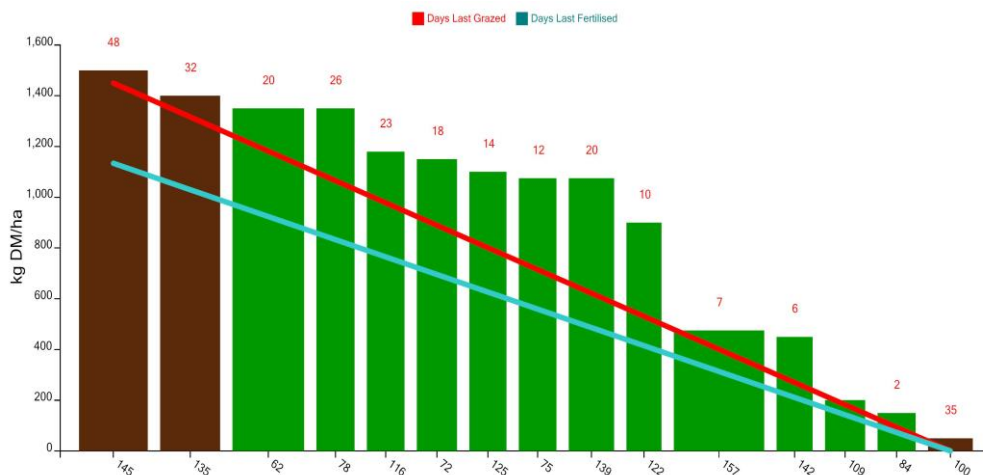
- All the calves were weighed on the 7th August, dosed for coccidiosis and given a pour on for flies. Out of the 252 calves, seven calves had lost a lot of condition, presumably due to coccidiosis.
- The calves averaged 159 kg, with an ADG of 0.745kg/day for their first season at grass. There is a large variation in weights (90kg vs 260kg).
- The calves will be randomised before the end of this month into their treatment groups.

Grass Management:

- The latest farm cover was taken on the 9th August. Grass growth rates have increased enormously following the rain, with the averaging almost 70kgDM/ha/day across the farm.
- Grass DM is now 21.5%. Older cattle are going into paddocks of 1350-1600kgDM/ha, with calves going into lower covers of ~1000-1200kgDM/ha.
- 37% of each of the trial farmlets has been set aside for silage (around 8 paddocks each) and received fertiliser and slurry over the last 2 weeks.
- One paddock on the medium farmlet has become too strong and will be taken out for baled silage next week, which will help to make up for some of the bales that we have had to feed out over the dry period.

	Growth/ha (kg DM/ha/day)	Demand/ha (kg DM/ha/day)	Farm Cover (kg DM/ha)	LU/ha	Days Ahead	Silage (ha)
High	77	45	919	4.17	20	7.86
Medium	49	41	993	3.83	24	8.49
Low	76	40	904	3.76	23	9.69

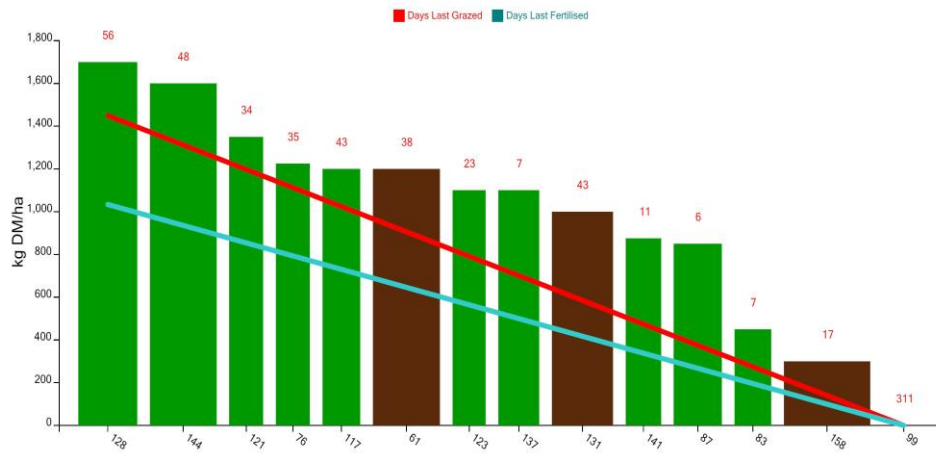
High stocking density



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Medium stocking density



Low stocking density

