

# Teagasc Dairy Beef Research Programme

## Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford

### Update: March 2020

March thankfully brought drier conditions, although it was colder than previous years; 48 ml of rain fell over the course of the month, with soil temperatures averaging 5.9 °C. Ground conditions were poor at the start of March due to the heavy rain that fell over February. The first of the cattle were let out to grass on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

### Animal Performance:

#### 2 year old steers

- 7 steers were killed on the 6<sup>th</sup> March, they averaged 305 kg carcass weight, with an O-conformation score and 3= fat score.
- The remaining steers we turned out on the 24<sup>th</sup> March averaging 561 kg. out of the 45 steers, 22 are LM, 13 HE and 10 AA.

**Table 1. Weight of steers at turnout, March 2020**

	24/03/2020	2 <sup>nd</sup> Winter ADG
High	556 kg	0.40 kg/day
Medium	567 kg	0.47 kg/day
Low	561 kg	0.48 kg/day

#### Yearlings

- The yearlings were weighed on the 10<sup>th</sup> March. They averaged 312 kg.
- The yearlings have been on *ad lib* silage only, of moderate quality, since the 19<sup>th</sup> February, so their ADG dropped slightly in March.
- The yearlings were turned out on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March. They were weighed hungry (hence the drop in live weight) and averaged 301 kg with an ADG for the winter period of 0.53 kg/day.

**Table 2. Weight of yearlings according to stocking density, March 2020**

	10/03/2020	23/03/2020	2 <sup>nd</sup> Winter ADG
High	306 kg	295 kg	0.52 kg/day
Medium	313 kg	303 kg	0.53 kg/day
Low	319 kg	306 kg	0.55 kg/day

**Table 3. Weight of yearlings at turnout according to breed**

	Date of birth	Weight at turnout	2 <sup>nd</sup> Winter ADG
AA	24/02/2019	310 kg	0.58 kg/day
HE	20/02/2019	309 kg	0.52 kg/day
LM	01/03/2019	291 kg	0.50 kg/day

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### Spring 2020 calves

- The first of the 2020 born calves arrived to Johnstown on the 6<sup>th</sup> March. Upon arrival the calves are given their IBR and PI3 vaccinations and are fed electrolytes for their first feed. There were 53 calves in by the end of March, and it is hoped to have all 130 calves in by the end of April.
- The calves that have arrived to Johnstown to date range from 2-4 weeks of age and are averaging 55 kg on arrival.



*Hereford and Angus calves that arrived on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020*

### Grassland Management

- Across the entire farm, the average farm cover sits at 1150 kg DM/ha.
- The priority at turnout was to get the paddocks destined for reseeding this spring grazed off and as much of the silage ground as possible. Given that spring turnout was late this year and that we are closing for silage earlier (aiming for a cutting sate of 15<sup>th</sup> May), getting the silage ground grazed proved very difficult. Some wetter paddocks with very heavy covers were not able to be grazed off by the end of March and so have been closed for silage ungrazed.

**Table 4. Farm cover, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

	Farm cover	Demand/ha	Grazing area	Silage cut later	Total LU	LU/ha	Days ahead
	Kg DM/ha	Kg DM/ha/day	Ha				
<b>High</b>	1192	60	10.11	6.04	66.4	6.57	20
<b>Medium</b>	1332	55	10.83	6.84	65.4	6.04	24
<b>Low</b>	1255	48	12.22	7.34	64.4	5.27	26

- This April, approximately 10.5 ha in the Beef Unit are to be reseeded for the new dairy beef farm systems trial commencing next year; ~3.5 ha are to be reseeded to Perennial ryegrass (PRG) only, ~3.5 to PRG with clover and ~3.5 ha to PRG with clover, plantain and chicory. Each 'farmlet' will be 16.92 ha in size and will carry 60 yearlings and 60 spring born calves each year.