

**Title :**

The investigation of alternate expansive pasture-based milk production systems for the Border Midlands West regions post EU milk quotas

***Abstract***

The potential of Irish farmers to expand output can be realised through a variety of changes to their current system such as increasing cow numbers and area farmed, increasing cow numbers on the existing farm base, or increasing productivity per cow through the efficient use of supplementary feeds. The identification of best management systems that facilitate increased farm productivity and profitability through expansion in an environmentally sustainable manner must be clearly defined. Within the context of the Border Midlands West (BMW) region, it the potential to produce milk efficiently from grazed pasture has been established based on experimental herd at Ballyhaise college in recent years. The development of efficient systems specific to this region requires that alternative stocking rates and levels of supplementary feeding are considered in order to maximise productivity and profitability per unit of land. Within this context, the current RMIS will serve to quantify the biological and economic consequences of alternate pasture-based production systems differing in stocking rate and external feed input, measure the growth potential of well managed pasture systems within the BMW region and describe the critical success factors required for operating efficient profitable grass-based systems in the Northern region of the country.

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