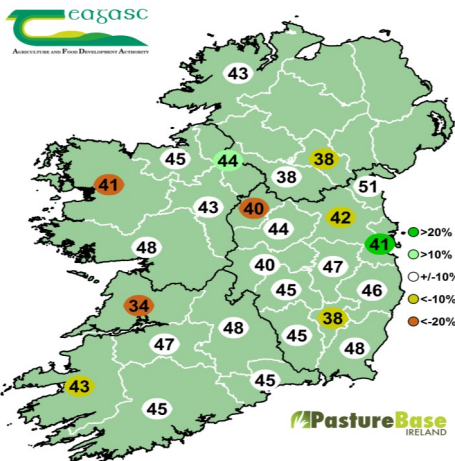


6th October 2020

**PastureBase**  
IRELAND

AFC	Stocking Rate	Cover/LU	Growth	Demand	Pregrazing Yield
927 kg DM/ha	2.91 LU/ha	317 kg DM/LU	40 kg DM/ha	40 kg DM/ha	1950 kg DM/ha

Grass growth measurement  
Today's grass growth (kg DM/ha/day)



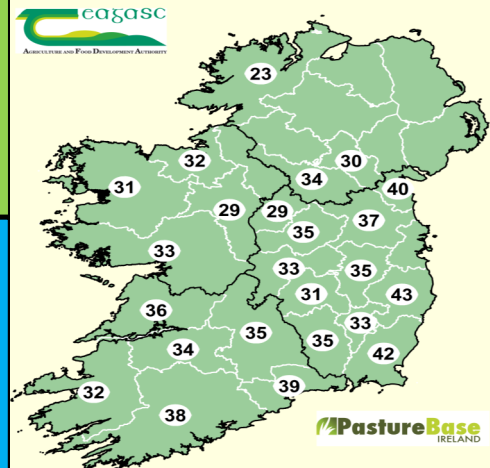
On the left: counties map showing **current** grass growth rates over the last week.

On the right: counties map showing **predicted** grass growth over the next 7 days from farms involved in Elodie Ruelle's MoSt grass growth model (55 farms).

Predicted Growth Rate:

- Ballyhaise 30 kg DM/ha
- South Wexford 38 kg DM/ha
- Athenry 34 kg DM/ha
- Clonakilty 36 kg DM/ha

Grass growth predictions  
Next week (kg DM/ha/day)



**Maintain focus on the Autumn grazing objectives**

1. Keep grass in the cow's diet to maximise days at grass and benefit cow performance—Worth €1.80 per LU per day in Autumn.
2. Set the farm up during the final rotation to grow grass over winter and provide grass for spring 2021 – worth €2.70 per LU per day next Spring.

As we now enter October, its time to put some thought into where you want to be grazing next Spring! First paddocks closed will not be the first paddocks grazed next Spring.

**See the "Picking your Paddocks to Graze" diagram below**

**First 30%- 35% in October** – want >1400 kg/DM/ha grass next March for increased demand, so these can be further from yard + ok access

**2nd 30% - 35% in October**– want to be in these in early February with 800– 1200 kg/DM/ha so good access is key

**Final 30- 40% in November**– key for slurry next Spring, graze later!



**Anthony Meehan, Monaghan**, using spur-roadways to clean out paddocks.

**Grass DM%**

**12.3**

**Moorepark**

(1800 kg/DM/ha cover in damp conditions)

**How should I graze during October?**

Spring grazing rules apply!

- 12 hour strip wire and backfence
- Protect regrowth's
- Continue to hit residuals
- Be flexible– On/Off grazing for 3 hours in sustained wet weather
- Spur roadways to access difficult paddocks

**Picking Your Paddocks to Graze**



60%  
by  
Nov  
1st

**..For The Autumn Rotation Plan**

**30% by 20<sup>th</sup> Oct**

(further from yard, ok access, dry)

**Another 30% by 1<sup>st</sup> Nov**

(drier, closer to yard, multiple access, sheltered, recently reseeded, quickest growing)

**Final 40% During Nov**

(awkward paddocks, furthest from yard, poorer grazing infrastructure, older pastures, slower growing, silage ground)

**..For The Spring Rotation Plan**

**30% in February**

(drier, closer to yard, multiple access, sheltered, Covers of 800-1200kgDM/ha, recently reseeded, quickest growing)

**30% from 1<sup>st</sup> Mar to St. Patrick's day** (Heavier Covers > 1200 KgDM/ha, further from yard, ok access, dry)

**Last 40% by 5<sup>th</sup> April**

(awkward paddocks, furthest from yard, poorer grazing infrastructure, older pastures, slower growing, silage ground)

\*Heavy Farm targets for autumn should be 7 – 10 days earlier and for the spring 7-10 days later.

**Autumn Checklist– Tick when completed for your farm**

- Slurry & FYM applied
- Lime applied
- K fertiliser applied
- Grass Budget
- Autumn Rotation Planner
- Grazing Plan

6th October 2020

## Closing the Farm To Get Out Early Next Spring

Aidan Maguire runs a dairy calf to beef system outside Navan, Co. Meath. The home block consists of 31Ha which is split into 45 paddocks. Aidan is building stock numbers aiming to finish 75 cattle this year, increasing to over 100 cattle next year. One of the benefits of this system is carrying a lot of light animals at the shoulders of the year which helps maximise days at grass. *“I put a big focus on grass to extend my grazing period at the shoulders of the year my cattle were housed on the 17th Nov last year and back out to grass by day on the 24th Jan”.* (Over 300 days at grass).

Aidan began closing the farm one week ago (29th Sept) and wants this rotation to last 45 days, housing on the 14th Nov. **Using the 60:40 plan, entails closing 60% of the farm by 1st Nov.** In Aidan's case there are 19 Ha to be grazed in 32 days, or 0.6 Ha per day, **which means grazing and closing 1 paddock per day.** The remaining 40% of the farm will be grazed until 14th Nov. 12 Ha to be grazed in 14 days = 0.9 Ha per day (3 paddocks closed every 2 days).

From Aidan's rotation plan below we can see he is ahead of target. This is due to grazing lighter covers and moving stock quicker during the wet spell over the weekend. Once it dries, they will enter the 1800-2000 kg DM/ha (11-12cm) covers grazing out to 4cm and this will slow them up. Calves are currently grazing 1200 kg DM/ha (9cm) covers. *“Having a lot of paddocks means moving cattle every day. This makes it easier to clean out paddocks without doing damage.”*

**Aidan will not regraze any paddocks closed** as he would prefer to have the grass available for the spring, so regrazing closed paddocks in Nov doesn't make any sense for him. Instead he will house stock if grass supply is low. See Aidan's farm at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?>

Aidan's Current Grass Performance	
AFC (Kg DM/Ha)	929
Cover/LU (Kg DM/LU)	429
Growth (Kg DM/Ha/Day)	43
Demand (Kg DM/Ha/Day)	29
Stocking Rate (LU/Ha)	2.12
Days Ahead	31
Kg LWT/Ha	1524
PGY (Kg DM/Ha)	1800 (11-12cm)



Aidan Maguire, Navan, Co. Meath, is also host of the local Grass10 Course.

### Aidan's Autumn Rotation Planner From PastureBase

WEEK	TARGET HA GRAZED/DAY	TARGET HA GRAZED BY WEEK END	ACTUAL HA GRAZED BY WEK END	TARGET %	ACTUAL %
27/09/2020 - 03/10/2020	0.56	3.90	6.13	12	19
04/10/2020 - 10/10/2020	0.56	7.81		25	
11/10/2020 - 17/10/2020	0.56	11.71		37	
18/10/2020 - 24/10/2020	0.56	15.61		49	
25/10/2020 - 31/10/2020	0.56	19.52		62	
01/11/2020 - 07/11/2020	0.90	25.84		82	
08/11/2020 - 14/11/2020	0.90	31.60		100	

## Autumn Grazing Study - Spring Grass Still Pays The Best

### What are the alternative autumn practices to increase grass supply?

This was the basis for the research by Mike Egan, Aisling Claffey and Caitlin Looney looking at the effect which autumn closing plans have on the animal and sward. Three different autumn closing rotations were used (see table on right). The results are summarised below:

- Every day delay in start of closing reduces AFC in spring by 16 kg DM/ha (1 week delay = decrease spring AFC 112 kg DM/ha)
- Feeding silage in late lactation had little effect on milk yield (can impact milk protein %)
- Reduced sward quality in spring on early closed treatment (see bottom table) negated by extra grass available. Every 1 kg DM available to the cows increasing milk production by 0.38 kg milk when compared to feeding silage. Heavy covers should be grazed by mid-March
- To have adequate grass supply for spring, farmers should use AFC in conjunction with dates to manage autumn grazing for herd demand in the spring

For more info, see Mike webinar here <http://bit.ly/autumngrazingstudy>

Treatment	Start of Closing	60% closed	Housed
Early	25 Sept	17 Oct	9 Nov
Medium	10 Oct	1 Nov	24 Nov
Late	25 Oct	17 Nov	9 Dec

	Early	Medium	Late
Leaf proportion %	71	72	76
Stem proportion %	14	15	12
Dead proportion %	15	13	11
OMD %	83.4	83.4	85