

24 MONTH FRIESIAN STEER BEEF

(DAIRY CALF TO BEEF)

1. SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

- Production of steers from the Holstein-Friesian bull calves which are slaughtered at 24 months of age out of the shed in the spring.
- Steers go through a modest store period over the first winter gaining around 0.6kg/day before being turned out to grass for their second grazing year. After housing for the second winter steers are placed on a diet of grass silage and concentrates up to finish.
- Steers on this system are eligible for the Quality Payment Scheme (QPS) provided they are quality assured and fall within the correct conformation and fat classes on the grid.

2. TYPICAL LIVEWEIGHTS AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF PRODUCTION

| STAGE OF PRODUCTION | LIVEWEIGHT (KG) | AVERAGE DAILY GAIN (KG/DAY) |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Weaned Calf Weight | 90 | 0.70 |
| Housing (1st winter) | 230 | 0.70 |
| Turnout | 310 | 0.60 |
| Housing (2nd winter) | 490 | 0.90 |
| Slaughter | 620 | 1.05 |
| Carcase Weight (kg) | 310-330 | |

3. MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Weanlings for this system are on average 230 kg at housing in the autumn. This system requires excellent grassland management, a proper parasite control programme and a small amount of meal feeding at turnout and in the autumn (1.0 kg per day).
- Weanlings are introduced to 1.0 - 2.0 kg of concentrates and good quality silage (72%DMD or better) over the first winter. The target is to achieve a modest weight gain of around 0.6kg/day or 80 kg over the first winter.
- Yearling steers are turned out in early spring to achieve a 200 day grazing season and a total weight gain of around 180 kg over their second season at grass. This level of performance from grass alone requires good grassland management.
- From housing to slaughter the steers will be on high quality silage and an average of 5.0 - 6.0kg/day of concentrate. They will be slaughtered at 620kg liveweight or a 320 kg carcass.
- Good grazing management will be required to ensure animals achieve good weight gain over their second grazing system.

4. INPUTS REQUIRED

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Concentrates | 0.87t DM or 1.0t fresh weight |
| Grass | 2.2t DM |
| Silage | 1.2t DM or 6t fresh weight |
| Stocking Rate | 2.2 animals/ha at 170kg organic N per ha |

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5. ECONOMICS

| | | € |
|----------------------------------|------------|------|
| a. Weaned Calf Purchase Value | 90 kg | |
| b. Carcase Value | 320 kg | |
| c. Sales – Purchases (B – A) | | |
| Variable Costs per Head* | | |
| Grass | 2.2 tDM | €88 |
| Concentrates | 1.0 tonnes | |
| Silage | 6 tonnes | €180 |
| Veterinary | - | €39 |
| Transport & Levies | - | €40 |
| d. Total Variable Costs | | |
| Gross Margin per Head (C – D) ** | | |

* Variable costs per head do not include interest or mortality costs.

** Subtract estimated fixed costs per head to calculate net margin per head.

6. MARKET CONSIDERATIONS

- Steer beef is seen as being of equivalent quality to heifer beef across many of our markets.
- Steer and heifer beef are the ideal preference for the major UK customers, and similarly across continental Europe these are a point of differentiation, or selling point, against young bull beef, which is widely available and competitively priced.
- Strongest demand is for animals of up to approximately 400 kg carcass weight, which will produce steak cuts of the preferred size for most customers.

7. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- The system depends on high quality grass silage being available of at least 70%+ DMD. If silage quality falls below this, higher concentrate levels will be required at both the weaning and finishing phase.
- Good weight gains over the first winter (80kg) are essential to maintain the targets outlined otherwise the finishing period may be prolonged.
- Where silage quality is not adequate producers may opt to feed concentrates *ad-lib* for the final 80-100 days. This will increase the amount of concentrates used and feed costs.
- It is important to slaughter animals as they become fit so that they are not allowed to become over fat.
- Animals are marketed in the spring months when generally demand for steers is good.