

PastureBase Ireland: Technologies to assist grassland management

Technologies which enable data-informed decision-making on the farm can help to increase farmers' confidence and greatly improve grassland management. Huge leaps have been made in developing decision support tools to improve resource farm efficiency, profitability and sustainability.

Teagasc launched PastureBase Ireland (PBI) – an online grassland management decision support tool – in January 2013 and Grass10 will see the roll-out of the new PastureBase Ireland website as a key component of the campaign. PastureBase Ireland is informing us that farmers need to have a good control of current grass supply in order to manage grass well.

Grass cannot be managed correctly without a good knowledge of farm covers, grass demand and grass growth. The crucial point on any farm is utilising the feed resource produced inside the farm gate. Any farm that is dependent on imported feed is exposed to the current volatile market environment.

To achieve greater change in the level of grass utilised, farmers will need to build their grazing management practices. This means regular measurement of grass cover, using specialised grassland focused software to analyse grass production and making and implementing grazing management decisions.

These are key drivers to increasing grass production on the farm. New technologies are now available which make grass cover assessment and the decision making process much easier. It is important to recognise that improvements in the level of soil fertility, grazing infrastructure and level of reseeding are also important to achieving higher levels of grass production and utilisation.

The role of stakeholders

Significant change is required in the grassland management practices of Irish livestock farmers to ensure that Irish grassland farming systems remain competitive and sustainable.

Teagasc recognises that the co-operation and collaboration of a range of organisations and stakeholders is required to achieve the changes required right across the industry. This approach will ensure that the messages from the campaign, and the support offered by those involved, will have a greater reach.

Grass10 wishes to acknowledge the support of our industry stakeholders in this new campaign.




Grassland Farmer of the Year competition

With 2017 designated as the Year of Sustainable Grassland, and the link between increased grass utilisation and increased profitability clearly proven, the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine, in collaboration with numerous industry stakeholders including Teagasc, launched a competition in 2017 as part of the Grass10 initiative to find the Grassland Farmer of the Year. The objective of the Grassland Farmer of the Year Competition is to promote grassland excellence for all Irish livestock farmers.

The seven winners of this competition are reaching the grass production and utilisation targets set by the Grass10 campaign. These farms have been generous in allowing Grass10 hold events on their farms in 2018. See <https://www.teagasc.ie/news-events/> for details.

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