

19th May 2020

PastureBase Ireland Current Performance (Last 7 Days):

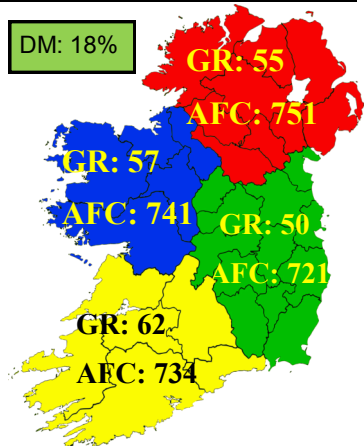


AFC	Stocking Rate	Cover/Cow	Growth	Demand
733 kg DM/ha	3.9 LU/ha	187 kg DM/ha	60 kg DM/ha	59 kg DM/ha

- 10 kg DM/ha drop in growth nationally, however this is largely made up of a **number of farms in Leinster**, where **growth has declined to below 50 kg DM/ha** on average due to cold nights and soil moisture deficit of 50 mm in regions (see page 2). Munster growth was 20% higher than Leinster on average last week
- **Areas that have received rain and heavy soils are experiencing growth of 70-80 kg DM/ha.** Some farmers are still cutting surplus bales on these farms which is the correct decision given the rainfall received
- Farmers should **walk the farm regularly** and use the **Predicted Wedge** and **Predicted Growth Rates** to budget grass over the coming week

Below: Covers in the Last 7 Days

DM: 18%



Predicted Growth Rate: Elodie Ruelle Moorepark

Ballyhaise 95 kg DM/ha

Athenry 80 kg DM/ha

South Kilkenny 41 kg DM/ha

South Carlow 49 kg DM/ha

Areas That Have Received Rain/Heavy Soils

- Keep walking the farm and monitoring growth rate. Where growth is exceeding demand, action is required to keep pre-grazing covers at 1,400 kg DM/ha (9-10cm).
- Where growth is exceeding demand surplus bales should be cut to keep cover/cow at 160- 180 kg DM/ha or 10-12 days ahead for drystock farms.
- Graze down to 4 cm to ensure high quality grass for the next rotation.
- Minimise the supplement being fed to livestock
- Match growth and demand on the farm e.g. if growth is 65 kg DM/ha, demand should be 65 kg DM/ha (4 LU X 16 kg DM grass= Demand 64 kg DM/ha)
- Where silage is cut, replace the P and K off-take with slurry using LESS
- On heavy farms, high quality surplus bales are always needed in the spring/autumn. While growth is high, these surplus bales should be made to have for a "rainy" day
- Fertiliser should be spread as normal on these farms (Protected Urea/Compound + Sulphur)

Growth Has Reduced Due To Soil Moisture Deficit

- Hold grazing rotation at a minimum of 21 to 25 days.
- Walk your farm to establish growth rate and average farm cover. Watch the weather forecast and see if there is rain forecast for your farm.
- Act immediately. Match growth and demand. Average farm cover cannot drop below 500 kg DM/ha
- Options to hold rotation and match growth & demand:
 1. Graze silage ground (strip grazing). If higher than 3,000 kg DM/ha, strip graze like a fodder crop (3 hr allocations) & match with lower covers.
 2. Move heifers to outfarms and reduce stocking rate on the grazing platform
 3. Increase meal feeding
 4. Introduce high quality surplus bale silage
- E.g. 4 cows/ha, growth 40 kg DM/ha, feed no more than 10 kg grass per cow (4x10 = 40) and supplement the balance of the diet up to 18 kg DM with meal & grass from silage ground/ round bale silage
- Walk the farm regularly to track changes in AFC as a result of decisions regarding supplement
- Keep spreading N fertiliser where farms are green (Protect Urea/compound + Sulphur). If it is not used up for next rotation, fertiliser spreading should cease



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Reduced Growth Rate- How Soon Can Round Bales be Fed Back to Livestock?

- **Grazing silage ground is a cheaper option than feeding back round bales.** However, not all farms have access to graze silage ground, so in that case round bale silage will have to be fed to extend rotation where growth has dropped
- If demand exceeds growth and meal alone won't hold the rotation, then silage has to be fed to livestock (if no silage ground available to graze)
- If feeding silage, **feed it out daily so it is fresh** and will all be used. **Round bales can be fed back to livestock directly after harvesting.** Allocations should be eaten with 24 hours to **avoid spoilage.**
- **Avoid opening pits where 1st cut has just been harvested.** These need to ferment. Round bales are the preferred option.
- **All grass should be used on the farm.** Make sure that **residuals are maintained (4 cm)**, even if supplementation is being fed. No grass can be wasted on any farm



Brian Maher, Lower Conahy, Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny has all land included in rotation, but demand is still exceeding growth. Cover/cow is at 140 kg DM/cow, so growth must match demand.

Growth: 28 kg DM/ha, 3.6 LU/ha.

$28/3.6 = 8$ kg DM grass/cow to match growth and demand on this farm

The diet per cow is now 8 kg DM grass + 5 kg meal + 5 kg DM surplus bale silage

(18 kg DM intake in total/cow)

Twitter & Instagram Takeover- Sheep:

Follow @TeagascGrass10 and Teagasc Instagram to learn all things grass & sheep with Fiona McGovern, INZAC flock, Athenry, Co. Galway. Some topics to be covered on the day include setting up a rotational grazing system, grazing infrastructure, ideal pregrazing covers, soil fertility and much much more...

Soil Moisture Deficit:

- See the graph on the right of soil moisture deficit levels on moderately drained soils nationally (Source: Met Eireann)
- A soil moisture deficit of 50 mm will result in declining growth rates on farms
- There is large variation within farms, depending on where rain fell and soil types. Keep walking the farm to make decisions and hold AFC above 500 kg DM/ha in all circumstances

