

Shinagh Farm:

All the cows (both own herd and the late calving cows bought in) have calved now and there are 251 cows going into the tank

Current milk yield is 23.7 litres at 4.29% fat and 3.53% protein, that's 1.91kg of milk solids per cow per day

Milk quality is good at 139,000 SCC and 10,000 TBC, and thermotolerant at 90.

All products used on the machine and bulk tank are chlorine free chemicals.

The herd is still getting 2 kg of ration (12% protein) which is ensuring the cows are getting the necessary magnesium to cover for grass tetany.

Grass cover is 726kg/ha and 176kg/cow at a cow stocking rate on the grazing area of 4.13 cows /ha

Growth has been good for the past week at 85kg/ha/day, and is ahead of our demand (of 64kg/ha/day) which will encourage us to reduce feeding to match this growth.

There is 7.14 ha (nearly 10% of the grazing area) out either reseeded or waiting to seed at the moment.

3 ha of this will be set with multi species which will include chicory, plantain, red and white clover as well as standard grasses

This is being done as part of a Carbery project looking at options which may help to reduce carbon emissions on dairy farms.

Breeding started on Monday May 4th and using the full herd of 251 our target is to breed 12 cows per day (251/21days), which would give a 100% submission rate

To date its going very well with 108 cows bred after 9 days breeding.

Cows are in good body condition and are gaining condition which along with long enough time after calving are the biggest factors in having cows cycling.

Tail paint and observations are the heat detection methods being used.

Sire Advice on ICBF was used to select the Dairy bulls

We selected bulls above €100 for fertility (I would use €150 for a non-cross bred herd), positive for health, positive for fat and protein % and above €15 for maintainance

We found plenty of bulls to match our criteria except for the maintainance one which we had to drop to above €10.

A bull with €0 for maintainance will produce mature cows of 640kg. We think this is too big a cow for a grass based system as too much of her feed intake will be going to maintain herself

Our target is a 550kg mature cow and to achieve this ideally we would need bulls that are €20 for maintainance index. We compromised and chose bulls of above €10 in order to have a bull selection to satisfy our other criteria.

The breeding heifers were heat detected and bred to AI for 7 days.

24 of the 55 heifers were bred in this 7 days (which is higher than could be expected)

The remaining 31 heifers were injected with PG to bring them on heat

16 of these have been bred to AI since and there may be a few more will show heat yet

All heifers that have been bred to AI are then left into a group to run with 2 Angus bulls

No Jersey AI straws or stock bulls have been used this year.

All calves are gone to the contract rearers

The replacement heifers are gone to their usual farm in Fermoy

And the bull calves and beef heifer calves are gone to a different contract rearer in the Fermoy area too.

These will be contract reared until April 2021 when the plan is they will then be sold on the open market

We are doing this mainly to establish the costs and returns (if any!) in the event that there was no export market for dairy calves.

We will have all the weights and costs for these calves and will publish them.