

Shinagh Dairy Farm Report 7-06-2019

Farm Update

There are 232 cows milking. We are decreasing cow numbers in order to remain under 250kg of organic nitrogen per hectare in 2019. The plan is to farm under the 250kg/ha without exporting slurry this year or in future. Previous years we exported slurry onto land we purchased growing silage off.

Breeding started on May 3rd. All cows are tail painted and this is topped up on a regular basis. 94% of the herd were submitted for AI in the first 21 days of breeding (All cows have been served at this stage, 5 weeks into breeding). The non-return rate after 13 days of the second three weeks breeding is running at 73%. We are finished with dairy AI straws now and are using an easy calving Hereford AI bull from the Dairy Beef Index for the rest of AI. Vasectomised bulls are now running with the herd as an aid to heat detection.

The farm grass cover is 675kg/ha or 162kg/cow. Growth rate for the last week was 86 kg/ day. The herd is stocked at 4.17 cows per hectare with a demand of 70kg/ha, this has allowed us to stop feeding supplements. One 2 ha paddock is being cut for bales. 4 ha of silage ground have been reseeded with a two cut silage grass mixture. Magnesium is supplied in the drinking troughs daily by adding magnesium flakes to them.

The current co-op milk details are as follows: 20 litres/day at 4.49% fat, 3.80% protein, 4.76% lactose, 123,000 SCC and 8,000 TBC. That's 1.71 kg of milk solids per cow per day. We are over our peak milk supply, we aim to keep the drop from peak as slow as possible and less than 10% per month decrease. To do this we strive to always have the herd grazing high quality grass at covers between 1300 and 1600 kg/ha. This will mean taking surplus grass out for bales on a regular basis (and possibly feeding those same bales back the following week if growth drops). But if we keep a "safety" amount of cover per cow (and not cut surplus paddocks regularly as needed), we will always be grazing grass a little too strong. That will reduce milk yield and especially milk protein.

This round of fertiliser we are using a protected Urea product. We have taken a decision to use protected urea products instead of CAN products because they are better from an environmental point of view and they are cheaper per unit of nitrogen. The product is 29:0:14 plus 3.5% sulphur.

Updates are on the Shinagh website: <http://www.shinaghdairy.ie/>