

Shinagh Dairy Farm Report 24-09-2019

Farm Update

There are 224 cows milking now.

There was an 8.23% not in calf rate (NIC) this year after 11.5 weeks total breeding season. Five of these not in calf cows have been sold already, the remaining 14 not in calf cows will be sold shortly. This is because they are no longer producing enough milk per day to pay for their costs and we need to reduce cow numbers to ensure we will be under the 250kg of organic nitrogen per hectare stocking rate limit. We set that as the target stocking rate for 2019 to ensure we did not need to export slurry. We are planning for the likely future nitrate rules where export of slurry will not be allowed.

The farm grass cover is 1092kg/ha or 382kg/cow. Growth rate for the last week was 58 kg/day. The herd is stocked at 2.86 cows per hectare, with a demand of 44kg/ha, as we reduce demand by selling empty cows and feeding ration. Thus ensuring we hit our grass budget targets, to ensure grass in the diet as long as cows are milking. We are feeding 2kg of ration.

The current co-op milk details are as follows: 14.75litres/day at 4.99% fat, 4.48% protein, 4.51% lactose, 120,000 SCC and 7,000 TBC. That's 1.44 kg of milk solids per cow per day, which is a drop in litres from 2 weeks ago but an increase in the kg of solids due to the increased milk composition.

The herd has sold 305kg of milk solids per cow to the end of Aug which is on a par with 2018, with less inputs because grass growth was back to normal in 2019. Grass growth in 2019 has been 12.65 tonnes of drymatter per hectare to date versus 9.73 tonnes for the same period in 2018.

The 53 breeding heifers have been scanned. 52 of them are in-calf, that's a 1.9% not in calf figure. We will have surplus in calf heifers for sale this autumn, as we are targeting an 18% replacement rate, which is the optimum in terms of making genetic gain and having a mature herd. The average lactation age of the herd currently is 4.2 lactations and our target is to increase this to 4.5 lactations, by having a reduced % of heifers entering the herd and retaining cows longer in the herd.

The last round of fertiliser has been applied before the deadline. It was $\frac{3}{4}$ of a bag of 29:0:14, which is a protected urea type product. There will be muriate of potash spread now on any low index potash (K) paddocks with the objective of increasing their K reading to 150ppm or greater.

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