

Shinagh Farm Update 18-08-2020:

Planning the Autumn grass budget now. Current farm cover is ahead of our target and with grass growth ahead of demand there will be a paddock baled this week. Growth last week was 71kg/DM/day and our demand was 55kg/day. This will likely be the last paddock cut this year as we try to hit a target peak cover of 1220kg/DM/ha in late September. We don't like to go above this target as if weather is wet at the time of grazing high covers, utilisation is lower and the recovery of the paddock is slow. The other side is unless the farm achieves a build-up of grass to graze when demand will exceed growth, then the amount of grass in the diet in Oct and Nov drops very fast. We all know the effect of this reduction in grass on lower yield and milk composition. All the grazing area is now available for the herd which gives a stocking rate of 3.28cows/ha on the grazing area.

The herd is yielding 16.36 litres per cow per day at the moment, at 4.79% butterfat and 3.83% protein which amounts to 1.45 kg of milk solids per day. We note here that anytime they are grazing on the hills facing down onto the Dunmanway road they will drop 1 litre of milk. They use more energy in both grazing and walking up the hill for milkings. We are not however looking at levelling out these hills due to the prohibitive cost involved! Milk quality is good with SCC of 154,000 and TBC of 7,000 and thermodurics at 300. The farm is not using chlorine in the machine or bulk tank washes, in preparation for no chlorine being allowed from Jan 1st 2021.

The installation of feeders allows for the rattle of the nuts to speed up cow flow into the parlour, so they are getting about 0.5kg of ration per day currently. As we look to grow farm cover we will be increasing meal to keep our grass demand less than growth. The current fertiliser is a half bag of 29:0:15. All second cut silage was in the pits ahead of the recent high rainfall. As part of the Farm Zero C project there has been a seaweed product included the current ration. This product has the potential to reduce the methane emissions from the rumen of the cows. The inclusion in the ration is very small at 100grams per cow per day. The research on the product and its effect on methane will be done in Moorepark. Shinagh will see if the cows will eat the nuts with the product in them. The mixed species sward is doing well and has been grazed for the third time. The plan is to use reduce nitrogen application on this paddock by 100kg/ha in 2021, as high clover has the ability to add 100kg/ha of nitrogen.