

## Teagasc Dairy Beef Programme

Update, Johnstown Castle

Date of writing: 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017  
Covering period: March-April 2017

### Animal performance:

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#### *Yearlings (2016 born calves)*

- The yearlings are divided into their allocated high, medium and low stocking densities (2.8, 3.2 and 3.4 LU/ha), with 72 animals per group.
- Concentrate supplementation ceased on the 7<sup>th</sup> March.
- The average liveweight was 17.1kg heavier at turnout compared to the previous weighing on the 16<sup>th</sup> February.

15/03/2017 (turnout)		
	LW (kg)	*Gain kg/day
High	296	0.73
Medium	300	0.80
Low	291	0.72

\*Average daily gain for first winter period.



#### *26 Month Steer System*

- There are 54 steers remaining; 18 animals per stocking density group.
- Steers were turned out on the 7<sup>th</sup> April.
- The steers will be slaughtered in June at their predetermined slaughter age.

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Date	Live weight (kg)	*ADG kg/day
07/04/17	575	0.64

\*Average daily gain per day since previous weighing.

### Health:

#### **26<sup>th</sup> Month Steer System**

- One steer slipped and fractured his pelvis. He has been removed from the trial.
- No other health issues.

#### **Parasitology study 2017**

- A parasitology study will be carried out on the 2017 born calves with the help of Orla Keane (Teagasc Grange).
- This task has 2 aims:
  1. Estimate the heritability of nematode (*Ostertagia* and *Cooperia*) resistance in cattle.
  2. Estimate breeding values for nematode resistance for the evaluated sires.
- The progeny of the chosen sires will be grazed in groups balanced for sire.
- For each grazing group, herd level faecal egg count (FEC) will be monitored every 2-3 weeks from early June in order to determine the nematode challenge.
- Within each grazing group, when the herd level FEC reaches >100epg, individual calf faecal samples will be collected and faecal egg count determined.
- As the calves will not be dosed for worms at grass until the 100epg threshold is reached, calves will be vaccinated on the ABP rearer farms with Huskvac before they come to Johnstown in order to prevent lungworm infection.

### Grassland management:

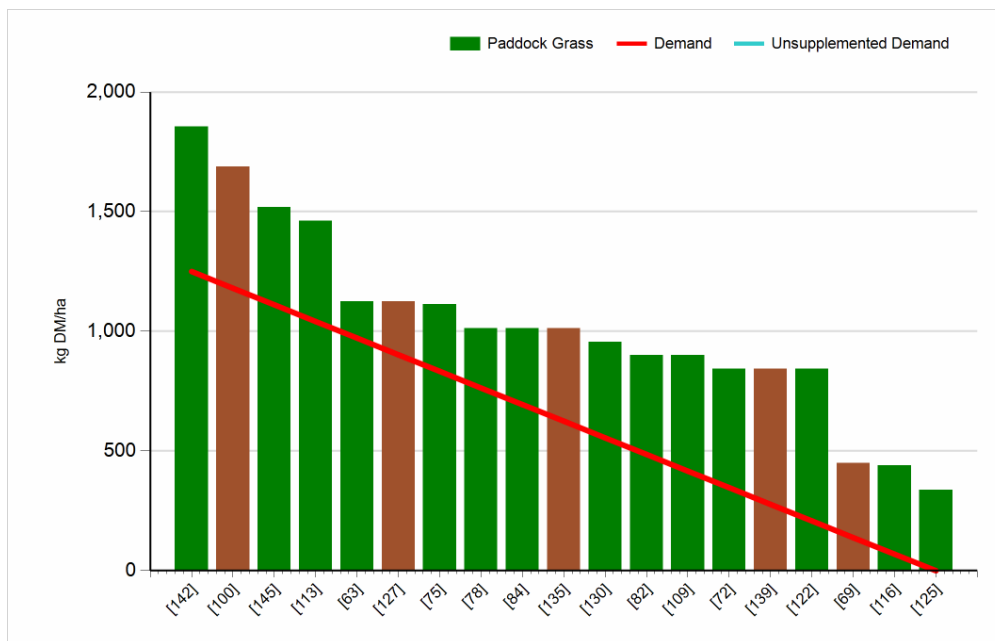
- Yearlings turned out on the 15<sup>th</sup> March. Animals began grazing season in six groups (two groups per stocking density) as the ground was tender. They are now grazing in three groups of 72.

## Teagasc Dairy Beef Programme

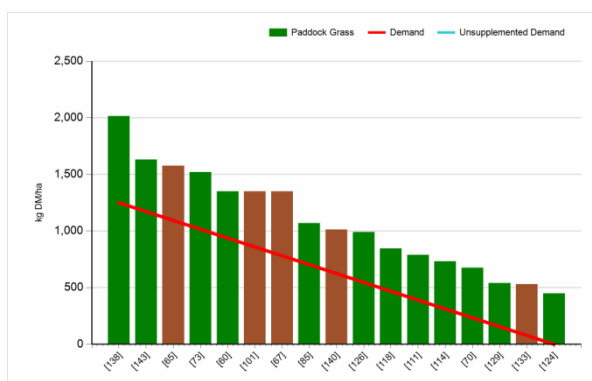
### Update, Johnstown Castle

- Some poaching of heavy ground in March, but this has since recovered well in majority.
- The 26 month steers were turned out on the 7<sup>th</sup> April, grazing in three groups of 18.
- Weekly farm covers and grass cuts for chemical analysis being conducted.
- Pre and post-grazing heights also measured.
- The beef farm is now mapped onto a Grasshopper which will be used to measure the grass cover going forward.

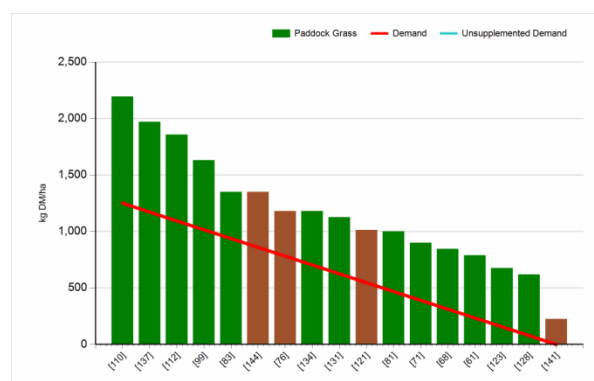
	Farm cover, kg DM/ha		Grass growth (kg DM/ha/day)
	07/04/17	13/04/17	13/04/17
<b>High</b>	914	1034	63
<b>Medium</b>	1159	1152	67
<b>Low</b>	1182	1109	72



**Grass wedge, High stocking density farmlet 13-04-17**



**Grass wedge, Low SD farmlet 13-04-17**



**Grass wedge, Medium SD farmlet 13-04-17**

- Grass is plentiful with supply greatly exceeding demand. The average Days Ahead is 29 days.
- There are currently 8 paddocks (a mixture of full and half paddocks) that have become too

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### **Update, Johnstown Castle**

strong to graze and will be cut as early pit silage in the coming weeks.

#### **2017 Dairy Beef Programme**

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- Calves for the 2017 programme have been bought by ABP and are residing between two ABP rearer farms; Shepard's farm in Clonegal and Haskin's farm in Tullow. The cut off birth date for calves was the 7<sup>th</sup> April.
- The weaned calves will begin to arrive into Johnstown the end of May/June.

#### **ICBF**

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- 16 bulls selected for 2018 dairy beef programme; majority are Angus and Hereford, with some Saler, Limousin, Shorthorn and Belgian Blue.
- Approximately 200 herds signed up for 2018 so far.
- Approximately 7,000 straws have been sent out (~1500 more than last year).
- ICBF have reported a large increase in the both the uptake and interest in the Gene Ireland Dairy Beef Programme.

#### **Changes to trial protocol for 2016 calves**

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- Unlike the 2015 programme, the 2016 animals will be killed to a fatness level rather than on a predetermined age/slaughter date.
- From August of this year, the 2016 heifers and steers will be Body Conditioned Scored (BCS) every three weeks when they are brought in for weighing. Those that are fit (i.e. deemed to reach the fatness score of 3=) will be drafted for slaughter.

#### **This month...**

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- Dairy Beef webpage launch. The webpage will have updates, calf rearing information as well as details of the current and previous dairy beef trials at Johnstown Castle.