

14th January 2020

PastureBase
IRELAND

PastureBase– Initial Farm Covers for 2020

The initial opening covers carried out in early January show an average farm cover of 720 kg DM/ha. Average growth for December/ January so far is 4 kg DM/ha/day

- Growth prediction (Elodie Ruelle): Ballyhaise 3, Moorepark 4, Johnstown 4, Clonakilty 5 (kg DM/ha)
- Walk the farm to identify paddocks suitable for grazing in early February (low grass covers and moderate soil conditions)
- Aim to achieve as many days at grass as possible on the farm (target 30% of the farm grazed in February or 15% for heavy soils farms). This is worth €2.70/cow/day
- Soil samples should be taken before any fertiliser or slurry is spread on farms. Soil sample results can be uploaded and stored on PastureBase



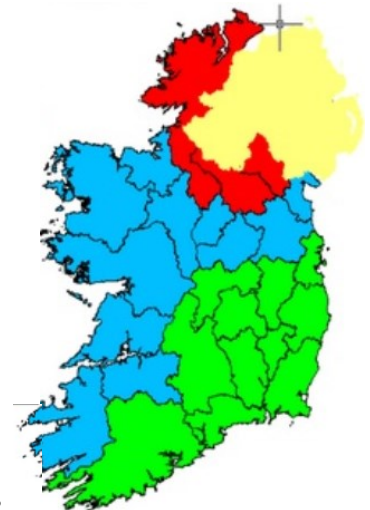
See the table below showing the soil temperatures across the country (13/01/20) (see attachment in email)

Location	Moorepark	Kilkenny	Meath	Cavan	Roscommon	Limerick	Westmeath
Soil Temperature (100mm @9am)	5.2°C	6.2°C	4.1°C	5°C	5.8°C	6.3°C	5.7°C

Know the Spreading Dates for your Area:

See the table and map to see the opening dates for spreading slurry, fertiliser and FYM for your area

Fertiliser Type	Zone A	Zone B	Zone C
Chemical Fert	13th Jan	16th Jan	1st Feb
Organic (Slurry)	13th Jan	16th Jan	1st Feb
FYM	13th Jan	16th Jan	1st Feb



On– Off Grazing: How Can I Deal With Wet Weather Conditions This Spring?

The idea of on-off grazing is to get cows out to grass with an appetite so that they graze efficiently and are taken off pasture once they've had their fill of grass. This is to minimise poaching in wet weather conditions. Flexibility is key for this to work.

The Typical Routine for On-Off Grazing:

7am-9am milking time (1- 2 kg concentrates)

9am– 10.30am hold cows indoors (no silage)

10.30am– 1.30pm cows out grazing (3hrs)

2.30pm-4pm milking time (2 kg concentrates)

4pm-6.30pm cows out grazing (2.5hrs)

6.30pm bring cows in



The goal is to maximise the amount of grass and minimise the amount of silage in the diet without poaching

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Entering a Busy Time for Farmers: How Can I Save Time?

- Make a “Grass Plan” for the farm. Identify the paddocks where grazing will commence. Identify the paddocks suitable for grazing on a wet day and for a dry day. Create a daily routine for setting up strip wires. Have an opening cover and budget done to know what to supplement cows with while grazing this spring
- Have fertiliser bought and in the yard. Make sure to have the contractor on standby if slurry and fertiliser work is contracted. Watch the weather forecast and identify a suitable spell of weather to spread slurry/ fertiliser. Have maps ready for the contractor displaying the paddocks where slurry should go, and displaying the paddocks where fertiliser should be spread too
- A whiteboard map in the dairy/ office can be useful for communicating with staff and for creating a grass plan for the week ahead
- Make sure to have enough labour and space on the farm for the spring to be able to cope with calving
- Make sure that fencing on the farm is adequate and that there is power in all electric fences. Have reels and temporary posts all stored together to make life easier when setting up strip wires



PastureBase Checklist for Spring 2020:

- Paddocks should be set up to match the farm map for the grazing season ahead
- Opening cover should be carried out to see how much grass is available on the farm
- Paddocks suitable for early February grazing selected
- A spring rotation plan should be carried out for your farm. Select your turn out date and target for starting the 2nd rotation (early– mid April)
- A grass budget should be set up to determine how much supplementation should be allocated to feed along with grass this spring. Average farm cover should not drop below 500 kg DM/ha at any point
- Soil samples carried out and uploaded on PastureBase. Farmers can see if there is a correlation between the highest performing paddocks on the farm and soil index's
- Slurry and fertiliser should be recorded on PastureBase this year to see what paddocks are receiving in terms of N, P, K and lime per hectare
- Download the PBI Grass app and use it to record covers, grazing dates and slurry/ fertiliser application off your phone

