

2nd October 2018

**Current Pasture Performance PastureBase Ireland:** [www.pbi.ie](http://www.pbi.ie) Micheal O'Leary

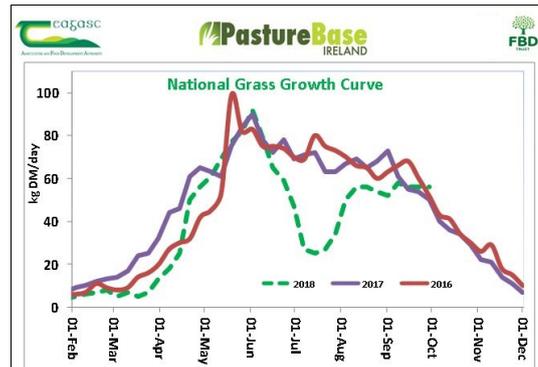


	Farm Cover (kg DM/ha)	Cover/LU (kg DM/LU)	Stocking Rate (LU/ha)	Growth (kg DM/ha)	Demand (kg DM/ha)
<b>Average</b>	955	330	2.95	46	39

- Average feed allocation:
  - Grass 13.2 kgDM/LU
  - Concentrates 4 kg/LU
  - Silage 0.4 kgDM/LU

**Grazing Tips for the Week:**

- Use strip wires to graze heavy covers
  - Graze down to 4 cm
- Operate a rotation length of 35+ days



**Dry Matter Results:**

<b>Location</b>	Moorepark
<b>Sampling Date</b>	01/10/18
<b>Time of Day</b>	09.30
<b>Weather</b>	Fine
<b>DM%:</b>	16%



**Rectifying Soil Fertility on Farms:**

Although the N & P fertiliser deadline is now in effect, there is still a lot to play for in terms of rectifying soil fertility issues on farms:

- Lime-** Ground conditions are excellent for spreading lime. Lime can be bought and spread for around €23/ Tonne. A pH of 6.2- 6.5 is important to release P & K into the soil and create a stable environment for the ryegrass plant
- Slurry-** Now is also a great opportunity to spread slurry. Slurry should be targeted where silage is taken off and also on paddocks deficient in Potassium and Phosphorus.
- Potassium (K)-** Products like Muriate of Potash (straight K 0:0:50) can be spread on paddocks in index 1 & 2 for K
- Picture-** A map of the grazing platform hanging up in the milking parlour on the farm of Billy, Mark & Liam Heffernan, Dunnamaggin, Co. Kilkenny (Grass10 Leinster Grassland Farmers of the Year 2017). Soil index's are wrote on the map to make decisions on fertiliser, lime and slurry.



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### Fodder Budgeting and Winter Feed:

The first step in preparing for winter 2018/2019 is to carry out a fodder budget. The fodder budget calculates the demand for fodder, and compares the demand with the amount of winter feed available on the farm. From these figures, we can see if there is a surplus or deficit of feed and make decisions accordingly.

- See an example of demand being calculated for a 100 cow herd (30 heifers, 30 calves and 2 bulls) in the table below:

Animal Type	A) No. of Stock	B) No. of Months	C) Silage Needed/Animal/Month	Total Tonnes Needed (AxBxC)
Dairy Cows	100	5	1.6	800
Suckler Cows			1.4	
0-1 Year Old	30	5	0.7	105
1-2 Year Old	30	5	1.3	195
2+ Year Old	2	5	1.3	13
Ewes			0.15	
<b>Total Tonnes Needed</b>				<b>1,113 Tonnes</b>

Once we know the demand for fodder on the farm, we can then assess the amount of feed we have in stock.

To calculate silage stocks:

- Measure all pits of silage – length X breadth X average settled height – to calculate the volume in the silage pits in  $m^3$ . As a rough guide, to convert to tonnes of silage, multiply the volume by 0.75. E.g.,  $100m^3 = 75$  tonnes of fresh silage at 20% dry matter.
- Count number of bales – estimate weight. Most bales will be roughly 0.8 Tonnes/silage.

See the example below of silage stocks being calculated on a farm:

No. of Bales (0.8 Tonne)	300 Bales X 0.8 = 240 Tonnes/Silage
Tonnes of Silage in the Pit:	700 Tonnes
<b>Total Silage:</b>	<b>1,000 Tonnes/Silage in Stock</b>

Grass Silage	Multiply $m^3$ by
20% DM	0.75
24% DM	0.68
30% DM	0.62

For this example, we can see that we have a deficit of 113 Tonnes of silage.

Options to rectify the situation:

- 80 Tonnes of silage can be saved by culling 10 empty/underperforming cows
- 65 Tonnes of silage can be saved by selling 10 surplus heifers
- Meal feeding calves & heifers to reduce demand or alternatively feed a mix to cows to extend silage reserves and reduce demand. 3kg/head/day saves roughly 2.2 tonnes/silage/head over 5 months (20%DM silage).
- Use hay, straw etc. to extend silage
- Use a combination of reducing demand and supplementation to ensure enough winter feed! Contact your local Teagasc advisor.



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Getting the balance between extending the grazing season this autumn, while opening up the farm with grass next spring is central to increasing profit on farms and also reducing pressure on silage reserves. Take a look at the following farmers grass situation and plans for closing off their farms.



Farmer: Shane O'Loughlin, Kildare

Enterprise: Dairy

Current Average Farm Cover: 723kgDM/ha

Current Cover/LU: 258kg DM/ha

Growth: 67 kgDM/ha

Demand: 36 kgDM/ha

Stocking Rate (Grazing Platform): 2.8 LU/ha

Start Date of Closing Autumn Closing: 5th October

Current Supplementation: 5 kg Concentrates (cows)

Key Quote: "I'm building grass at the minute to graze longer into November. I would like to have more grass on my farm, so I am feeding 5 kg meal"



Farmer: Peader Kearney, Louth

Enterprise: Sheep

Current Average Farm Cover: 805 kgDM/ha

Current Days Ahead: 22 days

Growth: 30 kgDM/ha

Demand: 37 kgDM/ha

Stocking Rate: 2.57 LU/ha

Drought: Down 3.6 Tonnes DM/ha compared to 2017

Current Supplementation:

Key Quote: "I've made 157 bales so far and have the option to buy 50 if I want. However, lot more meal has gone into the lambs this year because of the drought"



Farmer: Denis & Tomas O'Brien, Co. Cork

Enterprise: Dairy

Current Average Farm Cover: 1136 kgDM/ha

Current Cover/LU: 386 kgDM/ha

Growth: 45 kgDM/ha

Demand: 42 kgDM/ha

Stocking Rate: 3.01

Start Date of Closing Autumn Closing: 7th October

Current Supplementation: 4 kg concentrates (cows)

Key Quote: "Getting the balance right between closing off and extending this autumn, while having grass next February for cows calving is the top priority on this farm".



Farmer: Paul Ryan, Co. Tipperary

Enterprise: Dairy

Current Average Farm Cover: 882 kgDM/ha

Current Cover/LU: 394 kgDM/ha

Growth: 34 kgDM/ha

Demand: 22 kgDM/ha

Stocking Rate: 2.24

Start Date Autumn Closing: 28th September

Current Supplementation: 8 kg Concentrates (cows)

Key Quote: "I've fed meal heavily to build grass on this farm as I suffered badly from drought from July to September. I am happy with cover per cow at the minute, but it has come at a cost. This week- cash flow budget."