



## Lyons Systems Research Herd Notes

**Background:** It is widely recognised that grass-based systems offer a competitive advantage and will predominate in Ireland. However, grazing systems that have been developed to utilise large quantities of grazed grass have in the main been based on low-output per cow. In this scenario, high levels of profitability are possible through avid cost control and comparatively high stocking rates for grazing systems. There are now reasons to consider the development of grazing systems that are based on high-output per cow. These reasons include (i) concerns about increasing dairy cow numbers and environmental emissions, (ii) facilitating farm expansion post EU-milk quota removal for land limited and fragmented farms, (iii) lack of available skilled labour on farms to deal with expanding animal numbers. The rationale for this research is that a high output grass-based spring milk production system can be profitable when built on a foundation of good grassland management and meeting both milk and fertility targets and has a place in a sustainable Irish dairy industry.

For more details on the High Output Systems Research Herd visit <http://www.ucd.ie/agfood/welcomemessage/systemsresearchherd/>.

### Lyons Systems Research Herd Notes Week 05/11/2018

#### Farm Details:

Area available: 17.65 ha  
Current Stocking Rate (MP): 3.34 cows/ha  
Farm Cover: 510 kg DM  
Growth Rate: 12(12) kg DM/ha/day  
Demand: 0 kg DM/ha/day  
Average Concentrate Supplement: 4 kg/head/day  
Average DIM: 262.5  
Cows Milking: 59



**Daily Feed Budget:** Cows are being offered *ad lib* silage and 4 kg of an 18% in-parlour concentrate.

**Grazing Plan:** AFC on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November was 510 kg DM/ha (range 173 to 1102 kg DM/ha) with a cover/LU of 153 kg DM. Average grass growth was 12 kg DM/ha/day last week. Average grass DM last week was 15.1%. Average soil temperature (at 100mm) for the last week was 7.1°C. The final rotation started on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October and as of the 5<sup>th</sup> of November, 81% of the MP has been grazed with three paddocks remaining ungrazed. However, to prevent the AFC reducing anymore, a decision was made to house the cows full-time from the 6<sup>th</sup> of November. If the block grows ~10 kg DM/ha/day between now and Dec 1<sup>st</sup>, the AFC will be ~760 kg DM/ha which is on target for this stocking rate.

**Milk Production:** Average production is 16.4 kg/cow/day, as of the week ending 4<sup>th</sup> of November, at 5.12% fat and 4.14% protein (1.50 kg MS). Average production this time last year was 15.5 kg/cow/day, at 4.98% fat and 3.94% protein (1.38 kg MS). SCC is currently 251,000. Fat, protein and SCC figures are based on milk recording results from the 24<sup>th</sup> of October.