

Newsletter SEPTEMBER 2020



Feeding the Dairy Cow at Grass in Late Lactation

By Aisling Claffey - (Dairy & Grassland Specialist) - 086 0317483

Persistent strong growth throughout August has led to good covers of grass on farm. However, wet weather can hamper utilisation. Avoid grazing covers in excess of 2000 kg DM/ha! On heavier farms, aim to have a peak average farm cover of 900-1000 kg DM/ha, while dryer farms, particularly with high stocking rates, should aim to peak between 1100-1200 kg DM/ha by late September.

Now is the time to start assessing Body Condition Score on farm to ensure cows are at a target of 3.0 at drying off, as cows are more efficient in late lactation at increasing body condition score. There is also a strong milk production response to concentrate feeding in autumn, as grass dry matter and quality

reduces, particularly with recent wet weather! Typically, a response of 1 kg milk/kg of concentrate is observed in late lactation, up to 6kg/cow.

Autumn grass is high in crude protein, so where grass makes up most of the diet, a high energy, low crude protein nut (**Elite Breeder 14**) is the ideal supplement at 3-4 kg/cow. However, where ground conditions and dry matter intake may be compromised by wet weather, a good quality 16 % nut, such as **Mega Milk 16** is the ideal supplement where silage may be introduced intermittently.

In preparation for the dry cow period, contact a member of our technical team to arrange silage

sampling. We provide full quality and mineral analysis of forage samples and will assist you in formulating transition cow diets to ensure you are set up to get the most from your herd in 2021!



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ANALYTICAL SERVICES AVAILABLE

PRODUCTS	ANALYSIS	TURNAROUND
Soils	Lime, Phosphorus, Potash, Trace Minerals, Full Soil Heath	14-28 days
Calf Scour Test	Cryptosporidium, E.coli, Rotavirus, Coronavirus, Giarda and Coccidia	2-3 days
Faecal Parasite Test Cattle/Sheep	Fluke & Worms	2-3 days
Pre-Cut Grass	Nitrates, Sugars, Dry Matter and Buffering Capacity	2-3 days
Silages	Feed Value and/or Mineral Analysis	7-14 days
Colostrum	Immunoglobulin Concentration	Immediate Results

THE BEST DECISIONS ARE ALWAYS BASED ON ACCURATE INFORMATION.

Digest-it

Reduces Blockages & Improves Consistency

By Hilda Dooley - (Crop Specialist) - 086 6074729

Digest-it is a liquid biological composting product which contains aerobic bacteria, enzymes and nutrients. Its purpose is to aerobically digest (compost) slurry to....

- ✓ Improve fertiliser nutrient level.
- ✓ Reduce ammonia concentration & odour.
- ✓ Breakdown crusts and solids.
- ✓ Make agitation easier.
- ✓ Improve soil health and fertility.

Ideally, **Digest-it** would be applied at the start of housing (once there

is 6-12" of slurry in the tank), and then again after slurry is removed in Jan/Feb, which will take the tank through to post first cut silage. Talk to your rep to calculate how much you need. **Digest-it** is easy to apply – in a bucket, add some water to **Digest-it** to dilute slightly, then pour through the slats into the tank – Job Done.

*A single farm trial over a 5-year period showed an average of 0.97 t DM/ha extra grass was grown per year on ground which received **Digest-it** treated slurry, compared to un-treated slurry.

Cost Benefit of using Digest-it	Mean 2016-2020
DIGEST-IT Extra Grass yield	+971 kg DM/ha
Net Value of Grass DM/tonne*	€173
Extra Grass Net Value/ha	€167.98
DIGEST-IT cost/ha	€15.00
Additional Grass Net Value/ha	€152.98
Return on investment	11:1

*Teagasc 2018



Autumn Management of Weanlings at Grass

By Joe Naughton
(Calf Specialist) Ph: 086 1452586

With the rate of grass growth slowing, it is very important to start planning your grassland management for weanlings for the autumn and to start building grass on farms from mid-August onwards. Aim to have the highest farm cover by mid-September.

Allocating quality grass to calves can be achieved by grazing calves ahead of cows via a creep gate, this will improve the calves' liveweight gains and help break the cow/calf bond over a period of time, making weaning less stressful.

Spring calved suckler cows are currently in good condition and are contributing very little in the form of liveweight gain to their calves. These cows can be used to clean out fields or be moved onto rougher grazing areas once weaning has taken place.

Where grass is scarce or grass quality poor, creep feeders are ideal for introducing meal to calves. Creep feeders can later be replaced by trough feeding or feeding **Nugget Easy Beef 16% Cobs** under a fence, giving calves an equal chance to eat.

The response to meal feeding will vary greatly depending on age, breeding, and sex of the calf. With meal and good quality grass, bulls can achieve growth rates of 1.3-1.4kg/day with heifers achieving 1.2-1.35kg/day.

Feed 1-1.5kg/day for 4 weeks prior to weaning. Increase to 2kg/day from weaning until sale. If grass supplies are tight and weather conditions are poor meal can be increased to 3kg/day.

Use **Nugget Super Weanling Crunch, Hi Energy Beef 16% or Easy Beef 16% Cobs** for best results. All these feeds include:

- 16% crude protein and over 40% cereals.
- Live yeast to help improve digestion and optimize rumen health.
- *Grennans Bovine + Yeassac Beef Mineral and Vitamin pack to supply all essential minerals and Vitamins to support rapid growth of muscle and bone.



Liver Fluke in Sheep

By Shane Gonoude - (Animal Health Specialist) Ph: 087 6466707

By Damien Conboy - (Sheep Specialist) Ph: 087 2124036

Disease caused by liver fluke (fasciolosis) is an increasingly common and economically important parasitic disease of sheep in Ireland. Liver fluke is caused by a flat worm (*Fasciola Hepatica*) that requires a mud snail as a host to develop. High rainfall and warm conditions are the ideal environment for mud snails. With the warm wet weather we are after having since July, there is the likelihood of a high incidence of liver fluke in sheep.

Acute live fluke disease is caused by migrating immature liver flukes and is difficult to confirm in live animals, as there are no eggs to detect in a dung sample. Some animals die either due to the direct effects of massive numbers of migrating fluke, or due to clostridial disease (Black disease) triggered by the migrating fluke larvae. This can affect unvaccinated sheep. This is also a cause of poor reproductive performance in ewes.

Chronic fluke arises due to adult fluke sucking blood in the liver, signs of this includes loss of condition, anaemia, paleness around the eye and swelling (bottle-jaw). If not treated the animal will die.

Treatment:

There are products on the market that control immature and adult fluke and o t h e r p r o d u c t s



that control adults only. From now until spring the greatest threat is from immature fluke and the product used should reflect that. Triclabendazole products (e.g Endofluk) are best used at this time as they control the three stages of fluke. Resistance to flukicides is an important factor to consider also when choosing your dosing programme.

Other control measures:

Fence off wet areas on farm to reduce access to contaminated pastures and don't allow stock to access natural water courses. Do faecal egg counts to establish the level of adult fluke contamination, but remember, this will not establish the level of immature fluke.

Variety Details				Total PPI € per ha/year	Pasture Profit Sub-Indices (€ per ha/year)					
Variety	Ploidy	Heading Date	Kg/ac		DM Production			Quality	Silage	Persistency
AberGain	T	June 4 th	5.5	192	21	38	42	52	39	0
Aberchoice	D	June 11 th	3	176	19	45	51	43	18	0
Drumbo	D	June 7 th	2.5	116	19	24	34	27	12	0
White Clover (med)			0.5							
Weighted average		June 5 th		170	20	37	43	44	27	0

- Exceptional quality
 - intensive grazing
- Strong seasonal growth
- Late heading
- Good 1st cut in early June
 - more flexible

50% Tetraploid



Important to study grass seed mixtures before you purchase them. This is by far the best grass seed mixture available at present for sowing under Irish conditions. If you are thinking of reseeding this autumn, please talk to us in advance.

RAGWORT WARNING

By Paul Mooney - (Crop Specialist) Ph: 086 3532342

Unfortunately, Ragwort has become a serious issue nationwide again - it was almost totally eradicated from our country up to a few years ago. Many fields are gone beyond pulling by hand at this stage, so **Forefront T** next April is the best option for those fields. Where it is possible to pull the plants, it needs to be done asap before they start to shed seeds. Pay attention to ditches and areas that cannot be reached with sprayers. If everyone makes an effort, we should be able to get rid of this noxious weed for good.

