

29th May 2018

Current Pasture Performance PastureBase Ireland: www.pbi.ie

PastureBase
IRELAND

Farm Cover (kg DM/ha)	Cover/LU (kg DM/LU)	Stocking Rate (LU/ha)	Growth (kg DM/ha)	Demand (kg DM/ha)
710	184	4	82	60

- Target is 160-180kgDM/LU in the mid-season.
- Our growth rate is exceeding our demand by 36% (22kgDM/ha).
- Farmers need to walk the farm twice per week to monitor growth rates and to identify surpluses.
- Remove surpluses quickly.
- Rotation length needs to be adjusted according to your growth rate (16-20 days).

Grazing Tips to Maintain Grass Quality on Dairy and Drystock Farms:

Currently, there are lots of farms where grass quality has deteriorated recently. Here are the 5 steps to improve grass quality:

1. Meet your residual of 4cm every grazing or the problem will intensify in subsequent rotations.
2. Cut surplus bales from the poorest quality paddocks.
3. Enter low covers (less than 1400kgDM/ha). Don't graze heavy covers.
4. Walk the farm to monitor grass levels and growth rates on your farm. Use PBI to generate a wedge.
5. Operate a short rotation length of 16-20 days.



Silage/ Fodder Message:

1. Get a sugar test on your grass before cutting.
2. Weather forecast is good this week.
3. Mow in the middle of the day to increase sugar content.
4. A 24hr wilt will increase the DM content and sugar levels. Nitrates will not be a problem if sugars are right and crops are wilted.
5. Slurry should be spread where silage is taken off. Farmers must incorporate slurry into fertiliser plans for 2nd cut silage. See the following table on slurry values in terms of N, P & K:

	Units/ 1000 gal	Units/ 1000 gal	Units/ 1000 gal
Manure Type	N	P	K
Cattle Slurry (7%)	6	5	30
Dilute Cattle Slurry (3.5% DM)	5	3	15
Pig Slurry	19	7	20



Fertiliser Programme for 2nd Cut Silage:

80 units N/acre for 2nd cut silage	2,500-3000 Gallons Slurry Application/ Acre First and Fertiliser 7-10 Days Later
Soils Adequate in P & K: Slurry and Nitrogen Fertiliser + S	Soils Deficient in P & K: Slurry and/or Compound Fertiliser + S
10 Units of Sulphur/Acre in all cases	Low-emission Slurry Spreading: Can Minimise N losses

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Grassland Farmer of the Year Regional Winner: Payne Farm Take Home Messages:

- The farm grew 15.5tonnesDM/ha and achieved 10 rotations in 2017.
- The farm was traditionally drystock and set stocking, however a paddock system was incorporated into the dairy enterprise and is paying huge dividends for the farm.
- Discussion groups with local advisor Seamus Nolan encouraged good grassland management practices and built knowledge in grassland.
- Soil samples are taken on the milking platform every year and on all other land every 2nd year.
- Grass measurement is carried out over 40 times per year and decisions are made using PastureBase Ireland.
- Grazing season length was 275 days in 2017 (15th Feb to 15th Nov).
- Improved grassland management has unlocked the potential of not only the land, but the cows and people on this farm too. It is an enjoyable place for people to work.



Lime:

- Spread lime on grazing ground to increase the pH on acidic soils.
- Target soil pH: 6.3-6.5.
- Lime will increase grass production annually.
- Lime will release up to 80kg N/ha/year.
- Lime will unlock soil phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) in the soil.
- Lime will increase the response to freshly applied N, P & K.

Rate	Lime Type:	Cost
2-2.5 tonnes/acre	Ground Limestone	€20-25 per Tonne Spread

Fun Fact: At farm level every €100 investment in lime equates to approximately €700 in extra grass production annually!



Safety Message:

Silage season is a busy period for farmers. Make sure to be safe on your farm. Get enough rest and be vigilant when carrying out jobs like covering a silage pit and agitating slurry. Thank you.