

7th December 2021

PastureBase data from dairy farms:



AFC	Growth
707 Kg DM/Ha	12 Kg DM/ha

Teagasc Grange dairy-beef research herd

Nicky Byrne, Donall Fahy, Anthony Mulligan and Jamie O’Driscoll



After 285 days at grass the grazing season will end this week with the housing of spring born weanlings at a targeted closing AFC of 500 kg DM/ha. Herbage production year to date is **14,210 kg DM/ha**, across 6.1 grazings of an average pre-grazing herbage mass of 1400 kg DM/ha, grazed to a residual height of 4.3 cm for calf and yearling groups. Currently calves weigh 282 and 280 kg for AA and HF calves, respectively, both having achieved an ADG of 0.84 kg over their 1st grazing season. Weanlings will be offered high quality grass + red clover silage (72 DMD) and 1.5 kg of concentrate per day over the housed period. One of the experimental treatments saw steers being supplemented at pasture from July in their 2nd grazing season, while rearing treatments received grass-only until being housed on a conventional grass silage and concentrate diet. All AA steers supplemented at pasture achieved an acceptable level of finish without the need for an indoor finishing period, while HF steers didn’t and had to be housed for a conventional finishing period. Table 1 outlines carcass performance for AA steers of divergent genetic potential for the age at which they will produce an in-spec carcass. After 60 days of a conventional finishing diet (grass silage + 5 kg concentrate) the 1st draft of AA steers managed on grass-only treatments over the 2nd grazing season were slaughtered, achieving a carcass weight of 323 kg, O+ conformation and a fatness of 3+/- at 21 months of age.

In summary, a grass-based beef system can produce in spec carcass weights at a reduced slaughter age, through the optimisation of animal genetics and grassland nutrition.

Table 1.

Genetic group	Age at slaughter (months)	Carcass Weight (kg)	Conformation	Fat	% in spec Carcass Weight	% in spec Confirmation
High Merit	20.5	306	O=	4-	100%	86%
Low Merit	20.3	269	O+	3+	50%	93%

Don’t forget to record your final grass walk of 2021 on PastureBase

Recording a closing AFC will allow you to quantify the amount of grass grown for 2021 on your farm & allow you to accurately measure over winter growth when you walk the farm next Spring.

Ensure you have **20 farm walks** entered throughout 2021 on PastureBase Ireland to meet your derogation plan requirements. Use the Grass10 scorecard to review your year after your closing AFC is completed:-

<https://bit.ly/PBI-Scorecard>

Stocking Rate	Average Farm Cover on Dec 1st	Covers on Strongest Paddocks
2.5 LU/ha	600	1200 Kg DM/ha
3.0 LU/ha	650-700	1400 Kg DM/ha
3.5 LU/ha	700-750	1600 Kg DM/ha

Improvements in Soil Fertility Mark Plunkett, Teagasc Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford

Soil fertility has improved dramatically over the last 3 to 4 years. The soils database would tell us the following:-

Dairy – 24 & 27% of soils testing at P & K Index 4, respectively

Drystock – 19 & 27% of soils testing at P & K Index 4, respectively

Identifying these fields (Index 4’s) is a great place to start in making savings especially on P & K’s for 2022 plus it allows a more targeted and efficient use of the N, P K in cattle slurry and other organic manures in replacing expensive fertilisers.

Time for Lime :-Up to date soil analysis will also identify fields with low soil pH’s & lime advice which can be planned over the coming weeks & months

Soil Sample Now:- Now is the time to spend €2.50/ac to help reduce the impacts of high fertiliser prices on farm profitability in 2022.



PastureBase data from sheep & beef farms:

7th December 2021

AFC	Growth
595 Kg DM/Ha	10 Kg DM/ha

GFOY Update, Caroline Walsh, Ballinascorthy Co. Cork.



Reviewing your Farm Summary Report on PastureBase Ireland

“Thankfully we had a good finish to the grazing year with excellent grazing conditions during October & November. This helped to recover somewhat from a slow start to the year and a very poor May for grass growth.”

“Overall we will finish about 400 Kg DM/Ha behind 2020 at 13.6 T DM/Ha mainly down to poor grass growth in May as you can see in my Farm Summary Report from PastureBase Ireland”

“I walked my farm 47 times as I feel grass measurement gives me huge confidence during a difficult year in keeping the correct amount of grass ahead of my cows”

“I am happy that my pre-grazing yield was 1350 Kg DM/Ha during the summer months as this is the optimum grass cover to maximise performance and graze outs”

“I had a long grazing season of over 274 days which means that I am making good use of a high quality & our cheapest feed which helps to keep costs down in a year of high feed prices”

The “Farm Summary Report” is a one page summary of your farms grassland performance for a given year. It is an excellent report in a discussion group setting to highlight areas where farmers can improve and make quick gains in the subsequent grazing season.

It is packed with information on your farm performance & between now and Christmas is an ideal time to review your 2021 grazing year.

Watch our webinar back below if you want further information on how to navigate to these reports on PastureBase Ireland & where to locate our PastureBase scorecard to review 2021 performance

Parameter	YTD	Spring J F M A	Summer M J J	Autumn A S O N D
No. of Covers Recorded	47	13	19	15
No. Of Grazings	9.7	1.8	4	4
No. Of Silage Cuts	0.4	0.1	0.3	
Grazing DM (kg DM/ha)	13062	2249	5386	5428
Silage DM (kg DM/ha)	505	163	342	
Total DM (kg DM/ha)	13567	2412	5728	5428
Over Winter Growth (kg DM/ha)	122			
Average Pre-grazing Yield(kg DM/ha)	1347	1249	1347	1357
Average Growth Rate (kg DM/ha)	41	16	65	46
Max Farm Cover (kg DM/ha)	1142 (25/Feb)	1142 (25/Feb)	853 (17/May)	1020 (27/Sep)
Min Farm Cover (kg DM/ha)	550 (02/Aug)	690 (24/Apr)	571 (01/Jul)	550 (02/Aug)
Demand/ha (kg DM/ha)	43	25	61	43
Stocking Rate (LU/ha)	3.13	2.29	3.91	3.23
Opening/Closing Cover (kg DM/ha)		943 (20/Jan)		559 (27/Nov)
Total Meal Fed/LU (kg/LU)	1168	457	289	423
Total Supplement Fed/LU (kg/LU)	1940	1077	289	574
Hectares Cut for Silage (%)	6.66 (35%)	2.07 (11%)	4.59 (24%)	
No Of Silage Bales Made				
Silage Yield (Tonnes of DM)	10	3	7	
Area Reseeded (%) (ha)				
Total Kg MS Produced	31653	11657	11151	8845
Average Milk Solids per ha	1642	605	578	459
Average Milk Solids per cow	495	182	162	146
Average kg N/ha (Artificial)	198 (165)	96 (76)	50 (43)	53 (47)
Average kg P/ha (Artificial)	30 (9)	15 (2)	13 (6)	3 (1)
Average kg K/ha (Artificial)	155 (17)	86 (3)	59 (12)	10 (3)
Average kg S/ha (Artificial)	14 (11)	4 (3)	4 (3)	6 (6)
Start Grazing on	25/Feb			
Finish Grazing on	26/Nov			
Grazing Season Length (days)	274			
Start Date of 2nd Rotation	29/Mar			
Growth Exceeded Demand on	01/Jan			
Peak Growth was on	11/Jun (89)	29/Apr (54)	11/Jun (89)	07/Aug (68)
Your 5 Best Paddocks are	12, 9, 18, 16, 17			
Your 5 Worst Paddocks are	4, 3, 5, 6, 1			

Opportunities for Growth in 2022 Webinar

Last Thursday 2nd December, the Grass10 & PastureBase team were joined by dairy farmer John Phelan on our final webinar of the year & we reviewed his grazing year using the reports on PastureBase Ireland and identified areas for improvement in 2022.

To watch this webinar back please click on the link below:-

<https://bit.ly/Growth2022>



Opportunities for growth in 2022 with PastureBase Ireland

Thursday, 2nd December | 7pm

Join the Grass10 & PastureBase team as they discuss:

- What reports are available on PastureBase Ireland
- Understanding your PastureBase Ireland reports
- Identifying 3 areas to improve on your farm in 2022

Dairy farmer John Phelan from Co. Waterford will join us on the night to discuss his 2021 grass performance and identify areas for improvement in 2022.

Or visit www.teagasc.ie/grass10