

GRASS TIPS



Windows of Opportunity for early Spring grazing

We have had some heavy rainfall but aim to get animals to grass by day, using a good network of grazing infrastructure for 3-4 hours grazing

- See our infographic below on measuring out area
- A dairy herd after calving with 20% heifers will start off at about 13-14kg DM/Ha intake so factor this in when allocating grass.
- If feeding 3kg meal & 3 kg silage, aim for 7-8kg of intake at grass & allocate 20% more twice per week.

Complete your opening AFC on PastureBase Ireland

- Average farm cover on Irish dairy and drystock farms are 848Kg DM/Ha & 701 Kg DM/Ha respectively.
- Identify the 1st 30% of your farm that you want to graze now during February and have temporary reels and posts at the ready!
- Animals should start grazing in grass covers of ideally 700-1000 Kg DM/Ha to tune animals back into grazing.
- Animals to turn to grass should be priority animals such as weanlings on beef/drystock farms or autumn calvers/freshly calved spring cows on dairy farms.

Measuring out area

- 50 cows being offered 15 Kg DM per day (12 Kg grass+ 3 Kg meal)
- 50 cows - 3 hours being offered 6 kg grass
- = 50 cows x 6 kg = **300 kg DM required**

➢ 1ha = 10,000 m² = 100m X 100m

➢ 1.5 hectare paddock X 1000 kg/DM/Ha = **1500kg available in the paddock**

➢ 1500 kg DM in paddock / 300 Kg DM required = 5 grazings in paddock

1.5ha divided by 5 grazings = 0.3 hectare per grazing

0.3 of a hectare = 3000 m² = 50 metres x 60 metre section

Allocate twice daily- Pick easier paddock for PM grazing



Have you N fertiliser in your yard for application?

- A warmer week is forecast, so soil temperatures are expected to rise along with growth rates for the next 7 days.
- Land trafficability will have to improve on many farms before chemical N or slurry is spread but it is important to be ready to take the opportunity
- 1.5T or 1 pallet of 46% Protected Urea applied at a rate of 23 units/acre will cover 60 acres/ 24 Ha so have some N ready to go in your yard
- If applying chemical N ensure that:
 1. Soil temperatures are above 6°C & rising
 2. Land trafficability is very good
 3. Check forecasts to make sure that no heavy rainfall is expected

The recommended rate is 20-23 units N/acre or 25-29 Kg N/Ha applied on land that has not received slurry.

N fertiliser and Slurry application plan for 2024

Fertiliser/Slurry Split	Product	1 st 40% of Farm Area	15% of Farm Area	15% of Farm Area	3 rd 30% of Farm Area
January/February ¹	Cattle Slurry ²	2,000 gals/ac (16 units N/ac – 20 kg N/ha) Lower covers (<1000 kg DM/ha) ⁴			
February ¹	Protected Urea (NBPT)			23 units N/ac (29 kg N/ha)	23 units N/ac (29 kg N/ha)
	Cattle Slurry ²		2,500 gals/ac (20 units N/ac – 25 kg N/ha) Mid-February after grazing ³	2,500 gals/ac (20 units N/ac – 25 kg N/ha) End-February after grazing ⁴	
March	Protected Urea (NBPT)	40 units N/ac (50 kg N/ha)	40 units N/ac (50 kg N/ha)	23 units N/ac (29 kg N/ha)	40 units N/ac (50 kg N/ha)
Total N by 1 st April	Slurry + Fertiliser N Units/ac (kg/ha)	56 units N/ac (70 kg N/ha)	60 units N/ac (75 kg N/ha)	66 units N/ac (83 kg N/ha)	63 units N/ac (79 kg N/ha) Total 60 units N/ac (75 kg N/ha) ⁴