

# GRASS TIPS



## Establish a growth rate for your farm on PastureBase Ireland

- After another week of high temperatures, grass growth has dropped further to 47 & 39 Kg DM/Ha on dairy and drystock farms respectively.
- However, drier counties in the east and the south-east are experiencing larger reductions in growth as soil moisture deficits (SMD) are now approaching 70mm
- Above 60mm of SMD grass growth begins to drop significantly
- These farms are growing in the region of 30-35 Kg DM/Ha
- Farms growing less than demand should introduce additional supplementation to hold farm cover.
- 25% of dairy farms are currently running at under 150 kg DM/LU and action must be taken on these farms
- Considerable amounts of rain expected this week, with a risk of heavy, thundery downpours which should reduce SMD.

## Managing through the current dry period

- In drier conditions, the grass plant starts to enter survival (reproductive) mode & more stem & seedhead will be apparent, even at lower covers
- Growth rates dropping under demand on Irish farms (47Kg DM/Ha vs 51Kg DM/Ha)
- Rotation length must be held 20-25 days and operate at 700 - 800Kg DM/Ha AFC (180-220Kg DM/ LU) to protect growth rates
- Keep AFC > 500 Kg DM/Ha
- Make sure animals are grazing out paddocks to 4cm. Dry matter % is high (>19%) so target high grass utilisation.
- Hold a reasonable demand on your farm (50-60 kg DM/Ha demand) and remove any surplus stock/ replacement heifers/ non-priority animals from main grazing platform
- Reseeds over 600 KgDM/ha should be grazed lightly to strengthen roots and encourage tillering.

## P K and S applications on grass & grass clover swards

- Maintenance P and K requirements of a paddock in any given year will depend on the yield of the paddock and if the paddock was primarily grazed or if there was silage harvested.
- When grazed, animals will recycle 90% of the K in the grass back on to the paddock in dung and urine
- If baled, 100% of the K in the grass is removed from the field. A typical bale of silage contains 10 units of K and 1.7 units of P (see info graph below)
- Ensure all chemical and organic fertilisers are recorded on PastureBase so that this can be reviewed during the year. P and K can be applied such as slurry, 0-7-30 or 0-0-50 depending on P allowance
- Don't forget sulphur now, essential for N uptake and fixation in grass clover swards

## Complete a winter fodder budget

- Many first cuts of silage have been completed throughout the country, with quality & quantity reported to be excellent
- However, many farmers had small reserves of silage left over after an extended housing period in winter 2022/2023
- What requirement have you for a 2nd cut in order to be self-sufficient for feed on your farm?
- Complete a fodder budget now on PastureBase or talk to your advisor
- By completing a fodder budget early, you can plan for 2nd cut silage or aim to source alternative feed stocks early

