

TECHNICAL NEWS



June / July 2019

Increasing Home-Grown Feed This Year

Patrick Cashman, Grass and Forage Development Manager, Goldcrop

In recent years, feed shortages have left devastating consequences for many farms across the country. The long-term economic solution to avoid a feed shortage is to grow and harvest more home-grown grass as it is the cheapest form of feed.

If a paddock is underperforming, one of the following areas are likely to be at play;

1. Soil fertility and fertiliser
2. Grazing infrastructure
3. Grazing management
4. Levels of perennial ryegrass and reseeding

It is best to identify the cause first and then put a plan in place to increase performance.

Plan in advance

Now is the time to identify what paddocks should be reseeded in autumn. It is likely that paddocks with low levels of perennial ryegrass have been underperforming over the winter and spring. Recent soil tests for these paddocks should be checked for underlying soil fertility issues and reseeded to improve the perennial ryegrass content.

Steps to take immediately:

1. Identify underperforming paddocks for reseeding
2. Check recent soil tests for underlying soil fertility issues or complete a new soil test
3. Any drainage or grounds work should be completed well in advance of reseeding to minimise turnaround time
4. Purchase Glyphosate and ensure that your sprayer is in working order

Why reseed?

Grass reseeding is one of the best paying investments on a livestock farm, **with a payback easily under two years on dairy farms.** Newly reseeded swards are more responsive to fertiliser and are more digestible, resulting in improved animal performance. The dry matter production is also vastly superior in the shoulders of the year in a newly reseeded sward, exactly when the farm needs it.

“Grass reseeding will improve the economic and environmental sustainability of grass-based farming”

High perennial ryegrass swards will produce more quality feed. The graph below shows the production difference between a 15% perennial ryegrass sward, typical of an old pasture, and a 100% perennial ryegrass sward, typical of a newly reseeding sward.

KEY REASONS FOR RESEEDING A SWARD IN 2019

- Home-grown grass is the cheapest way to feed animals
- Each extra tonne of grass dry matter can increase dairy farm net profits by €181/£161/ha
- New reseeds are 25% more responsive to Nitrogen
- New reseeds have higher feed quality and drive animal performance

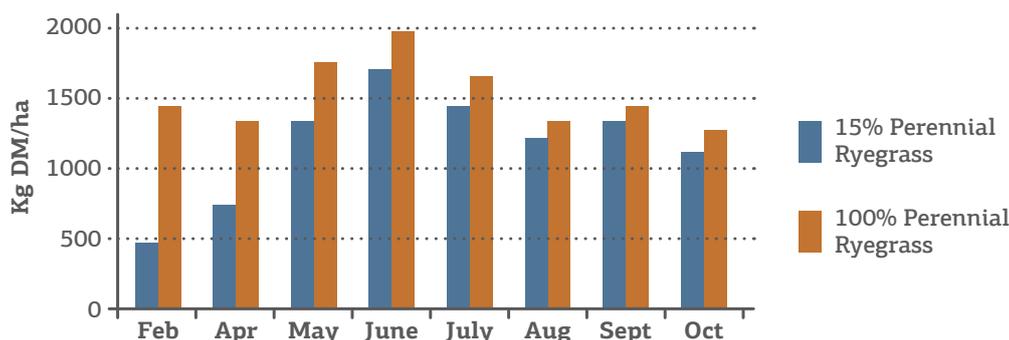
Choosing the right variety

Oakpark, a new late diploid, entered onto the 2019 Recommended Grass Variety List in Ireland, having been bred through the Irish Teagasc forage breeding programme.

It rates as the second highest late diploid variety on the ROI Recommended List. It has excellent seasonal growth characteristics and has high silage yield values, should the sward be required for a cut of silage. Oakpark also has very good ground cover, which can be desirable in certain regions.

The inclusion of clover should also be strongly considered as it offers increased feed value, improved animal performance and the potential to reduce chemical nitrogen dependency.

DRY MATTER PRODUCTION OF 15% AND 100% PERENNIAL RYEGRASS SWARD



Save The Date: Major Grassland Event Announced for Monaghan Farm

Lakeland Agri, in conjunction with the Lakeland Dairies and Teagasc Joint Programme, will host a major interactive grassland event this coming July.

The *Getting More from Grassland* event takes place on Wednesday, 10th July on the farm of Alan Mackarel, near Clones in Co. Monaghan. The event will bring together industry-leading experts from across the grassland, soil fertility and technology sectors.

The event aims to promote the benefits of reseeding and best practice procedures that farmers can adopt to achieve greater grassland yields. Topics discussed will include, soil structure and fertility and grass seed selection. There will also be an interactive demonstration highlighting the differences between ploughing, direct drill and min-tilling and which technique is best for your farm.

Speakers on the day include representatives from Lakeland Dairies, seed companies Germinall

and Goldcrop, as well as soil fertility experts, Dr Stan Lalor from Grassland Agro and Dr David Atherton from Thomson and Joseph.

Speaking on the event, Alan Hurst, Lakeland Agri Technical and Product Manager states, "We are delighted to have put together such an informative and knowledgeable group of speakers for our *Getting More from Grassland* event. Getting your soil fertility to the optimal levels will ensure greater grass growth, which in turn, will help drive profitability at farm level. Productive grassland is the foundation for any successful farm business. Alan Mackarel is at the top of his game in terms of growing grass and there will be plenty of practical information for farmers on the day. Lakeland Agri is delighted to be running this event and we hope to see you all there."

The event is approved for the Knowledge Transfer (KT) scheme by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and will count as one of the necessary five meetings as part of the KT scheme.



Date: Wednesday 10th July 2019

Time: 11.00am to 1.30pm

Location:
Alan Mackarel's farm, Granshamore,
Stonebridge, Clones, Monaghan
Eircode: H23 WP68

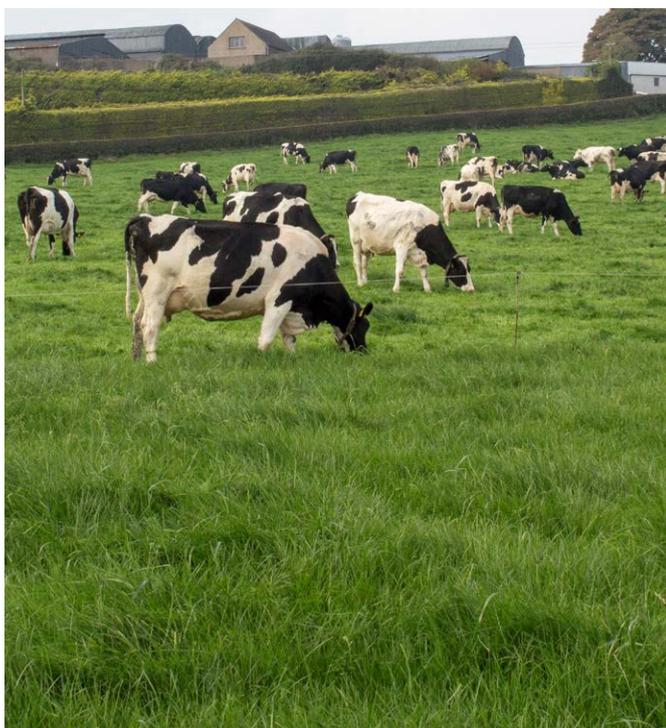
DAFM registration for Knowledge Transfer group participants will take place from 10.45am to 11.45am

Refreshments will be served



Assessing Herd Performance in Grass Based Systems

Christopher Cahill, Technical & Nutritional Support Representative, Lakeland Agri



Cow condition is considered excellent on the majority of farms with the breeding season progressing extremely well overall. The weather conditions has played a major factor in this as an early spring allowed farmers to reduce the housing period and let stock out to grass 6 weeks earlier than last year. Steady grass growth over the mild winter also meant that many of these farms were opening with large covers of grass on paddocks.

Grass growth has varied across the country. Growth rates were excellent in the Cavan-Monaghan area during May, with many farms achieving greater than 70kg DM/ha per day. In contrast, the midlands region in particular experienced early signs of soil moisture deficits and growth rates dropped off significantly, with fields closed for silage having to be grazed and concentrate feeding levels increased.

With variations in growth rates and grass quality, cow performance can vary tremendously from one herd to another. Assessing your milk data will help guide your feeding decisions at grass.

Protein % is recorded as reasonably steady for this time of year, however some farms remain challenged with low milk protein levels. This may be an indication of an energy deficit in the diet, and will be influenced by current cow performance, sward quality and concentrate usage.

Calf Trial: Maximising Daily Live-weight Gains



James Hoey, Drumcar Farm, Co. Louth, was a new entrant to dairy farming in 2017, and has been supplying milk to Lakeland Dairies since the spring of that year.

Over the past two seasons, James has been expanding his high EBI, crossbred herd, a practice he intends to continue in future years. To achieve this, a successful heifer-rearing programme is imperative, as James plans to calve all of his heifers at 23-24 months of age.

Butterfat % in milk appears to be a challenge, with many farms at 3.5% or below. On some farms, SARA (Sub-Acute Ruminal Acidosis) has been identified as one of the contributing factors to these low butterfat levels. Lakeland Agri have several options for tackling SARA and we would encourage farmers to contact the team for further advice.

Milk Urea:

The ideal range for milk urea should be between 20 and 35 mg/100ml. Figures above 35 mg/100ml indicate that the cow's diet is too high in protein, which can increase the risk of cows "milking off their backs" and also early embryo reabsorption. Figures below 20 mg/100ml indicate that the cow's diet may be low in protein, which as a result, can compromise milk output.

If struggling with cow condition, milk composition, or urea levels, please contact our technical & nutritional support representatives, Kerrie Brown on +353 87 299 6394 or myself, Christopher Cahill, on +353 87 1934502 to discuss your options or to arrange a farm visit.

James strives for heifers that are well developed and fertile. Maximising daily live-weight gains from the very start is essential for James and the aim for each heifer is to achieve an average daily live-weight gain of circa 0.7-0.8kg between weaning and calving.

2018 TRIAL

During 2018, a trial was undertaken with James' calves, where they were assigned to differing groups which were monitored and weighed at the beginning and end of a 60-day trial period. Each group of calves were randomly selected with no bias, and were allocated to three individual groupings:

1. Grass-only group (GO)
2. A group fed on grass and 2kg/hd/day of the Lakeland Agri Calf Grower Nut (CG)
3. A group fed on grass and 2kg/hd/day of a high-quality home blend meal consisting of barley and soyabean meal (HB)

All groups were treated similarly in terms of grassland management and were administered the necessary dosing as required.

RESULTS

When the trial period was completed, the following conclusions were reached:

Calves on **Lakeland Agri Calf Grower Nut** recorded a **10% greater daily live-weight gain**, compared to calves that were fed on James' home blend meal and a **38% greater daily-live weight gain**, compared to calves which were on a grass only diet.

Commenting on the results achieved from the Lakeland Agri Calf Grower Nut, James stated:

"Calves performed extremely well on the Calf Grower Nut. I was very happy with how they responded to the feed and you could see this in how well they looked. It was great to see the weight they achieved on paper. I had a target of 175kg for calves at the end of the trial, but they actually weighted 194kg on average, which was fantastic."



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- 16% crude protein
- Contains maize, barley and wheat
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- Contains RumiSmart Yeast and essential oils to help promote rumen health and development



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ROI: 1890 47 47 20 NI: 028 30262311

That Winning Feeling!

A Co. Down farmer is celebrating after striking lucky at the Balmoral Show last month, thanks to Lakeland Agri.

Thomas Travers from Cabra Road, Newry was chosen from thousands of entries made at the Balmoral Show to win **£1,000 worth of quality Lakeland Agri manufactured feed.** Lakeland Agri ran a competition over the course of the week at the show, encouraging milk suppliers to enter in the hope of winning the big prize. Thomas was chosen at random from all those who entered and was presented with his prize earlier this month by Michael McGeeney from the Lakeland Agri NI team.

Commenting on his win, Thomas said, "I'm delighted to have won the prize. It is great at this time of the year to have a boost like this on the farm. I'd like to thank everyone at Lakeland Agri for running the competition."



Lakeland Agri Sales Representative, Michael Mc Geeney, presenting Balmoral Show prize to Thomas Travers

For more information, contact the Lakeland Agri Sales team or our Customer Services Centre on
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