

Grass Tips

BUILDING GRASS COVERS

- August is the month to start building grass for the autumn. The growth of grass during the next 6 weeks is crucial as the rate of grass growth (supply) will be less than what is eaten (demand) by mid-September
- Grass is needed in the diet of the cow for as long as possible into the end of the year and will lead to:
 - Reduced costs
 - Increased milk solids
 - Improved body condition score
- Slow down the rotation to 25 days by mid-August and 30 days by early September
- This can be achieved by reducing the daily demand – by feeding high-quality bale silage or meals, or by selling/ removing surplus stock
- Graze paddocks out well – every extra half day spent in a paddock adds up and lengthens the rotation
- If some farmers end up with too much grass entering the autumn (rotation lengths well over 30 days entering September) this should be baled
- So, if the rotation length is gaining too quickly during August, the worst quality paddocks should be removed for baled silage. The earlier this surplus grass is removed, the easier it is to rectify the problem
- Complete a grass budget and Autumn rotation planner on Pasturebase
- Use average farm cover as the benchmark for building autumn covers (see below)

Date	Cover/Cow (Kg DM)	Average Farm Cover (Kg DM/ha)	Rotation Length
Stocking rate of 2.5 LU/ha			
1 st August	180	450	20 days
Mid-August	200	500	25 days
1 st September	300	750	30 days
Stocking rate of 3 LU/ha			
1 st August	180	550	20 days
Mid-August	250	750	25 days
1 st September	330	990	30 days
Stocking rate of 3.5 LU/ha			
1 st August	190	665	20 days
Mid-August	220	770	25 days
1 st September	280	980	30 days

Full technical support will be available to assist farmers in making grassland decisions. If you are interested in availing of this service please contact Gavin Hunt on 087-3453495