



AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority



Mark Coyne & Paul Fox, Teagasc Tullamore

Introduction



Part 1 – Impact on Conor (Host Farmer)

Part 2 – Impact on wider farming community

Smart Farming^o

Improve Farm Returns with Better
Resource Management

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Conor McGrath (Host Farmer)

Drystock Farmer (Part time) from Tullamore

Calf to Store/Beef (70)

100 mid season lambing flock

Two blocks of land:

Home Farm - 14 Ha (35 acres)

Out farm on the Tullamore Bypass – 9.3 Ha (23 acres)



Conor McGrath



Winter 2016 – Concerns

- I am carrying extra stock this Winter
- I am worried about having enough grass for them
- Should I try and rent in grazing land for 2017 ??

Solution – Why not make more use of the resources that you have!

9.3Ha (23 acres)- one big field



9 x 1 Ha permanent grazing paddocks





Preparing for Spring Grazing 2017

2017	Action	Result
5 th Jan	Soil samples taken	P index = 3 K index = 3 pH = 7.1
12 th February	Grazing infrastructure installed	9 paddocks Cost = €2,500
22 nd February	Urea spread	Early grass
February	Agree Spring rotation planner	Target turnout & end of 1 st rotation
11 th March	20 yearlings turned out	Early start to grazing
20 th April	55 cattle grazing End of 1 st rotation	1 st rotation ends too late

Stock Numbers & Cattle performance

	2016	2017	2018	2019
No. Cattle grazed	30	55	60	55
Daily Liveweight gain (Kgs per hd per day)	0.70	0.90	0.87	0.95
Grazing season (start)	3 rd April	11 th Mar	21 st Mar	19 th Feb
Grazing season (end)	Nov 18 th	23 rd Nov	23 rd Nov	23 rd Nov
Days at grass	229	257	247	277 (target)
Nitrogen application (units per acre)	54	103	160	150
Stocking rate (LU/Ha)	1.9	3.6	4.1	3.6

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COVER DATE: 25/04/2019 -

 PROJECTED / PLANNER

 SHORT EXPORT (PDF)

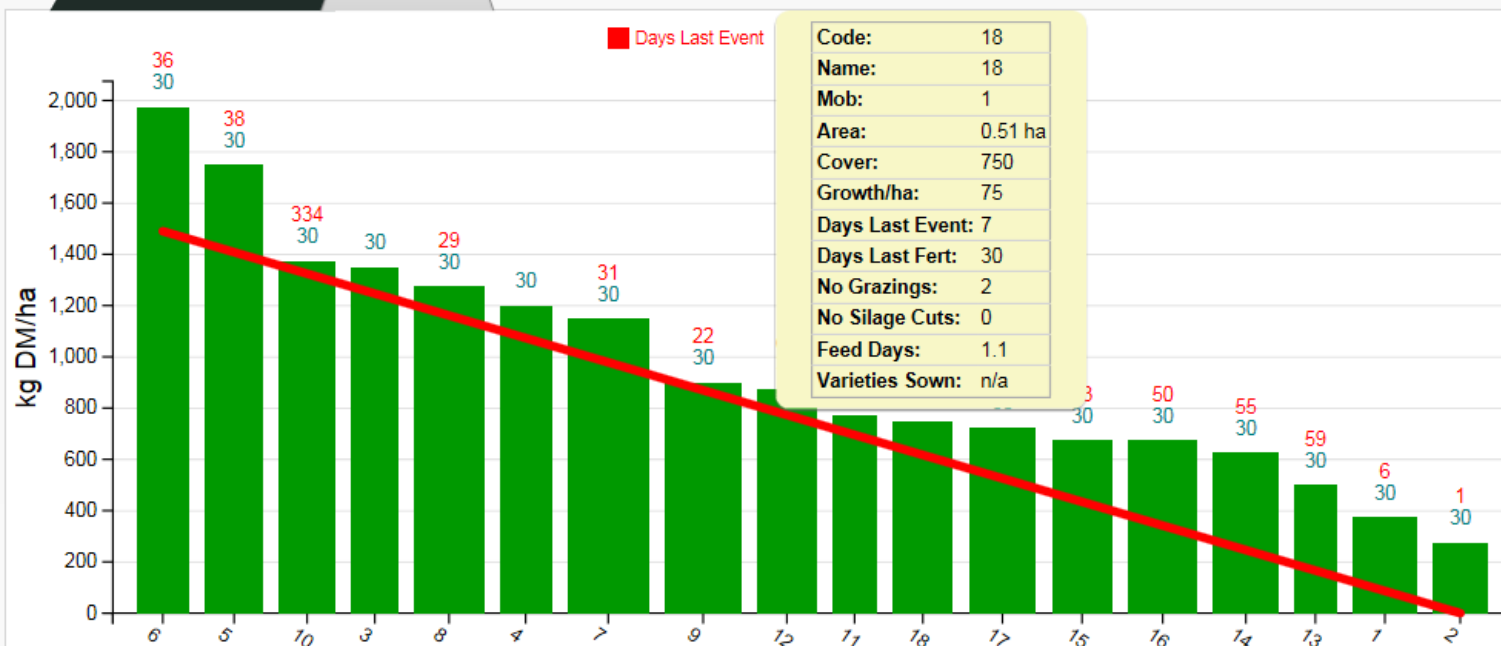
 EXPORT TO EXCEL

 EXPORT TO PDF

PREVIOUS FARM COVER - kg DM/ha on 15/04/2019

Cover Estimations

Wedge



15 Cattle turned out on 19th Feb 2019





55 cattle grazing today

Conor McGrath (Host Farmer)



Impact:

- Cattle now heavier in Autumn (+40 kgs)
- Additional gross output value of €9,300
- Improved his grassland management skills
- Cattle much easier to handle – saves time
- Surplus grass conserved as silage (75%+ DMD)
- Home farm now fully paddocked
- Conor is now happy farming in a sustainable system

Part 2

Grass on the Bypass & its impact on the wider farming community

Take a drive down the Tullamore Bypass



Brexit crisis: 'Beef farmers are on their knees already'



Giving up beef will reduce carbon footprint more than cars, says expert

Study shows red meat dwarfs others for
environmental impact, using 28 times more
land and 11 times water for pork or chicken

Damian Carrington



Beef price: '40c/kg below this week last year – consistently below cost of production'

April 17, 2019

BEEF

"Urgent action is required to save the beef industry" in light of beef farmers "supplying cattle to processors – and subsequently retailers –...

'Beef is in serious, serious trouble' – Jim Power



Aisling Kiernan

Apr 18, 2019, 7:49pm



Irish Beef



“The only competitive advantage we have is our ability to grow grass”

Shalloo, L. 2018*

***Irish Grassland Association Conference, Cork.**

A few facts about grass....

- Providing feed is the single biggest cost in beef systems
- Grazed grass costs 8c / kg DM compared to purchased concentrates @ 30c + / kg DM
- A similar level of performance when you supply quality grass, managed correctly



But grassland management techniques remain poor on many beef farms

Why?

Why?

- Lack of knowledge?
- Lack of resources – piped water, mains electric fence
- Seems like a lot of hassle
- Reducing field size and making field operations more difficult
- It's the way I always grazed this field
- Cattle need a run/cattle need to get to shelter
- Concept is too abstract

So how do we make the abstract more concrete...?



“

I HEAR AND I FORGET.
I SEE AND I REMEMBER.
I DO AND I UNDERSTAND.

— Confucius

 feedly / #learn

Why is Grass on the Bypass Different?

- You can see it everyday
- Its credible/believable – nowhere to hide
- Shows what success can look like
- Shows what failure can look like
- No distraction

Why is Grass on the Bypass Different?

- Gets people talking
- Its local, I know the farmer
- Builds confidence
- Niggles at your consciousness
- Free information – no entry fee
- Working 24/7
- Potential audience of 10,000 per day

Smart Farming^o

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Grass on the Bypass – Future Plans

- Settle on a sustainable stocking rate
- Incorporate more clover
- Switch to using protected urea
- Solar powered electric fence
- Improve biodiversity on the farm
- Developed sister projects in Co. Offaly

GRASS ON THE BYPASS



Grassland Management



Thank you

Getting it right.....

- ✓ Rotational grazing rather than set stocking
- ✓ Cattle to grass in Mid february
- ✓ First rotation finished 10th April (spring rotation planner)
- ✓ Grass growth monitored by measuring & Pasture Base
- ✓ 10 grazings per paddock per year
- ✓ 10 tons + DM utilised over the growing season
- ✓ Cattle gaining 1kg LWG per day (vs 0.6 to 0.8 kgDLG / day)
- ✓ Stocked at up to 2,500 kg LWG in peak growing season
- ✓ Surplus grass conserved as silage
- ✓ Paddocks closed in rotation in Autumn from 10th October
- ✓ Cattle at grass for 270 days +



The Tullamore drystock advisory team: Mark Coyne, Bernard Doorley, Paul Fox and Mark Gavin.

Grass on the ByPass

Who? Introduce the farmer & project

What is it?

Why are we doing this?

How it started

What we did

Day to day stuff.....

Impact.....on wider public

.....on the environment (Smart farming concepts)

Smart Farming

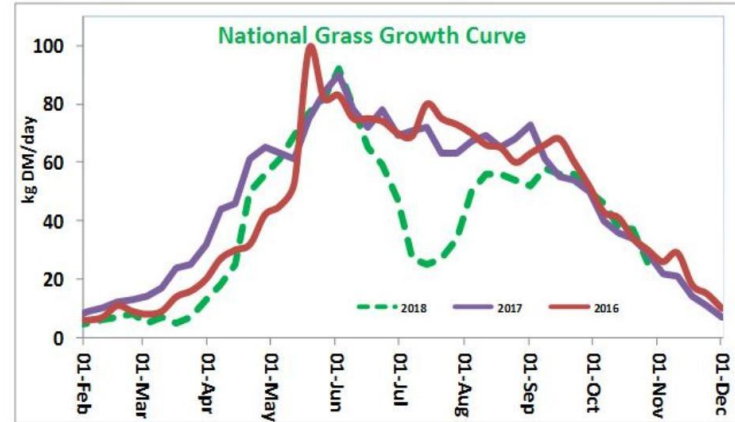
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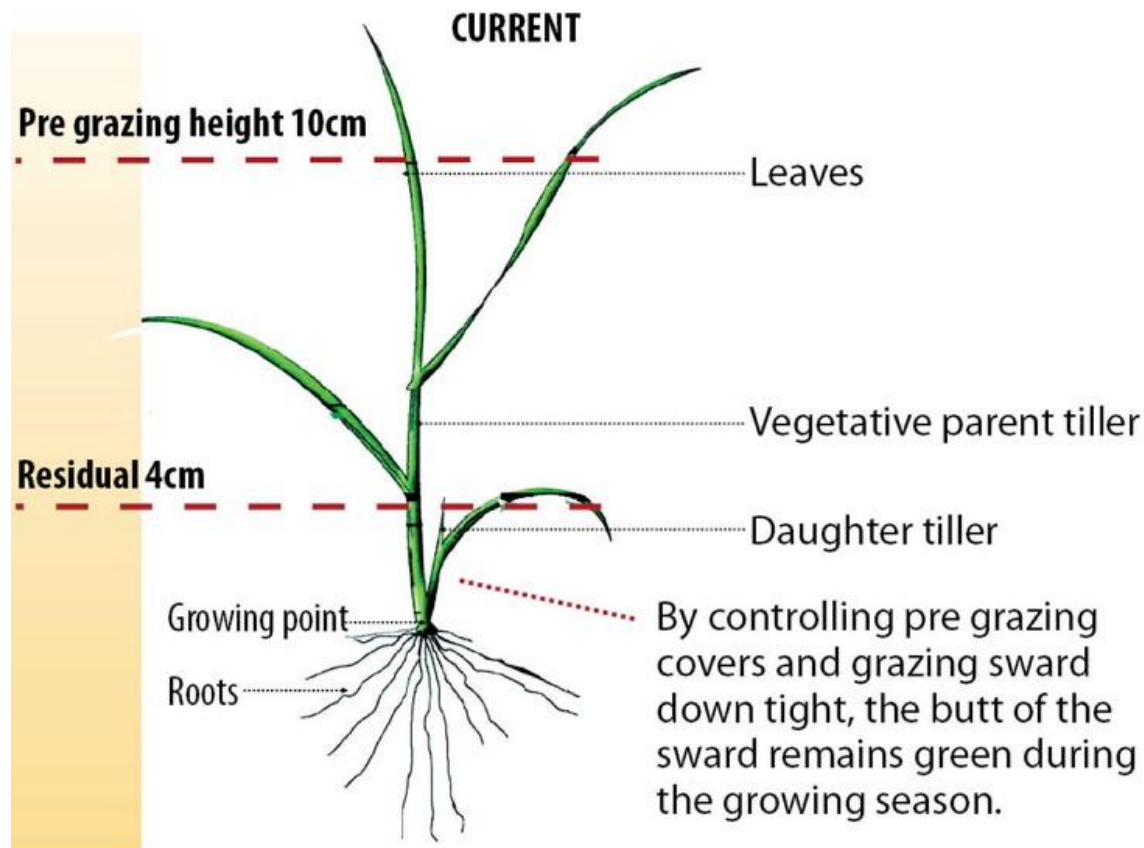


BEST BEFORE

10 JUN

Store in cool, dry place





The aim of the grass budget is to simply match your rotation length to the time taken for the plant to grow three leaves.

What is GOBP?

Background:

Conor Mc Grath – Beef & Sheep Farmer, Tullamore

Meet Conor Mc Grath – Owner of grass on the Bypass Field

Owens a 23 acre (9ha) grassland field on the Tullamore bypass.

Main block of land is 6 miles away

Purchases 50 calves, rears to forward store / beef

Also Mid-season lambing flock



Pre 2017 – Set stocked his 23 acre field.

Carried 30 yearlings

Closed bottom end of field for hay / silage when grass growth exceeded demand

Boundary well fenced, cattle had access to one drinking trough

Questions:

How do I get more from my field?

Can I grow and utilise more grass?

How can I improve animal performance / thrive?

Preparing for Spring Grazing 2017

Soil samples taken

- Index 3 for P & K
- Soil pH: 7.1

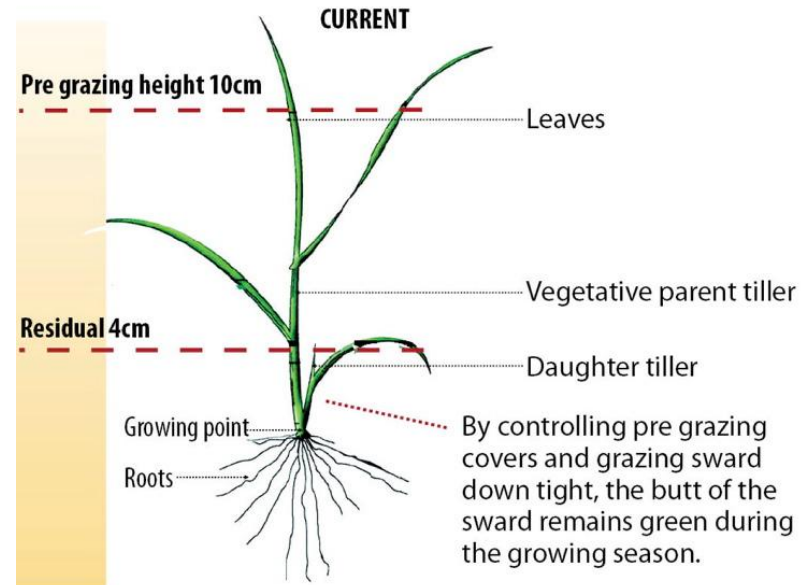
Grazing infrastructure completed : Cost €2,500

Spring Rotation Planner implemented

Early application of fertiliser (Urea spread on 22nd February)

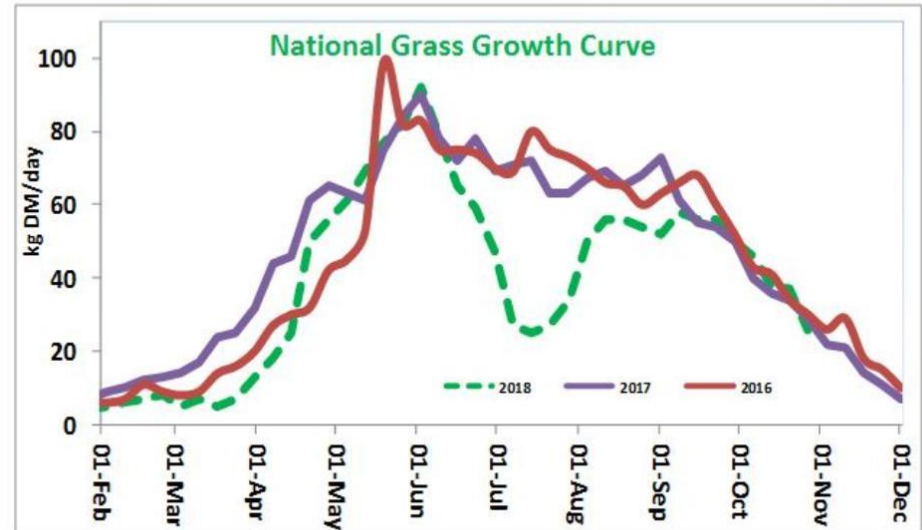
Stock turned out to grass from March 11th

Here's the science bit!



1. Grass is most digestible at 3 leaf stage
2. Grass has a Best Before date (approx. 3 weeks of growth)

Here's the Science Bit !



3. Grass growth rate is hugely variable, ranging from 5 to 100kg DM / ha / day

Why focus on grass??



- 80% + of cattle feed comes from grass (either grazed or as silage)

Irish Beef

'Demand for bulls is gone - there's just no money in it'



by **Kevin Forde** 14 Mar 2019
Email: kevin.forde@longfordleader.ie

 share  0 comments

