

## Grass Growth

Growth rates are well below normal.

- Soil temperatures are low for the time of year.
- Growth rates of 5 to 15 kgs of Dry Matter per hectare per day are being recorded.
- For optimal animal performance, grass digestibility needs to be close to 80%.

## Budget Grass

Allocate grass to cows on a daily basis.

- Budget what grass is available.
- The aim is to reduce the amount of silage being eaten by the cow.
- Wet grass silage is probably the worst forage to feed to a cow from a milk protein point of view.
- The concentrate being fed should not be reduced significantly as the cow is heavily reliant on it.
- Grass quality is variable depending on levels of carryover.
- The type of concentrate fed should not change during the turnout phase.

## Managing Turnout

Cows need care.

- Milk yields can drop, milk protein can decrease and cows can get digestive upsets and scours.
- Milk butterfat levels can also decrease due to the introduction of soft grass.
- Changing too much at once will drop the total intake of feed.
- This will lead to reduced performance and increased stress levels.
- Every dietary change should be gradual, turn cows out for 2 to 3 hours initially.
- Keep some indoor forage or buffer feed in the diet.
- Provide a source of long fibre (hay, baled silage or straw) as grazed grass can be low in fibre.
- Reducing concentrate too much and too quickly will crash performance.
- Cows should only move out by day initially.
- Any overdue stress will reduce cow body condition and cow fertility.
- Good animal health and performance during March and April are critical to a good breeding season.
- Grass Tetany is easily prevented by feeding Magnesium.
- Feeding Cal. Mag. in the concentrate is an effective means of preventing Grass Tetany.
- GAIN Winter Feeds have 2 ozs Cal. Mag. in 4.5 kgs (10 lbs).
- GAIN Pature Feeds have 2 ozs Cal. Mag. in 2.5 kgs (5 lbs).

## Mineral

Many herds are also deficient in minerals particularly Copper, Selenium and Iodine.

- Herds deficient in Copper, Selenium and Iodine will not go back in calf.
- Infertility is a major cost and loss of income.