



Cappagh farm

GrassCheck farm walk 4th September 2025

Cappagh farm overview



Farms

- **2 individual farms** (both on long-term leases)
- **Spring calving farm** – leased since 2015
- **Autumn calving farm** – leased since 2002

Objectives

- Run **efficient & cost-effective** systems
- **Reduce working hours**
- Maintain a **tight calving period**
- Produce **milk solids from grass**

Spring calving farm

- **Farm size:** 119ha (2.5LU/ha)
- **Milking platform:** 70ha (3.2LU/ha)
- **Cows:** 211 cows (Friesian/crossbreds)
- **Dry stock:** 46 maiden heifers & 36 calves
- **Calving:** 6 week calving block from 1st February

Performance



Current Performance (per cow/day)

- **Milk yield:** 20.4 litres (18.85 kg MS)
- **Milk solids:** Fat **4.65%**, Protein **3.84%**



Current Diet (per cow/day)

- 13 kg grass
- 3 kg silage
- 4 kg meal (14% protein)



Year-to-Date (2025 so far)

- **Yield:** 4,200 litres/cow
- **Meal fed:** 850 kg/cow



Last Year (2024)

- **Total yield:** 5,600 litres/cow
- **Milk solids:** 465 kg MS/cow
- **Meal fed:** 1,400 kg/cow



- 48 farmers across NI measuring grass growth and quality weekly
- Grow and utilise more grass on NI farms.
 - **Demonstrate** good grassland management on farm.
 - **Record** data on a weekly basis for on farm predictions and research .
 - **Exchange** information with other NI farmers.

2024 What is 1 tonne of grass DM/ha?

- 2bales/ac (750kg & 27%DM)
- What does it cost?



Grazed Grass/White Clover
£75/t DM



Grass silage £160/t DM



Concentrate £320/t DM



- **Recording grass growth weekly since 2017**
- 70ha measured weekly
- Turnout mid February
- Housed October-Mid November
- Grazing targets
 - Target Pre-grazing cover: 2800-3000kg DM/ha (11–12cm)
 - Target Post-grazing cover: 1500–1600 kg DM/ha (6–7cm)

Last week

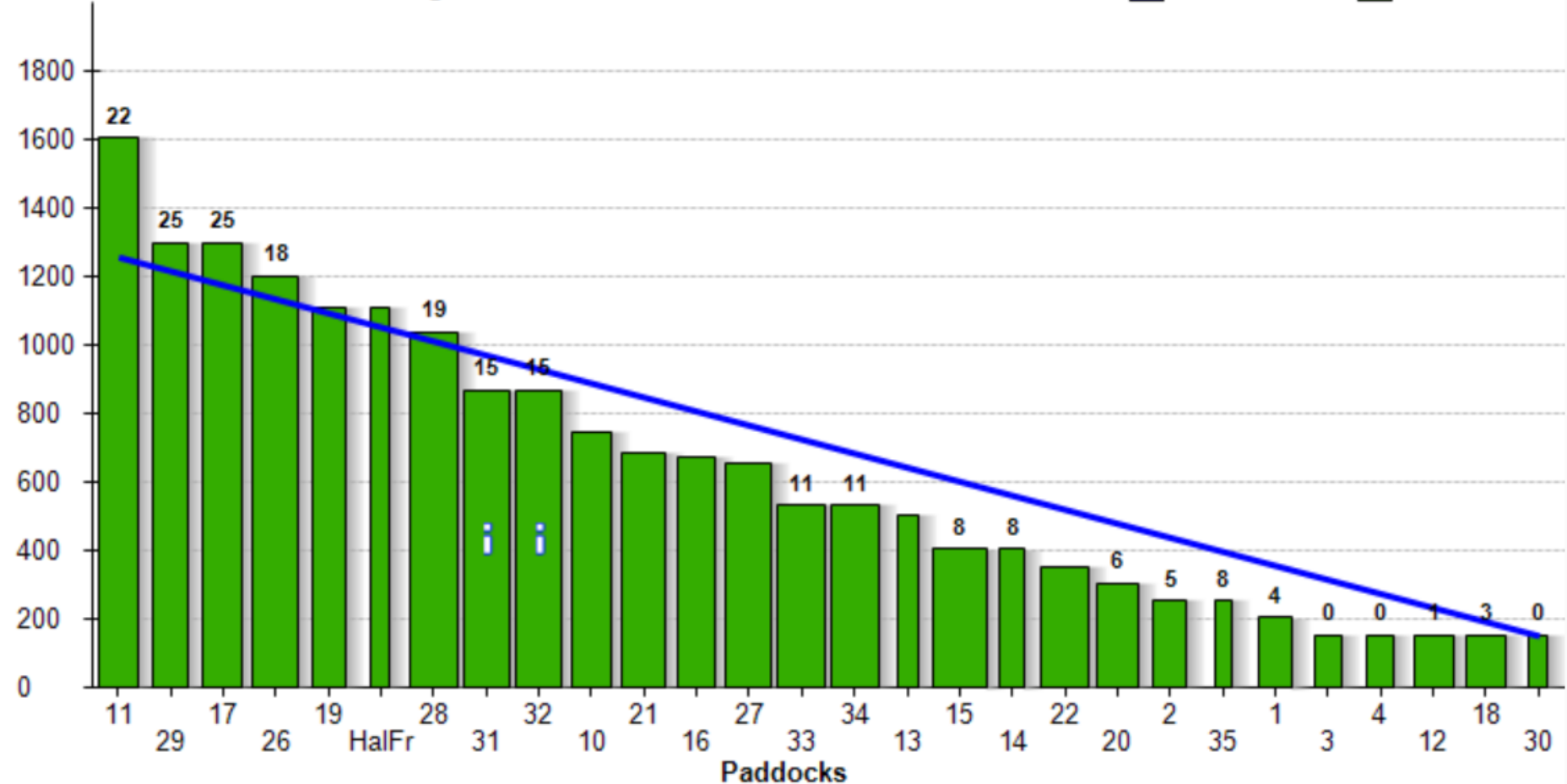
	No.	Actual Grass	Meal	Silage	Target Grass
Spring Milkers	211	12	4	3	0

Date Measured 26/08/2025
Selected Mob All Mobs
Daily Growth 45.7 (over 8 days)
Farm Cover 654
Total Area 68.67
Total LU 211
LU / Ha 3.07
Demand / Day 2532
Demand / Ha 36.9
N Kg / Ha 69.2
N % Area 96.7
Weather
Cover / LU 213.03
Litre / Cow / Day 21.35 (26/08)
kgMS / Cow 1.79
Milk Quality F4.35% / P3.81%
KgMs/Ha YTD 512 (68.67 Ha)
Short Term Silage 0 (0Ha) Reset
Long Term Silage 0 (0Ha) Reset
Area Unmeasured 0 Ha

Graph Type Cover

Cover Deficit: -5369 Target Pre-Graze Cover: 1256

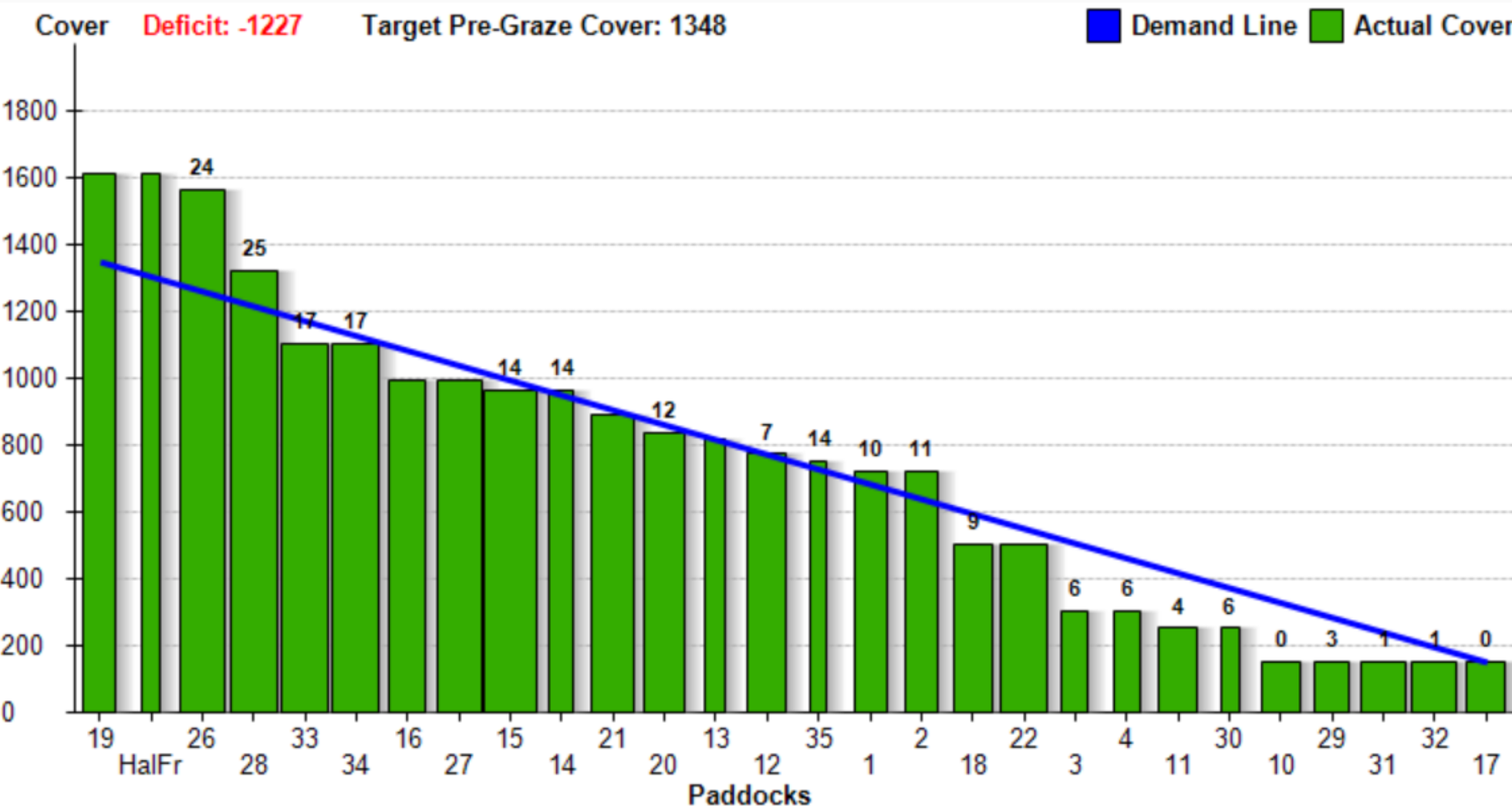
Demand Line Actual Cover



	No.	Actual Grass	Meal	Silage	Target Grass
Spring Milkers	211	13	4	3	0

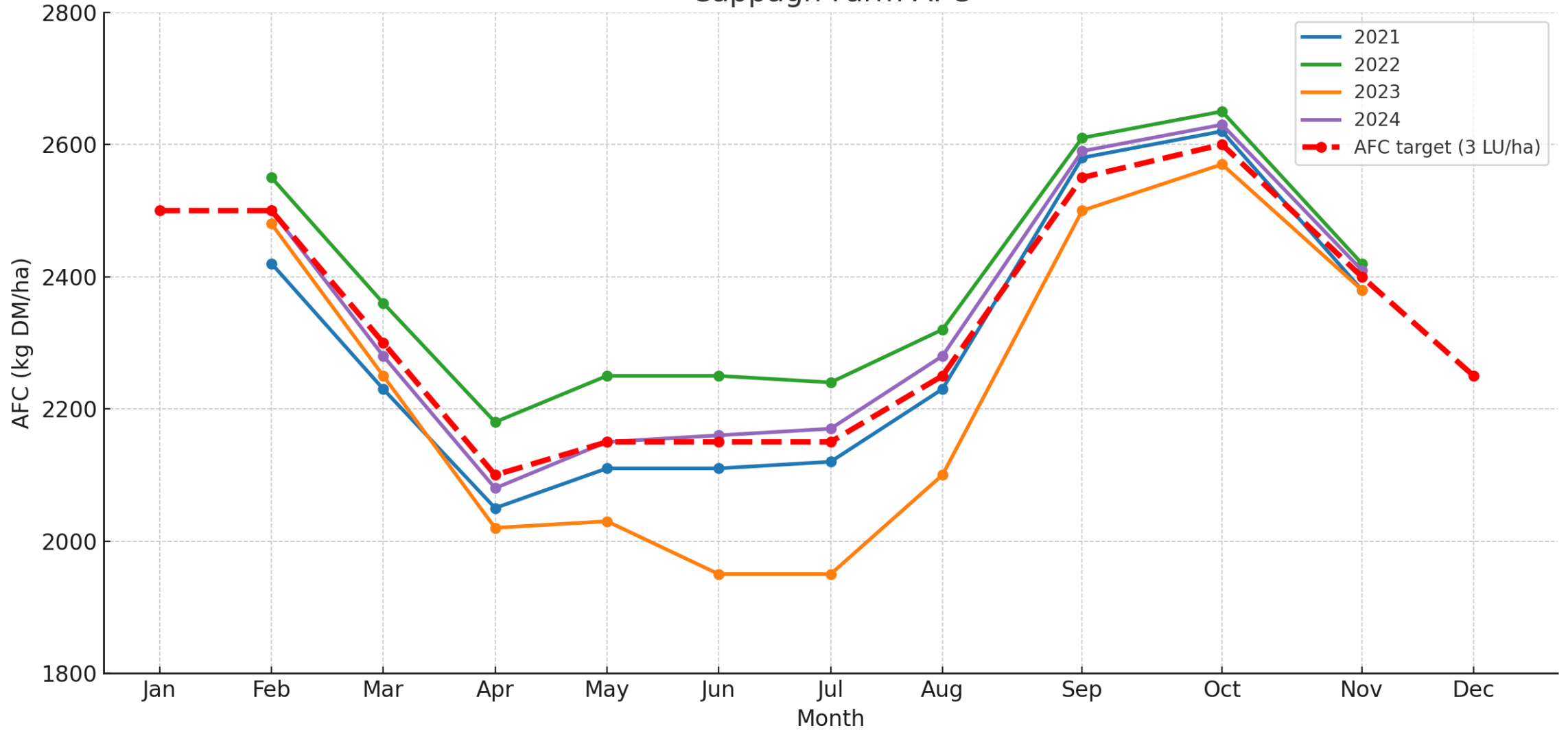
This week

Date Measured	01/09/2025	
Selected Mob	All Mobs	
Daily Growth	66.8 (over 6 days)	
Farm Cover	743	
Total Area	68.67	
Total LU	211	
LU / Ha	3.07	
Demand / Day	2743	
Demand / Ha	39.9	
N Kg / Ha	67.2	
N % Area	100	
Weather	0mm, 0°	
Cover / LU	242.02	
Litre / Cow / Day	19.77 (01/09)	
kgMS / Cow	1.66	
Milk Quality	F4.35% / P3.81%	
KgMs/Ha YTD	544 (68.67 Ha)	
Short Term Silage	0 (0Ha)	Reset
Long Term Silage	0 (0Ha)	Reset
Area Unmeasured	0 Ha	



Date	Average Farm Cover AFC	Available Cover/Lu	Rotation Length	% of MP: grazed or closed off
	(kg DM/ha)	(kg DM)	(Days)	
Mid February	>2500	335	60	
1 st March	2300	265	40-50	30
1 st April	2200	230	40	60
Mid April	2100	200	25-40	100
May, June, July	2100-2200	200-230	18-25	
Mid August	2250	250	25-30	
1 st September	2550	350	30-35	
1 st October	2600	365	35-40	20
1 st November	2400	300	40	60
1 st December	2250	250		100

Cappagh Farm AFC



Options to increase grass supply and reduce demand on farms

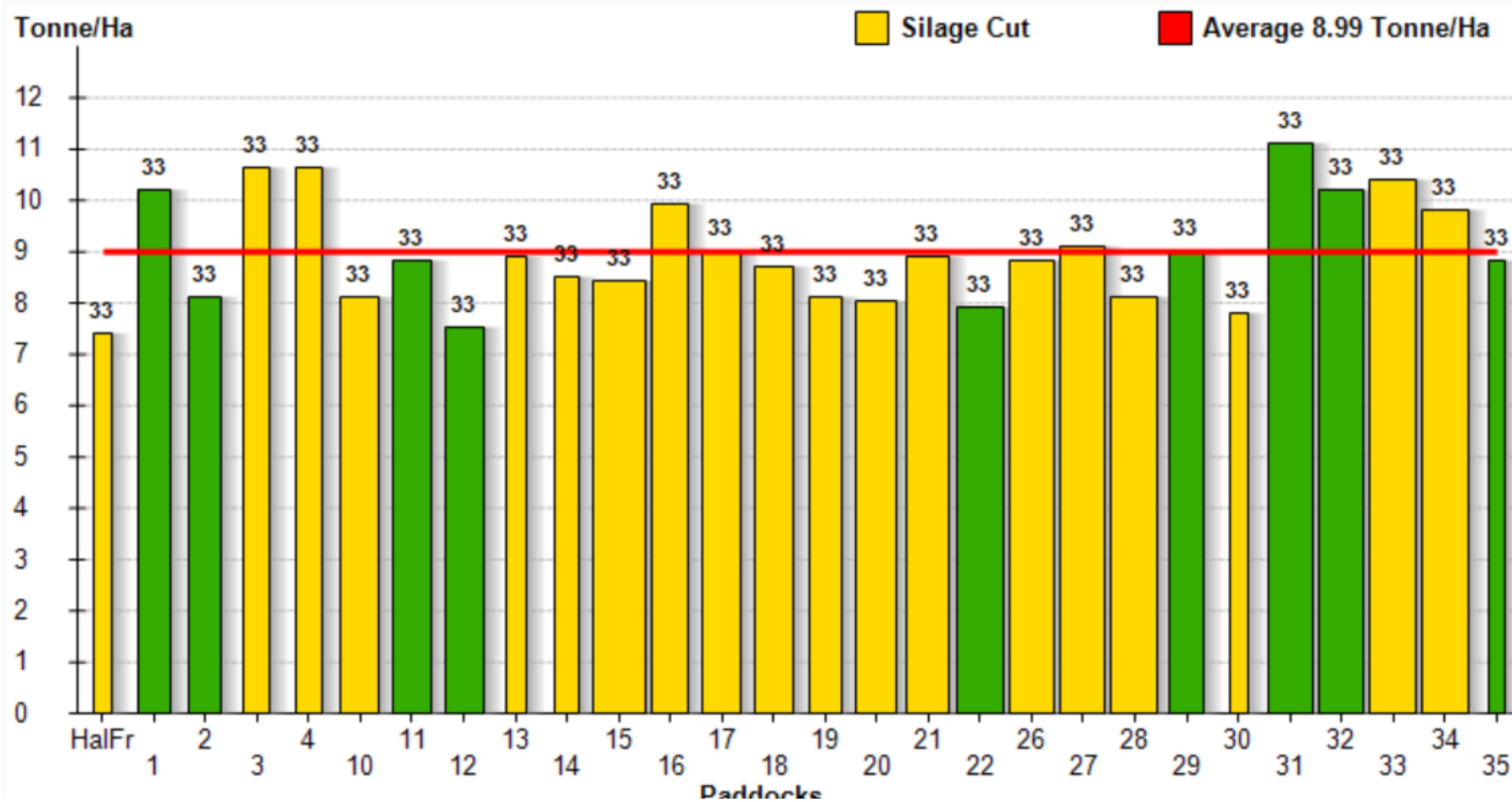
Increasing supply	Reducing demand
<p>Increase the grazing area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bring in silage ground• Bring in reseeded ground	<p>Reduce stocking rate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove young or other stock• Cull cows
<p>Drive growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fertiliser• Address any soil fertility deficiencies	<p>Introduce extra feed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Silage• Zero-graze• Increase meal

Autumn Planner

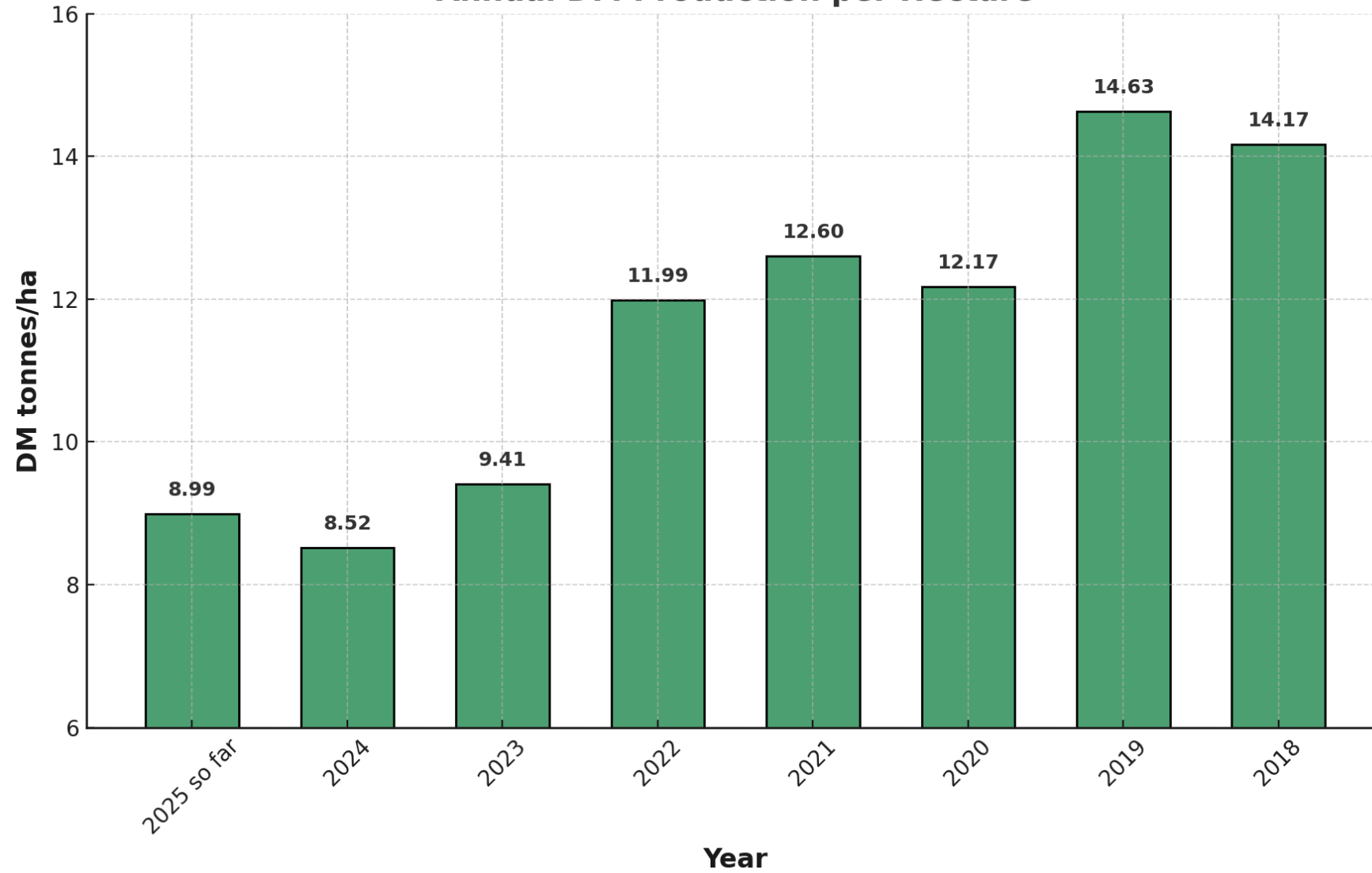
Week Starting	01/09/25	08/09/25	15/09/25	22/09/25	29/09/25	06/10/25	13/10/25	20/10/25	27/10/25	03/11/25	10/11/25	17/11/25	24/11/25
Grazing Area	68.67	68.67	68.67	68.67	68.67	68.67	68.67	68.67	68.67	68.67	68.67	68.67	68.67
Target Cover	900	1000	1050	1100	1150	0	0	0	0	600	650	0	0
Projected Cover		939	1078	1122	1131	1105	1044	913	705	455	177	247	289
Measured Cover	743	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Growth	68	55	55	50	45	40	30	19	13	9	10	6	3
Spring Milkers	211	186	186	186	186	186	186	186	186	186			
Grass	13	13	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18			
Meal	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2			
Silage	3	3											
LU	211	186	186	186	186	186	186	186	186	186	0	0	0
Grass Demand	39.94	35.21	48.75	48.75	48.75	48.75	48.75	48.75	48.75	48.75	0	0	0
Stocking Rate	3.07	2.71	2.71	2.71	2.71	2.71	2.71	2.71	2.71	2.71	0	0	0
Cover/LU	242	346.5	397.8	414	417.3	407.8	385.2	336.9	260.2	167.9	0	0	0

24/02/2025 To 01/09/2025 (189 Days)

 Sorted



Annual DM Production per Hectare



Breeding & Herd Background

Herd History

- Originally (2015) **Holstein**, all year-round calving
- Started crossing with **Friesian/crossbred type**
- Initially bred for **litres**, now breeding more for **solids**
- Bulls chosen for **fertility & health**

Breeding Targets

- **6-week calving rate: 85%**
- **Empty rate: <10%**

Recent Performance

2024/25 calving:

- 13% empty
- 76% in 6 weeks

2025/26 breeding:

- 10% empty
- 85% in 6 weeks

Staff

- One-person full time
- One part time
- 2 relief milkers
- Hours vary during calving/drying off

Weekday Routine

5:15 am – Cups on

7:15 am – Breakfast

9:00 am – Back in yard

1:00 pm – Lunch

2:00 pm – Back in yard

3:00 pm – Cups on

5:00 pm – Out of yard

Weekend Work Pattern

February – May (calving season):

Every other weekend

- The UK Dairy Carbon Network is working with over 50 UK dairy farms to implement and assess practical, farm-ready solutions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG).
- Led by AFBI and funded by DEFRA, the project is supported by a UK-wide consortium of leading research and industry partners
- On farm mitigation: Enhanced nutrient planning
 - Introducing clover/legumes
 - Protected urea