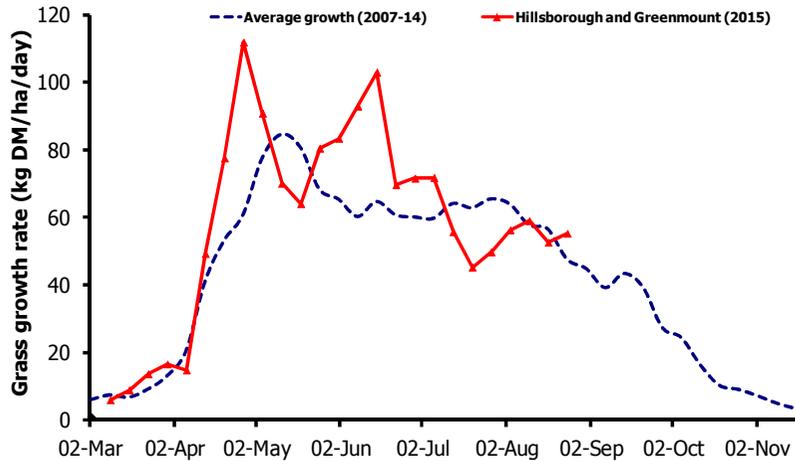


GrassCheck

Grass Growth and Quality

Week beginning 24 August 2015

Grazing Management Focus



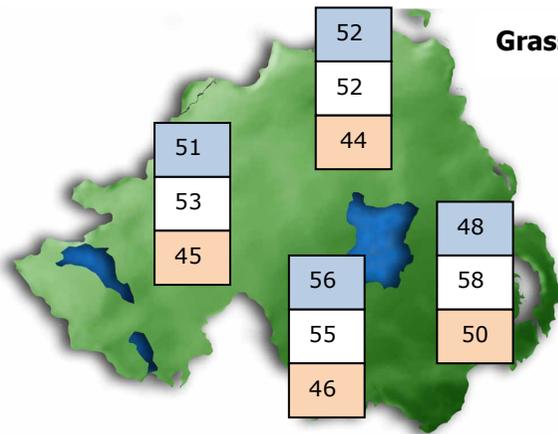
3-week Grass Growth (kg DM/ha/day)*	
Greenmount	51
Hillsborough	59
Downpatrick	42

*270 kg N/ha/year applied

Grass Quality	
Dry matter (%)	14.4
ME (MJ/kg DM)	11.8
Crude protein (%)	19.7
Sugars (% DM)	13.0

Grass growth predictions represent the average daily growth over a 21 day period

Grass Growth Predictions (kg DM/ha/day)



Current	
1 week ahead	44
2 weeks ahead	44

General comment: Although milder temperatures through mid August have pushed growth up above average, grazing and ground conditions remain challenging. Extended grazing techniques can help minimise the impact of the weather on grass intakes and sward damage.

Noel and Helen Willis manage an all year round calving herd of 200 Holstein cows split into 2 groups on their farm near Portadown, Co. Armagh. There is an emphasis on milk quality with the herd currently averaging 575kg combined BF and protein per cow from 7,990 litres sold/cow/year. Poor milk prices have put a renewed focus on milk from forage and new laneways are being made to improve access to paddocks.



Grass supply

Average farm cover	2,780 kg DM/ha
Pre-grazing cover	3,990 kg DM/ha
Current grass growth	99 kg DM/ha/day
Herd grass demand	91 kg DM/ha/day

Grass wedge

Stocking rate	6.5 cows/ha
Rotation length	21 days
Estimated grass intake	14 kg DM/cow/day
Post-grazing target	1,900 kg DM/ha

Cow performance

Milk yield and quality	21.8 litres/cow/day, 3.96% BF, 3.23% PR
Concentrate feed level	7.6 kg/cow/day
Milk from forage	5 litres/cow/day

Management issues

The herd has been managed as 2 groups with high yielders grazing by day, housed at night and low yielders grazing full time. Cows are fed to yield in the milking parlour with an 18% CP concentrate. Grass growth was excellent through mid August but grass utilization has been very difficult. Third cut silage will be mown this week, if conditions permit. However, if herd demand for grazed grass exceeds growth rates Noel and Helen will add 4 ha of 2nd cut silage aftermaths into the grazing platform. To date all grazing ground is currently being sown with a 23% N fertiliser with sulphur, sodium and magnesium at 185kg/ha (1½ bag/acre). The aim on the Willis farm is to continue to graze as much grass as possible into the autumn with higher yielding cows housed if weather conditions deteriorate and intakes fall.

