



3-week Grass Growth (kg DM/ha/day)*	
Greenmount	59.0
Hillsborough	68.0
Average	63.5

* 270 kg N/ha/year applied

Grass Quality	
Dry matter (%)	16
ME (MJ/kg DM)	11.8
Crude protein (%)	21
Sugars (% DM)	14

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

Grass Growth Predictions (kg DM/ha/day)

Current
1 week ahead
2 weeks ahead

Comment:

Despite cool overnight temperatures, grass growth continues to keep pace with the seasonal average.

David Kernohan manages a herd of 120 spring calving cows near Ballymena, Co Antrim. The herd is made up of Friesian, Fleckvieh, Montbeliarde and MRI breeds. The annual performance of the herd is 5,317 litres per cow with 1t of concentrate fed equating to 3095kg of milk from forage. The average butterfat and protein content of milk produced in the herd is 4.08 and 3.55% respectively. David places a strong emphasis on producing milk from grass.



Grass supply

Average farm cover	2,449 kg DM/ha
Pre-grazing cover	3,041 kg DM/ha
7-day grass growth	44 kg DM/ha/day (based on farm cover)
Herd grass demand	51 kg DM/ha/day

Cow performance

Milk yield and quality	25 litres/cow/day, 3.89% BF, 3.29% PR
Milk from forage	18.3 litres/cow/day
Concentrate feed level	3 kg/cow/day

Management issues

The driest areas of the farm received around 33 m³/ha (3000 gallons/acre) of slurry using a dribble bar in early March. The grazing area received 125 kg/ha (1 bag/acre) of urea on 1st March. Cows were turned out to grass by day on 17th March and have been grazing day and night since 13th April. A further round of fertiliser application on the grazing platform will commence shortly. David has invested in infrastructure around the farm to allow improved access to paddocks in an effort to reduce poaching and improve grass utilisation.

Current average yield for the herd is 25 l/cow/day. All cows receive 3 kg/cow/day of a 14 % CP in-parlour concentrate. The fertility management programme has been progressing with 25 cows already inseminated in the week beginning 21 April.

David has achieved target entry and exit covers on most of the paddocks but three have reached covers of around 4000kg DM/ha due to improved growth rates in the past week. As a result approximately 5.3ha of the grazing area has been closed off for silage in an effort to control grass covers. Target harvesting date for first cut silage is between mid - end of May. Although current demand is ahead of grass growth, the situation is expected to reverse in the near future. Taking action early early is vital, as attempting to graze these higher covers will result in low quality swards, with a dead butt which will be difficult to rectify later in the season.