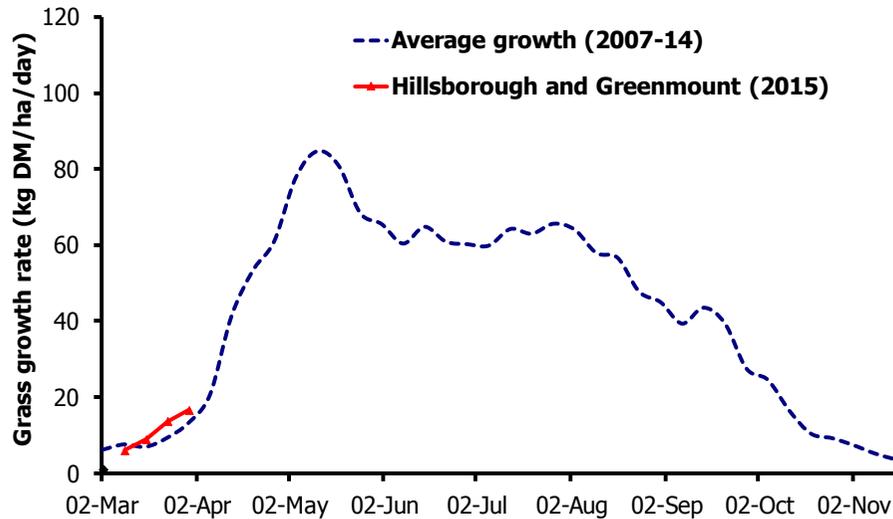


GrassCheck

Week beginning 30 March 2015

Grazing Management Focus

Grass Growth and Quality



3-week Grass Growth (kg DM/ha/day)*	
Greenmount	21.2
Hillsborough	11.9
Downpatrick	7.0

*270 kg N/ha/year applied

Grass Quality	
Dry matter (%)	18
ME (MJ/kg DM)	12.5
Crude protein (%)	25
Sugars (% DM)	15.1



Alan Scott farms 52 ha of mainly free-draining loam at the Vow near Ballymoney. The 100 cow herd has been spring calving for many years with Friesian and Jersey cross-breeds. However, the aim is now to move to an autumn calving herd with more Holstein genetics. The overall aim is still a simple system based on summer grazing, but with higher output. Current performance is 6,700 litres at 4.38% BF and 3.33% protein from 1.25 t of concentrates (3,900 litres from forage).

Grass supply

Average farm cover	2,434 kg DM/ha
Pre-grazing cover	2,815 kg DM/ha
Current grass growth	11 kg DM/ha/day
Herd grass demand	25 kg DM/ha/day

Grass wedge

Stocking rate	4.7 cows/ha
Rotation length	30 days
Estimated grass intake	7.0 kg DM/cow/day
Post-grazing target	1,800 kg DM/ha

Cow performance

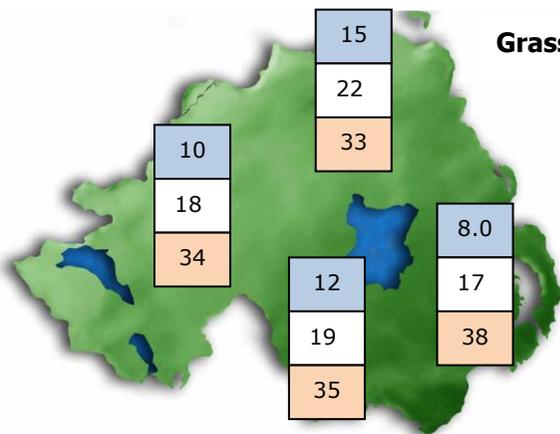
Milk yield and quality	26.0 litres/cow/day, 3.99% BF, 3.18% PR
Concentrate feed level	9.0 kg/cow/day
Milk from forage	6.0 litres/cow/day

Management issues

A grazing platform of 21 ha has been set up with a view to completing the first rotation by the start of May. Cows should then be out day and night with an allocation of 1.0 ha per day on a 21 day rotation. Given good spring growth, there should be an opportunity to ensile surplus round bales from this platform. Cows are strip grazed on separate day and night grazing areas. Turnout has been delayed by the cold and wet weather through late March but all 74 milking cows will be turned out as soon as conditions improve and they will be initially allocated 0.7 ha each day on this first rotation.

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

General comment: Wet and cold weather has had a negative effect on growing and grazing conditions. However, growth can accelerate rapidly in early April so be ready to get the herd grazing at the first opportunity.

