

# Management and benefits of grazing large herds



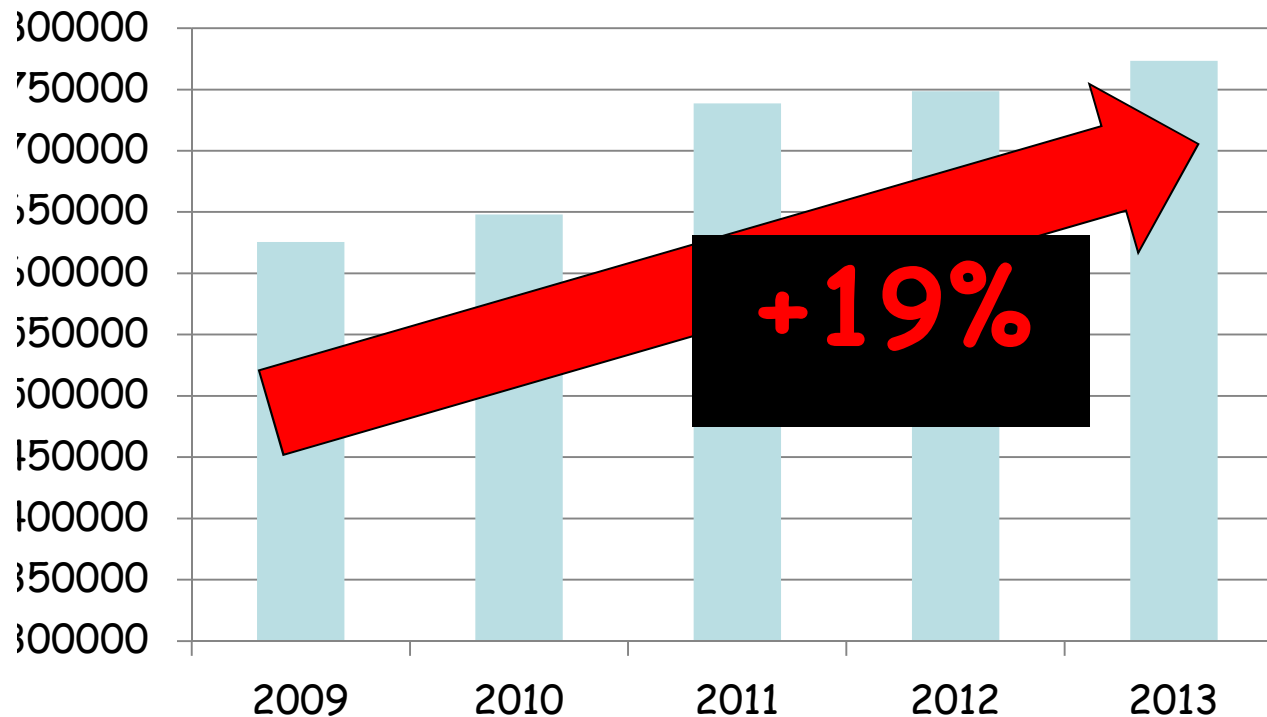
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# Dairy production in Ireland



Calves born to a dairy bull



- Average herd size = 61 cows

- Quota removal April 2015

- Food Harvest 2020 outlined 50% increase in milk production

- 27% more cows





What are the requirements for grazing large herds?



- 



# Get the infrastructure right

## Paddock Shape

- Square paddocks work best, ideally 2: 1, not over 4: 1.
- Square paddocks allow for a few entrances.
- Less walking to water troughs
- Long narrow paddocks, a lot of damage in wet weather and near gap



### Distance from roadway to furthest point in paddock

- Within 100m on heavy land
- Within 200m on free draining land

# Access points



## Paddock entrances

- Have multiple access points from roadway
- Where possible put entrances at rear of paddock also
- Wide entrance for cow flow
- Set gap posts back into paddock for cow and slurry/silage access

# Water troughs

- **Min flow rate** of 0.15 litres/minute/cow

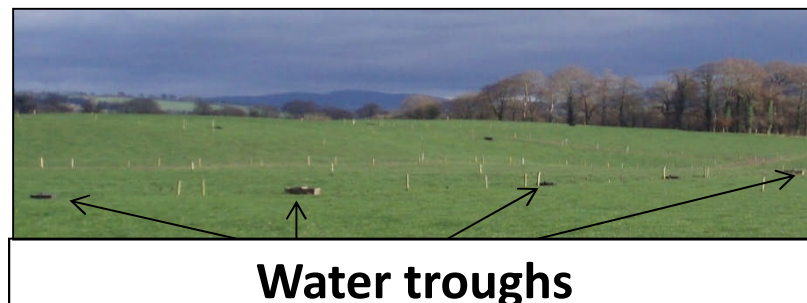
- **Water intake**

10 L on cold wet days

Up to 90 L on hot sunny days

Drink up to 14 L per min, 30-50% within one hr of milking

- **Locate** centrally to minimize walking distance and facilitate strip grazing (Do not locate near paddock entrances)
- **Trough size**
  - Allow 7 L trough capacity per cow
  - Use large troughs give plenty of drinking space
  - Rough guideline: ensure that 5% of the herd can drink at once



# Roadways

## Considerations when designing/locating new roadway

- Future herd size
- Location of future grazing platform - locate centrally
- Well constructed roadway will use 1-2% of land area

## Width of road

- Widest section near the milking parlour
- Herd size < 80 cows - 4-5 m road width
- Herd size < 250 cows - 6m road width
- Roads too narrow -lameness



## Cow flow

- Cows will walk at 2-3 km / hour on good road structure.
- Narrow roads, bends, poor surface will slow down movement.
- Cows walk < 1.5 km / hour on poorly designed roads.
- Avoid water troughs on road.
- Wide entry exit points to prevent blockages
- Avoid road slopes over 3:1 for stock



# Get the infrastructure right





A photograph of a rural landscape featuring a large herd of black and white cows grazing in a vibrant green field. The field is divided into sections by a series of white wooden posts connected by a thin wire, illustrating a rotational grazing system. In the background, a dense line of green trees separates the field from rolling hills under a sky filled with large, white and grey clouds. The overall scene depicts a healthy, managed agricultural environment.

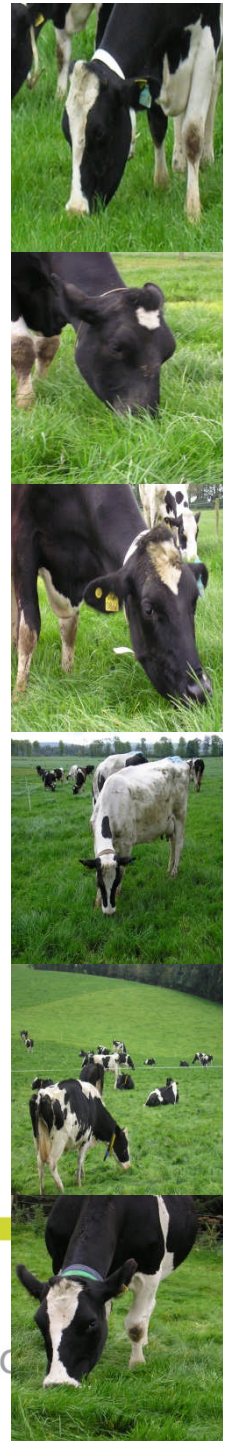
# Spring Rotation Planner

# Spring Rotation Planner

- Divides the area of farm into weekly portions

## Information required:

- Farm area
- Turnout date
- End of first rotation
  - Magic day: day the farm is growing enough grass to meet demand



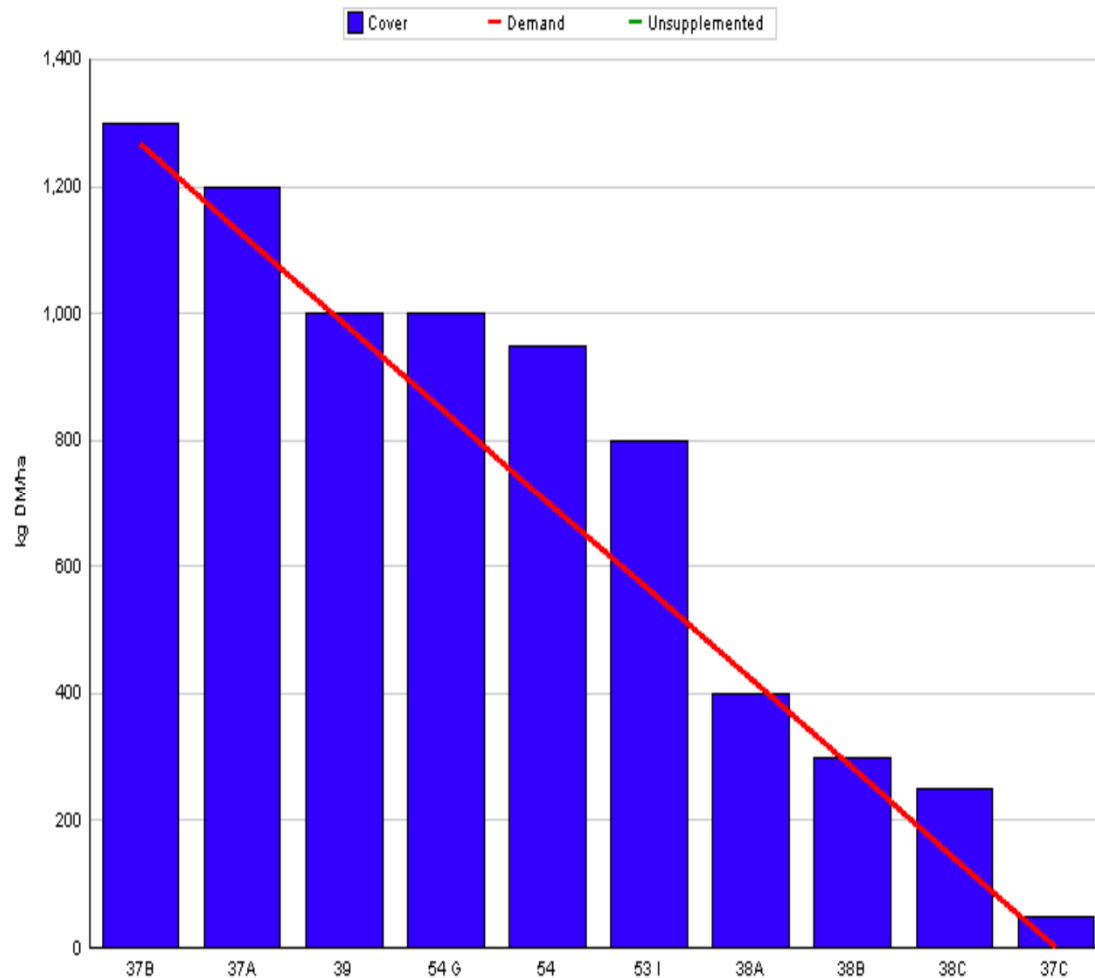


# The Grazing Wedge





# What is the Grazing Wedge

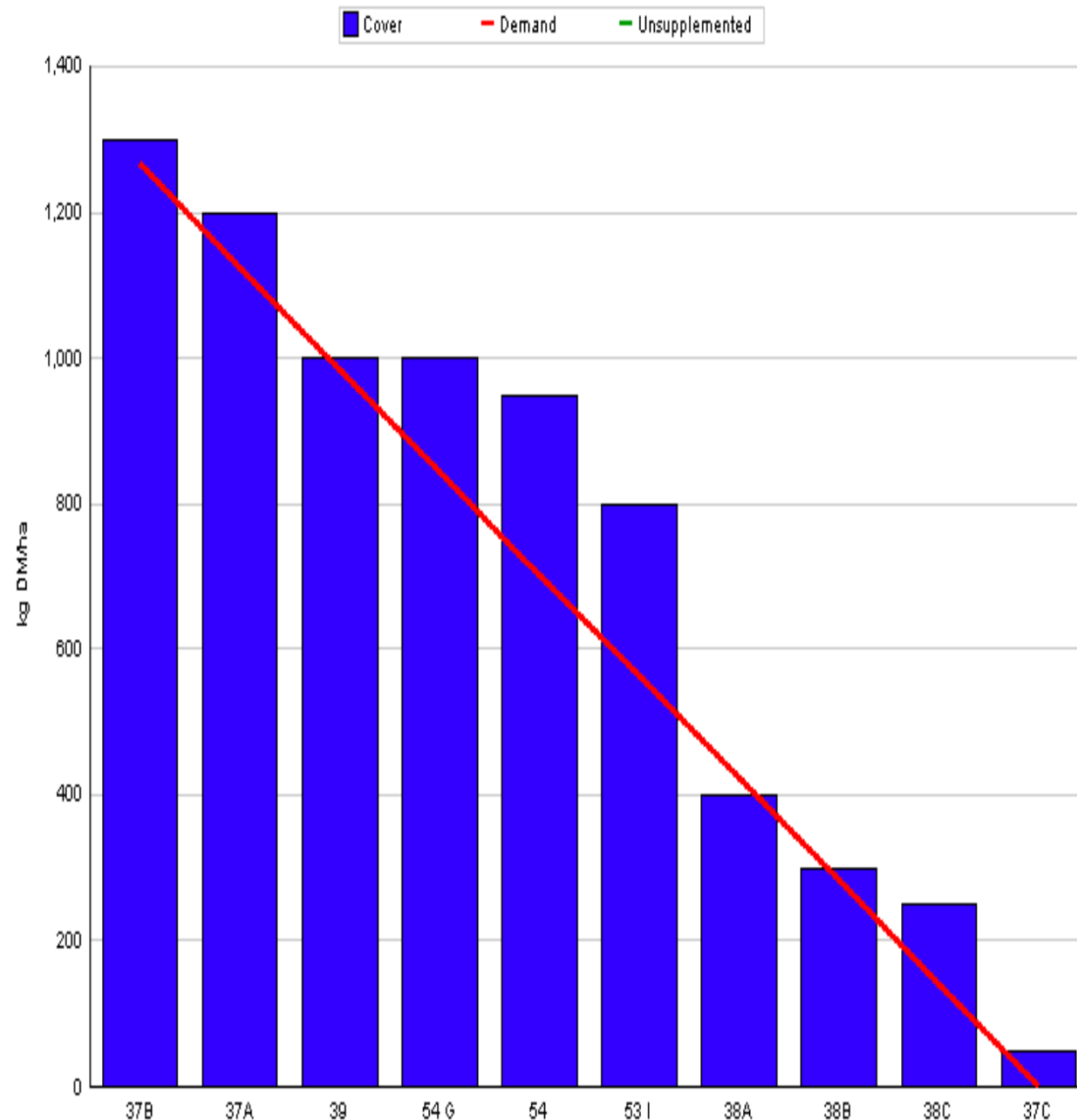


**Visual representation of  
the grass on the farm**

**Line drawn from the  
ideal pre-grazing yield  
to the desired post-  
grazing residual**

**Completed weekly  
during main grazing  
season**

# What is the Grazing Wedge



- Visual representation of the grass on the farm
- Line drawn from the ideal pre-grazing yield to the desired post-grazing residual
- Completed weekly during main grazing season





**Thank you for  
your attention!**