

Management and benefits of grazing large herds



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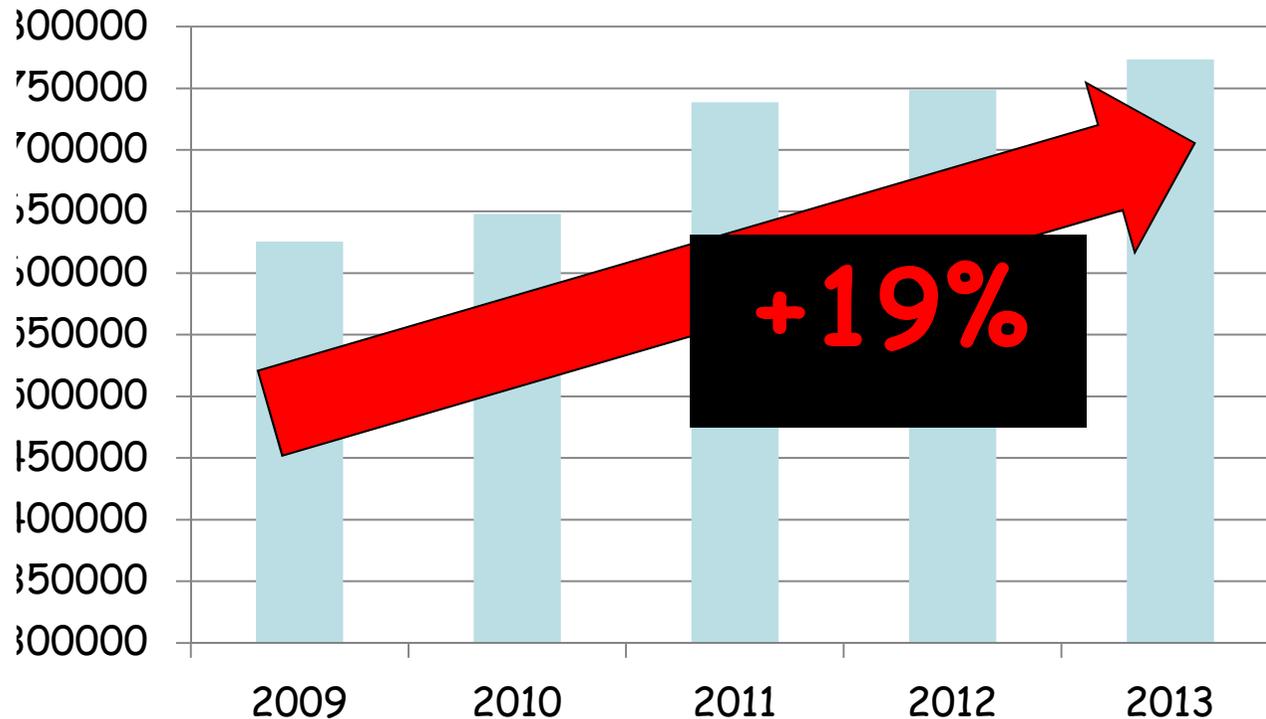


The Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority

Dairy production in Ireland



Calves born to a dairy bull



- Average herd size = 61 cows

- Quota removal April 2015

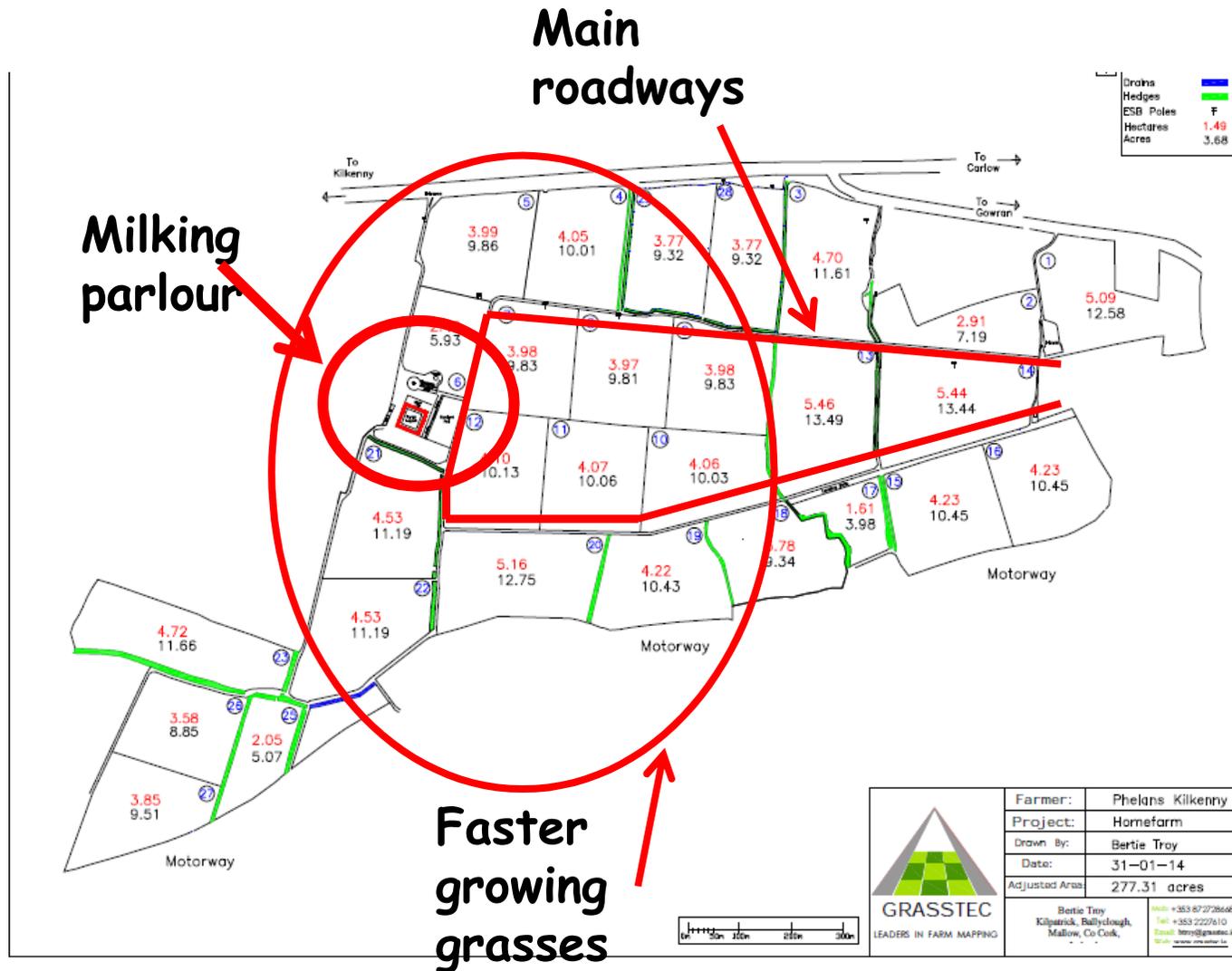
- Food Harvest 2020 outlined 50% increase in milk production

- 27% more cows



What are the requirements for grazing large herds?

Greenfield Farm



- Farm area 112 ha
- 307 cows
- Stocking rate = 2.74 cows/ha

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



Multiple 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

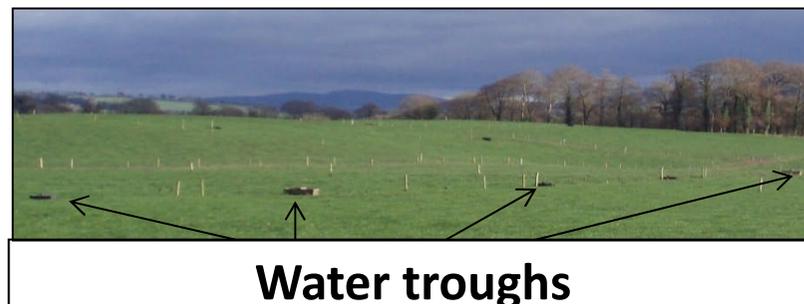
Up to 90 L on hot sunny days

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



Use a back fence



Spring Rotation Planner

Spring Rotation Planner

- Divides the area of farm into weekly portions

Information required:

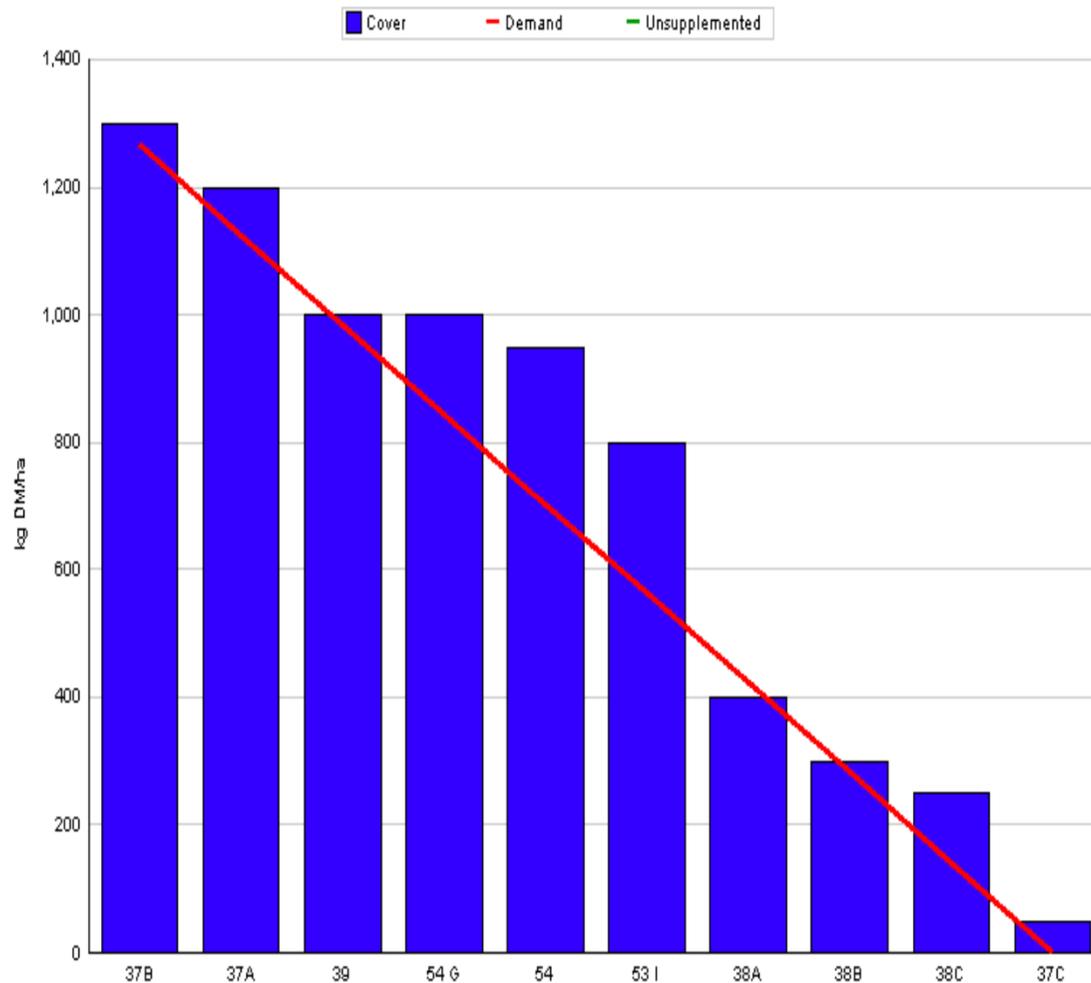
- Farm area
- Turnout date
- End of first rotation
 - Magic day: day the farm is growing enough grass to meet demand



The Grazing Wedge



What is the Grazing Wedge

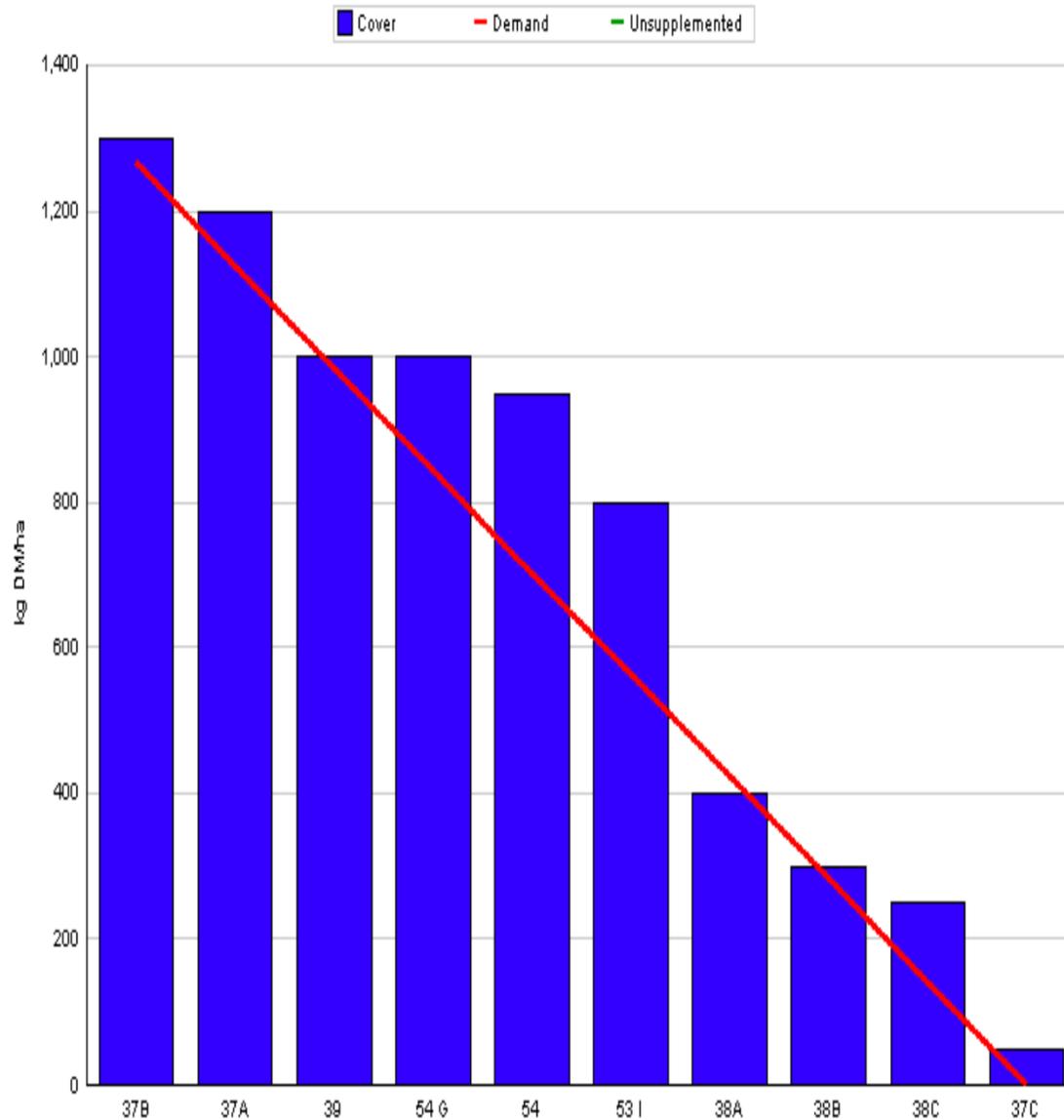


Visual representation of the grass on the farm

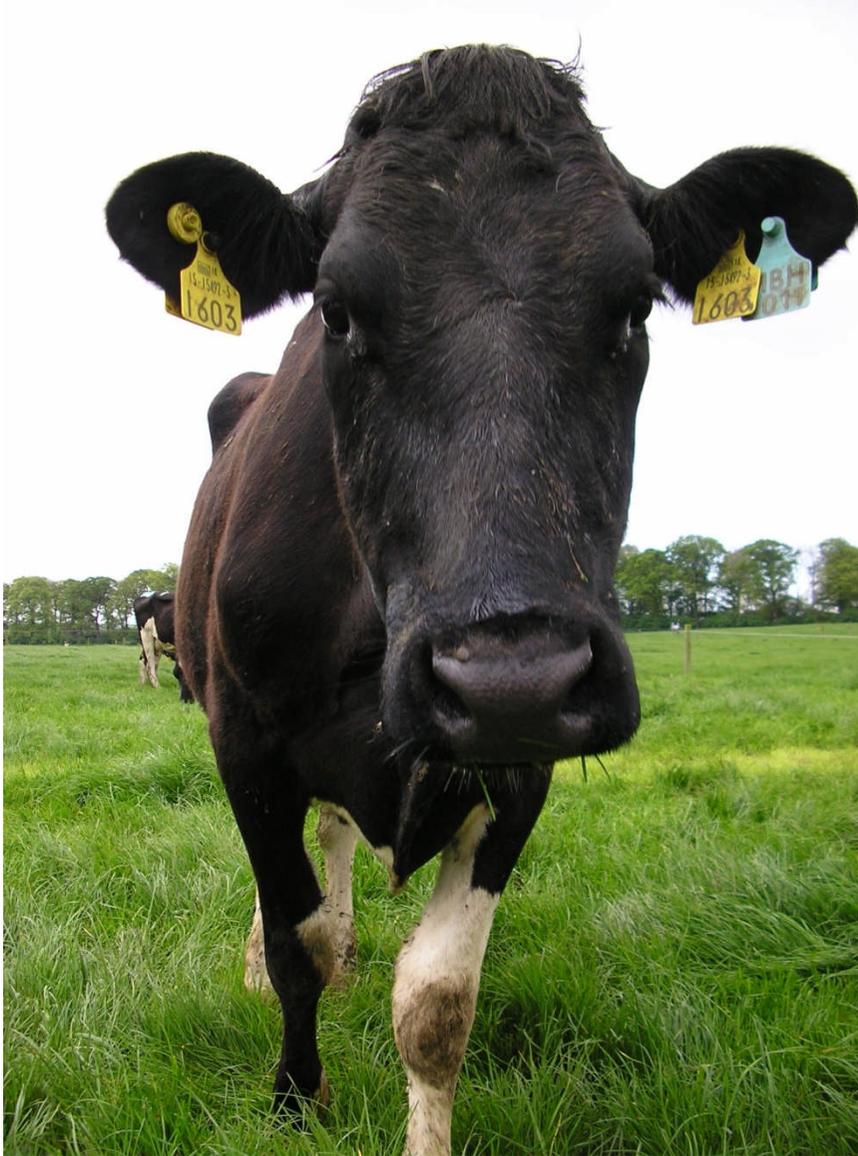
Line drawn from the ideal pre-grazing yield to the desired post-grazing residual

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!**