

FORAGE for PROFIT



National Advice Hub
T: 0300 323 0161
E: advice@fas.scot
W: www.fas.scot

The Forage for Profit Discussion Group are a group of beef and sheep producers based in South West Scotland with a common desire to improve business profitability through improved utilisation of grass and forage crops.

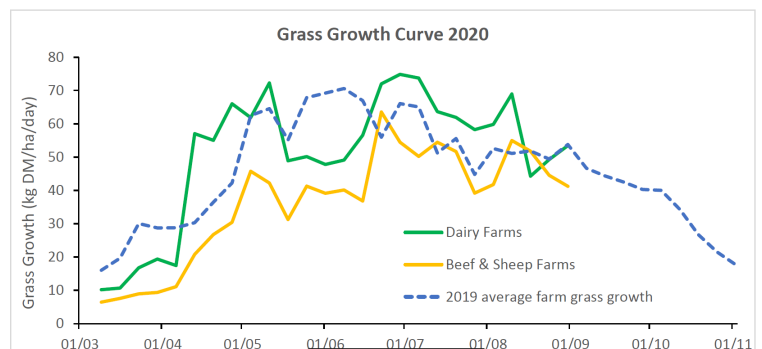
August Update — The drought was well and truly broken in July and August. July saw 198mm of rain recorded by SEPA in Newton Stewart and 140mm in August—this makes July the wettest month of 2020 so far.. Grasscheck information shows that the grass DM yield for March-August averaged 7.8t DM/ha —1.5t DM/ha behind the long term GB average. See graph below from GrassCheck GB demonstrating the UK growth curve to date. August saw a much needed flush of grass, however plentiful in supply it was very wet and that low DM content brought with it issues with dirty lambs and flystrike.

Encouraging grass to Tiller

Perennial ryegrasses mainly reproduce through daughter tillers which become separated from the parent tiller and result in a new plant which in turns produces more tillers and so on. Tillers only ever live for one year so a daughter tiller is required to be produced each Spring to sustain the perennial nature of a grass plant. Spring and Autumn are key periods of tillering. Every time a new leaf is produced, a new tiller bud is produced. It stays dormant until the right conditions come for it to grow.

Autumn tillers are the one that will grow your winter and summer pastures. The spring tillers will grow your spring, summer, and autumn pastures.

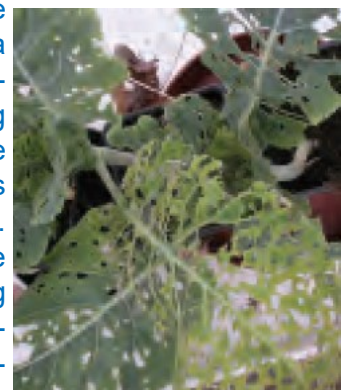
Good grazing management in spring and Autumn promotes tillering. Daughter tillers require sunlight to develop and will not survive weeks of darkness under high pasture covers. consistent grazing residuals of 1500-1600 kg DM/ha will enable sun light to reach the base of the pasture and help the survival of newly emerged daughter tillers. Similarly if plants are not grazed properly and dead material is allowed to build up in the base of the sward clover will be shaded out, disease and weeds will build up and the ME of that sward will be reduced.



Source: www.grasscheckgb.co.uk

Pests in Forage Crops

Moth and Butterfly larvae can be devastating to forage crops, eating outer leaves until only a skeletal structure remains. These larvae feed between July and September depending on their species so it is important to check your crops regularly during this period for caterpillars. The larvae can be controlled by insecticide for a low cost if the population warrants treatment. Strong plants can tolerate some damage but smaller plants may not survive the attack. Strategies to minimise the impact would be ensuring your crop has the soil conditions, fertility and least competition from weeds to overcome challenges.



For more information and events from the Farm Advisory Service see www.fas.scot or find us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter @FasScot



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot



FORAGE *for* PROFIT — August Update

Monitoring Livestock Performance

Monitoring livestock through regular weighing is an essential tool providing information on the performance of your flock or herd.

Regular weighing enables:

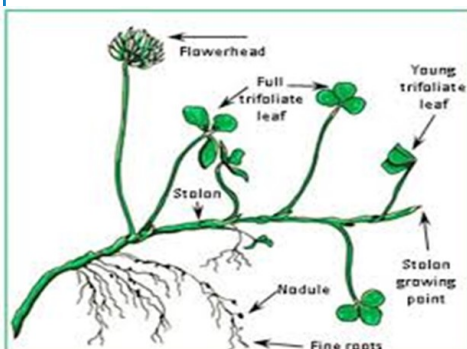
- ♦ animal performance to be monitored and intervention made if animals are not meeting the benchmark daily live weight gain such as drenching for worms or altering feed rations/grass allocations
- ♦ information to be used for wider strategic decisions on breeding stock.
- ♦ correct dosage of anthelmintics to be administered
- ♦ Market or processor specifications for finished or store animals to be met

The use of benchmarking as a measure of business performance is becoming increasingly popular and compulsory by some banks and regular weighing is one part of ensuring livestock are meeting expected performance targets. Weighing can also be used as a proactive method to reduce blanket anthelmintic use by only dosing those indicating a worm burden through reduce dlwg.

White Clover

White clover grows across across the surface through stolons, each stolon has a growing point and roots and can regenerate as an individual plant. More stolons = more persistence. Small white nodules formed by bacteria on the roots take in Nitrogen from the atmosphere and adapt this into a form of N which can be taken up by the legume.

Artificial N applied will inhibit the Rhizobia bacteria on the nodules ability to fix Nitrogen, avoid applications of N after establishment. 30-40% clover content in a sward should supply the equivalent of 180kg N/ha – however clover content can vary throughout the season and year to year so Nitrogen should be used to match supply to demand.



Join us on Tuesday 8th September for a virtual chat with SAC Beef Specialists Robert Ramsay and Lesley Wylie on the Beef Supply Chain.

Silage Sampling

Silage should be ensiled for 6 weeks before sampling to allow for adequate fermentation. It is a good idea to sample different cuts as there can be a significant difference in quality and this will enable higher quality feed to be prioritised towards growing stock. A representative sample should be taken across the pit avoiding the face or sides of the pit where there may be more spoilage. Early sampling will give you an indication of what other feeds you may need to complement your silage and gives you time to plan and buy at a good price. DM content are slightly higher than this time last year but the intake potential is high indicating stock will eat more so a feed budget is a good idea to ensure you don't get caught short!

Beef and sheep silages	Average	Minimum	Maximum
DM g/kg	331	152	646
D Value (%)	75	54	77
ME MJ/kg DM	11.1	8.6	12.3
CP g/kg DM	119	78	167
Ash g/kg DM	75	54	103
PAL	813	688	1138
NDF g/kgDM	480	390	635
Sugar g/kgDM	83	39	119
SIP	104	77	125
pH	4.4	3.7	5.1

Data from SAC laboratory courtesy of Mary Young, Aug 2020