



Technical leaflet

# Early Turnout to Grass in the Spring

## 1 Description of the innovation



### Get calved cows out to grass as early as possible:

- Increased animal performance - high quality diet with minimal supplements
- Recondition swards for the year ahead – stimulate growth and improve quality
- Maximise spring grass utilisation & minimise sward decay
- Reduce workload on the farm

Each extra day at grass = €2.70/cow/day

### How?

- Maintain target Average Farm Cover (AFC) each week during Spring
- Allocate spring grass based on Spring Rotation Plan (SRP)
- Achieve target post-grazing height of 3.5cm
- maximise utilisation & recondition spring swards
- enable plants to capture sunlight energy
- Steadily increase total feed allowance from calving into breeding



### Advantages

- Less cost in supplementary feed
- Increase milk solids output
- Less workload in the spring



### Disadvantages

- Risk of poaching





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#### Fertiliser Recommendations: February/ March:

- Spring Nitrogen (N) application is essential to boost growth on all paddocks
- Immediately after the closed period for fertilizer and slurry application
- Apply 2,500 gals. slurry/ac. to 30% of paddocks (<650 kg DM/ha herbage mass)
- Apply 23 units urea/ ac. to remainder (Urea= 30% cheaper than alternatives/kg N)

#### In early March:

- Apply 2,500 gals. slurry/ac. to 30% of paddocks
- Apply 40 units urea/ ac. to remainder
- 70 units N applied by April 1st
- Pay close attention to weather forecasts to avoid heavy rain and waterlogged soils within 48 hours of nutrient application to minimise losses and maximise benefits.





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### Summary

#### Walk the farm and establish grass supply

- Hit 30% area grazed in February to build grass for Rotation 2
- Increase feed allowance by 0.75 kg DM/cow/wk from calving to breeding
- High Autumn Covers (>1,200 kg DM/ha) should be grazed before Mid-march
- Avoid poaching and protect regrowth
- 70 units N applied by April 1st



### More information

- <https://www.teagasc.ie/>
- <https://www.teagasc.ie/crops/grassland/grass10/>