EFFECT OF TWO PRE-GRAZING HERBAGE MASSES AND DAILY HERBAGE ALLOWANCES ON PERENNIAL RYEGRASS SWARD CHARACTERISTICS

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I. Introduction

Efficient exploitation of grazing grass will require the development of systems designed to **maximise daily herbage intake per cow** while maintaining **high quality pasture over the grazing season**. Sward characteristics are an important tool to achieve this, such as maintaining a **high proportion of green leaf and low dead material** within the grazing horizon and an adequate daily allowance.

II. Objective

To examine the effect of two **pre-grazing herbage masses (HM)** and two **daily herbage allowances (DHA)** **on perennial ryegrass sward structure across the grazing season**.

III. Material and Methods

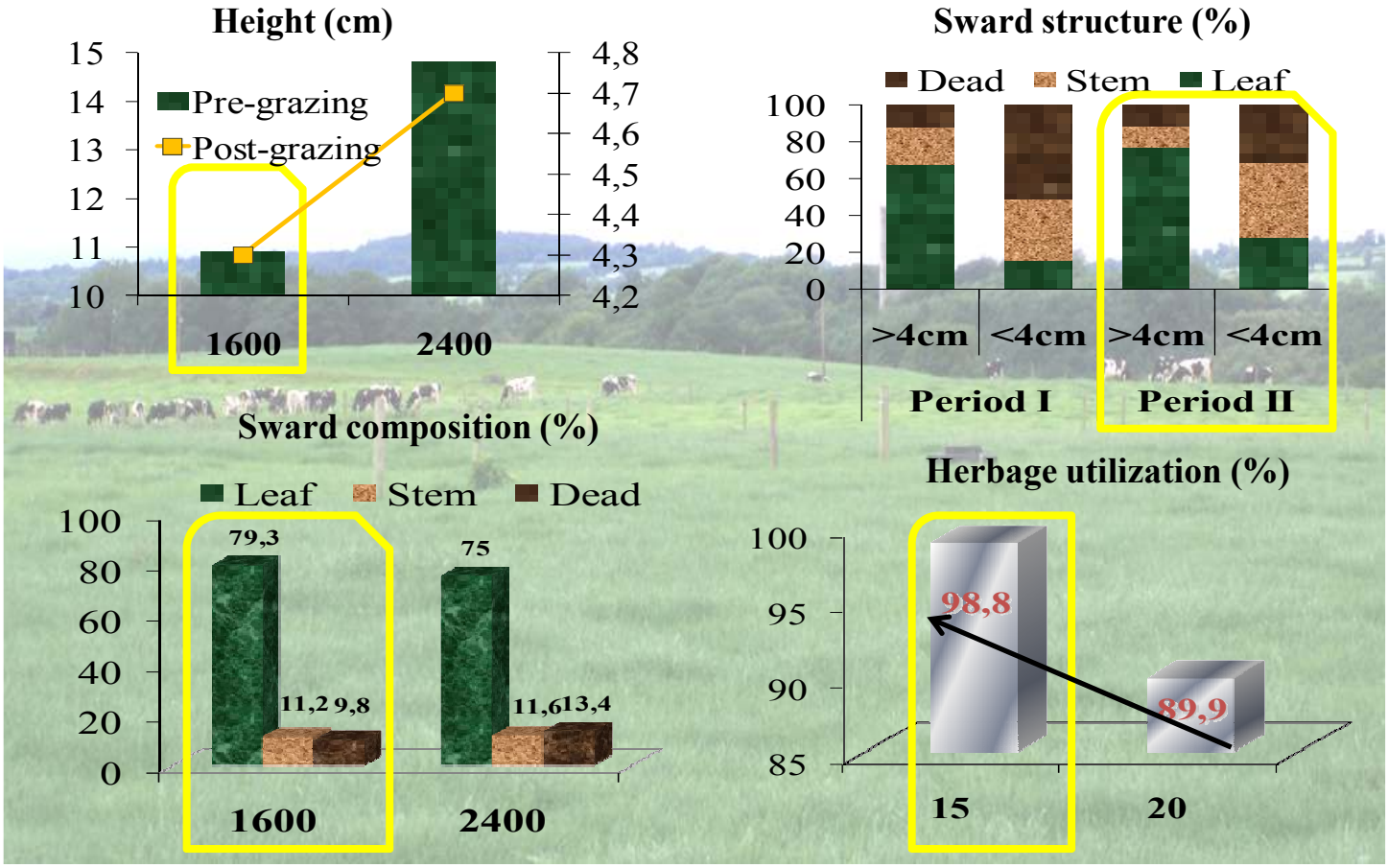
Spring calving cows (n=64) randomly assigned to 1 of 4 grazing treatments (LL, LH, HL, HH) **in a 2x2 factorial design** (n=16), from April 9 to July 20 (PI) and from July 21 to October 31 (PII):

- **Two HM:** L, low HM (**1600 kg DM/ha**) and high HM (**2400 kg DM/ha**).
- **Two DHA:** L, low DHA (**15 kg DM cow/day**) and high DHA (**20 kg DM cow/day**).

Measurements: Pre- and post-grazing heights (cm) and herbage utilization (%). Leaf, stem and dead proportions (%).

Statistical analysis by ANOVA: The variables included in the model were HM, DHA and interaction between both.

IV. Results and Discussion



V. Conclusions

Results show that **maintaining 1600 kg DM/ha** and **offering cows 15 kg DM cow/day** are achieved **high herbage utilization rates** in the early season, **improving sward quality**, and consequently **increasing nutritive value in the mid-season** compared to high HM swards.

VI. Acknowledgements

To Moorepark TEAGASC and their staff for the opportunity give us to work in this research project.