

# Changing Farm System and Grassland Management on our farm

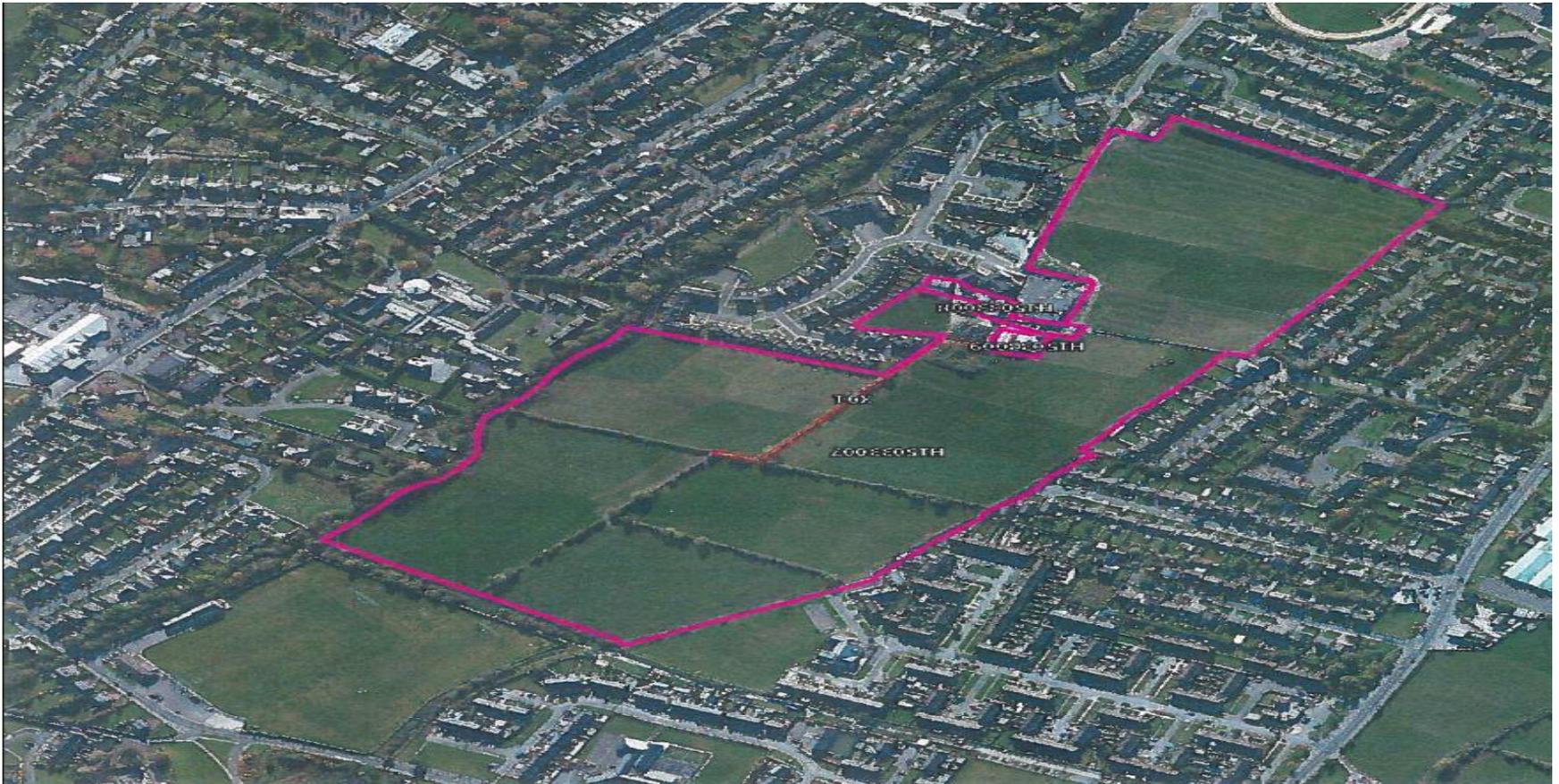
Shane and Joann Crean,  
Doneraile, Co Cork

# Outline of Talk

- **Background – Managing 2 Milking Platforms in Tralee**
- **Move to Cork - New farm set up**
- **System change**
- **Grassland management**
- **Future objectives**

# Background - Kerry

- 1994 – 50/50 Autumn ; Spring calving, 2 milking platforms,
- Liquid milk system/High input system



# Setting up new Farm

**1999 – Purchased 88ha in Doneraile**

**2003 – New Zealand experience - Travel**

**2004 – Dairy unit development Doneraile**

**2005 – Moved all herds**



# Doneraile Development Grass Based Infrastructure

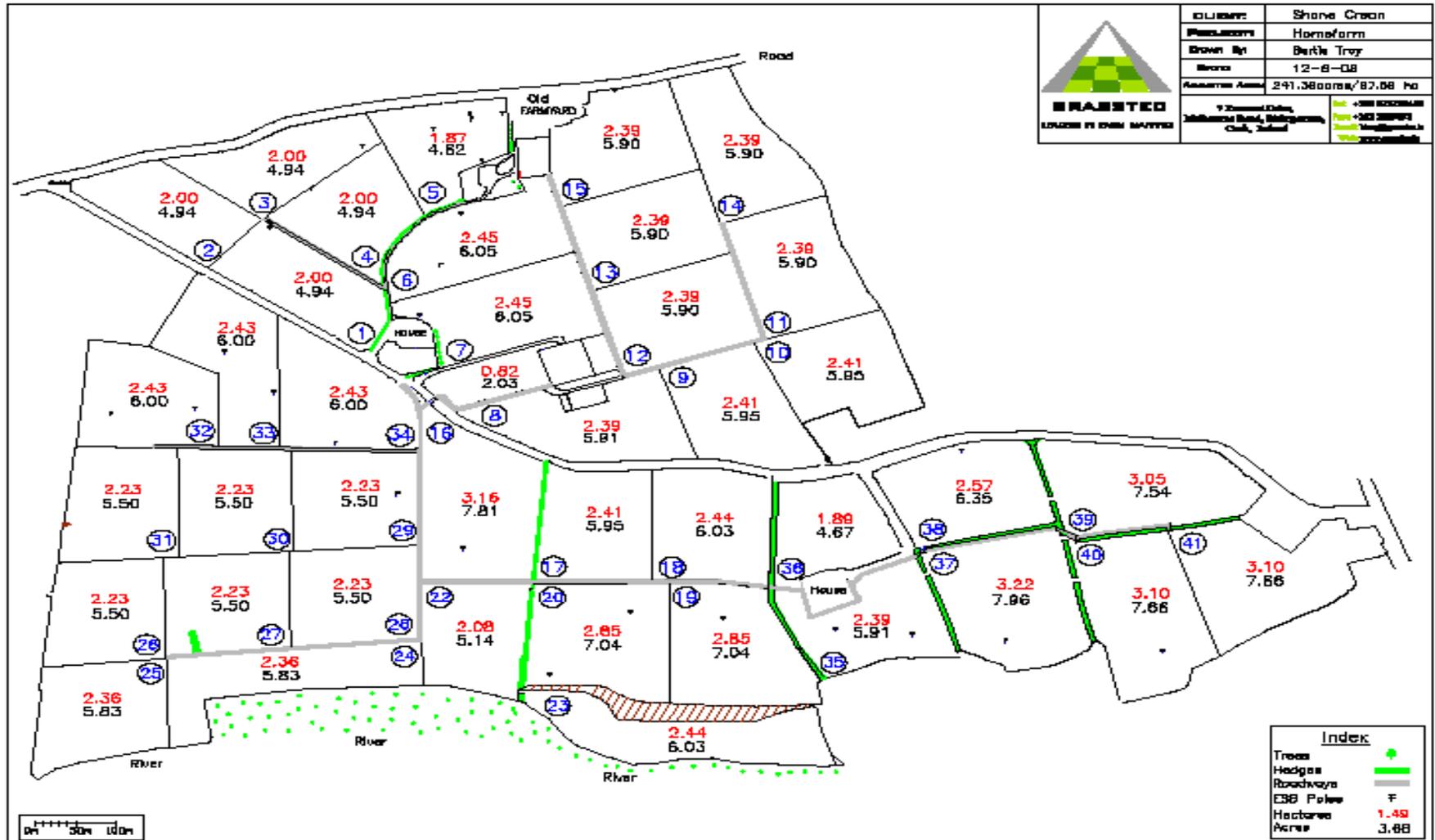
- 50 Unit Rotatory parlour
- 250 cubicle Shed
- Lagoon storage – 4.5 M litres



# Current Farm Details 15/16

- **130 ha farmed**
- **98 ha milking platform**
- **Milking 330 cows – 100% Spring calving**
- **Milking platform SR – 3.36**
- **Cow type – 80% of herd cross-bred with Jersey**
- **Milk Solids Sold per cow – 400 kg MS/cow/1320 ha**
- **Concentrate – 500 kg/cow**
- **Heifers reared in Tralee**

# Milking Platform 2015/6



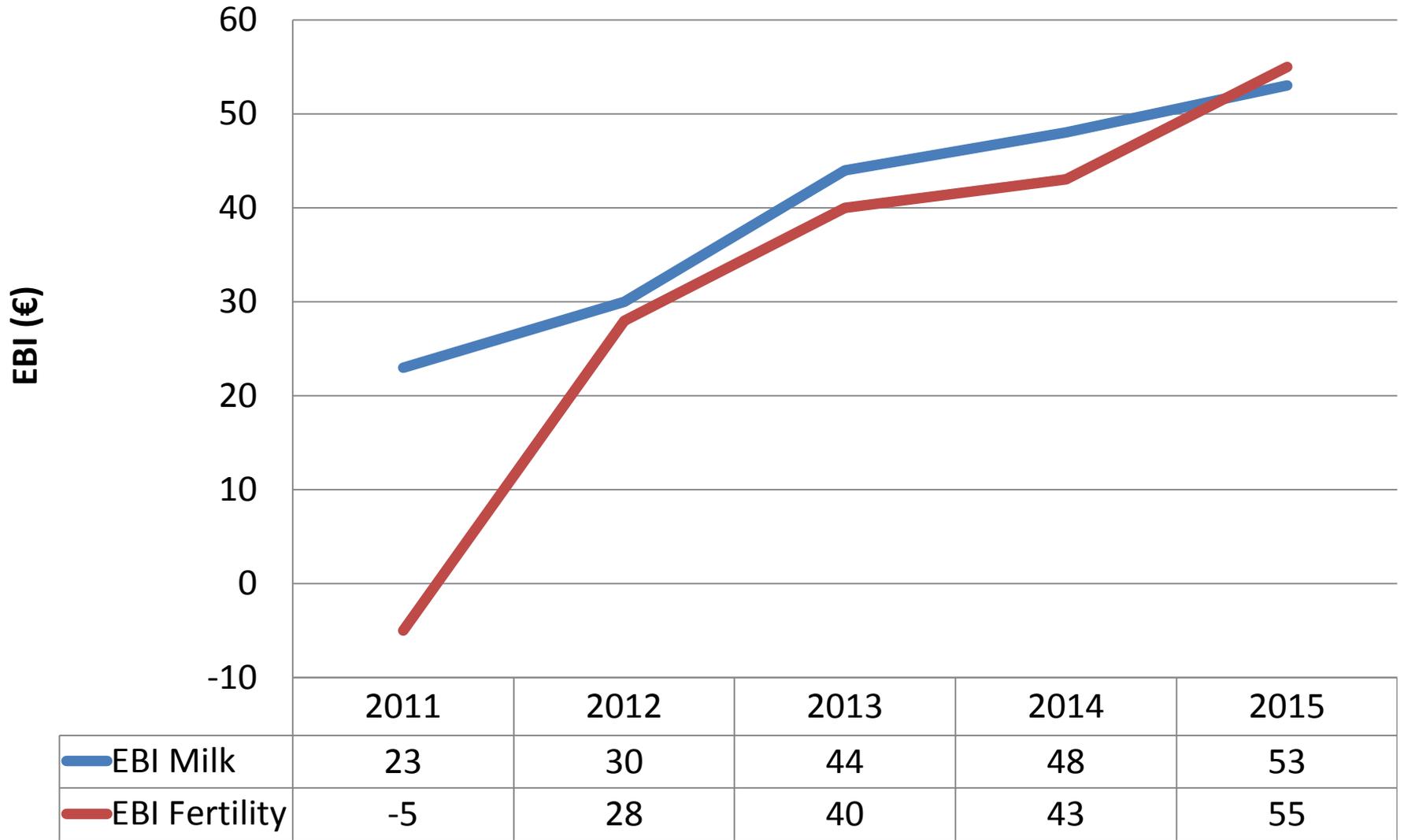
CLIENT:	Shane Cronin
PLANNERS:	Horneform
DRAWN BY:	Bertie Troy
ISSUE:	12-8-08
ANALYSIS AREA:	241.36 acres / 87.66 Ha
7 Zoned Sites, 100m Buffer, 100m Buffer, 100m Buffer, 100m Buffer, 100m Buffer, 100m Buffer	100m Buffer 100m Buffer 100m Buffer 100m Buffer 100m Buffer

Index	
Trees	●
Hedges	—
Roadways	—
ESB Poles	+
Hectares	1.49
Acres	3.68

# **New Focus - Grass and cow type**

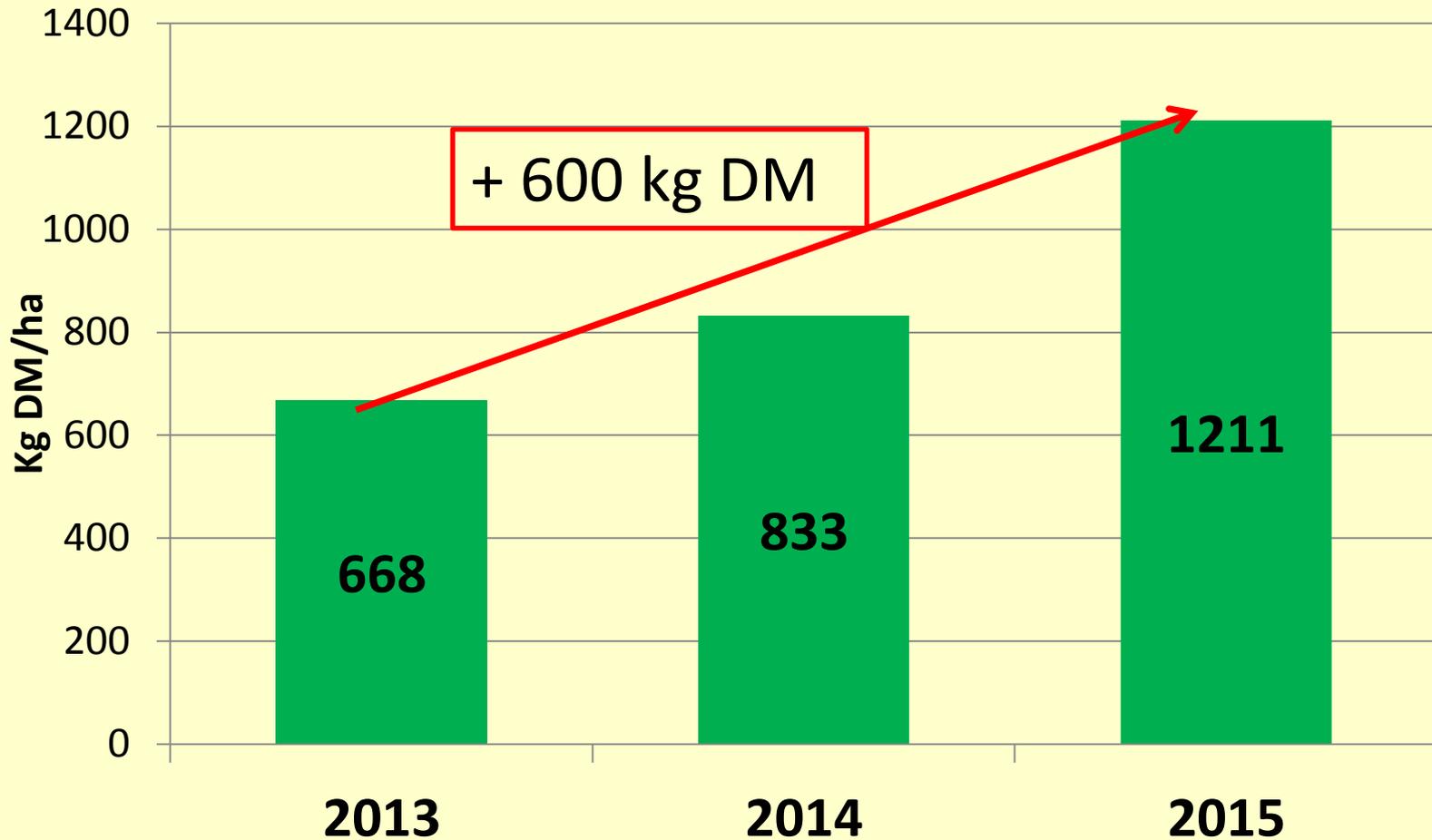
- **System – 100% Spring calving**
- **Cow type**
  - High EBI, fertility and longevity
- **Grass**
  - Increase production to sustain high stocking rate

# System Change - Herd EBI for Milk & Fertility



# Increasing Spring Grass Yield

Increase *+100%* - since 2013



# Focus – Spring Grass Management

- **Spring Rotation Planner**
  - 35% grazed by March 1<sup>st</sup>
  - 70% grazed by March 17<sup>th</sup>
  - 100% grazed by April 1<sup>st</sup>
- **Nitrogen Fertiliser application in Spring**
  - 3000 gl/acre slurry – covers < 600 kg DM
  - 70-80 units applied by April 1<sup>st</sup>
  - 2500 gl/acre watery slurry after first grazing

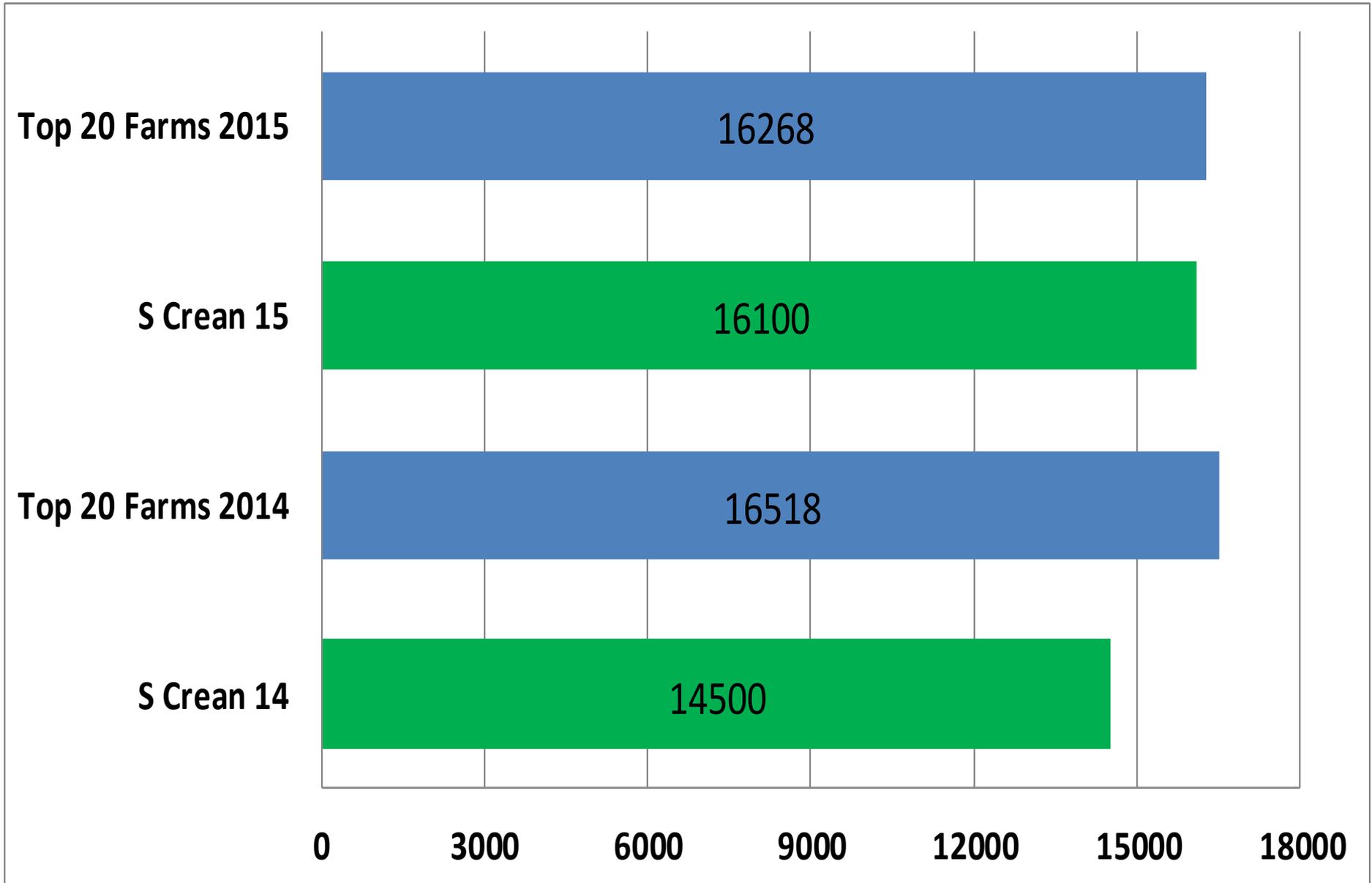
# New Focus - Spring Grass Management

- What is 600 kg DM/ha worth in Spring
- **50t** extra grass available (98ha)
- €10-12,000 for my business
- We aim to build on this

# Autumn Grass Management

- **Late August/Early September**
  - Feed **5kg DM** silage to build cover 10-12 days
  - Peak cover 1300-1350 kg DM/ha – mid/late Sept.
- **5<sup>th</sup> October**
  - First paddock closed
  - **1<sup>st</sup> November**
  - 60% closed
  - 100% closed by 20-30<sup>th</sup> November
- **Closing AFC – 650-700 kg DM/ha**
  - Farm grows 200-250 kg DM/ha from 1st Dec-1st Feb

# My farm versus Top 20 farms in Pasture Base Ireland



# Improvement to grass management - Reseeding

- **Soil fertility is been addressed-**
  - 2014 – pH.->6.3 - 50%; P ->3/4 - 77% ; K – >3/4 - 25%
  - Needs continuous investment
- **Lower producing paddocks only (if soil fertility is right)**
- **80% of top producing paddocks are new reseeds**



# Grass Management Improvements

- **Better Spring control - 1 April - First Round, 24 April – Second Round, May 13 - Third round**
- **Farm average number of grazings is 7 (ranging from 5-8)**
- **Target increased grazings – 9 to 10**
- **Grass output can be increased by raising output in the lowest third of paddocks**

# Costs and their Control

- **Common costs 20 c/litre – (2014+15)**
- **Concentrate cost 2c/litre (2015) was previously >10c/litre in old system**
- **1c/litre has real significance on our Farm**
- **Still working on reducing all costs**

# Future years

- **Decision on system - improve it**
  - **Grass, Cow and Cost management**
  - **Young Family – time**
  - **Discussion group input and analysis**
- 
- A photograph of a large herd of black and white cows grazing in a lush green field. The cows are arranged in a long line, stretching from the foreground into the distance. The background features a line of trees and a cloudy sky. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.



**Thank you for your  
attention**