

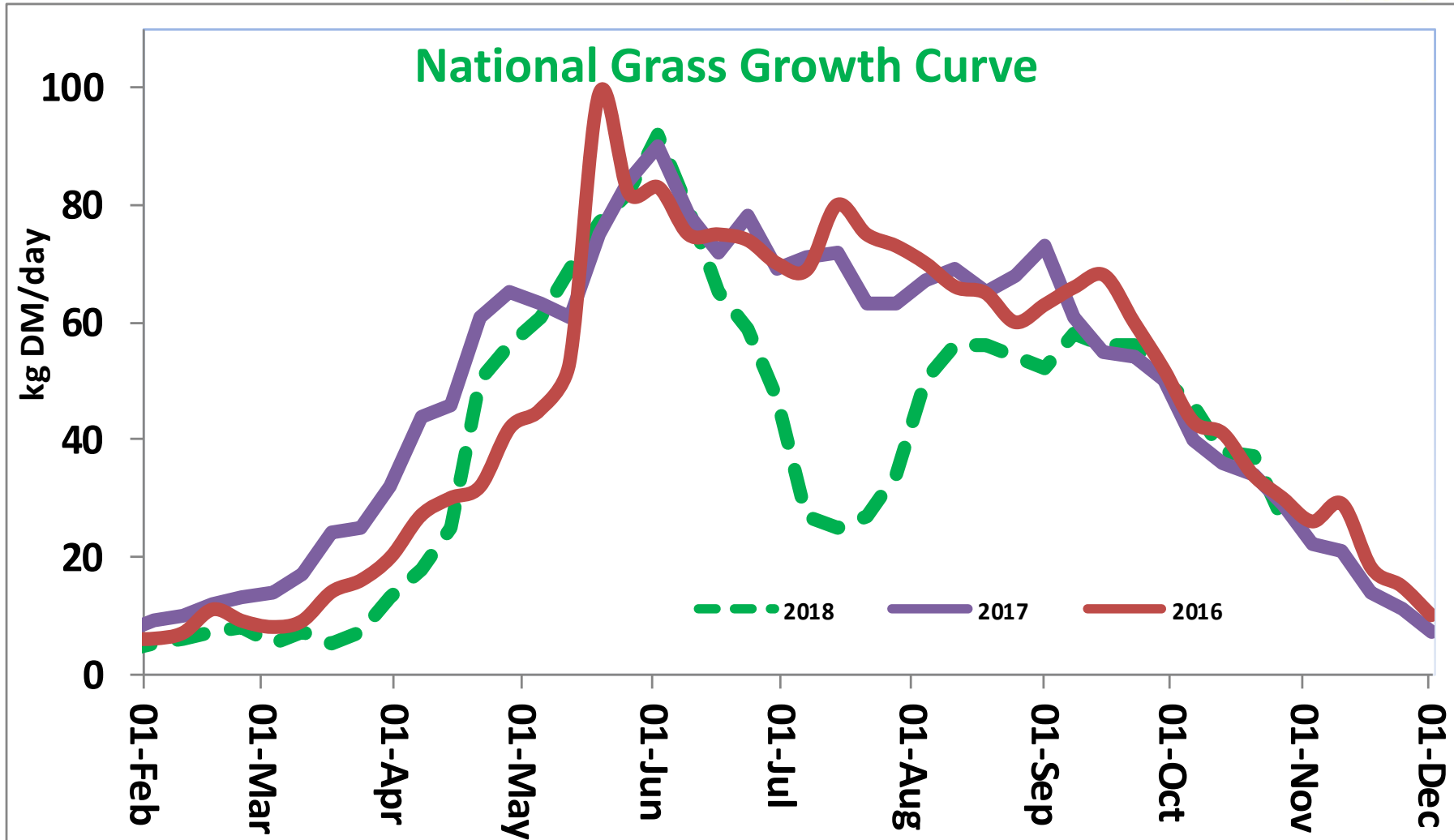
Dealing with weather risks:  
lessons from 2018  
Tom O'Dwyer

# Presentation outline

- National grass growth curve
- Ten key messages
- Understanding weather risk
- Weather risk management strategies
- The right stocking rate for your farm
- Managing through

*“We do not learn from experience; we learn from reflecting on experience.”*

*John Dewey, American educator*



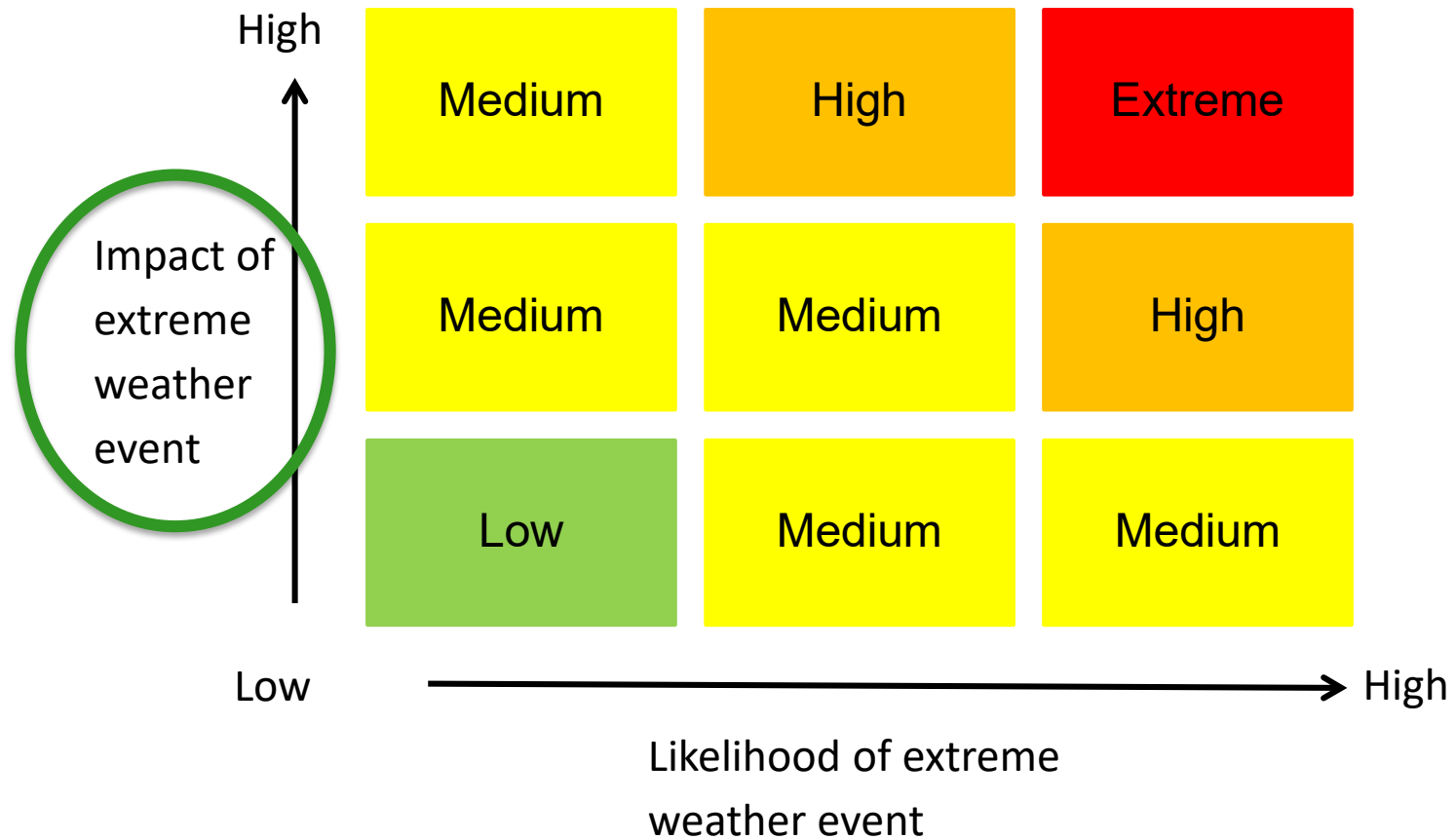
# Ten key messages

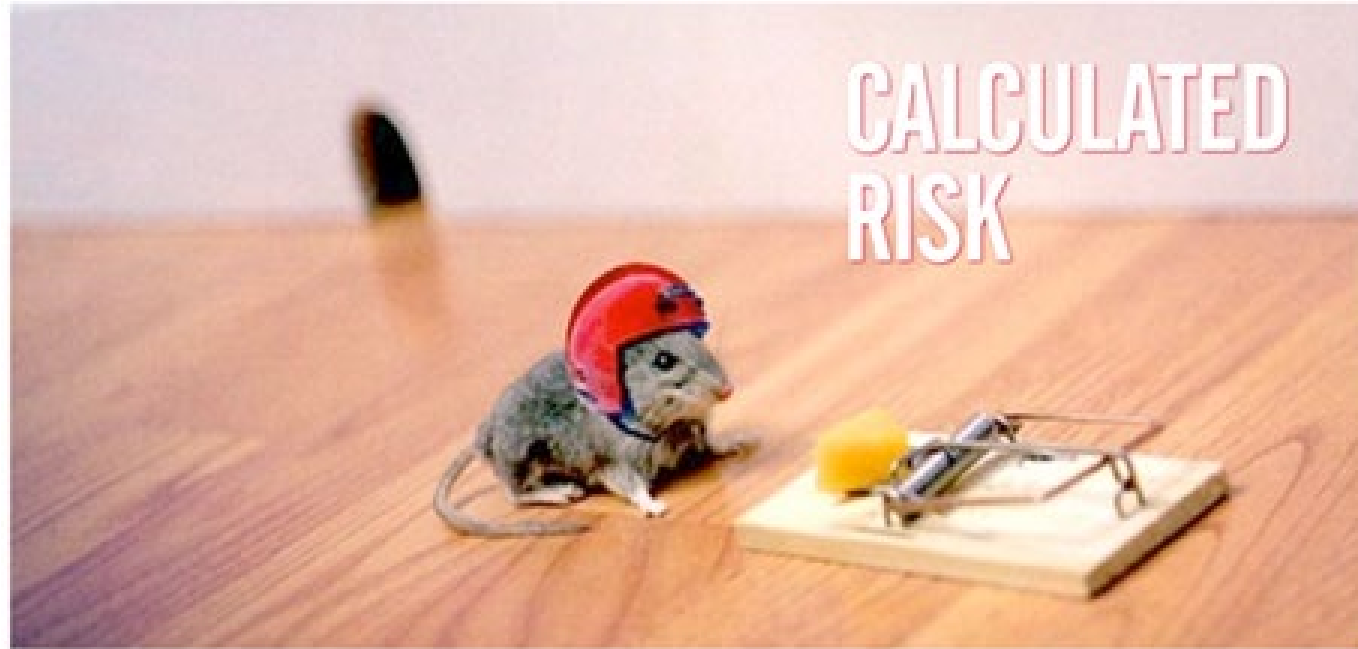
1. “Old hay is old gold”
2. Match stocking rate to grass growth potential
3. A compact spring calving, grass based system is “fit for purpose” and resilient to weather risks
4. Assess both fodder requirements and fodder reserve requirements
5. Additional fodder storage and feeding facilities may be required

# Ten key messages

6. Having a cash reserve for a rainy or sunny day helps
7. Contract cropping may have a role to play
8. Measure, measure, measure
9. Weather risk is a reality
10. Hope is not a strategy.

# Understanding weather risk





“Between calculated risk and reckless decision-making lies the dividing line between profit and loss.”

Charles Duhigg



# Weather risk management strategies

Ignore

Avoid

Reduce

Accept

Share

# Following spring 2018

What worked?	What didn't work?	Key Learning/Lessons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Protocols/ procedures</li> <li>✓ Having enough fodder – quality silage</li> <li>✓ Good calf health</li> <li>✓ Adequate facilities – accommodation, slurry storage, office</li> <li>✓ Good grazing infrastructure</li> <li>✓ Contractor for slurry</li> <li>✓ Soil fertility – grass grew</li> <li>✓ Outside interests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Too many stock</li> <li>✗ Too much work</li> <li>✗ A strategy of hope</li> <li>✗ Inadequate help</li> <li>✗ Inadequate housing</li> <li>✗ Limited fodder</li> <li>✗ Poor slurry management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better organised</li> <li>• Better facilities</li> <li>• Better infrastructure</li> <li>• Can't create time; have to work smarter and reduce work</li> <li>• Good help around you really helps</li> <li>• Need adequate slurry storage</li> <li>• Expect the unexpected</li> <li>• Take every weather window</li> </ul>

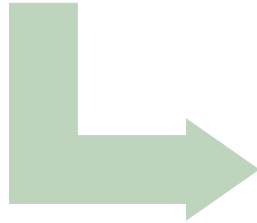
# Choosing the right stocking rate

tonnes conc. DM per cow	Grass grown, tonnes DM per Ha			
	10	12	14	16
0.00	1.5	2.0	2.3	2.6
0.25	1.7	2.1	2.4	2.8
<b>0.50</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3.0</b>
0.75	1.9	2.3	2.7	3.1
1.00	2.0	2.4	2.9	3.2
1.25	2.1	2.5	3.0	3.4
1.50	2.2	2.6	3.1	3.5

# Managing through

**1. Define your reality**

- “I am facing a fodder shortage of xxx tonnes”.
- “Grass growth has fallen below demand; I need to supplement.”



**2. Do something about it**

- Identify solutions
- Rule out non-solutions



**3. Face into the challenge**

- The sooner you act, the more options you have

# Managing through

- No “silver bullet” solutions
  - Identify the best solution for your farm
- Look after yourself, your family and your team
  - Coping with an extreme event is challenging
- Afterwards, correct what didn't work
  - How many generators were purchased after Storm Brian?

# And finally...

