



FARMERS
MONTHLY
IRISH

FM

 @farmersmonthly
 /irishfarmersmonthly

www.irishfarmersmonthly.com

APRIL 2021

Dairy Focus:

Latest research, efficiencies on farm and sustainable growth



GLANBIA'S VICE-CHAIR, PAT MURPHY, ON THE SHORTFALL IN PROCESSING CAPACITY

TRACTOR SAFETY – KEY STEPS TO SAFE TRACTOR OPERATION

Coccidiosis?

Did you know 96% of infected animals show no signs apart from lost thrive¹⁻⁷



Dycoxan Jacket



Dycoxan Gun

CALVES AND LAMBS



Ask your Animal Health Supplier about our new Dycoxan equipment

Sign up to our knowledge hub
www.farmhealthfirst.com



Use medicines responsibly

Equipment available while stocks last. REFERENCES: 1. Dausgschies, A., et al. 3-4, 2007. Veterinary Parasitology, Vol. 149, pp. 199-206. 2. Platzler, B., et al. 1-2, 2005. Veterinary Parasitology, Vol. 129, pp. 1-9. 3. Romero, Jorge, et al. 1-3, 2013. Veterinary Parasitology, Vol. 193, pp. 277-280. 4. Scala, A., et al. 2014. Small Ruminant Research, Vol. 120, pp. 242-246. 5. Eriemark, Heidi Larsen, et al. 1, 2015. Parasitology Research, Vol. 114, pp. 201-212. 6. Mundt, Hans-Christian, et al. 1, 2009. Parasitology Research, Vol. 105, pp. 141-150. 7. Diaferia, Manuela, et al. 1, 2013. Parasitology Research, Vol. 112, pp. 163-168. DYCOXAN® 2.5 mg/ml Oral Suspension for sheep and cattle. For the prevention of clinical signs of coccidiosis. In lambs: Prevention of clinical signs of coccidiosis caused by Eimeria crandallis and Eimeria ovinoidalis sensitive to diclazuril. In calves: Prevention of clinical signs of coccidiosis caused by Eimeria bovis and Eimeria zuernii sensitive to diclazuril, refer to product packaging and leaflets for full indications, side effects, precautions, warnings, contra-indications and meat withdrawal. Advice should be sought from Medicine Prescriber or Licensed Merchant. Further information can be found on the datasheet, SPC or at www.farmhealthfirst.com. DISTRIBUTED BY: Chanella Veterinary (Ireland) and Chanella Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Ltd (UK), Dublin Road, Loughrea, County Galway, Ireland. L.M. VPA10987/122/001. MKT/Dycoxan/ Copyright ©Chanella 2020 All rights reserved.

Editorial

Time to assess dairy progression



"When sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions!" Milk producers could be forgiven for reflecting on this quotation from Hamlet. After quotas were at last swept away six years ago, there was an anticipation that the Irish dairy sector was entering a golden age where the suppressed production potential of our grass-based milk production system could at last be realised. National food policy suggested a doubling of milk production was achievable, while still applying the Moorepark principles of a seasonal, grass-based, production system. Milk producers responded positively to the opportunity

to grow their enterprises, improve their livelihoods and contribute to the development of the Irish rural economy. This all seemed possible until new barriers to milk production began to be erected. The environmental impact of milk production was cited as a reason to curtail output. On reflection, not enough emphasis was placed in those early years of growth on balancing expansion with environmental awareness. That is certainly not the case now, with a huge commitment, both voluntary and regulatory, to ensuring that our countryside can be well protected while still accommodating further dairy growth. Realities are ignored by critics of dairy and livestock farming in general. The only economic sectors which make a positive impact on the environment in terms of sequestering and storing carbon over long periods are agriculture and forestry. This fact is either ignored or unknown by those who demand reductions in our livestock herd.

We are now faced with the return of production ceilings after Glanbia announced restrictions on peak milk production from next year. Blaming Glanbia is futile. Whether the Board should have acted earlier is a moot point. An Taisce's throwaway 'industrial farming' tag has stuck and, despite the illogical nature of the description as it relates to Irish agriculture, it is a case of giving a dog a bad name. To that extent the critics have won, for now. Irish milk producers have been stigmatised, whatever the reality of our production system being as close to nature as any on the planet. That does not exclude the necessity for us to regularly examine our production credentials and improve on them where necessary. Very intensive stocking rates where significant feed deficits occur on a regular basis are not an example of the dairy system we wish to promote. By its very description, the Nitrates Derogation implies a free pass. The reality of intense scrutiny and higher regulatory demands is a reasonable rebuttal. The proposed curtailments on Irish dairy production must be challenged. At the same time, they offer us an opportunity to reset our ambitions and management practices. Well planned growth should still be a focus. There is much unrealised potential and many young aspirants who rightly deserve an opportunity to make a living from farming dairy cows. Otherwise, we risk slipping into the past decades of quota-induced stagnation.

Our Dairy Focus this month highlights the potential efficiencies that can be adopted by our milk producers in terms of improved breeding and balancing optimum production strategies with the need to acknowledge that it cannot be all about least cost production. The dairy-calf-to-beef model outlined in these pages shows that there is potential for some economic return from surplus calves from dairy herds, provided farmers are willing to accept that these calves cannot be seen, either by themselves or the general public, as an uneconomic appendage to dairy production. Brian Wickham's comments on the surge in Friesian fertility lends credence to the view that the Jersey influence on our dairy herd, once seen as a panacea for our increasingly infertile dairy herd, has been usurped by a spectacular resurgence in Friesian fertility performance. If the Jersey gene was a silver fertility bullet, it is no longer the case.



- 4 Upfront
- 8 Business News
- 12 Interview
- Pat Murphy, Vice Chairman of Glanbia
- 14 Feature
- A well-planned breeding programme
- 17 Education
- 22 Feature
- Protecting water quality
- 43 Management Hints
- 50 Machinery
- 62 Farm Safety
- 63 ICMSA
- 64 Rural Life
- 66 Very End

Dairy Focus

- 26 Irish dairy, sustainable dairy
- 28 Maintain butterfat in early-mid lactation
- 32 The value of fresh milk
- 35 Twenty20 Beef Club success
- 38 Dairy breeding with Brian Wickham
- 40 Supporting the transition cow to prevent ketosis



What hope for Agricultural Shows in 2021?



With Covid cases escalating again across Europe, the possibility of holding any of the major agricultural shows in 2021, is looking more and more remote by the day. While many of the agricultural and equestrian shows scheduled for the early months of 2021 in the UK have been cancelled, there is optimism that, from mid-summer onwards, British farmers can look forward to meeting old acquaintances at race meetings, show-jumping events and agricultural shows. Time will tell as to how effective the fast-tracked vaccine programme across the pond is in eliminating the scourge of Covid from the national psyche. Meanwhile, on this side of the Irish Sea there seems little realistic prospect of any major public events

happening for at least several months. The World Ploughing Championships are scheduled for Ratheniska in County Laois next September. If Covid vaccinations are well advanced by next July then a trip to Laois is a viable prospect. This may be the last chance for holding the World event in Ireland for many years. Russia is earmarked to host the World Ploughing in 2022, followed by Estonia in 2023. Such is the forward planning involved that the schedule for the next fifteen years is already full with Kenya pencilled in to provide the venue for the WPC in 2036. Meanwhile the FTMTA announced earlier this year that their big Grass&Muck event is still a possibility in 2021, although no

indication of possible dates has been given yet by the organisers, which is fully understandable. The machinery organisation will shortly appoint a successor to Gary Ryan as CEO. Ryan's successor will have to hit the ground running if the Covid cloud dissipates and a Grass&Muck event gets the go ahead. Gary Ryan did an amazing job for the organisation and, together with his organising committee, displayed all that is best in farm machinery, both at the biannual Punchestown Machinery Show and Grass&Muck, which immediately became a go-to event for farmers, dealers and manufacturers. Holding it in the centrally located Gurteen College was a masterstroke.

What's in a name?

The labelling row which has broken out between supermarket giants Aldi and Lidl and the IFA could get very dirty with legal writs already flying. According to IFA President Tim Cullinan, putting local sounding names on milk products is a marketing device designed to give consumers the impression the products are coming from local suppliers. However, the supermarkets have hit back, claiming they have worked with many suppliers for over twenty years and that the IFA are playing petty politics with this misleading campaign against the German multiples. Own-brand labelling has been around for years with Dunnes and Quinnsworth starting the trend in the 1970s. The use of spurious brand names to convey local provenance is nothing new and certainly not confined to Lidl or Aldi marketing. Under the surface, what is really at stake for IFA is ensuring that producers get properly remunerated for their costs of production rather than how it is marketed. There has been a continuing erosion of the end margin returning to the producer with the percentage of the end price for fresh milk, for instance, reducing from 43 per cent to 34 per cent in the past 25 years.

TALK TO
FBD INSURANCE
TODAY TO
FIND OUT WHY
9 OUT OF 10
CUSTOMERS
STAY WITH US.*

FBD has been supporting Ireland's farming community for over **50** years. With a network of branches nationwide, our expert team is on hand to help with your insurance needs.

Visit [fbd.ie](https://www.fbd.ie) to find your nearest branch or call us on 01 7617 617

SUPPORT.
IT'S WHAT
WE DO.



FBD
INSURANCE

Ornua not for spreading the Kerrygold brand



We see Ornua has won a case against Kerry Plc in relation to Kerry's ambition to brand register and market its Kerrymaid dairy products outside Ireland and the UK. While Kerry is a well-known holiday destination for tourists from across the globe, the European Court of Justice ruled that continental European consumers would not be able to distinguish between Kerrygold and Kerrymaid, so it disallowed Kerry's request for registration of the Kerrymaid brand across European countries. The EU Court did say that the Kerrygold and Kerrymaid butter brands can continue to peacefully co-exist in fridges in the UK and Ireland. However, it insisted that if the brands were side by side in non-English speaking EU countries it would lead to confusion among butter lovers. Kerrygold has enjoyed four decades of success in Germany and also commands a premium price in most Mediterranean countries. Ornua has successfully protected its valuable brand against all comers, Kerry-based or not.

A Spring Show comeback

Could the Spring Show be about to make a comeback, albeit at a different venue? We believe that talks are ongoing with the RDS and the Punchestown Festival Committee with regard to putting on a joint Agricultural – Rural show in 2023. While the talks at the moment are in the early stages, it's an interesting move for the RDS Agricultural Committee. Holding such an event in the Simmonscourt space might have been a logical decision, in order to attract the all-important urban audience. That, however, might not be an attractive venue for rural attendees, especially those hoping to showcase their livestock, if that turns out to be an aspect of the proposed Spring Show Two. A Bealtaine Festival might be just what is needed to celebrate all that is positive about Irish agriculture after the dark days of Covid have been banished. The concept fits in perfectly with the RDS's 350 years of commitment to the promotion of Irish agriculture. On another theme entirely, the RDS is expected to be a major location for a new Disney movie, expected to start production in the summer. It could be a very busy period ahead for Geraldine Ruane, the RDS new Chief Executive who took up her role last month. It's an exciting time for the organisation.

The real cost of cheap food

An interesting YouTube presentation caught our eye recently: titled as 'The Greenhouses of Almeria: The Garden of Europe', it gives an insight into how and where most of the tomatoes, cucumbers and aubergines that European consumers eat are produced. Hailed as the Spanish miracle, this region of Spain was previously regarded as offering little in terms of agricultural productivity. Now it produces 65 per cent of the EU's tomatoes, 80 per cent of its cucumbers and an estimated 90 per cent of the Union's aubergine requirements. Upwards of 3 billion tonnes of these food commodities are grown annually in Almeria, helping satisfy European consumers insatiable appetite for cheap fruit and vegetables. The produce value is estimated at €3 billion annually. The Almeria region only receives around 20 mm of rainfall each year so finite groundwater sources are tapped at a depth of 2,000 metres for water supply. The soil is so poor that an artificial soil growing medium is imported to support the hydroponic production system. Forty thousand hectares of Almeria are covered in plastic to facilitate the intensive production system. With temperatures regularly hitting 45 degrees under the plastic greenhouses, it is not a workplace most Irish farmers would be either familiar with or want to work in. The workforce is mostly made up of low-paid immigrant labourers from North Africa, many of them without legal work status in the EU. This is the reality of cheap food on supermarket shelves.

Fast broadband coming fast



There was a welcome email message sent to thousands of homes and business premises across the country in the past month. It came from National Broadband Ireland and confirmed that specific geographic areas are being surveyed and prepared for access to the Fibre-to-the-home network. To add to the positivity, the email included an anticipated date for connection. The novel broadband system is expected to deliver speeds of up to 1Gbps for business and residential users, with a minimum speed of 500Mbps. Despite the challenges posed by the Covid pandemic, work is clearly progressing with a workforce upwards of 800 people involved in the various stages of implementing the national broadband plan. It cannot come too soon, though, in fairness, many of the existing broadband providers have upped their game to provide some level of broadband access to hundreds of thousands of customers around Ireland, as the country struggles to work remotely, learn remotely and even socially interact remotely. Trump's Operation Warp Speed in relation to vaccination could just as easily describe the seismic shift to online communication everywhere and especially on farms with rafts of regulatory and business interaction now conducted over the internet.

Alltech launches human health company Acutia

Alltech, a global leader in the animal health industry, is applying its more than 40 years of scientific innovation and proven nutrition expertise to human health. Launching on March 24, Acutia, a wholly owned subsidiary of Alltech, combines science and sustainability to provide high-quality supplements that enhance everyday nutrition and improve long-term wellness.

"This is an exciting and pivotal moment in Alltech's long history of improving nutrient value throughout the food supply chain," said Dr. Mark Lyons, president and CEO of Alltech. "Acutia is a natural extension of our business, allowing us to directly support people in their pursuit of improved wellness. In a time when we are all deeply aware of the importance of our health, this launch is particularly meaningful."

Acutia's initial line of products will be rolled out in phases, beginning with Acutia Selenium. This supplement provides immune system support, antioxidant benefits and essential nutrition and helps maintain healthy thyroid function.

Acutia Brain Health, which will follow later this spring, provides support for cognitive health and brain function, as well as antioxidant benefits and essential nutrients, by combining selenium, vitamin C and plant-based omega-3 DHA. The selenium found in Acutia Selenium and Acutia Brain Health is made from a specialized, high-quality strain of brewer's yeast to optimize the quality, absorption, safety and efficacy of the products.

Rounding out the initial launch of supplements is Acutia Digestive Health, which will be available later this year.

Acutia products are backed by the Alltech Life Sciences division, which conducts research on digestive health, cognitive health, brain function and cellular health. In 2019, researchers with Alltech Life Sciences achieved a breakthrough that offers a possible alternative to current insulin treatments for those living with diabetes.

"While people associate Alltech with the provision of products and solutions for the agricultural sector, we have been studying the potential benefits of a number of our products for human health for many years," said Dr. Ronan Power, vice president and chief scientific officer at Alltech.

"Acutia supplements have arisen from part of that work. They have been extensively tested to ensure safety, quality and efficacy. We firmly believe that consumers will come to value these supplements as a key part of their overall health regimens."

Ornua appoints John McRedmond as Chief Risk & Compliance Officer



Ornua Co-Operative has announced the appointment of its General Counsel, John McRedmond, to the role of Chief Risk & Compliance Officer.

As Chief Risk & Compliance Officer, John will join Ornua's Executive leadership team and will be responsible for identifying, analysing and mitigating risk, including commercial risk management, operational risk, legal, insurance,

corporate procurement, and compliance. This role will be pivotal in supporting Ornua to deliver on its new five-year strategic plan, Ornua 2025, which seeks to drive valuable and profitable growth in 110 markets worldwide while protecting the long-term sustainability of the Ornua business.

In addition to this new appointment, John will continue in his role as Secretary of Ornua, where he is responsible for the provision of governance and corporate secretariat support to the board of directors of Ornua and its sub-committees.

John joined Ornua in 2010 as Group Legal Counsel and has built a team responsible for identifying and managing legal risk across the Ornua Group. Prior to this, he worked in the Corporate Group at Matheson, where he gained extensive experience in M&A and general commercial law.

Commenting on the appointment, John Jordan, CEO Ornua, said: "We are delighted to appoint John to the role of Chief Risk & Compliance Officer for Ornua and we warmly welcome him to our executive team. With global markets constantly evolving, the external environment is becoming increasingly complex. John will play an integral role in enabling Ornua to navigate change and in identifying and analysing our risk portfolio and mitigating against this, protecting the business now and into the future. He brings over 20 years' experience to this role, and his contribution will be invaluable in providing Ornua with the support and guidance required to continue on our trajectory of sustainable and valuable growth around the world."

A qualified solicitor and member of the Law Society of Ireland, John holds a Bachelor of Business Studies degree from Dublin City University and a Diploma in Corporate Finance from Chartered Accountants Ireland.

Improved access for Irish beef exports to Japan

The Minister of State with responsibility for new market development, Martin Heydon T.D., has announced that agreement has been reached with the Japanese authorities on the export of Irish minced meat and meat preparations.

Following the conclusion of negotiations between his officials and their counterparts in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Minister Heydon said: "I am pleased to announce that we have successfully modified the terms of the export health certificate for beef to allow for the export of minced meat and beef burgers to Japan."

This expansion of beef access follows on from the removal of the age restriction on beef exports secured in May 2019 when beef from cattle of all ages became eligible for export to Japan.

Speaking about the latest developments the Minister stated: "This good news for Irish beef exports reflects the cordial and productive relationships that have been developed with official and trade contacts since the appointment of an agricultural attaché in the Irish Embassy in Tokyo in 2019 and the placement of a Bord Bia Market specialist in Japan."

Irish agri-food exports to Japan were worth more than €147 million in 2020, an increase of €14.6 million or 11 per cent since 2019. The European trade agreement with Japan, which entered into force in 1 February 2019 as the largest open trade zone in the world, provides an excellent opportunity to expand food and drink trade with Japan.

Irish beef exports to Japan increased from 2,323 tonnes in 2019 to 4,120 tonnes in 2020, growing in value from €9.5 million to €15.7 million in the same period. The majority of this was in the form of bovine tongues, a delicacy in Japan, and other beef offal. The agreement of access for Irish minced meat and burgers to Japan should help Ireland increase sales due to the ease of shipping those products by sea and the Ireland's reputation as supplier of beef burgers in the foodservice channel.

Concluding, Minister Heydon noted: "Enhancing access to existing markets is as important as opening new markets in maximising the potential of Irish beef exports for the benefit of all stakeholders in the sector."

TRACE MINERAL INJECTION PRE-BREEDING

EVEN WELL-FED COWS CAN BENEFIT FROM "TOP UPS" AT A HIGH DEMAND PERIOD.

One of the key performance indicators and a major determining factor for farm profitability is compact calving.

Adequate trace mineral levels are vital for reproductive performance in cattle. Copper deficiency can lead to decreased conception rates, infertility, silent heats and foetal resorption.¹ Zinc deficient cows display abnormal oestrous as well as a decrease in fertility.²

At critical phases in production like breeding, increased demand for minerals, variable oral intake, rumen antagonism and poor absorption can result in oral minerals taking weeks to restore a cow's trace mineral stores, which alone may not be enough to ensure cattle are in adequate trace mineral status to meet profitable targets of a compact calving.

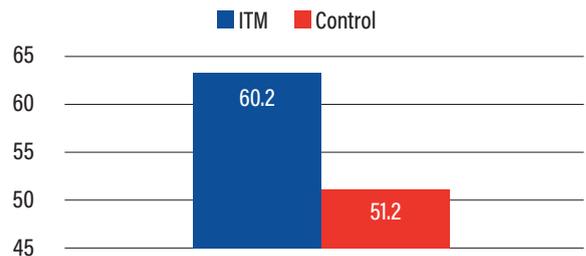
Trial work has shown that strategic injectable trace mineral "Top Up" can help to improve calving distribution.³

Injectable trace minerals bypass the harsh rumen environment and antagonists, raising circulating trace minerals within 8 to 10 hours and liver levels within 24 hours.⁴

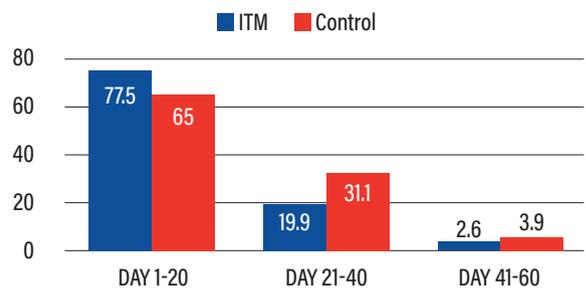
The study illustrated in the graph below indicates that supplementing cows with an injectable trace mineral (ITM) may improve reproductive performance indicators significantly.

Ask your vet how injectable pre-breeding trace mineral supplementation could help get your cows and heifers back in calf more quickly^{3,4}

CONCEPTION RATE TO FIXED TIME AI³



IMPROVED % CALVING DISTRIBUTION³



1. Hollister C.E. et al., Vet J. 2003 Sep;166(2):125-39.

2. Underwood, E.J. (1981) The Mineral Nutrition of Livestock. 2nd Edition, Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux, Slough.

3. Mundell J.R. et al. The Professional Animal Scientist 28, 82-88(2012)

4. Pogge D. et al. J. Anim. Sci. 90, 2692-2698 (2012)

Email info@virbac.ie to register your interest in a free consultation on the benefits of injectable trace minerals (state your county) or contact the Virbac Team directly.

THE VIRBAC TEAM IN IRELAND

Oliver Dillon (086) 8210418 (North East, East, South East)
 Peter Gannon (086) 7725514 (North West, West, South West)
 Joanna McNally +447887422565 (NI)
 Eugene Smyth (086) 8210912

FURTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM:

Virbac Ltd. Unit 16 Woolpit Business Park, Windmill Avenue,
 Woolpit, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP30 9UP.
 Tel: +44 (0) 1359 243243.

Virbac

InTouch

Fertility: The basis to a successful farming cycle

Cathal Bohane, InTouch Nutrition

A lot of farms look forward to this time of the year. Following the change in the time, April brings a stretch in the evening and the 'magic day' in grazing terminology. The day when grass supply meets demand, and we are getting into high-quality, second-round grazing. Fertiliser should be out for the first cut at this stage, and while calving does not seem too long ago, we must again begin the cycle of breeding to keep everything within the yearly cycle.

While most farms will not kick off breeding for another few weeks, now is the ideal time to prepare for success. Breeding is like the championship; you have to be very much hitting the ground for the first round, as defeat here will result in another crack a few weeks later in the qualifiers. If we do not get it right here, we are facing relegation.

Pregnancy Rate = Submission Rate x Conception Rate

Putting it simply, the above equation is what fertility is all about. Empty cows or cows not scanned in-calf is usually the measurement of a fertility issue. To solve these issues, we need to take a closer look at the numbers as to why this has happened. Sometimes small changes can yield big benefits, and if we are demoralised with 15% of cows not in-calf and this is a 100-cow herd, by simply getting a further 5 cows in-calf we can get this below 10%.

We need to examine what area of fertility we are having issues with based on the equation above. Submission rate is physically seeing the cows in heat, and our target is to have >90% of cows (that are available to be served) viewed in heat in the first three weeks of breeding. Conception rate is physically getting this cow to conceive. There are myriad reasons for this to happen or not, from serving process and technique to nutrition, body condition score, genetics and more. A target for this stage of the process is 65%.

For a 100-cow herd, meeting the submission rate target and getting 65% of these in-calf to first service and 65% to second service for the rest of the cows, there should be approximately 86 cows in-calf at this stage.

There are many things to get right in a short period, and for this reason, preparation is key this month. For the month of April, we should be doing a pre-breeding check, whether this is using visual appraisal, tail paint or some form of technology. This is to make sure that all cows that are available to cycle are cycling before the start of breeding. If you do not have an opportunity to examine, scan and/or treat so that these cows have the best opportunity to breed in the first or second cycle.

In summary, now is the time to focus on getting cows cycling and treat non-cycling cows. Once breeding begins, we have really only two chances to get our cows back in-calf. Otherwise, our calving interval will be slipping.

Genetic science driving down methane emissions

The ongoing farm-based research being conducted by ABP, Teagasc and ICBF, continues to deliver positive outcomes in reducing methane emissions in beef production. The Irish and UK commercial cattle farms being used in the research focus on using best-of-breed genetics for dairy-bred beef cattle to deliver higher productivity. In turn this reduces methane outputs over the lifetime of the animal. Younger slaughter ages are made possible by focusing on animals with better feed conversion ratios and faster growth rates. There is now verifiable data that methane reductions of up to 40 per cent are achievable in addition to improved meat value yields upwards of €100 per animal. These financial figures correlate with those coming from other dairy-calf-to-beef programmes including Teagasc's Green Acres Calf-to-Beef Programme and the Glanbia/Kepak Twenty20 Beef Club. The ABP-promoted research programme, which has been ongoing for the past six years has data from 4,000 cattle which have been accumulated by ICBF. The programme results have been verified independently and, if adopted widely across the sector, have the potential to deliver substantially on the methane mitigation targets required under the recently published Climate Change Bill. That's not to say that it will be easy. The management standards involved are far higher than those available on many cattle farms currently, and the demonstration farms have the advantages of intensive support and advice from ABP, Teagasc and ICBF. Nevertheless, this appears to be a practical blueprint for the delivery of significant reductions in enteric methane emissions and the advice, support and information regarding the adoption of best breeding practices are available to every dairy and cattle farmer. The research disproves the notion that the only remedy to meet our climate change targets is a crude cull of the Irish cattle herd.

Dairymaster's new "DraftNow" system

Dairymaster has announced the launch of "DraftNow", a standalone drafting system. It includes a new software programme and mobile App, which allows the farmer to easily sort cows remotely if necessary. It can be installed on farms with or without Dairymaster's auto identification system and is suitable with other makes of parlours. All information related to drafting cows can be viewed on the PC or App. The DraftNow intuitive dashboard allows for a selection of functions including: Easy to navigate and select cows for drafting; Permanent and scheduled drafting for example, cows who are lame, insemination etc; Automatically draft cows with no tags or unknown tags; Select by group for drafting for example, dry off; Gives a history of cows drafted; Interactive grid to re-order and filter cows, groups etc.



ifac

See clearly today so
you can better plan
for tomorrow.

FarmPro

Expert advice and real-time data,
putting you in control.

Learn more at
ifac.ie/farm-pro

Or call **1800 33 44 22**

Supported by





GLANBIA TO CURTAIL PEAK MILK

A ceiling on growth due to a shortfall in processing capacity at Glanbia is affecting milk suppliers. **Matt O’Keeffe** talks to Pat Murphy, Vice Chairman of Glanbia.

Since 2014 the Glanbia milk pool has grown from 1.75 billion litres to almost three billion litres. That’s a compound annualised growth in volume of 6.5 per cent. It is clear from producer surveys that the growth story should have some distance to run yet. Even maintaining the Glanbia herd at present levels would result in a significant lift in output over the coming years as cows mature and improved genetics kick in. The reality was that further cow number growth was anticipated in tandem with improved productivity within the existing herd.

All of that has changed with the announcement from the Glanbia Ireland board that, due to a shortfall in processing capacity, an effective ceiling with limited growth allowances, has been put in place for at least the next two years and possibly longer depending on circumstances. The specific circumstances are that a joint venture between Dutch company A-Ware and Glanbia to develop a high-end cheese manufacturing facility at Belview has been stopped in its tracks by a legal challenge from An Taisce. It had been expected that this €180 million investment, with capacity to process 450 million litres of milk, would be on stream to cope with further milk volume expansion from 2022 onwards. With the latest legal challenge due to be adjudicated in June, that date has been pushed back by two years.

Should An Taisce’s appeal against the Bord Pleanála decision, which gave the go-ahead for the development be successful, then all bets are off on future milk expansion for Glanbia milk suppliers. Even if An Taisce’s objections are rejected, there is no certainty that the environmental watch-dog’s campaign will not continue in some other judicial forum, postponing indefinitely any hope of Glanbia increasing its processing capacity.

Peak production curbs

Pat Murphy is a vice chairman of Glanbia. He outlined the situation to Matt O’Keeffe: “We remain committed to growth and, in anticipation of the Belview development, we had enough additional milk on-stream to run that factory from the start at two-thirds of capacity. We cannot process that milk in 2022 and 2023 because of the legal objections

from An Taisce. That's the background to our milk supply management proposals. There are two aspects to the proposals. The first is a milk production retirement scheme, alongside a peak supply management policy. We hope the retirement scheme will be an economic proposition for suppliers considering exiting milk production for whatever reasons. If it is successful, we believe it can remove two to three million litres per week from our current peak production. Investing elsewhere in increased capacity for that peak period would cost up to €35 million so the retirement option, if availed of by sufficient current milk producers, is a viable proposition. On an annual basis the retirement scheme could take out up to ninety million litres."

An Taisce perspective

The Glanbia vice chairman outlined An Taisce's rationale in objecting to the Belview joint venture: "They are not objecting to the cheese factory as such. Their objection is based on the increased milk output to supply the factory putting increased pressure on biodiversity, water quality and methane emissions from cows. In effect, it is an objection to the cows not the processing of the milk produced by the cows."

For milk producers this would seem to be a matter of semantics since the end result is the same – a barrier to further growth of their dairy enterprises.

Hard hit producers

Pat went on to confirm that Glanbia and its suppliers are actively engaged in promoting improved water quality, particularly through the ASSAP joint programme with Teagasc and in increasing on-farm biodiversity through a range of measures. In regard to milk processing, he bluntly confirmed the situation in which Glanbia finds itself: "We do not have a home for the extra milk coming from our suppliers. We are and have been cooperating with the other processors, particularly at that acute peak production twelve-week period. That milk was a cost to us so that we would have adequate volumes to run the Belview development at near capacity from the start. We expect that around seventy percent of our suppliers will not be seriously impacted. A further fifteen percent will suffer some impact and the other fifteen percent will be very heavily impacted by the curbs on peak milk supply which Glanbia is having to implement. That group are ambitious to grow their enterprises strongly. They have the land base in place to do so. They have invested in cows, land leases, slurry storage, milking and housing as well as other production costs. They are depending on being able to supply extra milk volumes in the years ahead to pay down the borrowings for that investment. We are fully conscious of these facts and there is no point in understating the serious impact the peak supply management policy will have on many of our members and suppliers."

A two-year hiatus – at least

The Glanbia representative concluded with a tentative

timeline for future progress: "Given the situation we are in, the Board has tried to come up with a policy that is fair and equitable to everyone. Most of the growth in milk output has come from existing suppliers, as distinct from new entrants. That reflects the frustration of so many producers who waited so long under quotas to develop their dairy farms and then grabbed the opportunity with both hands when the chance to expand came. Glanbia has been fully in-step with that expansion until these objections from An Taisce disrupted our plans. No one could have anticipated that An Taisce would appeal the original County Council decision to allow the Belview development, or that they would in turn appeal the Bord Pleanála decision which also allowed Belview to go ahead. If the latest objection is rejected and there are no further delays we could turn the sod on the joint venture with A-Ware by next September, commission the factory by the end of 2023 and start production in the Spring of 2024. That would make the peak production restriction policy a relatively short-term problem. Unfortunately, that scenario is full of 'ifs' and 'buts' with many things out of our control. The victims of this situation are the milk suppliers in the Glanbia milk catchment area. It is a big curtailment of dairy farmers businesses and their livelihoods. As a board, we are conscious of making the best decisions possible in the circumstances."

WANT TO SIGNIFICANTLY
REDUCE
MILK COOLING
COSTS...

GRANT
AIDED

SwiftCool Milk Silo DAIRYMASTER

- ✓ Best build quality
- ✓ Quicker cooling
- ✓ Instant communication with your tank
- ✓ Reduces the amount of electricity being used
- ✓ Lots of dimensions and size options available
- ✓ Precision temperature measurement

To learn more about the unique features of a
SwiftCool Milk Silo
CALL 1890 500 247
www.dairymaster.com

Milking - Feeding - Cooling - Manure Scrapers - Health & Fertility Monitoring

A well-planned breeding programme delivers best results

Matt O’Keeffe reports on learnings from a recent discussion group session with Matt Ryan and New Zealand-based Enda Hawe on reproductive management.

Last month, Matt Ryan and his discussion groups completed an intensive group session with New Zealand-based Enda Hawe on reproductive management. By any standards Enda’s management practices in ensuring optimum reproduction outcomes on his farm are impressive. Matt makes the point that the session was not meant to be a comprehensive instruction on reproductive management, rather it was meant to improve on existing knowledge and skills amongst his clients.

Four per cent empty rate

A summary of Enda’s herd performance confirms the efficacy of his management strategies. Milk solids (MS) on the Hawe farm are 490 kgs per cow on a concentrate input of 400 kgs per cow. That MS figure equates to 110 per cent of the cows liveweight. While the New Zealand herd empty, or not in calf, figure averages 13 per cent,



Enda's herd is running at 4 per cent empty over an 11-week breeding season. That figure is achieved without the use of a stock bull or teaser. The future target is to reduce that breeding season to ten weeks without impacting adversely on in-calf rates. The use of just 1.3 to 1.35 AI straws per pregnancy further confirms in practical terms what is possible when optimum breeding strategies are in place. These long-term strategies for breeding success have resulted in compacting the entire process to the extent that there are eight to nine days from start of calving to median calving date on the Hawe farm.

Achieving breeding goals

Enda has a few 'bon mots' that he adheres to in his approach. One is to stick closely but not dogmatically to the regime to achieve his breeding goals. He has a wall planner of the things that are non-negotiable.

The third pertinent point is that Enda's aim is not to break records on submission rate, but rather to set high thresholds for conception rates. Once a cow is pregnant/served, Enda's focus is on the cows not served. He runs two groups of cows, one pregnant and the other the non-pregnant cohort. The rationale for this strategy is that, over time, there are far fewer cows to monitor. After six weeks of AI, very-short gestation bulls are introduced. Enda takes the economically sensible approach of preferring to milk nine very good cows instead of ten average cows. He is then able to cull the inefficient cows and reduce the number of replacements required to maintain herd numbers. The Hawe herd requires one hundred replacement heifers for the seven hundred strong herd. That equates to fifteen heifers or less per one hundred cows.

The importance of days in milk

Enda is adamant that the key to achieving high kgs of MS is the number of days the cows are milking. That in turn is achieved through good reproductive management. A key objective, he insists, is to reduce the mating season from twelve weeks to ten weeks. That in turn will deliver a shortened calving season.

In fact, Enda considers the breeding season as a thirteen-week period encompassing ten weeks of actual breeding, preceded by three weeks of what he terms 'pre-mating' during which much of the necessary data is gathered to make the ten-week intensive service period a success. Enda admits to not being an advocate of CIDR's, mainly because

of their cost in comparison to PG (prostaglandins), which are naturally occurring hormones in cows. When used, the CIDR's are recycled to reduce cost without impacting on efficacy. The overall aim is to achieve four heat cycles in the ten weeks of breeding.

The economic logic of high reproductive management success is clear. A missed heat costs €150. There are, Enda adds, ancillary benefits in terms of early born replacements achieving target growth rates so that they, in turn calve down at optimum size and weight. An extended breeding season will result in the following year's calving period running into the next breeding season, with all the pressure that places on the system and personnel on the farm. Ultimately, if calving loses its compactness, Enda stresses, there is an erosion of Milk Solids production.

All of this emphasis on achieving compact breeding

provides opportunities to improve herd performance by being able to cull

underperforming cows. One ambitious aim for the Hawe herd is to calve 80 per cent of heifers in the first eight days of calving. Currently, Enda is achieving a seventy-seven per cent success rate in this regard.

These long-term strategies for breeding success have resulted in compacting the entire process to the extent that there are eight to nine days from start of calving to median calving date on the Hawe farm.

Observation

Tail painting, combined with patient observation, is required for identifying cows in heat. That simple message is a key factor in Enda Hawe's successful breeding management. It is recognised through Irish research that cows can be in heat with only 30 per cent of paint removed. Even cows with 25 per cent paint removal have a 76 per cent chance of being in heat. Cows not submitted for AI in the first three weeks have Kamars (heat detection patches) attached.

Enda recognises the three-week heat recording period before insemination begins as particularly important. Among other advantages, it allows management to react to a missed heat and provided the data from pre-breeding is accurate, the cow can be assisted into heat with the application of PG. He describes the use of PG in the absence of in-heat records as a waste of both time and money.

Why Wait Programme

The breeding management of the Hawe herd involves selective use of PG to bring heats forward where appropriate. Cows observed in heat in the week or weeks before insemination can have subsequent heats brought forward into the first weeks of breeding, thus compacting the breeding season. Enda describes this tactic as the 'Why Wait Programme'. This programme is meticulously

organised with various colour coding applied to cows in different groups depending on in-heat dates. Attention to every detail is required including ensuring that cows and more especially heifers are on a rising plain of nutrition for two weeks before service and two weeks after. Enda takes every precaution to ensure that Body Condition Score (BCS) loss is kept to a minimum from calving to mating through good energy availability, absence of lameness and remediation of any health challenges. The grass allowance is 19-20 kg/cow per day, allocated every twelve hours during



the breeding season. In the event that buffering is required, straight barley is the preferred option. Checks are carried out pre-mating to ensure that cows have no post-calving infections. Enda Hawe makes the interesting observation that fat cows are a bigger problem than thin cows to get back in calf.

The human factor

Human interaction plays a key role in breeding management, according to Enda. He has developed a good relationship with his AI technician and ensures that everything possible is done to make his job as straightforward as possible. Pre-breeding, the technician visits the farm to discuss what is required and plan the breeding period. On AI visits, the cows are loaded for the technician, and all necessary facilities are in place to make the operation as fast and efficient as possible.

Interestingly, Enda does not use Jersey AI bulls. In his experience Jersey cows are more prone to milk fever and becoming overweight. That attitude may change with butterfat becoming more valuable and the quality of sexed semen is now changing the options to using beef or alternative AI sires.

In 2019, Enda served 59 cows with sexed semen and 36 went in calf. LIC gave him 5 straws per day over 12 days, so he carefully chooses his cows based on records. They must have had 2 heats, be in good BCS, and a good record of going in-calf. He is very careful with timing of AI, targeting 14 to 18 hours after the onset of heat. With sexed semen he had a 2.3 per cent lower conception rate than his herd average in 2019 but 6.8 per cent better than the full herd in 2020. He says he will use more sexed semen in the future as it will allow him breed more Wagyu and animal welfare requirements also need to be considered.

The heifer breeding strategy is planned around a double PG programme. Enda uses paint and scratch cards to monitor heats. To keep the system simple no second round of AI is used. Bulls are introduced immediately after the initial AI programme is completed. From Enda's experience his high submission/pregnancy rate in the first three weeks, is adequate. A bull to heifer ratio of 1:15 of the estimated non-pregnant heifers is the appropriate cover required. A scan twenty-eight days after the AI mating will determine any heifers mated by natural sire. Scanning is an integral part of the Hawe breeding management system.

Cow stress

Enda Hawe understands the fundamental impacts of stress on cows, especially around the breeding period. He will not mate a cow with mastitis or sickness. Increased SCC indicates herd stress. Lameness, he emphasises, will not allow a cow go in calf and must be resolved before breeding commences. Lameness can be kept to 3 per cent or below with care and attention, especially when handling and moving around the parlour area. Quads, he warns, must be driven in 1st gear and be 100 - 120 metres behind the slowest cow. Grazing should be managed so that AI'd cows go into a good field of grass near the parlour and do not mix with other cows thus minimising continuous mounting.

Good Deal / Bad Deal?

Niall Diffeley, a student of the UCD Food Business Strategy MSc – which is a collaborative programme between the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science and the UCD Smurfit School of Business – examines the pros and cons of the EU Farm to Fork Strategy in the context of the Irish agri-food sector



This article aims to evaluate EU Farm to Fork strategy, the reaction to the strategy, and what implications it may have for the Irish Agri-Food sector. The strategy provides a framework which aims to transition the EU Agri-Food sector to a more sustainable model in the areas of production, food processing and distribution, consumption, as well as food loss and waste prevention. Outlined is the role that the food and agricultural sectors will play in achieving the EU's overall goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. This policy is one of the core aspects of the European Green Deal, aiming to make food systems fair, healthy and environmentally friendly. The Farm to Fork Strategy provides the framework for the food industry to transition towards a more sustainable module and future. This is a cross-agency strategy, and is not under the portfolio of the Agriculture Commissioner, which has been criticised by some within the sector. One of the key components of the strategy is to provide a "just transition" by building a more robust and resilient food system which will encompass environmental, financial and social sustainability.

Why the need?

There is a myriad of issues that the strategy aims to address, such as the fact that in the EU, 20 per cent of all food produced is wasted.

The policy document outlines also highlight some issues in relation to affordability and quality, harking back to some of the key frameworks of the Treaty of Rome in 1960 when the Common Agricultural Policy was first introduced. Many of those issues are still prevalent today as is the case that 33 million people in the EU cannot afford a quality meal every second day.

The strategy also highlights dietary imbalances within the EU diet, with average intake of energy, red meat, sugars, salt and fats continuing to exceed recommendations while consumptions of whole-grain cereals, fruit and vegetables, legumes and nuts are all insufficient. These imbalances have led to over 50 per cent of the adult population in the EU now being overweight. The importance of having resilient and secure food supply chains is also underlined in the framework, and have been particularly tested during the current Covid-19 pandemic. These food supply chains will come under more sustained, long-term pressure as climate change comes into even sharper focus. While the EU Agricultural system has reduced its GHG emissions some 20 per cent since 1990, agriculture emissions still account for about 10.3 per cent of the EU's total GHG Emissions. Therefore, it is hoped that this new framework will combat some of the issues identified previously while also reducing environmental impact from Agriculture.

Implications for Food Producers

From an economics point of view, much of this strategy document is focusing on scarce resources within the EU food supply chain and looks at how to best manage and allocate these resources in the most efficient and fair manner. The Commission aims to reduce chemical pesticide use by 50 per cent and fertiliser application by 20 per cent by 2030. The Commission also outlines its plans to have 25 per cent of European Agricultural land under organic farming by the same year. Some of the other issues raised were in the areas of microbial resistance, biodiversity, animal welfare, new eco-schemes as well as reducing Green House Gas emissions from the livestock sectors. From an Irish perspective, a lot of work has been done on farm level and producer level while working with Bord Bia in the Quality Assurance and Origin Green schemes, as well as the Teagasc Carbon Navigator. This leaves Irish farmers in a unique and strong position

to meet these criteria when they do come into play, however it is important that producers and farmers take a proactive approach to this framework and continue to work to improve standards, efficiency while also reaching production and export targets. However, despite the strong position of Irish agriculture to meet these targets, there are issues in relation to the increased costs or reduction in output that these measures will have. This would cause further downward pressure on farm income, margins and profits in a sector where many are struggling as it is.

Criticism

The policy has been met with criticism in some quarters, both nationally and internationally. The Irish Farmers' Association has accused the EU's Farm to Fork and biodiversity strategies of being "unrealistic" and said that they could push farmers out of business. Some critics have pointed out that "The European Union's Green Deal risks becoming a bad deal for the planet... EU member states are outsourcing environmental damage to other countries, while taking the credit for green policies at home". Professor Alan Matthews, Professor Emeritus of European Agricultural Policy, Trinity College Dublin has argued that, "to properly incentivise, motivate and track progress in the farming sector, a focus on agricultural emissions alone is misleading and should be supplemented by also considering changes in land use emissions and removals that are under the control of farmers". These concerns will need to be taken into consideration at the Commission and at National Government level to implement changes that will have the least impact on sustainability and viability of the sector.

Implications for Food Businesses

Interesting research from farming, food and agribusiness consultancy firm ifac, in their 2020 food and agribusiness

Want to be rewarded for your low claims record?

Get up to 30% off AXA SMART FARM INSURANCE.

Know You Can

axa.ie/farm • 0906 435070 • In Branch

Terms & conditions apply. Claims free on your farm for the past 3 years. Windscreen claims are excluded. AXA Insurance dac is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

report, indicated that only 8 per cent of SMEs in the Food and Agribusiness Sectors were very aware of the Farm to Fork strategy, with a further 3 per cent indicating that they were somewhat aware. This will need to change for firms operating in these sectors, and business owners and workers will need to know the implications of the Farm to Fork strategy on their business, as well as any possible opportunities or challenges that it may create for their business.

One of the important takeaways and supports for businesses from the Farm to Fork framework is the expansion of Horizon Europe funding, which was previously unavailable for firms in the food and agriculture industries. A €10 billion fund will be made available to fund and drive innovation in the sector.

Reaction from Food Businesses

In the strategy, the Commission aims to develop, along with relevant stakeholders, an EU Code of Conduct responsible for business and marketing practice. This will show the way for the retail and food industry to reduce their carbon footprint and to increase the affordability of sustainable food options. The framework also aims to encourage the increased use of a circular economy business model in the retail, food processing and SME sectors. Food packaging is also an issue, with the Commission hoping to support and encourage innovation in this area to allow firms to transition to more sustainable, less damaging packaging. There is also scope for food processors and suppliers to implement new strategies to increase the efficiency and reduce the impact of their supply, processing and distribution systems. In the area of marketing, the Farm to Fork Strategy will revise standards and further develop legislation for geographic indicators (GIs) in Food. In addition, reducing food waste and moving towards increasing energy efficiency and use of renewables is also highlighted as key components of the policy. Michael Dowling, former Secretary General of Ireland's Department of Agriculture and now Head of Agri Strategy at ALB, commented that, "The potential benefits to the Irish food sector of taking a proactive approach on the issue of sustainability might include building market position over the medium to long term and an enhancement of our reputation". Bord Bia have also stated that they are already in a strong position in terms of working on sustainable standards, marketing the Irish food and drink sector as a sustainable food producer as well as already having taken a proactive approach when it comes to geographical indicators.

Economic Impact of the F2F Strategy in Ireland

With dairy and beef being Ireland's two largest value agricultural commodities and export product, any reduction in the use of artificial Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium fertilizers would have a significant impact on farm output as well as income. Some data suggests that reducing nitrogen application by 20 per cent on Irish dairy farms would result in a 10 per cent decrease in net profits. This would further harm many farmers who are already

struggling financially, as well as reducing throughput for processors and therefore exports to high value- added markets. Reduction in food produced would result in food prices increasing, further widening the consumption imbalance in the EU and leading to further food insecurity. It may also lead to larger number of food imports from nations with less efficient production systems to make up the deficit, leading to carbon leakage. With Ireland being a small, open economy, any reduction in food exports would have a large impact on the nations balance of payments, as well as employment. Given that the agri-food industry is Ireland's largest indigenous industry and employs 173,400 people or 8.6 per cent of total employment, any reduction in production and processing industry would surely lead to a slowdown in the economy which would pose a threat to direct and indirect employment linked to the sector. With targets under the scheme for 25 per cent of all EU food to be organic by 2030, the Farm to Fork strategy also raises issues in relation to the prevalence of the organic sector in Ireland, as well as market demand for same. Currently, land use for organic farming only accounts for 1.4 per cent of the total agricultural land in the country, the third lowest among EU member states. This is despite the fact that as recently as 2016, 70 per cent of organic lamb produced on the island was sold under a traditional label. This raises the question of whether European consumers are willing to pay a premium for organic produce in order to make it economically viable for farmers to produce, or will it be more of the same?

Conclusion

Given the substantial effort by all players along the Irish Agri-Food supply chain to ensure the transparency, sustainability and traceability of Irish food and market this on the global marketplace, may some of this competitive advantage become eroded with this new policy measure? Given that Ireland is well placed to meet many of the measures outlined in the Farm to Fork framework, it may cause some member states to catchup to Ireland and the lofty standards that have been set. It will be important that all stakeholders in the Irish Agri-Food sector ensure not to become complacent, and continue to be a European and world leader in the production of sustainable and quality food. A collaborative and holistic approach will be necessary for the correct implementation of the strategy within Ireland, with all stakeholders working together and in order to achieve the most preferable outcome for the Irish Agri-Food sector.

From a consumer point of view, there will be a continued focus on health and diet, as well as empowering consumers to make healthy, sustainable and nutritious food choices in the future. Reducing food loss and waste will also be a key focus, with the Commission hoping to nudge consumers into making more sustainable food choices. Consumers may also have get used to paying more for their locally produced food or paying less for imported, less efficiently produced food.

References available on request

Crop disease management

Ciaran Collins, Teagasc Crops Specialist, provides detailed advice on timing of application for the all-important final fungicide on Spring Barley crops*.

The objective, as outlined by Ciaran and well understood by grain producers, is to maintain the green leaf area as long as possible into the grain fill period of the crop. This is achieved by targeting key leaf diseases such as rhynchosporium and ramularia. The Teagasc advice is based on many years research where fungicide timing trials were conducted to establish the most effective disease suppression outcomes. For winter barley the effectiveness of the last spray depends greatly on timing it before the ear is fully emerged. That coincides with growth stage 49. Researchers also note very poor responses from Autumn applications and from applying a fungicide post ear emergence, which equates to growth stage 59. In the case of spring barley, there is significantly higher yield response when the final fungicide is applied at growth stage 49 - early stages of awn emergence. Ciaran advised that the fungicide make-up should include a mix of active ingredients targeting the key diseases, particularly ramularia.

Developing IPM strategies for Septoria

Septoria tritici blotch continues to be the most economically destructive disease of Irish winter wheat crops. The loss of the chlorothalonil fungicide last year further emphasises the need to develop fully integrated disease control strategies to combat the disease. These were key messages delivered by Teagasc Researcher Stephen Kildea in his presentation to the Teagasc Tillage conference back in February.

Septoria is recognised as the most challenging disease to manage in winter wheat production in this country. Stephen Kildea provided very important research updates on how to control the disease in his presentation. Septoria tritici blotch thrives in mild, damp conditions so it is no surprise that it is a regular disease challenge for Irish wheat crops.

Stephen outlined defense mechanisms from three perspectives. The first was the disease itself, then the

host crop and thirdly the environment in which the crop is growing. Avoidance is the first line of defense and minimising the impact of carry-over from a previous crop nearby is important. The general advice in this regard is to sow as late as possible, allowing for the need to establish in good conditions. This reduces the opportunity for spores to travel and establish in the crop as it emerges before the dormant winter period. In the latest research on Septoria twenty-one field trials were conducted over the 2016-2020 period across Ireland, England and Scotland. The factors studied included sowing date, variety resistance, seeding rate and fungicide intensity. Varietal resistance is a first line of defense, as Stephen confirmed. However, it is acknowledged that very high levels of resistance are required if growers are to be able to significantly reduce the use of fungicide used in crops. In sourcing and breeding varieties in the future that have high levels of septoria resistance it is important to determine that the inherent resistance is durable and sustainable, as Stephen emphasised in his presentation. Some varieties which initially showed very high septoria resistance subsequently lost that resistance. The reality is that the adaptability of the pathogen makes long term varietal resistance very difficult, as the Teagasc research confirmed.

The third line of defense is one that must be managed and safeguarded, Stephen Kildea warned. Effective fungicides deliver high levels of protection but if that is to continue to be the case, fungicide choice, application rates and timings must be managed well, matching fungicide applications to disease risk. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for septoria control and management in winter wheat, as Stephen explains, includes careful variety selection before sowing, delaying sowing as late as possible and, as mentioned above, matching spray timing and fungicide use to the disease risk in the crop.

***Information source: Teagasc YouTube**

CERIMAXX

BARLEY PACK

DECOY® 250 EC

**BETTER
TOGETHER**

PRIAXOR® EC

They say there's strength in numbers - and that's definitely the case when it comes to safeguarding your barley. Cerimaxx Barley Pack is the most effective T2 combination available, providing exceptional control of the key barley diseases, namely Rhynchosporium, Net Blotch and Mildew, in addition to preserving excellent straw quality.

Ask your agronomist about Cerimaxx Barley Pack at T2 and help your barley maximise its yield potential this summer.

■ - BASF

We create chemistry

Priaxor® is a registered trademark of BASF. Decoy® is a registered trademark of Bayer. Decoy® 250EC contains prothioconazole. Priaxor® EC contains pyraclostrobin and fluxapyroxad. Use plant protection products safely. Always read the label and product information before use. For further information, including warning phrases and symbols, refer to agricentre.basf.ie. Pay attention to the risk indications and follow the safety precautions on the label. Triple rinse containers and invert to dry at time of use.

Protecting Water Quality - the Nitrates Action Programme

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine outlines the key role agriculture and the farming community plays in protecting water quality.

Farming plays an important role in the Irish economy and landscape. Water quality in our rivers, lakes and groundwater is relatively good but needs to improve and farming practices play a key role in this improvement. Under the Water Framework Directive (WFD), Ireland also has key targets to achieve.

Agriculture covers over 65 per cent of the land area of Ireland and is the most frequent significant pressure in water bodies that are not meeting their Water Framework Directive targets. The main problems from farming are loss of excess nutrients (Nitrogen and Phosphorus) and sediment to water. Excess phosphorus and sediment are typically issues for rivers and lakes, and too much nitrogen is the main issue for estuaries and coastal waters.

Where agriculture is identified as a significant pressure, the Local Authorities Waters Programme is working with the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advice Programme (ASSAP) who are providing farmers with a free and confidential advisory service to help improve water quality. The programme is facilitating a far more targeted approach in terms of delivering the right

measure in the right place with a major focus in 190 areas that have been identified for priority action in the plan.

The Nitrates Regulations

The Department of Housing, Planning and Heritage is the lead authority for the Nitrates regulations (SI 605 2017). The purpose of these Regulations is to give effect to Ireland's Nitrates Action Programme for the protection of waters against pollution caused by agricultural sources. The set of measures in these regulations provides a basic level of protection against possible adverse impacts to waters arising from the agricultural sources.

The Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) Review 2021

Ireland's current Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) concludes in 2021, the process of reviewing the Nitrates regulations and derogation has commenced. This initial consultation closed on the 15th January 2021 and a second consultation is proposed to open in early May 2021.



Purpose of the initial consultation

In accordance with the Directive, Ireland's Nitrates Action Programme (NAP), which is currently given effect by the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Water) Regulations 2017, as amended, must be reviewed by the end of 2021. This will lead to the implementation of a new NAP, covering the period 2022 to 2025, inclusive. The purpose of this consultation is as follows:

- To set out the draft timetable and work programme to produce the next Nitrates Action Plan;
- To set out the potential issues to be considered as part of the review;
- To highlight milestones in the review cycle where further consultation will take place; and
- To invite interested parties to make submissions on the above.

This consultation also forms the starting point for delivering on the following commitments in the Programme for Government:

- Review the effects of the nitrates derogation on water quality, in conjunction with the EPA, which will inform future policy in this area.
- Work with nitrates derogation farmers to improve environmental outcomes on their farms, ensuring the sustainable use of the derogation, in line with our environmental objectives.

Next Steps and the co-benefits to be achieved - Water Quality, Biodiversity and Climate Action

To date, the Nitrates Action Plan consultation has outlined

a number of detailed issues. It should be noted that the initial consultation was exploratory. The next stage of the review will consider the wider agricultural sector and policy issues and will have a particular focus on better policy alignment.

It is becoming clearer that there needs to be greater alignment between different environmental protection policies at a National and European level. In particular, the EU Farm to Fork Strategy and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 have set ambitious targets for the agricultural sector. In Ireland, the links between water quality plans and programmes, biodiversity strategies and climate mitigation and adaptation plans need to be developed to ensure we are achieving multiple benefits from as many policies and implementation measures as possible. In this context, the review needs to recognise that other areas such as Climate, Biodiversity and the Nitrates Derogation will be play a key part in framing the next Nitrates Action Programme.

Finally, agriculture and farmers are central to achieving a stabilisation and improvement in all environmental metrics, especially water quality, and have adopted both scientific measures and technological advances to reduce any potential losses of nutrients to water and the environment. These include nutrient management planning, Low Emission Spreading of Slurry (LESS), better farmyard management and better grassland management to mention but a few. However, efforts from all must be extended to ensure the impact of agriculture on the environment is reduced.





PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE



Delivering a highly bio-available source of magnesium chloride, **Premier Ultra Mag** protects your herd from both grass tetany (hypomagnesaemia) and milk fever (hypocalcaemia).

Precision formulated, this versatile feed can be included in the TMR, fed through liquid ball feeders or simply top dressed on forages, making it the ideal magnesium supplement for cow's this spring.

t: 069-65311
e: info@premiermolasses.ie
w: www.premiermolasses.ie

Harbour Road,
Foynes,
Co. Limerick.



in association with



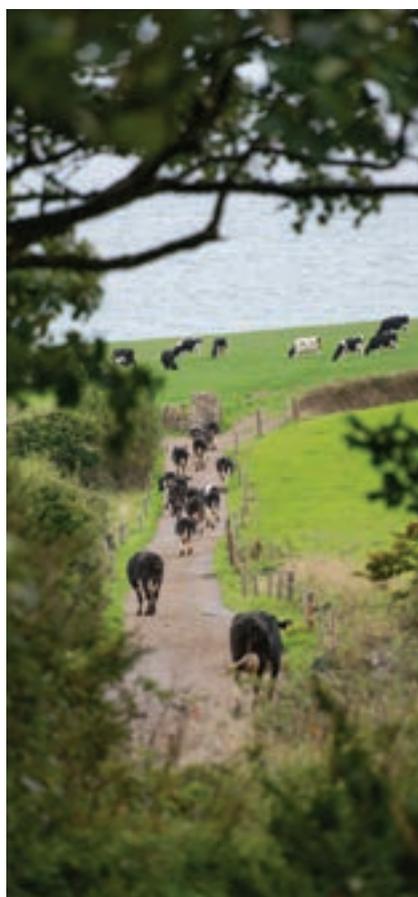
DAIRY FOCUS





Irish dairy, sustainable dairy

Ireland is blessed with the perfect conditions for dairy production, with a temperate climate and plentiful rainfall enabling a grass-based system that is the envy of the world. It's thanks to this that Ireland's dairy industry is the most carbon efficient in the European Union. **Zoe Kavanagh**, CEO of the National Dairy Council and spokesperson for the European Milk Forum in Ireland, outlines the key farmer's role in ensuring sustainable solutions going forward.



But while our grass-based, family-farming system is both natural and environmentally sustainable, the dairy sector cannot rest on its laurels when it comes to climate change. As a signatory to the COP-21 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, Ireland has committed to a long-term goal of keeping the increase in global average temperature to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. Last year, the EU announced an even more ambitious target; to be climate-neutral by 2050. The EU has now released a suite of policies to turn this ambition into reality, most importantly for the dairy industry the

EU Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy.

At the end of March the Irish Government published a revised Climate Action Bill, committing the country to "pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of the year 2050" carbon neutral status, including a reduction of 51 per cent in the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions within 10 years. Together with every other sector of Ireland's economy and society, dairy farmers and producers have an important role to play in helping Ireland meet these very ambitious targets. From Crookhaven to Carndonagh, Omeath to Oulart, Ireland's 18,000 dairy farmers are responding to the climate challenge, taking actions large and small to reduce their carbon footprint, improve their sustainability and protect the biodiversity on-farm – all the while continuing to deliver nutritious food for Irish and international families and ensuring ongoing economic viability for family farms.

The European Milk Forum and National Dairy Council's latest Fact Book, *Irish Dairy, Sustainable Ireland* spotlights the many the actions which dairy farmers are taking nationwide. These include a scientific approach to soil fertility and grassland management, as well as

innovations new (protected urea), old (white clover) and technological (low emissions slurry spreading), which cumulatively can make a significant impact on an individual farm's emissions.

There are also many exciting developments beyond the grass and soil that dairy farmers are embracing, including a focus on Economic Breeding Index (EBI) of their herd to make it as efficient as possible, as well as the roll-out of solar panels and energy efficient systems on-farm.

Irish dairy farmers are also continuing to play a central role in protecting and improving our precious rural biodiversity, planting native hedgerows and trees, offering pollinator patches for bees and wasps, and by protecting watercourses via the ASSAP scheme. While it is heartening to see the work being undertaken by dairy farmers across the country, there is more to be done. The next step is to mainstream all of these actions – which taken together can have a really significant impact on farm emissions – onto every dairy farm across the country. Up and down the country, experts from Teagasc, the cooperatives, the DAFM and the associations are standing ready to assist farmers to implement these proven actions on their farms. And,

The European Milk Forum's Sustainable Dairy in Europe campaign funded by the EU, brings together Dairy Councils from Ireland, Northern Ireland, Denmark, France and Belgium to discuss the challenges of sustainability and climate change and the determination of the dairy sector to be part of the solution, along with every other business sector and citizen, across Europe and the world. To view the latest Fact Book visit ndc.ie/publications



as always, we are seeing farmers talking to and teaching other farmers on sustainable methods – something which even has continued throughout Covid-19 pandemic with the use of technology, even as many other industries have been halted.

Taking a practical, win-win approach to sustainability, where both the farmer and environment benefit, is the key to widescale adaption, further reduction of emissions in the sector and ongoing farm sustainability.

Our journey is continuing as environmental sustainability does not have a finish line or cut-off point. There will always be more to learn as we strive to meet the challenge of a changing climate and continue to provide a source of sustainable, healthy and nutritious food for generations to come. The Irish dairy industry together with their European colleagues are committed and proactively working towards meeting those ongoing challenges. By doing so, we'll ensure that Ireland's dairy farmers will continue to deliver natural, healthy and sustainable dairy, now and into the future.

EVERYTHING STARTS WITH MILK



GAA players Grace Walsh, Cian Lynch and Con O'Callaghan are this year's sports stars appointed as Milk Ambassadors for the 'Everything starts with milk' initiative, a European Milk Forum campaign encouraging Irish consumers to drink more milk as it supports optimum performance.

The pan-European

campaign is in conjunction with the National Dairy Council (NDC) and is being implemented to highlight the importance of milk as an important dietary building block at all stages of life, from childhood growth and development to post-workout recovery.

National Dairy Council and the EU are also delighted to welcome boxer Kellie Harrington back as a campaign supporter. Speaking about the launch of the final year of the 'Everything starts with milk' campaign Jeanne Spillane, Marketing Manager at the National Dairy Council said: "We are delighted to welcome Grace, Cian, Con and Kellie on board as our ambassadors for this year's European Milk campaign. National Dairy Council and the EU has a keen focus on education and outreach to create awareness of the nutritional benefits of milk, therefore we will be looking forward to taking part in a series of virtual events such as *Irish Runner* magazine's fitness webinars and, hopefully, in person training events for young people later in the year. It aims to be an active year ahead, which we can't wait to deliver."



The cost of not reseeding this spring

Maeve Regan,
Head of Ruminant Nutrition, Agritech

Ireland has an unrivalled global advantage when it comes to growing grass, however, currently only 7% of the land on specialist dairy farms in Ireland is reseeded annually (approx. 2.5% nationally if we look at the country's entire grassland area).

Alongside optimal soil fertility, good grazing infrastructure, and best practise grassland management, reseeding is a critical pillar in maximising output from the grazing platform, be it for milk or meat production. Reseeding should be viewed as a long-term farm investment over 8-10 years. The aim is to reseed 10% of the farm annually, resulting in a completely renewed platform every 10 years.

Economically, a low proportion of perennial ryegrass in a sward is costing farmers up to €300/ha in lost grass production during the growing season. While, according to the Teagasc National Farm Survey Data, increased total herbage production when coupled with good grassland management can result in an additional €173 for every extra tonne of grass utilised.

The key benefits of reseeding include:

- ✓ Increased grass growth/grass availability in the shoulders of the season.
- ✓ Improved response to nitrogen (New swards are 25% more responsive to nitrogen compared to old permanent pastures).
- ✓ Higher feed value to support animal production.
- ✓ Faster regrowth post-grazing/cutting.

When compared to reseeding in the back end of the year, spring reseeding generally offers farmers more opportunities to achieve a better-established sward, as well as greater flexibility for post-emergence weed control. Also, typically with spring reseeding, there is less impact on the grass available for grazing due to high growth rates on the rest of the farm while the reseeded area is out of production.

For further reseeding advice or to choose a suitable grass seed mixture from the Tipperary Grass Seed Range, contact your local Agritech Sales Advisor or visit www.agritech.ie



www.agritech.ie



Manage and maintain butterfat in early-mid lactation

A decline in butterfat percentages can be common during the spring months, when cows are grazing lush grass that is low in fibre and high in oil and sugars, among other reasons.

The Alltech nutrition team focus on four key areas to combat a drop in butterfat, including nutrition, rumen health, grassland management and genetics.

1. Nutrition

We generally see a high percentage of solids for the first 6 weeks post-calving, then a drop in protein and butterfat replicated further on in the lactation. If protein percentages are fluctuating or dropping quickly, this is usually a symptom of reduced intake of energy, which leads to poor body condition and prolonged negative energy balance post-calving. It is important to maintain a body condition of >2.75 or avoid a drop >0.5 units post-calving until breeding. If below this, action must be taken to correct it as on top of milk solids drops, there could be adverse effects on fertility.

Protein percentages will also be driven by the quality of feeds fed in the form of starch and sugar content and the total quantity of these ingredients or dry matter intake (DMI). Starch content usually coming from grain and sugar content will be high in grazed grass. Cows should be fed to their requirements consistently. For example, a cow that will peak over 30 litres would have an expected DMI of 19–21 kg DM. Where there is a shortfall here, it

needs to be supplemented, or you run the risk of a protein decline.

Butterfat will be dictated by the energy levels in the rumen. Cows on high amounts of poor-quality forage can experience butterfat depression due to the lack of rumen-degradable energy. Fibre levels will also drive milk fat, with straw being a more effective fibre than silage and silage being more effective than grass. It is not always possible to include long, effective fibre when cows are at grass, so extra attention needs to be placed on the parlour feed by including high levels of digestible fibre and, ideally, no more than 3 kg per cow per milking

2. Rumen health

A key factor for the occurrence of butterfat depression is an elevated intake of unsaturated fats from young, leafy grass. Unsaturated fats are toxic to rumen bacteria, and in order for them to survive, they carry out a process called 'biohydrogenation'. This, in turn, creates by-products that, in effect, stop the mammary gland from producing butterfat, leading to butterfat depression.

This effect can be exacerbated in the presence of a low rumen pH. Fresh, lush grass can cause a drop in rumen pH, which leads to sub-acute rumen acidosis (SARA). If

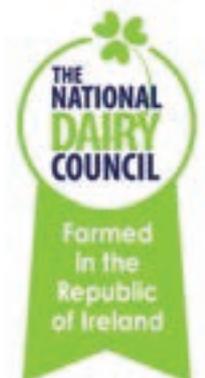
Where do you go for grass-fed, sustainably farmed Irish milk?



Straight for Tesco, SuperValu and Centra –
where you'll find a shared commitment.

- To all year round, sustainable quality milk production
- To guaranteed, locally sourced, processed and packed milk
- To Irish dairy farmers whose expertise and hard work delivers excellence
- To grass-fed goodness borne from lush Irish fields

It's all good. Every time you choose milk with the NDC trademark.



www.ndc.ie



the pH is below 6, bacteria will not work as effectively. This can harm both feed intake and digestion, leading to depressed milk production.

Avoiding conditions that can lead to SARA and improving rumen pH are central to ensuring that the rumen is working at its best, optimising the breakdown of grazed grass and concentrate, as well as improving nutrient availability. Research shows the correlation between pH

A key factor for the occurrence of butterfat depression is an elevated intake of unsaturated fats from young, leafy grass.

and milk fat percentage is very important, the higher the rumen pH the higher the milk fat percentage. BEAT THE DROP and manage and maintain butterfat in early-mid lactation by ensuring Yea-Sacc® is included in your feed. Yea-Sacc, a live yeast from Alltech — is proven in Irish grass-based systems to maintain rumen stability, increase efficiency and help cows avoid the wide variations in rumen pH that can interfere with fibre digestion and feed intake. Yea-Sacc works by removing air/oxygen from the rumen and increasing the presence of fibre-digesting bacteria. This helps reduce acidity in the rumen and increase the pH. This is all about supporting rumen health, performance and efficiency, helping to optimise feed and milk production.

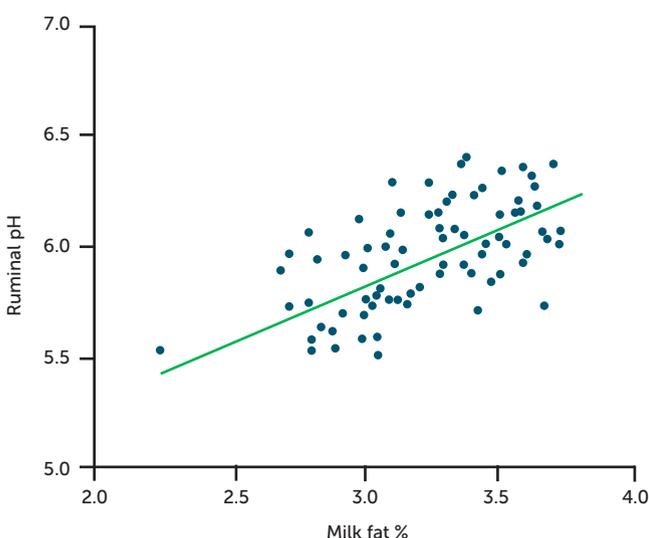


Figure 1: Relationships between rumen pH and percentage of milk fat (Allen, 1997)

YEA-SACC® research has shown:

- Increased milk production — 1.7 litres
- Improved feed conversion efficiency — 6%
- Help reduce the number of days open



3. Grassland management

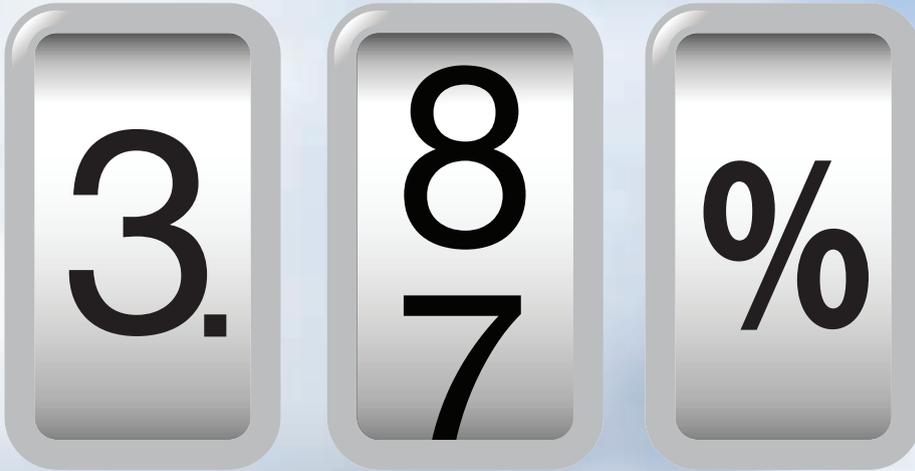
The focus of any grassland management is to grow and utilise as much grass as you can. Grazing covers of 1,300–1,500 kg DM/ha (8–9 cm), or what was outlined in the past as “the three-leaf stage,” should be the target on the majority of farms. Correct graze out of paddocks in the first round of grazing will result in higher-quality, lush grass growing in the second round. Grazing these covers down to 4–5 cm will promote quality further into the year. As outlined earlier, this will increase the oil and reduce the fibre content of the grass. While this promotes good milk and protein yields, it needs to be managed from a butterfat point of view and having a healthy rumen to deal with this is key.

If supplement is required, and this will be dictated by milk yield and requirements, we should target getting 16 kg of grass DM into our cows. High yield, weather, availability and stocking rate will determine whether extra supplement or a forage-based buffer is required.

4. Genetics

While addressing a drop in milk solids in early lactation, you would usually need to consider a holistic approach around balancing nutrition to ensure good rumen health and monitoring the cow’s physiological state. Longer-term benefits can be achieved by examining your genetics and reviewing your breeding policies. A good start would be to review your EBI report via ICBF, no matter what type of cow you have. This will tell you whether you have bred for increased solids production in your current herd or in the generations to come. This will allow you to make informed decisions for the upcoming breeding season.

BEAT THE DROP



MANAGING AND MAINTAINING BUTTERFAT IN EARLY-MID LACTATION



Lush spring grass that is low in fibre can increase the risk of acidosis in the rumen, leading to poor digestion and a drop in milk solids output.

YEA-SACC® is proven in Irish grass-based systems to maintain rumen stability, helping cows avoid the wide variations in rumen pH that can interfere with butterfat depression.

For more management tips on maintaining milk solids, visit [Alltech.com/Ireland/beat-the-drop](https://www.alltech.com/Ireland/beat-the-drop)
or call the **BEAT THE DROP** milk solids helpline on **059 910 1320** 





The value of fresh milk

Willie Lennon, Chairman of Fresh Milk Producers (FMP), writes on how we must value where our daily fresh milk comes from and those farmers who produce it.



Since the abolition of EU milk quotes in 2015, the Irish model for dairy expansion has sought and progressed to become more cost-efficient in producing additional milk for exportable dairy commodities. This essentially is the 'Teagasc Moorepark Model' of compact spring calving to grass and maximising production from that grass, which is Ireland's competitive advantage.

The 365 production model

In order to supply our domestic market demand for fresh milk for bottling every day of the year, milk is produced on FMP farms through the winter months when least-cost grazed grass is unavailable and milking cows must be fed high levels of expensive forage and concentrates.

Over the past 15 years there has been a gradual erosion of winter premiums traditionally paid to liquid milk producers for supplying this fresh milk from autumn calved cows for the drinking milk market.

In recent years, working with Teagasc and IFA, Fresh Milk Producers have established that covering all costs requires at least an average price of 40c/litre all year round to sustainably produce this fresh liquid milk. In the last five years, the price achieved has fallen short of this target and

it is the increased volumes of manufacturing milk destined for export commodity markets which are proving to be more profitable at farm levels. It is the difference in the cost of producing this milk, predominantly from grazed grass, versus expensive but necessary indoor concentrate and forage feeding which is not stacking up.

While the current prospects for prices are better for 2021 as base milk prices has improved since last June, liquid milk producers are unlikely to break even this year.

Specialist liquid milk producers number sixteen hundred. That equates to 8 per cent of all Irish dairy farmers and the fresh milk proportion they supply is 7 per cent of national supplies. That percentage continues to shrink as manufacturing milk volumes increase. Fresh Milk Producers have historically specialised by calving part of their herd in autumn and part in spring, a more complex production system, costlier on feed, energy and labour.

Margin erosion

Retail returns are stable – the consumer price in the large retailers is largely unchanged – but the competition between retailers and between dairies for a finite market has eroded the margins available in the supply chain to



pay the necessary premiums to farmers. The 'differentials' paid for fresh milk to producers over and above creamery milk prices have fallen from an average of 4.6c/l fifteen years ago to 2.2c/l nationally in the last five years. These specialist dairy liquid milk farmers will have important farm business decisions to make for the future unless the current long-term outlook improves. There are some reasons that will make moving away from this higher cost production system a difficult one, such as restricted grazing platforms and a requirement for a more

There are some reasons that will make moving away from this higher cost production system a difficult one, such as restricted grazing platforms and a requirement for a more even cashflow, but the biggest hold is most likely tradition

even cashflow, but the biggest hold is most likely tradition. There is a longstanding and proud tradition in many areas of the country, especially for those producing in close proximity to the liquid milk bottling plants, of supplying the highest quality drinking milk all year round. If tradition is a reason, it must be balanced with economics. Why stay at one system if another is a simpler one and gives higher returns?

Limited economic options

The latest announcement by Glanbia that it intends

implementing a cap on unrestricted growth during the peak production months will undoubtedly have an influence on Glanbia suppliers future decisions, and not for the best of reasons. Many farmers will be left with limited or no growth options that make any economic sense.

A few key changes in the liquid milk supply market could address a lot of issues and put a degree of stability back into many liquid milk farmers plans. The current one-year retail tenders must be prohibited by retail legislation. These do not match the two to three year timeframe of the breeding season required to alter milk supply patterns on farms and are very disruptive to the entire sector - farmers most of all. Retailers and dairies must foster more constructive commercial relationships - perhaps by offering multi-annual, fixed liquid milk price contracts? Glanbia has, to its credit, led the way on this front, but this needs to be expanded and further developed at an economically sustainable price level.

NMA role

The National Milk Agency (NMA) also plays an important role in the liquid sector. The NMA must be empowered to collate and disseminate data on the liquid milk market, including imported supplies. It must, together with Teagasc, establish an inventory of input costs for liquid milk production. This could in turn inform a more robust economic analysis of whether the contracted prices offered to farmers by dairies actually provide 'adequate compensation' for their additional costs, as the Milk Supply Act 1994 stipulates the National Milk Agency must ensure.

Implementation of these measures will ultimately help farmers secure a fair share of retail returns together with the necessary price premium for producing liquid milk. This is needed for both farmers and the consumer. Without these dedicated, NMA-contracted fresh liquid milk suppliers the guarantee of consistent, all year-round supplies of fresh, high quality, locally produced milk will face an uncertain future.

CAPTURE THE CREAM THIS SPRING

Feeding Equaliser® Cream maintains milk fat throughout the grazing season. Contact us today to maintain your herd performance this spring!

T +353 45 875726
E reception@cargill.com
www.provimi.eu/uk-equaliser

EQUALISER
CREAM

Cargill

@CargillAnimalsNutritionIreland

GAIN

DAIRY NUTRITION

SPRING BREEDER

GLANBIA CO-OP MEMBERS

Don't forget – all purchases made this year count towards your 2021 Trading Bonus.

OPTIMISE FERTILITY PERFORMANCE



5 KEY REASONS TO CHOOSE SPRING BREEDER

- ✓ Slow release energy formulation promotes high grass intake and milk solids output.
- ✓ Bioplex protected minerals from Alltech® – maintains healthy immune system and helps support fertility.
- ✓ Bioplex protected minerals return €50 per cow per year.
- ✓ Novatan® – helps improve conception rate.
- ✓ One missed heat costs €250 per cow per year.

GAIN
MOMENTUM
PROGRAMME

HERD NUTRITION
ENHANCING NUTRITION AT EVERY STAGE



Lo-call number
1890 321 321

Email
info@gainanimalnutrition.com

Order in-store, in-yard or glanbiacconnect.com



GAIN THE ADVANTAGE
WWW.GAINANIMALNUTRITION.COM

glanbia
ireland



Twenty20 Beef Club success

It is now two years on since **Matt O' Keffe** first reported on the launch of an innovative calf-to-beef programme, organised by Glanbia and known as the Twenty20 Beef Club. Run in association with **Kepak**, the Club members source calves from Glanbia dairy herds. At this stage, many of the 2019-born calves have passed through the production cycle and the economics of the system are being analysed. Here, **Matt** provides an update.



The key focus, as **Martin Ryan**, Head of Glanbia Beef, emphasises, is to increase the sustainability of the calf-to-beef enterprise: "This is particularly from the perspective of an economic return as well as the environmental aspects of calf-to-beef on farms. What we have developed is a closed loop from breeding, production, rearing through to slaughter and into the retailer, with the aim of achieving a premium price for that level of transparency. Having predictability for the beef producer is an extremely important aspect of the whole programme. Ultimately, it's about enhancing the value of the end product through careful management right along the production and processing cycles."

An integrated approach to beef

Glanbia does not sell beef so the programme is a coordinated approach by Glanbia Coop and **Kepak**, as **Martin** explains: "The programme is based on the concept that our milk suppliers produce calves. Some of them are reared on the farm and many are sold on to specialist rearers. For Glanbia the Twenty20 Beef Club

initiative was about creating a chain from the start right through the production process and adding value to it at the same time as extracting a level of premium from the marketplace. We coordinate the sourcing of calves, matching them up with rearers and working with them through the production stages. As soon as contracts are agreed, **Kepak** come on board to work with the producer in terms of assessing cattle fit for slaughter, providing killing dates and paying a premium back from the marketplace."

A premium price

Slaughter of the first batches of cattle in the Twenty20 Beef Club began last October. At the end of February 2021 there were up to 250 of these cattle being slaughtered every week. **Martin Ryan** was very positive about the economics of the programme so far: "They have performed spectacularly well. The average age of slaughter is running well under twenty-four months of age. When the complete cycle for that first crop of calves purchased two years ago is completed the average age will be no greater than twenty-four months. In terms of kill-out and combining heifers and steers, carcase weights are averaging 300 kgs for those dairy-cross calves. In terms of return to the producer, we are achieving an average of over one hundred euro per animal in excess of the average market price. That price is made up of a price premium, a quality assurance element that carries right across the grading spectrum and breed bonuses where appropriate. From the perspective of specification, 97 per cent hit the appropriate specification thresholds with 93 per cent meeting the necessary fat scores. Broadly speaking, in the earlier mix of cattle coming through the programme, about a third were Angus, one-third Hereford and one third Continental type. The Friesian type steers were coming through in late February, early March."

Expanding the programme

Given the success of the Twenty20 Beef Club so far, it is no surprise that the intention is to grow throughput, as **Martin Ryan** confirms: "The first year was very much a piloting exercise with a target of six thousand calves. In reality the intake was considerably higher than that. Last year we took in 20,000 calves and this year, 2021, the intention is to drive up calf numbers in the programme to 50,000 head, if at all possible. That is good in terms



of building scale and to ensure that the calf procurement process is operated as efficiently as possible, we have developed an App in conjunction with ICBF, which allows the sellers to upload their calves. The system applies filters to take out unsuitable calves such as Jersey types and poorer grades generally. The buyers can filter the calves by county or area, by breed, by gender, whatever their requirements are. The necessary seller contact details are then available. The App is restricted to members of the Twenty20 Beef Club, including suppliers

and rearers. The system is flexible enough to facilitate those farmers who only want to rear the calves to the weanling stage and sell on at that point in the production cycle. That is an option that some rearers adopt. There are many rearers then prepared to take animals through to slaughter from the weanling stage, so the system caters for that."

The key aspects of Twenty20

There are several key aspects to the system as highlighted by the Glanbia overseer: "The first is the price premium, then there is the genetics

management aspect and we offer breeding advice to calf breeders to bring up the beef value of the calf. On the App we rule out calves below a certain genetic merit and also calves with a low predicted carcase weight. The technical support programme, which is all part of the Beef Club concept, supports high levels of production efficiency. There are a number of areas where people can create a higher return from their investment and management practices."

COGECA, the European Cooperative Movement umbrella body has recognised the merits of the Twenty20 Beef Club concept and has listed it for an award under the economic value creation category: "It is a recognition that the club is delivering an economic benefit to the participants."

Dairy dominant as beef source

There has been an ongoing movement from the suckler herd being the dominant source of beef in this country to the stage now where the dairy herd provides over 50 per cent of beef carcasses, Martin Ryan confirms: "For us the critical part is in increasing the value of the animal as distinct from just putting cattle through the production/ processing system. It is about optimising performance in a short period of time. Getting to acceptable carcase weight at twenty-four months through the use of genetics and production efficiencies adds immensely to the economics of the enterprise. The fact that the average slaughter age is twenty-four months means that many of the animals have a reduced or non-existent second winter on the farm. That second winter adds a lot of cost and where it can be minimised or eliminated, the economics improve pro-rata. We are still achieving the desired carcase weights with those earlier finished animals and that's in comparison to the carcase weights achieved at a twenty-nine month finishing regime, so it's a win-win outcome."

ROPE SCRAPER SYSTEM

REDUCE YOUR LABOUR TIME



The Cowcare Systems Rope Scraper was introduced to the UK market in 1998 and is a simple and highly effective scraping system. The robust installation features two winch drive units per system powered by highly engineered geared motors controlled by our easily managed control system. The heart of the system is our specially formulated, tough, Ultra-Glide or Pro-Glide rope.

Advantages

Benefits of the Rope System

- Improved animal health
- Excellent resistance to wear and tear
- Touch screen system programming
- No adverse effect on cows feet
- Drive units wall or ground mounted
- High life span of equipment and rope
- Low maintenance
- Low replacement costs

Specifications

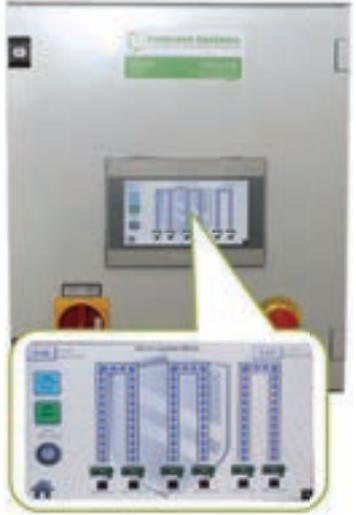
- ✓ Simple to operate touch screen control
- ✓ 0.55KW and 0.83KW drive motors
- ✓ Multiple winch widths
- ✓ Blades made to your passage width
- ✓ Solid floor and Slat scraping
- ✓ Two directional (dump at both ends)
- ✓ Drive through folding blade (optional)

Applications

Dairy and Beef Cows

For a no obligation quote

Call – Adrian 07803124235
 Email: adrian@cowcaresystems.com
 Call – 028 2766 9000 (office)
 Email: info@cowcaresystems.com



Touch Screen Interface

Cowcare Systems Ltd, 24 Drumlee Road, Ballymoney, BT53 7LE, United Kingdom Web: www.cowcaresystems.com



Time for turnout

Many batches of calves and weanlings will be let out to grass soon; a welcome relief to farmers' workload. **Cara Sheridan**, technical vet MSD Animal Health reports on the importance of correct vaccination at this time.



Clostridial bacteria are everywhere; in soil, in buildings, in the muscle and gut of healthy animals. Additionally, animals are more susceptible during key husbandry practices (which break the skin) such as tagging, disbudding or castration. Clostridia lie dormant in the form of highly resistant spores which can survive for many years in the environment. The warm, damp soils of Ireland predispose to high levels of disease. Clostridial infection usually results in sudden death. Clostridial disease remains one of the main causes of dead in cattle. Blackleg is the most frequently diagnosed clostridial disease. June through to November is the greatest risk period in Ireland with a peak from August to October. Cases are most commonly recorded in younger cattle with 90% occurring in animals < 12 months of age. Many carcasses presented to the regional veterinary laboratories for postmortem examination had not been vaccinated, were vaccinated incorrectly or vaccinated without the required strain.

Tribovax 10

Tribovax 10 is a "10 in 1" clostridial vaccine that provides broad protection against ten clostridial bacteria namely *C. perfringens* type A, B, C & D, *C. novyi*, *C. septicum*, *C. tetani*, *C. sordellii*, *C. haemolyticum* and *C. chauvoei*; the causes of blackleg, tetanus, malignant oedema, black disease, 'sudden death syndrome' (caused by *C. sordellii*), bacterial redwater and enterotoxaemia in cattle.

How to use Tribovax 10

- The primary course involves 2 injections given 4-6 weeks apart
- (A single injection is not enough as it is an inactivated vaccine and would provide little or no immunity)
- Single boosters are then given at 6-12 month intervals depending on the risk profile of the batch of animals
- It is a 2 ml dose in cattle and 1 ml dose in sheep and should be given under the skin
- (Recommended in the loose skin on the side of the neck)
- It can be given to calves from 2 weeks of age
- Shake well before-hand and use within 8 hours of opening the bottle
- Change needles regularly while injecting

Start calves now on their two-injection primary course and give weanlings their booster injection of Tribovax 10 (provided they received their full primary course within the last 12 months).

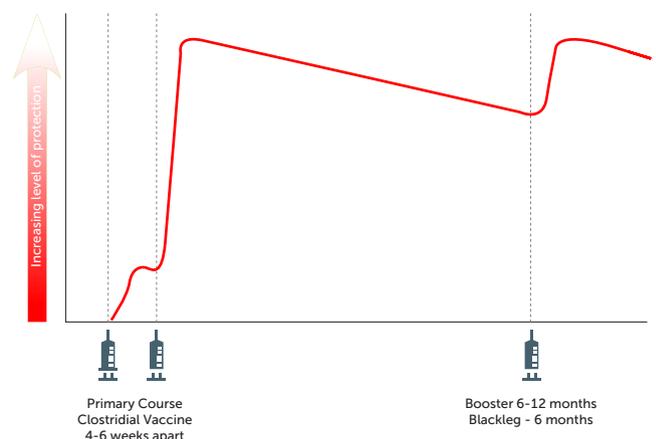


Figure 1. The level of protection against clostridial disease after the primary and booster vaccination with Tribovax 10



Dairy breeding

with Brian Wickham

New Zealander Brian Wickham, well known to Irish farmers from his time here with ICBF, has taken on a critical role in his home country as Manager of New Zealand Animal Evaluation Ltd. Here we reflect on Brian's contributions to the NZ Pasture Summit last November where he was hosted by Waikato-based dairy farmer Olin Greenan and we also quote from Brian's online interaction with Matt Ryan's Discussion Group members last month.



Brian Wickham and Olin Greenan.

Brian's critique of the differences between NZ dairy breeding and its Irish counterpart is refreshingly honest: "In New Zealand there is no slaughter data being compiled, genomics has not advanced and beef and dairy are considered as different species. Generally, there is a lack of the type of developments that are taken for granted in Ireland."

On-farm experience

The 650-strong Greenan herd produces 224,000 kgs of milk solids from a diet of mainly grazed grass. Pasture and crop eaten on the farm are calculated at 14.4 tonnes dry matter per hectare. The six-week in-calf rate is 76 per cent with an empty rate of 9.5 per cent after ten weeks of mating.

Olin asked Brian Wickham about the breed traits he needs to concentrate on with his herd. "Apart from the obvious production traits such as fat and protein content there are fertility traits that must be considered. One of the lessons I learnt from my Irish experience working with ICBF is that fertility is a trait that can be improved with breeding. We selected for calving interval and over a period of years we found the positive changes in the fertility of the Irish dairy herd to be spectacular."

Olin then posed the question as to how New Zealand could increase the importance and emphasis on fertility? "There are two important questions to be answered, "



Brian explained: "The first is whether we have an accurate means of measuring fertility and secondly, how much emphasis we are going to give to fertility in comparison to other traits. The reality is that it is very difficult to measure fertility accurately because it is lowly heritable and the available data is not sufficient. If we get high volumes of cow data then we can act. Emphasis is the other aspect. ICBF may have put more emphasis on fertility than the basic economics would have justified but the message from farmers was that they wanted bulls with high fertility traits."

"Ideally, the advice for Olin Greenan's herd in terms of bull selection is to look at the BW (Breeding Worth - NZ breeding index) and select for the best combination of relevant traits. Right now, we are having a new look at the BW and how it is structured and asking whether it has enough emphasis on fertility traits. We are also asking whether we are measuring fertility in the right way."

Breeding trade-offs

So, is there a trade-off between traits when breeding? "There is a trade-off. It's not about one or the other. It is about getting the best combination available without forfeiting too much in any one area. Ultimately, the goal is to breed cows that are profitable in the particular farming situation in which you operate. If done correctly, the results are very positive. If not, then the negative outcomes are significant."

Brian's advice to Olin as an individual farmer is to keep good records of each animal, recording facts not opinions: "Ultimately, the success of all dairy breeding systems across the world depends on data coming from farmers to produce the necessary genetic evaluations. We need accurate parentage details. We need good performance records from verifiable recordings. For fertility, we need accurate records of mating, pregnancy and calving dates. This data will contribute considerably to genetic evaluations. The other side of the equation is the background data on bulls used. Farmers could usefully get involved in bull testing and breeding programmes. That is a personal responsibility to improving future dairy genetics."

The New Zealand BW is upgraded annually. More is required so we have begun a biannual programme to closely examine how we arrive at the actual index and how we arrive at the weightings we give the individual traits in the index. This is becoming increasingly important with regard to environmental factors such as methane emissions and nitrogen outputs. That is hard to justify under the current approach of concentrating solely on the economic outcomes."

Developing new breeding strategies.

The Greenan herd is Friesian cross-bred. After replacements are secured the lower 25 per cent of the herd are mated with Hereford bulls and with Jersey sweeper bulls for the other part of the herd. That has results in a percentage of poor conformation calves. Avoiding that by using Hereford bulls has brought some

calving difficulties for these crossbred cows. Olin asked Brian for direction: "We need to think clearly on this issue. There is almost no market for these 'bobby calves' (Jersey type). No one has a profitable beef production model for these calves. For New Zealand this is a big problem that we need to face up to. There are options. Sexed semen is a possibility. Beef crossing is another strategy while avoiding calving difficulties with carefully chosen bulls. The current meat value from sub-optimal beefing calves is low. The newly constructed Irish example of a Beef Quality Index is worth looking at. That could deliver a possible premium product putting them ahead of New Zealand in terms of finding solutions to beefing calves coming off dairy herds. The question has been asked as to whether we could calve bi-annually. There are implications in milking cows through two seasons productively. With the right genetics it could be a viable solution. A relevant breeding programme could be developed over time. The bottom line is that there is not a quick, easy fix." Olin asked for ways to speed up genetic progress: "The use of genomics is one positive development. Well used, that science can increase the rate of genetic gain by 50-100 per cent."

The perfect cow

Olin noted that his perfect cow would have longevity, high fertility, low emissions, health resilience, and with less reliance on antibiotics. He also added flexibility on milking frequency.

Brian stated: "We need breeding innovation to solve the problems facing us, including around environmental issues. Fertility is strongly linked to genetics. Feeding extra supplements does not impact positively on getting cows in calf, provided they have ample access to grass. Cattle breeding is a partnership effort between farmers and those who put the infrastructure together in terms of data, identifying and improving productivity traits to identify the animal that are going to work for the next generation of farmers. It is a long-term, serious initiative and, done well, we can leave a fabulous heritage for the next generation."

BRIAN WICKHAM OFFERED SOME KEY ADVICE ALSO AT ONE OF MATT RYAN'S RECENT DAIRY DISCUSSION GROUPS.

- "There is a considerably lower carbon footprint from beef produced from the dairy herd than from the suckler herd."
- "The genetic trends in Friesian in Ireland are spectacular. It looks like the best of breed have passed out Jersey. In the past, Jersey offered improved fertility. Now, you can get higher fertility Holstein Friesian bulls than from Jersey genes."
- "The most environmentally friendly cow is the one with the higher EBI."
- "No amount of nutritional intervention will make a genetically infertile cow fertile."



Supporting the transition cow to prevent ketosis

Maura Langan, Norbrook Vet Advisor, examines ways to reduce the risk of ketosis during the transition period



Ketosis and milk fever are the two most common metabolic disorders affecting dairy cattle in Ireland. They typically occur in the days and weeks after calving as the cow adjusts to the huge physiological demands of lactation. Whilst milk fever can result in the typical 'downer cow', both ketosis and milk fever are often sub-clinical diseases that affect a cow's wellbeing and productivity in more subtle ways. A significant amount of research has also proven that they create a gateway to other common diseases, including displaced abomasum, mastitis, metritis and even lameness.

What is ketosis?

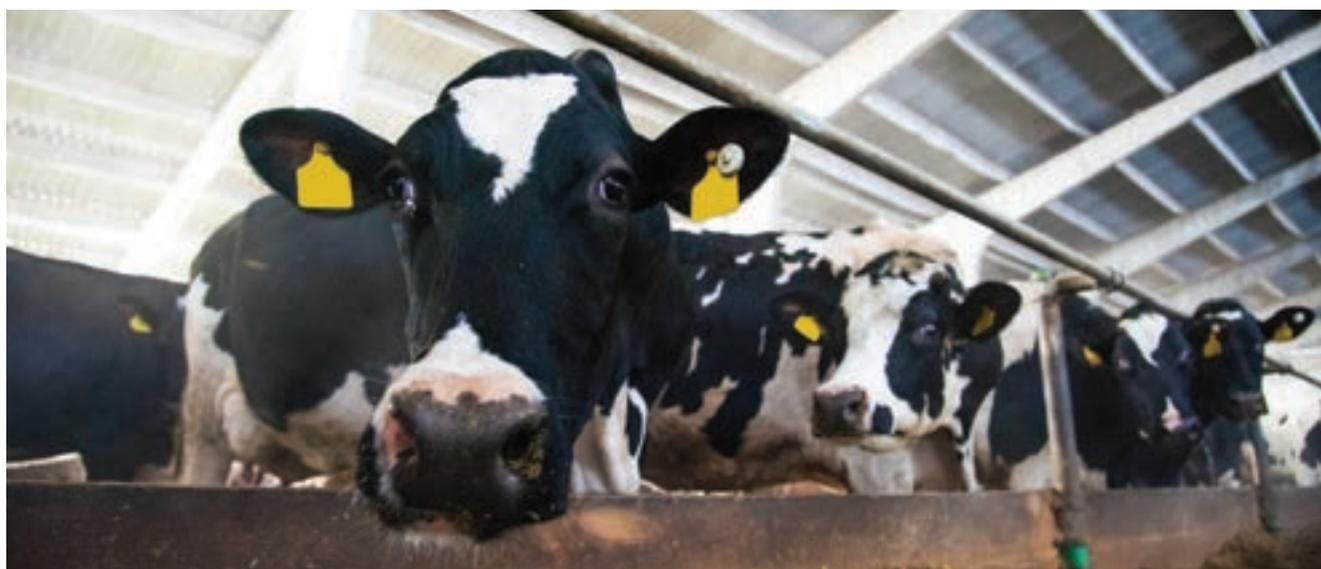
It's natural for a cow to have reduced appetite before and after calving and it takes her a number of days, even weeks to take in sufficient energy to cope with the increasing demands of lactation. This gives rise to a 'negative energy balance' (NEB). The cow is using more energy to produce milk than she is able to consume, so her body attempts to mobilise additional energy from fat stores. Some degree of NEB is relatively normal in cows but the extent to which it occurs and how long it lasts are key factors in how the cow transitions into productive lactation. During periods of high energy demand, the liver cannot fully utilise or cope with the fat that is being broken down and metabolites known as ketones are produced. Essentially ketosis occurs when there are elevated levels of ketones in the blood, urine or milk, indicating that the

metabolic processes in the liver are being overwhelmed. Unfortunately, the ketones released as part of this process suppress the cow's appetite, creating a vicious circle that results in weight loss and a drop in milk yield.

Clinical ketosis is often the tip of the iceberg and it may mean that many more animals are affected by the subclinical form of the disease without clinical signs.

Identifying ketosis in dairy cows

The clinical signs associated with ketosis are mild to moderate and generally non-specific. The cow can have moderate milk drop and reduced feed intake. Dung can be firm, and a sweet smell in the breath may be noted. Nervous ketosis is occasionally reported, where cows present with neurological signs, including disorientation, excessive licking and, occasionally, aggression. Clinical ketosis is often the tip of the iceberg and it may mean that





many more animals are affected by the subclinical form of the disease without clinical signs.

AHDB estimates that an average of 30 per cent of dairy cows in the UK undergo a period of subclinical ketosis in the first month of lactation with almost 60 per cent of cows affected in some herds. Incidence rates can vary dramatically between herds.

There are a range of contributing factors that predispose some cows and herds to ketosis, issues with fat cows, thin cows, those carrying twins or with a history of metabolic disorders being most at risk. Nutrition throughout the dry period should be carefully managed to reduce the risk of ketosis during the transition period. Even low risk cows are susceptible if they're put under stress, for example, following a caesarean, a difficult calving or a case of milk fever.

Treating ketosis

Treatment of ketosis is aimed at reestablishing normal glucose levels and reducing serum ketone body concentrations. By breaking the cycle of ketone production appetite recovers and the animal's voluntary intake begins to meet her energy requirements.

Treatment can include veterinary intervention through the administration of intravenous dextrose and possibly steroids. For the most part, treatment of ketosis centres on the provision of glucose precursors in the form of glycerol, propylene

glycol and propionates. Care should be taken with propylene glycol as overdose can be toxic to rumen microbes.

Two Ketonor+ boluses given at calving provides readily available energy sources during those crucial first hours. This encourages the cow

to start eating and drinking as normal.

The formulation also contains niacin, cobalt and yeast to support the liver, rumen and immune system. Ketonor+ is cost-effective, does not contain antimicrobials and is easy to administer. Although ketosis is usually seen

during very early lactation, it can occur any time that the cow experiences negative energy balance. Ketonor+ can be used as a supportive treatment in sick or convalescent cows alongside non-steroidal pain relief and antibiotics where deemed appropriate.

Transition Cow Management

NEW PRODUCT



AIDING SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION INTO PRODUCTIVE LACTATION

KETONOR⁺ Bolus

Ketosis is one of the most common metabolic diseases affecting dairy cows in Ireland. It typically occurs when a cow is unable to meet the energy demands of early lactation. Ketosis causes her to go off her feed, resulting in weight loss and a drop in milk production.

Ketonor+ supplies readily available energy to help get her eating and drinking again, as well as essential supplements to support the liver, rumen and immune system.

Each 135g bolus contains fast available glucogenic energy sources (propionates 104,000mg), with slow-release cobalt, selenium, niacin and yeast (*Saccharomyces cerevisiae*).



Ketonor+ is a dietetic mineral feed.
Distributed in Ireland by: Norbrook Laboratories Ireland Limited, Rossroe Industrial Estate, Monaghan, County Monaghan, [S21] UNK x19-93 255521



Norbrook
www.norbrook.com

IRISH
FARM

GLOBAL
VILLAGE



**Our success begins with
what is truly special about Ireland**

Looking for an international career? With our culture, our creativity and our world-renowned grass-fed dairy products, we bring something special to the table.

Be part of the team bringing the best of Irish dairy to every corner of the world.
Visit [ornua.com/careers](https://www.ornua.com/careers) today.

Ornua
THE HOME OF IRISH DAIRY

MESSAGES

- ▶ Practice “sustainability” farming in April.
- ▶ April is the most important month to manage the factors that drive the two key KPIs for dairy farming.
- ▶ Address, in early April, all the factors that influence the KPIs.
- ▶ Make a breeding season plan and adopt the “Why Wait Programme”.
- ▶ Know the signs of heat and teach all your staff.
- ▶ Choose your AI bulls carefully and use Sire Advice to match to cows.
- ▶ Synchronise the heifers and late calvers.
- ▶ If ‘tight’ in grass in April, assess your options, early.
- ▶ Use protected urea for full year and 40 units in April.
- ▶ Graze silage ground twice before closing to save meal costs.

By Matt Ryan

“SUSTAINABILITY” FARMING IN APRIL

- ▶ “Sustainability” the buzz word, now. Let’s embrace it!
 - ▶ If you are not familiar with Teagasc’s 7-steps sustainability leaf, you should do so.
 - ▶ I have some reservations in asking you start these actions, as we don’t know if and when they will set a base year. But you must be seen to be responsible and doing what people are recommending at this point in time.

1. Drive up EBI by €10/ year by mating your highest EBI cows with the highest EBI bulls.
 - ▶ A €20 EBI increase in your herd leads to a 3 per cent reduction in your carbon footprint.
 - ▶ No cost to but huge financial gain,
2. Substitute clover for chemical nitrogen:
 - ▶ A well-established clover sward will deliver a 10% reduction in your carbon footprint; we must now do 5-10 per cent of farm per year.
 - ▶ Big savings in your fertiliser N bill.
 - ▶ Sow clover in April.
3. Change to Protected Urea instead of CAN and Urea, resulting in:
 - ▶ A 71 per cent reduction in emissions of the Greenhouse (GHG) nitrous oxide, and,
 - ▶ Better quality water because of lower Nitrate losses in wet periods.
 - ▶ Small cost to you.
4. Slurry LESS (Low Emission Slurry Spreading) methods of managing slurry must be the norm – we must challenge people who ignore good practice and give all farmers a bad name.
 - ▶ Reduces Ammonia (NH₃) and GHG losses significantly.
 - ▶ Increases N recovery in spring (all slurry tanks must be emptied by April) by 15 per cent, worth an extra €14/ha on every 3000gallon/acre.
 - ▶ Small cost to you.
5. Other easy things you should do are: carefully dispose of rubbish, plastic, medicine bottles and needles. Your vet will take the latter.
 - ▶ All these are doable at little extra cost and little inconvenience to the farmer.



KPI's MOST IMPORTANT MONTH

- ▶ The two key KPIs in dairy farming we are chasing are:
 1. 6-week calving date (90 per cent), and,
 2. Tons of grass DM utilised per hectare (14-16 tons).
- ▶ The factors that now influence next year's 6-week calving rate are:
 - ▶ The 3-week submission rate must be 90 per cent of the herd. This is influenced by:
 - » Poor fertility genetics,
 - » Good heat detection pre and post mating start date (MSD),
 - » BCS at calving and BCS loss to Mating,
 - » Calving difficulty,
 - » Womb infection,
 - » Disease,
 - » Mastitis and lameness,
 - » Stress,
 - » Energy deficit in the cow's diet,
 - » Minerals, particularly Iodine, Copper and Selenium,
 - » Synchronisation options – must be considered.
 - ▶ Conception rate to 1st service, which is influenced by:
 - » Poor fertility genetics,
 - » Poor AI technician technique,
 - » Poor straw management on and before mating day,
 - » Poor cow management on the day of service,
 - » Ill health, disease and minerals,
 - » Presenting cows for service that are actually not in-heat.
 - ▶ Heifer submission rate and conception rate.:
 - » Target:100% of heifers in 2 weeks.
- ▶ The factors that, in April, influence tons grass utilised are:
 - ▶ Grass cover during the first two weeks of the month because grass grows grass.
 - » If too low you will be “chasing your tail” for the following 6 – 8 weeks.
 - » If too high, unlikely, summer growth will be low because tillering will be reduced.
 - ▶ Nitrogen usage and soil fertility levels,
 - ▶ Post grazing heights – must be 3.5 – 4 cms.
 - ▶ Grass measurement.

- ▶ A stocking rate of 4.5 cows/ha from 20th April, driven by a pre-grazing cover of 1750kgs DM on a 21-day rotation.
- ▶ As part of your planning process go through these listed here and ensure you have them in place.
- ▶ How can we make these targets happen? See below.

WHY IS ACHIEVING BREEDING SEASON TARGET IMPORTANT?

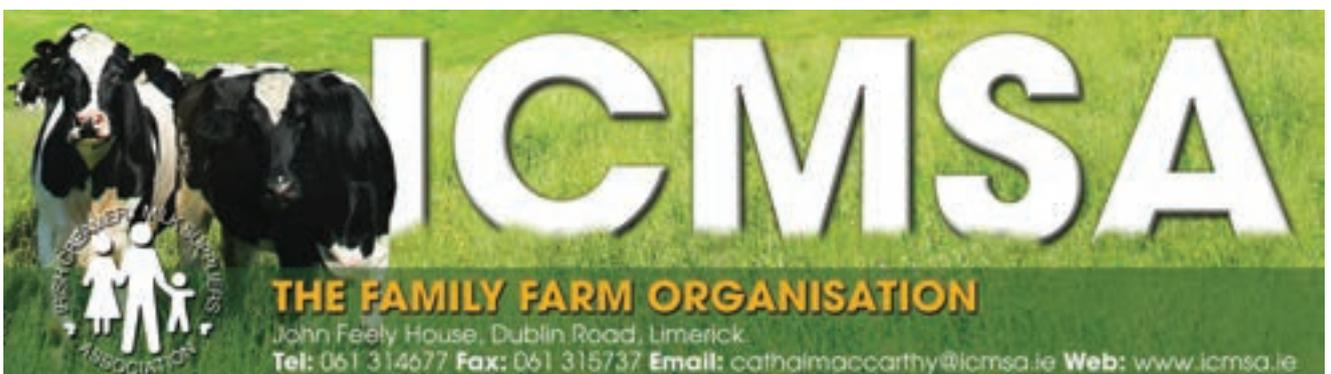
- ▶ The following losses accrue:
 - ▶ 6weeks calving %: Every 1% below target you lose €8.22/cow in herd.
 - ▶ Calving interval: For every 1 day lost you lose 0.12c/litre.
 - ▶ Replacement rate: for every 1% over 18% you lose 0.14c/litre.
 - ▶ Days in milk: For every 30 days short of target, you lose 0.6c/l.
 - ▶ Herd age (Lactations): Every 1 Lact. below target 4.5 = loss 1.5c/l.
- ▶ The 6-week target and herd age more or less embrace all other losses listed.
- ▶ 100 cow farmers on average are losing over €28,000 by not achieving these targets.
 - ▶ A serious loss, mainly due to:
 - ♦ National 6-week calving rate being 65 per cent.
 - ♦ National age of herd being 3.5 lactations.
- ▶ Farmers are now appreciating the convenience of compact calving from a labour and time management point of view.

BREEDING SEASON PLAN

- ▶ Decide on your MSD (mating start date) based on your targeted median calving date for 2022 and the number of days from start of calving to median calving date in 2021.
- ▶ Based on Research the following mean calving dates are advised:
 - ▶ South (dry land): 14th February.
 - ▶ North (or wet land): 24th February.
- ▶ The target number of days from start of calving to median calving date is 15-20 days:
 - ▶ The median calving date is that day when 50% (half) of the cows have calved,
 - ▶ Look up your current years figure on the ICBF site for your herd.



- ▶ Then, subtract your days from the target median calving date in 2022, to help you decide on the start of mating date.
 - ▶ A farmer targeting a median calving date of 20th Feb 2022 should follow this plan:
 - ▶ Because of short gestation bulls being mated to short gestation cows, many farmers are not going to AI until 10th May this year.
 - ▶ This plan will help you achieve the 3-week 90 per cent submission target.
 - ▶ Due to their biological position, heifers take 6-7 days longer to go back in calf the 2nd year; hence the need to calve the heifers 6-7 days before the cows.
 - ▶ Where the 6- week calving rate is poor on a farm, I recommend the “Why wait programme”
 - ▶ This involves moving cows being served in week 2 to week 1 and from week 3 to week 2, but you need very good pre-mating records.
 - ▶ See Table 1 for the date/procedures which must be followed to the “letter of the law”.
 - ▶ You must accurately identify and record cows coming on heat during the last 21 days before MSD – mark them with a special colour or marking, as per Table 1 suggestions. That means for a MSD of 1st May, pre-mating heat recording must start on 7 April with all calved cows painted “Red”. Cows identified as being on heat in weeks 1, 2, and 3 are painted yellow, blue and green respectively, leaving the “red” ones to be seen by the Vet.
 - ▶ To move week 2 expected heats to week 1, all cows with blue paint should get 2 cc PG on the MSD.
 - ▶ On the 7th May (or 7 days after MSD), cows with yellow paint should get 2cc PG.
 - » They will come bulling 2-4 days after (cows rarely come on heat the day after PG).
 - » With this programme you will have AI'd 60 per cent of your cows within 7 days and 90 per cent within 14 days of MSD.
 - » Many of my clients have successfully done it in 2020, with very good calving results in 2021.
 - ▶ As you will see from Table1, I am recommending an early scan, 32-39 days post service. It is done only once per week as outlined.
- KNOW THE SIGNS FOR HEAT:**
- ▶ Because every heat missed is €150 lost, it is important that everyone on the farm team are trained to ‘read the signs’ of heat as follows:
 - ▶ Cows coming into heat (duration 6-10 hrs):
 - ▶ Will not stand to be mounted,
 - ▶ Will be smelling other cows,
 - ▶ Attempts to ride other cows,
 - ▶ Displays a moist, red and slightly swollen vulva,
 - ▶ She is restless and bellows.
 - ▶ Cow is on standing heat (for 2-30 hrs, averaging 15 hrs) when:
 - ▶ Hair and skin rubbed off the crest of the tail head,
 - ▶ Dirt marks on flank or back,
 - ▶ Nervous, excitable and restless,
 - ▶ May ride other cows,
 - ▶ May stand with back arched and tail in the air,
 - ▶ Spends more time than usual grazing,
 - ▶ Displays moist red vulva,
 - ▶ There will be a clear mucus discharge from vulva,
 - ▶ May hold the milk,
 - ▶ Frequently changes from their usual order in the milking parlour – often leads the way from the paddock or lags behind.
 - ▶ Cow after heat signs:
 - ▶ Will not stand to be mounted,
 - ▶ Smells other cows,
 - ▶ Clear mucus discharge from vulva.
 - ▶ You, as manager, should train your staff/family by sending them to the cows’ paddock the week before MSD to identify cows in all three categories; get them to write them down.
 - ▶ Involve yourself with them; and after 2-3 days you and they will be much better and comfortable with the task.
 - ▶ They must also use that info in the parlour, having made notes as he/she brings the cows from the paddock, because, once milking starts there is very little time (10-15 secs or 8 in a rotary) to identify heats.
- USE SIRE ADVICE TO SELECT BULLS:**
- ▶ This is very simple to operate and the benefits enormous.



- ▶ Teagasc have set the following AI Bull Team Targets:
 - ▶ EBI €280; Fertility €120; Milk €80; Calving €40; Beef €15+; Health €7+.
 - ▶ They recommend the following number of bulls/ herd: 50-100 cows = 7 bulls; 100 -150 = 8; 150-200 = 9; 200-250 = 11; 250-300 = 12; 300-350 = 13; 350-400 = 14.
- ▶ As well as the above Teagasc targets I like to focus on % F & P with the result my recommended bulls (heifers in brackets) are:
- ▶ If using Jersey seriously consider sexed semen.
- ▶ Use a dairy stock bull if you wish to reduce profit by €100 per year for every cow in your herd.
- ▶ If using a beef bull consider synchronising these cows so that they are served 6-10 days early to prevent calving date slippage.

YOU MUST SYNCHRONISE HEIFERS

- ▶ Anyone who tells you they don't do this is telling you they don't believe research as this is essential if you want compact calving herd.
 - ▶ Because the herds calving date slips by 4 – 6 days each year, you must calve all the heifers in the first 4 weeks of calving, starting 5-7 days before the cows.
- ▶ This can be organised by synchronizing heifers as follows:
 - ▶ Day 1: Apply the heat detection aid - scratch cards or crayons.
 - ▶ Day 1-6: Bull heifers seen on heat.
 - ▶ Day 6: Inject non-bullied heifers with 2cc Prostaglandin.
 - ▶ Day 7-11: Most heifers will come bulling and should be served.
 - ▶ Day 12 -18: Put on scratch card on all heifers,
 - ▶ Day 19 – 24: Heifers (some) will repeat, so AI on standing heat.
 - ▶ This reduces heat detection time from 21 to 9 days.
 - ▶ If 30 per cent of the heifers have not been mated on day 6 do not proceed with this synchronization programme as something is wrong.
- ▶ There are other options – talk to your Vet or Adviser.
- ▶ It is almost certain that in most parts of the country that iodine is deficient or marginal, therefore, put 1cc/hd/day of Iodine in the water trough for heifers from 1 April – 1 June.

TARGET GRAZING STOCKING RATES:

- ▶ Aim for the following grazing stocking rates which will free up the remainder of the farm for silage and you can calculate if those acres deliver enough silage for next winter:

| Animals/hectare | April – May | June – July |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Cows | 4.5 to 4.7 | 3.6 |
| Cattle (Wt. /ha) | 2500 | 2200(kgs) |
| Calves/ha | 22 | 14 |

- ▶ If these high stocking rates result in grass being tight you can graze some of the silage ground. But you must make this plan because silage ground will get 100 units N/acre whereas if you depend on taking out surpluses off grazing paddocks they will only have got less than 40 units/acre.
- ▶ This plan ensures a large 1st cut which is cheapest silage, and maximise the response from nitrogen.
 - ▶ This is an essential principal in trying to grow more grass from less availability of N.
 - ▶ As well as grazing slightly higher covers, which must be matched to grazing SR/ha.

SHORT OF GRASS OPTIONS?

- ▶ All the signs are there that we will be short of grass in April: Mainly because the rotation length from 1st grazing will have been too short. Nitrogen was applied too late and too little used to date.
- ▶ The first step in overcoming the problem is: Estimate the average farm cover (AFC) by measuring the farm grass cover.
- ▶ The target AFCs are:
 - ▶ Moorepark type soil: 150-200 kgs DM per livestock unit.
 - ▶ Solohead type (wettish) soil: 210 Kgs DM per livestock unit.
- ▶ Therefore, for example, if you are stocked at 2.5 cows per hectare you need the following average farm covers on the grazing area in early April:
 - ▶ Dry Land: 500 Kgs DM per hectare.
 - ▶ Wettish/heavy land: 525 Kgs DM per hectare.
 - ▶ Calculate your own required cover for your stocking rate.
- ▶ The cheapest way to overcome grass shortage on the grazing area is to graze the silage ground a second time by delaying the closing date.

Table 1: "Why Wait Programme" for 1st May MSD* or any MSD*

| Group | Heat in the Period pre-MSD (*) | Colour Paint on cows back | Expected Period Post MSD* (days) | PG Date to achieve 2 to 1 and 3 to 2 | Colour Paint | Scan Period | Colour Paint | The recommended weekly Scan day will be this day post MSD* | Actual Scan Date for a 1st May MSD* |
|-------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | -21 to -14 days | Yellow | 0 – 7 days | None | Yellow | 32 to 39 days | Yellow | +39 days | 8th June |
| 2. | - 14 to – 7days | Blue | 7 to 14 days | 1st May or MSD | Blue | 39 to 46 days | Blue | +46 days] (Wk 3 to wk 2 cows) | 15th June |
| 3. | - 7 to 0 days | Green | 14 to 21 days | 7th May or MSD +7 days | Green | 46 to 53 days | Green | +53 days | 22th June Very Few |

(*) MSD = Mating Start Date

TABLE 2: My Top 15 Bulls - ranked under six headings
(Source: Various Catalogues & Active Bull List)

| RANK | EBI | FERTILITY | MAINTENANCE | Kgs MS | % PROTEIN | % FAT |
|------|--------|-----------|-------------|--------|-----------|---------|
| 1 | FR6484 | FR6718 | FR4965 | FR5803 | FR6076 | FR6076 |
| 2 | FR6547 | FR6469 | FR6229 | FR6475 | FR4547 | FR 6517 |
| 3 | FR6499 | FR6978 | FR6625 | FR7011 | FR5851 | FR5851 |
| 4 | FR6481 | FR6625 | FR6628 | FR6499 | FR6472 | FR6978 |
| 5 | FR7020 | FR7014 | FR6547 | FR6484 | FR7026 | FR6628 |
| 6 | FR6472 | FR6484 | FR6617 | FR7020 | FR6049 | FR6475 |
| 7 | FR6978 | FR6481 | FR4845 | FR6628 | FR6978 | FR4571 |
| 8 | FR6718 | FR6433 | FR7011 | FR7026 | FR5515 | FR5515 |
| 9 | FR7026 | FR6517 | FR6484 | FR5860 | FR6073 | FR7020 |
| 10 | FR6475 | FR6954 | FR6031 | FR6472 | FR4845 | FR6718 |
| 11 | FR6469 | FR6031 | FR5515 | FR6616 | FR6547 | FR6472 |
| 12 | FR6625 | FR6547 | FR5803 | FR4965 | FR6481 | FR4965 |
| 13 | FR7014 | FR7020 | FR5851 | FR6481 | FR7020 | FR6229 |
| 14 | FR7011 | FR6535 | FR6433 | FR5530 | FR6475 | FR6481 |
| 15 | FR6954 | FR5860 | FR6073 | FR6954 | FR6517 | FR6049 |

- ▶ Because of the ground conditions in Feb/Mar the objective must be not to complete the first round before:
 - ▶ Dry Land: 5-12th April
 - ▶ Heavy Land: 12-18th April
 - ▶ More precisely when you have 1200-1300kgs DM cover on 1st couple of paddocks on the 2nd rotation.
 - ▶ Use the principle of “grass grows grass”!
- ▶ The second rotation must not end before 1st May, or more precisely, until there is at least 1550 on the first 3-4 paddocks for the 3rd rotation.
- ▶ Farmers who are into budgeting could push these dates back by 3-5 days.
- ▶ Meals, may have to be fed on most, if not all farms but because the high cost this year it must be minimum.
 - ▶ 2-4 Kgs can be justified where a grass budget shows that need
 - ▶ Eighteen (18) kgs grass DM will sustain 26 l/day (2-2.2 kgs MS). Approx 1 kg meal must be provided for every kg of grass under this allocation.
 - ▶ The % P in the meal should be 12-14% P.
- ▶ Feeding pit silage should be seen as a last resort at this time of year.
- ▶ Poached or damaged paddocks need TLC care, on the 2nd grazing graze on dry days only.
- ▶ Most farmers are not grazing out paddocks well enough in April:
 - ▶ It is a fundamental

The Reference in Prevention for Animal Health

Mastitis Control is **PROFESSIONALISM**

Take the next step with Mastitis Vaccination

Ask your vet about your mastitis prevention plan

HIPRA (19) and (20) 2020
Rural Business Centre, Puckbeg Road, Ballyvaughan, D27 6L9, County Kerry
Tel: 056 9122 888 | info@hipra.ie | www.hipra.ie

requirement of good grassland management, particularly in April.

- ▶ Every 1cm post grazing height remaining represents 250kg DM. which will feed 14 cows for one day.
- ▶ What does 3.5 – 4.0 cms post grazing look like? Learn! Buy a plate meter for the discussion group to teach yourselves this most important skill.
- ▶ A big advantage of tight (3.5 – 4 cms) grazing in April-May is you will have:
 - ▶ Thicker grazing pastures for the remainder of the year.
 - ▶ The growing point of the plant will be kept low, near the ground, so that less stem will develop and so reduce the need for topping later in the year.

USE PROTECTED UREA!

- ▶ Protected urea is 90 per cent the cost of CAN and about 10% more expensive than urea.
- ▶ Trials have shown that it grows as much grass as CAN and there are lower N losses than urea.
- ▶ It can be spread throughout the year, being more

efficient on volatilisation losses, nitrous oxide losses and will reduce greenhouse gas and ammonia emissions.

- ▶ Use Nitrogen NOW to match your stocking rate during the following months, May and June, as follows: -

| Stocking Rate May/June (L.U/ha) | N(Urea) Units/Acre (Whole farm) | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----|-----------------|
| | Apr | May | N by 15th April |
| 3.74 or less | 23 | 23 | 69 |
| 3.75 – 4.0 | 30 | 28 | 123 |
| 4.0 + | 40 | 40 | 123 |

- ▶ If you haven't adequate P & K on by now apply 2.25 bags 18:6:12 per acre on grazing area.
- ▶ Sulphur with the Nitrogen should be used on all soils from early April: Use 5-20 units per acre.

SHORT REMINDERS

- ▶ As there is big demand over supply for bulling heifers now, you should plan to be bulling heifers that are only 250 kgs now and bull on 15 May - 1 June. Feed these 2kg meal (barley/pulp) with very good quality grass and delay service to mid/late May.
- ▶ Farmers with poor EBI's should put all their cows in-calf to beef breeds and do a contract with some very good farmer to supply you heifer calves next year.
- ▶ White clover should either be stitched in to a few swards after the second grazing or sown in grass seed mixtures where there are no weeds in the pasture.
 - ▶ If pastures to be reseeded had docks etc they should be reseeded without clover, then sprayed at the seedling stage and clover stitched in subsequently.
 - ▶ Take good advice on this.
- ▶ With N restrictions coming consider sowing HI ryegrasses with perennial grass mixes.
- ▶ You MUST weigh R2's now to monitor target weights. Contract rearers must be asked to submit R1 and R2 weights every 3 months at minimum.
- ▶ OAD milk cows losing BCS and late calvers so that they will recycle early.
- ▶ Metriceck all cows one month before MSD.



Stay in touch with us online

with daily updates from our specialists & researchers

Open the camera on your phone & scan the QR code for more information



Visit www.teagasc.ie/daily



New Massey Ferguson MF 5S Series



Massey Ferguson, a worldwide brand of AGCO (NYSE:AGCO) has announced the introduction of five new models from 105hp to 145hp in the MF 5S Series, which continues its striking new era design and enhanced operator experience introduced on the advanced, new MF 8S Series. With best in class visibility and industry-leading 4m turning radius, the narrowest steep-nosed bonnet and practical features they are supreme loader tractors. Also, their greater payload and higher linkage capacity make them powerful performers in the field and on the road. All models are equipped with four-cylinder engines, offering maximum powers from 105hp up to a new range topping 145hp model. There is a choice of three levels of specification – Essential, Efficient and Exclusive, plus a range of options including outstanding control from the latest state-of-the-art, easy to use Smart Farming technology.

“The versatile MF 5S Series combine high performance, comfort and agility with best in class visibility and special features that make them the ultimate loader tractors,” says Francesco Murro, Director Marketing Massey Ferguson Europe & Middle East.

“True multi-purpose tractors, the MF 5S Series offers the right choice of power and specifications to suit all applications. Building on the success of the MF 5700 S Series, these modern tractors deliver straightforward operation and enhanced features with low ownership costs. The MF 5S blends together the compact dimensions required by livestock and mixed farmers with the

performance and power needed for arable work,” he adds. With its compact dimensions, 2.55m wheelbase, high visibility, high hydraulic flow and control, the MF 5S further builds on Massey Ferguson’s renowned reputation as the leading loader specialist. All models can be supplied loader ready, or now come equipped with a factory-fitted loader from the Massey Ferguson MF FL Series. For arable and mixed farming operations MF 5S tractors offer a host of output enhancing features. Rear linkage lift capacity is increased to 5,700kg across the range, and up to 6,000kg in some specific circumstances, while the new, stronger front linkage capacity is increased from 2,500kg to an impressive 3,000kg. Coupled with a higher, 9,500kg Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW), this allows the tractors to safely handle wider implements to improve workrates. Latest Smart Farming technology further improves output and efficiency with easy to use precision farming features, including MF Connect telemetry, MF Guide auto-steering, MF Section Control and MF Rate Control. “Whether it’s working on an arable farm or with a contractor, on a livestock or dairy farm these straightforward, dependable, comfortable, versatile and well-equipped tractors deliver the performance modern farmers need with low operating costs,” adds Mr Murro. All five MF 5S Series tractors are available with the choice of Essential, Efficient or Exclusive specifications. These packages include a range of performance and comfort enhancing features to suit a range of applications. Typical equipment variations include hydraulic pump output,



spool valve control, AutoDrive, joystick controls and cab suspension.

Exclusive models are 'fully loaded' including, among other options, 110 litre/min hydraulics with up to eight electric spool valves, hydraulic joystick, Multipad control, AutoDrive transmission, auto air-con, cab suspension, Superluxe air suspended seat and Datatronic 5 touch-screen terminal.

Efficient specification is similar, but has two electric and two mechanical spools at the rear, standard air-con and an air-suspended seat, while the Datatronic 5 terminal becomes an option.

Essential models switch to using a T-lever gear control in place of the Multipad, with the hydraulic joystick an option and AutoDrive replaced by Speedmatching on the Dyna-4 transmission. It has a 58 litre/min hydraulic pump and two rear mechanical spool valves – up to four as an option.

All MF 5S Series models are equipped with a high specification cab, which keeps operators in optimum comfort. A new HVAC air system enhances air distribution, enabling operators to not only set and maintain the most comfortable temperature, but it also reduces demisting and defrosting times. On Exclusive and Efficient tractors a new armrest, as used in the recently launched flagship MF 8S range, houses the Multipad joystick. This provides control of a number of functions including forward/reverse shuttle, linkage and spool valves. The Multipad can also be equipped with a micro joystick to operate two rear spool valves (or any other spool valve when Datatronic 5 is fitted). Loaders are operated by a separate joystick that sits alongside the Multipad. While on tractors with Datatronic 5, the screen is placed conveniently to the right of the console.

Essential tractors come with a shorter armrest, with the transmission operated by a small T-lever to the side and separate levers for the spool valves. On loader tractors the joystick is mounted at the front of the armrest.

Latest AGCO Power 4.4 litre, four cylinder engines meet Stage V emissions regulations with straightforward MF All-in-One technology. Developed by AGCO Power, it contains the SCR system, DOC and soot catalyst in one compact unit, all neatly housed under the cab, maintaining the industry-leading forward visibility over the low, slim bonnet. Longer service intervals now extend oil and fuel filter changes to 600hr, which further helps reduce running costs. A new, optimised airflow system improves engine cooling, which increases performance and efficiency.

All MF 5S Series tractors are available with a choice of Massey Ferguson's highly regarded 16x16 speed, Dyna-4 or 24x24 Dyna-6, semi-powershift transmissions. Highly efficient and easy to use, both come with the useful Brake-to-Neutral function.

A new, stronger suspended front axle offers an industry-leading 4m turning radius. Working with the new 3t capacity front linkage, which can now lift an extra 500kg, it helps improve efficiency, enabling the tractors to use larger front-mounted equipment.

Extra comfort is offered by the electronically-controlled hydraulic suspension, which uses two longer stroke cylinders and three accumulators to absorb shocks.



Hold firm

Well readers, I hope you are all well and safe and looking forward to the continued vaccination program roll-out: I will use the quote 'no point in getting shot the last days of the war', so stay safe, get vaccinated and stick with

Government directions. We have all seen over the past few weeks the disgraceful behaviour on the streets of our nation's capital by a few challenging the lockdown and the restrictions that are currently in place. This carry on puts the Gardaí and other members of society in danger. If these people were brought in to a Covid hospital unit and shown the devastation this virus causes; if they spoke to people that lost friends, family and love ones; and spoke to survivors I honestly believe they would change their collective opinions very quickly. These restrictions are in place to do one thing, to save lives, and everything comes a poor second after that. I respect the view that people have the democratic right to protest and voice their opinions but collectively we all have to pull together for the greater good of the whole population of this great country. Now, down to business...I saw last week that a supermarket outside Belgium, which is owned by a well-known UK food chain and is frequented by British people working in the city, is now stocking rashers from Roscommon, milk from Cork, cheese from Cashel, crisps from Meath, tea packaged in Cork and much more besides. The reason for this is supply issues from the UK to Brussels owing to Brexit. Meanwhile, farmland prices in Ireland have risen by 15 per cent putting an average acre at over €10,316. There is a shortage of land on offer at the moment and over last year as well, as farmers were concerned about the effects Covid would have on them getting a strong price at auction. Diesel prices are rising at a rate of 1 cent a litre per week in Ireland – prices are now heading to double what they were a year ago. Prices ran at an average of 35 cent a litre plus VAT last year and are now running at 60 cent plus vat per litre at the moment.

On the sheep markets there are positive signs with factories looking for quantities of spring lamb for the Easter trade. Marts nationwide have seen strong trade also with quality hoggets hitting highs of €180 per head.

The dairy market is holding firm, prices are good and both the world and European markets are trading on the high side with increases in prices for butter and mozzarella, while cheddar remains stable and milk powder is heading for its highest price in over a year in Europe. Beef prices once again are heading upwards despite some factories trying to hold prices firm. There is a big demand for Irish beef both here and abroad with export markets showing growth. Tillage work has slowed down owing to the mixed weather we have been having but will get up to speed over the next few weeks as soil temperatures start to rise again and land dries out. Grain prices both here, in Europe and on the world markets are remaining stable...slight change in prices have been reported but nothing major. And finally, on the machinery front, new tractor sales are up 21 per cent on the same period last year there was a total of 797 new tractors registered for the first 2 months of this year, up from 658 units 12 months previous. Sales of farm machinery is brisk across all sectors; trade in the farm machinery industry for the first quarter of this year is up on the same quarter last year. Long may it continue and don't forget, as we head in to the busy sowing season and prepare for the grass season, remember to support your local dealer.

Until next month, farm wisely and farm safely.

The challenge of outdoing yourself.



THE ALL-NEW X7.624 VT-DRIVE. THE MOST RADICAL REDEFINITION OF X7.

Beneath the stunning design of the new bonnet, 240 hp and a torque of 983 Nm pulse at 1400 rpm for a robust increase in power and performance. The Stage V engine, nestled within the tractor's rugged chassis, reduces consumption and vibration. The advanced VT-Drive driveline and the front suspension with independent arms ensure traction, manoeuvrability and comfort. The control unit now has 5 programmable MyFunctions buttons, and the spacious semi-active suspension cab is topped by a new roof with 12 LED work lights that ensure 360° visibility even at night. The new X7.624 VT-Drive wins the toughest challenge: outdoing itself.

NEW ENGINE



NEW CONTROL UNIT



NEW STYLE



NEW ROOF



NEW LIGHTING
FIXTURES



To book a demo or to be contacted by your dealer,
scan the QR CODE with your smartphone and go to
the website

www.mccormick.it/en/tractors/x7-6-vt-drive/

Kleber unveils new Topker Agricultural Tyre range



Kleber has launched a new generation of its popular Topker agricultural tyre range, featuring IF (improved flexion) technology for the first time.

Specifically designed to improve grip, comfort and productivity for high horsepower tractors delivering more than 200hp, the new range – comprising five front sizes and six rear sizes – is designed, says the company, to provide farmers and agricultural contractors with a high-quality IF tyre at a value-for-money price.

Tyres with an IF rating benefit from a sidewall structure which is more flexible – allowing operators to carry more load at the same pressure, or to run the same load at a lower pressure when compared to standard tyres of the same size.

Commenting, Gordon Brookes, Kleber's Customer Engineering Support Manager, says: "The Kleber Topker IF is a solution tailored to meet farmers' needs at a time when modern day farm machinery is getting bigger and heavier. Being able to lower tyre inflation pressures means the impact on the ground is far less, reducing soil compaction and helping to improve yields."

Designed for all-round use from small crop farms to large-scale mixed operations, the new range is immediately available in four key sizes – IF 710/70 R42, IF 600/70 R30, IF 650/85 R38 and IF 800/70 R38. A further seven sizes are set to follow throughout 2021, with the range to include options from 28" to 42".

The full Kleber agricultural line-up includes the Traker, Fitker and Gripker for tractors rated 80 – 200hp, and the Topker and Topker IF for heavier farm work with higher horsepower machines. They are available across the Michelin Exelagri dealer network in Ireland and the UK.



Experts in your field

1400 V

- Autoload & Unload
- Telescopic Cut & Start
- Unload On The Move
- Compact & Well Balanced

MICHAEL 087 206 2625






www.tanco.global

TANCO

The Steketee year in review



High precision at larger working widths is made possible by the IC-Light camera control system developed in-house.

The Dutch company Steketee has been part of the LEMKEN group since 2018, and a lot of work was done throughout the past year to keep up with the rising demand for weed control solutions. According to the company, Steketee continued to grow in 2020 despite the corona pandemic, and the company recorded a sales growth of 30 per cent.

Iljan Schouten, Steketee's Managing Director, has a very positive outlook: "The trend towards integrated crop care is unstoppable. There is strong demand for hoeing machines, ridgers and band spraying implements for reducing the use of pesticides."

To meet this high demand, Steketee and Lemken have

worked together to optimise processes and production in Stad aan't Haringvliet. A new assembly line for small implements is being set up, which will boost production capacities and most likely shorten delivery times. The introduction of the two Professional and Individual product lines has made it easier to both create and process orders. The Professional line comprises of easily configurable hoeing machines for traditional row crops and row widths. "With the Individual line, we retain our ability to meet individual customer requests thanks to a wide range of available options. There is a clear trend towards customers demanding greater efficacy with larger working widths, with the IC-Light camera control delivering very high precision", explains Iljan Schouten.

Last year, the company also worked intensively on its After-Sales. Spare parts are now documented in the Agroparts online portal and can be ordered from there. Both dealers and end customers can order parts via this portal, and all popular spare and wear parts are available for express overnight delivery from the central warehouse. "This ensures that our customers' Steketee machines are up and running again as quickly as possible, wherever they are in the world," says Leonard Mol, Steketee's Head of Sales, adding that "demand from Central and Eastern European countries has been increasing substantially, in addition to demand in our established Western European markets." Mechanical weed control solutions, he says, have started to attract considerable interest in these regions too.



HIGH EFFICIENCY. HIGH ACREAGE. HIGH YIELDS.
LOOK TO LEMKEN

LEMKEN agricultural machinery is distinctive, not only because of its blue colour, but above all because of its quality, versatility and robust designs. We are continuously working towards developing solutions that optimally meet the specific needs of the Irish and global markets.

Contact: Derek Delahunty, LEMKEN Area Sales Manager
00353 86 0203886
d.delahunty@lemken.com

 **LEMKEN**
www.lemken.com



Growth through trusted partnership



Speak to us today about flexible competitive finance

For all your agricultural machinery finance needs, please contact:

1. Chris Smyth 07860 367125
2. Jimmy Murphy 0879 059394
3. Martin Connaughton 0872 481740
4. Geoff O'Shea 0872 481739



www.agcofinance.com

Part of the AGCO Family



Pottinger further strengthens its Irish force



Experts in your field

INTRODUCING
AUTO CUT

Request a Quote Call Michael 087 206 2629

Trailed Triple Mower & Conditioner from TANCO. Cutting & Conditioning widths of 29ft and 32ft. Horse power starting at just 180HP. Reduced fuel consumption.

www.tanco.global

TANCO

Pottinger is delighted to announce the recent appointment of James Buckley to its Aftersales and Sales Promotion department. Hailing from Co. Cork, James graduated from Tralee IT with an Honours Degree in Agricultural Engineering Management before taking up positions where he spent many years traveling the globe in service and product support roles.

With a keen interest in agricultural mechanisation James brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to his new position with Pottinger.

Diarmuid Claridge, Managing Director of Pottinger Ireland commented: "Pottinger is a company that values proximity to its customers and prides itself upon quality machines but also quality backup and support. Ireland is a very important market for us and we want our customers to experience the best aftersales support. Having James join our team brings increased strength and value to the services we provide to our dealers and customers. James's extensive knowledge, expertise, and passion for agricultural will be pivotal in our continued development, growth and success in Ireland."

More than a tractor



“Still to this day we cannot fault our dealer, it’s the sort of back up you need. You just can’t get service like that anywhere else.”

Mark Weaver, ARION 530 and 620

Turn desire into reality.
Contact your local CLAAS dealer to discuss your next tractor decision.
clas.ie



Preparation is key

Alistair Chambers explains that preparation is key when it comes to safely working with the modern and technologically advanced tractors and machines that are commonplace in progressive Irish farm businesses.

With the days getting longer and the ground starting to dry out, farmers and contractors are starting to get busy. Operators need to be prepared for long days. Whether currently out spreading slurry or preparing to get going at tillage operations. The most important thing is safety but also being as efficient as possible and thus profitable. Preparing your tractor for the day is essential to stay safe. All manufacturers will have a list of daily checks which should be undertaken, and we will look at some more routine things that can be done to make your day more productive and comfortable. Here, we look at some simple steps to make a tractor operators day productive and safe.



CLEAN GLASS AND MIRRORS

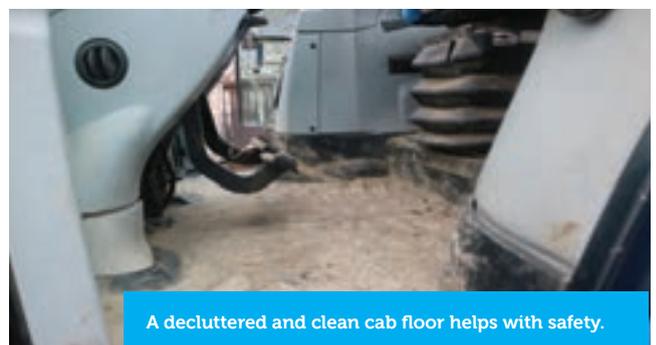
These days, with roads getting busier and machines getting more complex. The ability to see everything around you all the time is very important. Cleaning windows and mirrors will take a few minutes but the advantages that it gives make literally every operation and journey easier and safer. Once the glass is clear it is important to check and fill the window washer bottle to help keep them clean during the working day.



Clean Glass and mirrors are essential.

TIDY CAB

We have all seen the energy drink can filled cab floors, these are the opposite of what should be the correct approach to cab cleanliness. Having the floor clear of all debris makes operating the tractor easier and safer. The areas beside and around the seat should be kept as clear as possible too as any items stored here can become dislodged and end up under a pedal just when you need to push them. All food/drink for the day should be always secured safely in the cab. Carrying heavy parts or tools on the floor of the cab is never advised as a sudden stop may lead to broken cab glass in the footwells, an expensive and dangerous occurrence.



A decluttered and clean cab floor helps with safety.

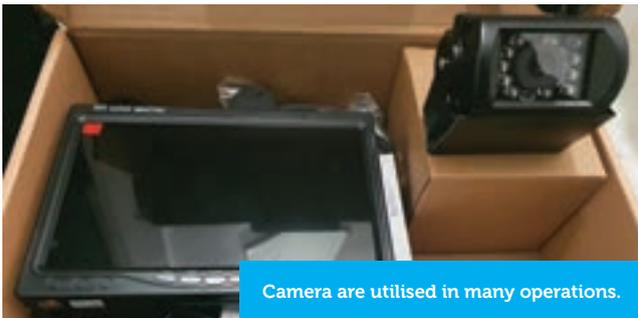
LIGHTS



Fully functioning lights make life far easier at night.

Before leaving the yard each morning, it is a good idea to check all your lights are working, you never know when you may end up working into the night either by choice or due to circumstances beyond your control. It is far easier to resolve any issue with a full set of tool/spares that may be in your shed than with reduced resources in the field.

CAMERAS



Camera are utilised in many operations.

Lots of modern gear have cameras to monitor how they are working, from in-hopper ones to check seed/fertiliser levels to on balers to check the bales leaving the chamber. It is far easier to fix any problem with these before you leave the yard than in the middle of a field.

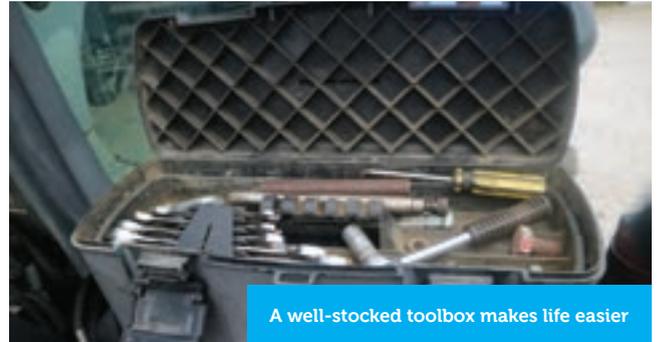
GUIDANCE



Guidance and data acquisition are becoming central to machine operation

More and more operations are being undertaken with some sort of guidance, it is a worthwhile exercise to fire up the unit before leaving the yard and checking that you have connection to satellites and that if autosteer is being employed that it functions. At the end of the working day, it is also very important for both farmers and contractors to download the days data from the system. This keeps records up to date and reduces the risk of data being lost or corrupted. Once the data has been saved to a safe place the original can be deleted to make room on the system for more jobs in the future.

TOOLBOX



A well-stocked toolbox makes life easier

Every job requires a different set of tools and or spare parts. Time spent making sure that you have the usual parts that you may require in the tractor or machine for the day will save time and stress in the long term.

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE



Manufacturers all state a set of daily maintenance tasks including oil, water and air brake draining.

All the manufacturers have a set of routine maintenance tasks which should be carried out daily in addition to the above suggestions, these include checking the engine oil and coolant levels and draining the air reservoir on air operated braking systems.

All of these suggestions may help to make you and your machine more efficient and profitable, but they will definitely make them safer for you and other operators working around you. The plan should always be that once you leave the yard in the morning that you should return having had a productive and stress-free day no matter how long or complicated the day has been. Preparation is key when it comes to working with the modern and technologically advanced tractors and machines that are commonplace in progressive Irish farm businesses.



Arramara Teoranta



Arramara Teoranta is pleased to announce David Shortall has joined the company as Market Development Manager for Ireland.

Arramara was purchased by Acadian Seaplants Limited in 2014 and they recently added Uist Asco in Scotland to their Acadian family of companies.

Acadian Seaplants, a family-owned company headquartered in Nova Scotia, Canada is a global leader in sustainable seaweed technology production for plant, animal and human health.

From a beef and tillage farm in Co. Laois, David graduated from University College Dublin in 2010 with a degree in Food & Agribusiness Management (B.Agrsc). He previously worked as Agri Sales Manager with Quinn's of Baltinglass Ltd. and spent two years working with Cargill as a Consultant Agronomist in Ontario, Canada. David has strong commercial and technical experience in both

ruminant nutrition and agronomy ensuring he can provide technical support to Arramara's customers for their Titan® range of feed additives and soil conditioners.

The Titan® feed additive is based entirely on *Ascophyllum nodosum* seaweed which is 100% Irish, natural and organic and is harvested sustainably near Arramara's plant in Kilkieran, Co. Galway. There has been significant research conducted worldwide highlighting the benefits of feeding *Ascophyllum* to production livestock. This research has shown benefits that include

reduced stress, increased immune competence and increased production of meat and milk. *Ascophyllum* acts as an effective prebiotic in monogastrics and as a rumen modifier in ruminants, increasing the activity of beneficial bacteria. It also reduces the impact of pathogens that can cause *E. coli* or *Salmonella*.

When used as a soil conditioner Titan's bioactive compounds help restore nitrogen and moisture levels and help promote seed germination. There is additional research evidence the *Ascophyllum nodosum* marine plant properties increase a plant's resistance to drought and extreme temperature stress.

David will be working closely with feed mills, mineral manufacturers and agri-input suppliers to grow sales of Arramara's sustainably produced range of both feed additives and soil conditioners in the Irish Market.

You can contact David directly at d.shortall@arramara.ie or 087-7854076.



CHOOSE TITAN® FOR LIFE!

Titan® Seaweeds keep your soil and animals healthy and at peak performance.

Titan® products are 100% all-natural, organic *Ascophyllum nodosum* seaweed harvested in the clean west coast waters of Ireland and are full of trace minerals and bioactives essential for healthy soil and animals.



Titan® for Animals is full of readily absorbed, naturally-balanced vitamins, minerals, amino acids and trace elements that promote the health of your animals. Our 100% natural feed supplement:

- Assists nutrient absorption, healthy growth and animal performance
- Maintains healthy intestinal functions by providing essential roughage
- Promotes a healthy immune system
- Builds your animals' resistance to disease



Titan® for Soil is a microbial-friendly, top dressing used to improve soil quality on a physical, biological and chemical level improving:

- Moisture retention, enabling seed germination
- Soil retention, minimizing erosion
- Cation exchange capacity, repairing soil chemistry
- Growth through the gentle release of nutrients
- Compost breakdown, releasing nutrients & creating rich, loamy soil



Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Registration No. BG101810



Trust Titan® for healthy soil. For healthy animals. For life.

www.aramara.ie | info2@aramara.ie | Kilkieran, Connemara, Co. Galway, Ireland

Do we have a stable agricultural contracting sector?



Tom Murphy
Professional
Agricultural
Contractors of Ireland



When I was a small lad I remember my excitement when men from neighbouring farms arrived on their bicycles at my grandfather's farm with their scythes slung across their shoulders to help with the harvest. They moved across the fields in unison like straight rows of soldiers, wielding their scythes expertly as they worked together to help cut the hay. I revelled in my job of transporting the lunch of soda bread and tea in porter bottle up to the men in the fields. Later, they all came down to the cottage where my grandmother and aunts put up the grub and I endured much good-natured teasing. The following days, much to my disappointment, it was my grandfather's turn to head off on his bicycle to return the favour, leaving me behind.

A few years later my excitement increased when a man on a tractor arrived trailing what looked like a very fancy implement. I watched in amazement at how fast the hay was cut and he went on to the next farm without even a cup of tea. However, he did not get out of the gate until my grandfather paid him in full. Looking back now I realize I had witnessed the birth of the agricultural contracting sector. The agricultural contractor was in great demand and much respected in the community. I am not sure that is necessarily the case today and I don't think any contractors get paid at the gate anymore.

A few years ago PAC Ireland did a survey of the agricultural contracting sector. One of the questions asked if there was a succession plan in place. Over 50 per cent of respondents answered "no". High amongst the reasons given was that, because of the uncertainty of the business, their children wanted a better, more secure life and indeed contractors also wanted that for their children. With contractors' children benefiting from our excellent education system and many carrying on to third level this looks to be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The survey also revealed that after a lifetime of serving farmers and carrying high risk investment in machinery, on retirement the agricultural contractor has no goodwill in his business to

sell on – a life's work for nothing. Conversely, a farmer has the asset of his land, which he can realise should he wish retire. A contractor once told me he would have to plan very carefully for his retirement because he couldn't put his business up for sale. If he did that he would lose his customers overnight and be left with a fire sale of his machinery, with little left once the bank and finance houses were paid off.

The importance of the agricultural contracting sector has, over the years, been paid lip service; now I think we don't even get that. The contribution that agricultural contractors play in supporting farmers can only be gauged by imagining the panic that would ensue should contractors go on strike for a whole season.

So the question is; do we have a stable agricultural contracting sector? As long as we are undermined by Government complicity in excluding contractors from the farm machinery grant system – which is funded by Europe and which does not exclude contractors from benefiting – my answer is definitely NO, we will not have a stable agricultural contracting sector until all of the above is addressed. The biggest problem for contractors I believe is not getting a fair price for their work. We need action to ensure that we have a strong agricultural contracting sector permanently in place to support and enable farmers to increase their production and profit. To achieve this I am calling for the following action: Department of Agriculture to fully recognise the agricultural contracting sector; Establish a register of tax compliant agricultural contractors; Include agricultural contractors in the grant system for farm machinery; Revenue to only accept receipts from farmers for work done by tax compliant registered agricultural contractors; Negotiations with farm representative bodies to form a 3-year fixed price contract between farmer and the agricultural contractor. I readily accept that that the above won't happen overnight but these issues must be addressed if farmers want a contracting sector working with them into the future.

Tractor Safety needs to be a Priority



The number of serious and fatal accidents in the agricultural sector remains stubbornly high and this is a cause of great concern. Ciaran Roche, FBD Risk Manager, discusses tractor safety on the farm.

Sadly, over the last five years there have been 100 people killed in accidents on Irish farms, this accounts for 43 per cent of all fatalities in all workplaces. While farmer's, contractors and other agricultural workers attitudes to health and safety are generally very positive, a change in unsafe culture and behaviour is critical if we are to achieve a reduction in farm accidents. Farmer operators rely heavily on tractors and vehicles (including quads) to get their work done quickly and effectively. Not only are tractors and vehicles essential on the farm, they can help save time and increase productivity, but they are also very hazardous if not operated in a safe manner, and tragically the evidence of this is all too clear. 43 per cent of all fatalities in the farming sector involve tractors and vehicles, with this in mind it is essential that they are maintained in good condition and only operated in a safe manner by competent persons. Most of these fatal accidents were due to the tractor or vehicles overturning, rolling over or as a result of somebody being crushed or struck by the tractor or vehicle. The majority of accidents with tractors and vehicles are caused by 1. The Operator / Driver (e.g. human error, inexperienced operators, rushing & speed, fatigue, lack of concentration / distraction (e.g. mobile phone); 2. Unsafe Environmental Conditions (e.g. steep gradient, poor weather, poor driver vision); 3. Unsafe Tractor / Vehicle (e.g. poor mechanical condition of vehicle including the braking system); 4. Unsafe Systems of Work (e.g. failure to follow safety procedures or ignoring a warning).

Key Steps to Safe Tractor Operation

- Always maintain tractors in good condition, in particular the brakes, lights, mirrors and wipers.
- Ensure that all controls are in maintained in good working order and clearly marked.
- Make sure all moving parts such as the PTO shaft are

guarded properly.

- Ensure that a cab or safety frame is fitted.
- Only allow competent experienced people to operate tractors.
- Avoid rushing and always be vigilant.
- Always park the tractor safely and remove the keys.

Quads Bike Safety

The underlying causes of quad bike accidents are usually one or more of the following: lack of training and experience, excessive speed, carrying a passenger or an unbalanced load and turning over on a slope or due to hitting a rock, rut or bump. The most important safety issues with quads are training, experience, wearing personal protective equipment, maintenance and a good knowledge of the terrain. Head protection is essential.

Child Safety

Tractors and vehicles account for 76 per cent of child fatal accidents on the farm and therefore children must not be allowed access to the areas where tractors and vehicles are in operation and they must be supervised at all times when on the farm. As per the "Code of Practice on Preventing Accidents to Children and Young Persons in Agriculture", children under the age of 7 must not be allowed to ride on a tractor and children over the age of 7 may only ride on a tractor provided the tractor is fitted with a properly designed and fitted passenger seat (with seat belts) inside a safety cab or frame. Children under the age of 14 must not be allowed to drive or operate tractors or self-propelled machines. In addition children over the age of 14 must only be allowed to operate tractors after having received adequate training and under adequate supervision. Young person's must be at least 16 and hold an appropriate drivers licence before they can drive in a public place.

Not all farm insurance is the same.
Talk to us today to make sure you are fully covered.
Call us on 01 7 617 617 or phone your local branch.

FBD INSURANCE

FBD Insurance Group Ltd trading as FBD Insurance is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland
Farm Insurance is underwritten by FBD Insurance plc.

We need to speak French on farm production costs

The question of branding by corporate retailers has received much attention recently. We have seen accusations of 'phantom' branding being made against certain retailers where dairy products are sold under a branding attributed to a creamery that does not, in fact, exist. Obviously, labelling should be as accurate as possible, but marketing – and the branding on which much marketing rests – has always relied on fostering a feeling as much as hard facts on ingredients or actual 'brick-and-mortar' processing locations. This has to be understood and differentiated from incorrect or downright misleading origin labeling, which is always and absolutely unacceptable. The balance that has to be struck is a careful one and we should be wary of insisting on elaborate standards from others that very famous Irish brands might not be able to meet. In any case, 'phantom' branding is not the worst infringement that corporate retailers make against the interests of farmers: not by a long way.

For some time now, we have seen a growing realisation amongst policymakers and politicians that the completely lop-sided dominance exerted by retail corporations over our food-supply chain is both wrong and dangerous. The most egregious abuse of the farmer primary-producers is the decades-old policy whereby the price paid by consumers is dropped below the costs of production with the prices paid backwards by through the supply-chain cut accordingly so that the farmers actually end up subsidising these price cuts by massively wealthy retail corporations. This is the so-called 'loss leader' pricing system where artificially low food is used to entice customers in so that they can be sold non-food, high-margin, products.

If the most flagrant examples of this abuse have become more rare under the pressure exerted by ICMSA and others, then we can have no doubt that the attitude that underlies it is still very present in the boardrooms of these retail corporations. That is why the law being proposed in France is so very interesting and encouraging. Country policymaking seems notably less beholden to the wishes of these corporations and



Pat McCormack
President, ICMSA

there is a general acceptance that the survival of France's farming and food sector is more important than any corporation's desire to increase their own margins and build market share.

The proposed French law as explained by Gregory Besson-Moreau to the EU's Parliaments' Agriculture Committee will involve a system of 'reviewed and updated cost indicators' that will have to be

incorporated into the prices paid by retail corporations to their primary food producers. In other words, and leaving aside the question of a decent margin, if this law is accepted then the costs of producing the food will have to be taken into account by the purchasing retailer – by law. This will be an enormous step towards re-establishing a connection that simply has to be made: the real costs of producing food and the need for retailers and consumers to understand that the real price has to be paid. If this law is introduced and retailers operating in France want to continue selling food at artificially low prices to their customers, then it is they – the retailers – who will be subsidising that. Not the farmers, who will have the support of the law in establishing what it cost them to produce the food and at least recouping that from the retailers.

We have been saying exactly this for the last 20 years and have been repeating it as a mantra since the Government put the green agenda front and centre. There is a real cost of producing food and that real cost – comprised of economic and environmental elements – is going to go up and will have to be paid for by everyone, including the retailer and consumer. We have had a situation for the last 30 years where the consumers paid an artificially low price with the balance of the real cost paid by the farmer primary-producer. That system was brutally unfair and hundreds of thousands of EU farmers have seen their livelihoods sacrificed on the altar of this 'cheap food' policy. Make no mistake, it should have been changed anyway, but the urgency around the integration of farming with climate change measures has meant that time has run out for this wasteful and destructive system. We will have to reform the way we calculate the costs of getting food to the consumers and that will mean – it has to mean – that the costs incurred producing that food are incorporated in the price paid to the farmers by the retailers. Allez Francais!



Making rural Ireland resilient

The National Economic and Social Council (NESC) has published two new research papers that each examine the opportunities to build economic resilience in rural Ireland.

At a time when rural Ireland is changing rapidly, it is important to identify where the challenges and opportunities lie for rural communities, not simply as they currently sit but also looking to the future. In an effort to understand these changes – and against the backdrop of the pandemic, which has resulted in some uplift to rural areas but has also magnified long-standing issues, such as access to high-quality broadband, social isolation and the need for sustainable enterprises and job creation – NESC has published two relevant research papers. The papers explore the value of understanding different types of ‘rural’ and the opportunities to build economic resilience, as Ireland transitions to a low carbon, digital and thriving economy and society.

Dr Larry O’Connell, Director of NESC says: “The papers have already helped start a dialogue with NESC members and wider stakeholders about the future of rural areas,

opportunities and co-creation of solutions. The papers will also help NESC to continue to examine just transition and regional development, in particular by feeding into its work on the Shared Island’.

The first paper, Challenges and Opportunities for Rural Ireland and the Agricultural Sector, is authored by Dr Edel Kelly, Dr Karen Keaveney and Dr Anne Markey from the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science. It identifies seven types of ‘rural’ – from very strong traditional rural to peri-urban rural areas adjacent to large towns and cities. It highlights common challenges such as declining numbers of young adults but also differences in changes in population density and consequent demand for services. The UCD researchers also point to reasons to be hopeful for Irish rural areas. A key finding is the need to look positively at rural spaces and to work with communities and farmers to “co-create” solutions and local value. They



engaged with experts and produced a list 106 opportunities, spanning social, environmental and economic activity. The opportunities included developing new products, remote working and solutions-focused on climate action.

In parallel, NESC commissioned Sean McCabe in TASC to consider how the idea of community wealth building might be a catalyst in rural spaces. The paper, *Economic Resilience in Sustainable Communities: Innovative Approaches in Public Spending to Maximise Local Benefits* examines how the community wealth was increased in the UK city of Preston. The key was a coordinated approach from local government to use procurement and job creation to create wealth locally. The paper argues that this same approach has relevance for rural Ireland, for example by using climate action resources, such as retrofit or renewable energy supports, as a catalyst for rural communities. Like the UCD research, the paper also focuses on co-creating these opportunities with local communities.

To access these papers or for further information, visit www.nesc.ie

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (NESC)

The National Economic & Social Council (NESC) was established in 1973. NESC is an expert advisory and consultative body, focusing on strategic economic, social and environmental policies. The Council was set up to analyse and report to the Taoiseach on strategic issues relating to the efficient development of the economy, the achievement of social justice and environmental sustainability. It addresses the public system and the institutional challenges related to implementation, monitoring and learning. It is chaired by the Secretary General of the Department of the Taoiseach. The members of the Council are appointed by the Taoiseach, for a three year term. They are representatives of business and employers' organisations, trade unions, agricultural and farming organisations, community and voluntary organisations, and environmental organisations; as well as heads of Government departments and independent experts. The Council has published 149 agreed reports on a wide range of policy issues, as well as research papers by its professional Secretariat and other experts.

NESC WORK ON SHARED ISLAND

NESC are responding to a request from the Department of the Taoiseach to carry out research and to produce a comprehensive report on the Shared Island in 2021. The NESC research will contribute to building a shared knowledge base and understanding about possible ways in which greater co-operation can emerge across a number of economic, social and environmental areas in Ireland, North and South, and also between these islands East and West. The research will not address the constitutional question, but will focus on sustainable economic, social and environmental development issues in line with NESC's strategic remit.

Environmental sinners

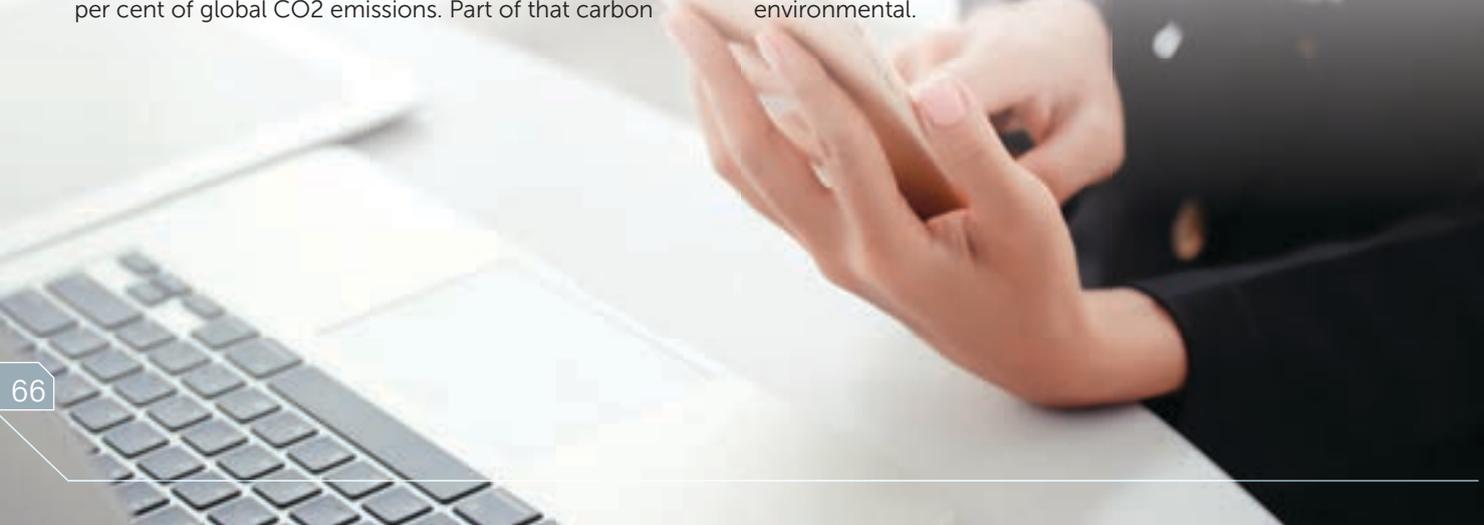
Matt O’Keeffe on the complex issues surrounding the protection of our environment and the hypocrisy he has witnessed.

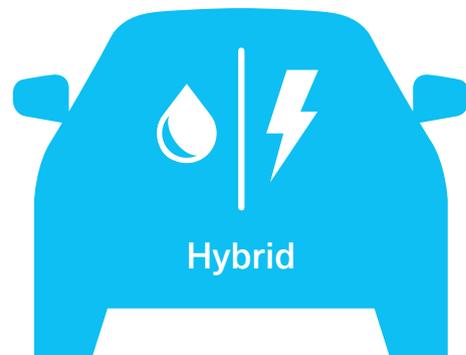
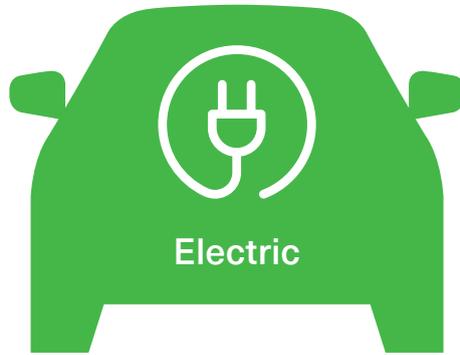
There has been much criticism of the effect of milk production on the Irish environment. There has been little acknowledgement of the successful efforts of milk producers to operate within environmental regulations and their work to enhance the environment within which they work. Contrast that criticism to the total absence of any realisation that the same people who believe that our milk producers are destroying the Irish environment are themselves impacting negatively on that environment. Anyone who uses a mobile phone, and from the stream of tweets emanating from environmental critics, that definitely includes them, must realise there is an environmental penalty accruing to their use. Firstly, there is the damage to the environment from extracting mobile phone battery construction materials from the bowels of the earth. The mining of lithium and cobalt, in particular, has heavy environmental and human impacts. They are mostly mined in countries where labour laws are lax, safety standards are low and respect for the environment is absent. Move on a stage further to the use of mobile phones. They require energy and that must be produced from either renewable or non-renewable energy sources. The latter includes fossil fuels, coal, oil or gas. Natural gas is a misnomer, giving the false impression that it is somehow a clean, non-environmentally damaging fuel. It is a hydrocarbon comprised mainly of methane. All three fuels are finite resources and inflict a heavy carbon and pollutant burden. Renewable energy sources to power mobile phones, mainly wind energy in Ireland, have somewhat of a lower environmental impact, but an impact, nonetheless. Wind turbines use vast quantities of cement, upwards of sixty truckloads each, to stabilise them in the earth. The most carbon-demanding building material on the planet is cement, accounting for eight per cent of global CO2 emissions. Part of that carbon

demand must be allocated to the end user, in this instance, to mobile phone users. It is not a finite demand. More turbines are being built on land and sea and more mobile phones are being manufactured. Moving turbines offshore does not eliminate this carbon footprint. Phone and computer use, the carbon critics main means of communicating their criticism of dairy, require vast data storage facilities. These data centres, particularly numerous and increasing in Ireland, need energy. Whether that comes from renewable or non-renewable energy sources, there is still a huge environmental impact. Let he or she who is without environmental sin, cast the first stone. Likewise, anyone who owns a house has an impact on

Let he or she who is without environmental sin, cast the first stone.

the environment, in the same way the critics say milk producers impact on their surroundings. Someone who owns two houses has double the impact, especially if that second house is rented out to the global tourist trade. When that six-bedroom house is warmed by oil-fired central heating, the environmental impact is all the greater. We do not write in theoretical terms here. These are facts that should be considered by those who take the high environmental moral ground with total disregard for their own active roles in the denuding of the planet resources and the ongoing pollutant effects of their lives and lifestyles. Hypocrisy is rampant amongst many of those who consider themselves to be the sole arbiters of all things environmental.





Driving Irish Motoring into a
Cleaner, Greener Future



Drive Cleaner
Drive Greener

Visit: [simi.ie/drivegreener](https://www.simi.ie/drivegreener)

Protect Your Valuables At Turnout



Protect for up to 12 months against 10 clostridial diseases
with 2 doses* of **TRIBOVAX 10**

TRIBOVAX 10

- MUSCLE - Blackleg - Gas Gangrene
- LIVER - Black Disease - Bacterial Redwater
- BRAIN - Tetanus - Pulpy Kidney
- GUT - Lamb dysentery - Diarrhoea[^] - Struck - Braxy



[^] *C. perfringens* causes diarrhoea in cattle and sheep

* Where 2 doses are part of a primary vaccination and are administered 4 to 6 weeks apart as recommended by SPC.

Tribovax 10 Suspension for injection for cattle and sheep contains *C. chauvoei* whole culture, and the following toxoids:

C. perfringens type A (α), *C. perfringens* type B & C (β), *C. perfringens* type D (ε), *C. novyi*, *C. septicum*, *C. tetani*, *C. sordellii*, *C. haemolyticum*.

Always read the package leaflet or SPC before use.

Prior to first time use on a farm, it is strongly recommended that the advice of a veterinary practitioner is sought.

Withdrawal period: zero days. Legal category: **LM**

Use medicines responsibly.

For further information see SPC, contact prescriber or MSD Animal Health, Red Oak North, South County Business Park, Leopardstown, Dublin 18, Ireland.

Tel: +353(0)1 2970220. E-Mail: vet-support.ie@merck.com Web: www.msd-animal-health.ie



MSD
Animal Health