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AUGUST 2022

EDITORIAL

Matt O'Keeffe, Editor



WHERE IS THE PLAN OF ACTION?

Ultimately, the arguments over the level of emission reduction expected of agriculture by 2030 are secondary to the 'How' question. Setting a twenty two percent reduction, or the twenty five percent that has been agreed by the government parties, is almost incidental. What is even more important is how these reductions are to be achieved. An addendum to that question – of primary importance to farmers, less so to those without an economic interest in food production – is whether the actions to be taken will damage the viability of Irish agriculture and, specifically, the viability of individual farms. There are early assurances that farmers will not be forced to reduce their herds. Given that a twenty five percent reduction in emissions by 2030 is not practically achievable using currently available management and technology practices, the reality is that there may be measures imposed which will ultimately require a reduction in cattle numbers on farms. Reductions in stocking rates and/or nitrogen application rates would effectively force stock number reductions unless farmers source more land to carry their existing stock numbers. Higher land leasing costs would be the inevitable result. Alternatively, as is happening in Northern Ireland, farmers would have to increase buffer concentrate feeding. That increases production costs and lowers profitability. Either way, farmers face financial losses. Those who advocate culling cows should address the societal and financial costs of their advocacy. Farmers are fully aware that if they are forced to reduce their herds, it will come at a cost to their family farm incomes. If their sacrifices in reducing cattle numbers on their farms are for the good of humanity and the planet, as they are regularly being told, then it is not unreasonable that the wider society should carry a proportionate share of the

income losses farmers will incur. Farmers need to know that their livelihoods will be protected if they must manage their farms in a manner that is less viable than they would otherwise be. There has been no debate on who carries the cost of acting in the common good.

While farmers are told that food production will be protected, that statement is difficult to reconcile with increased production costs which automatically impact on a farmer's ability to produce food. Being told that there will be opportunities in organic farming, in forestry and in renewable energy production including AD and solar only reinforce fears that these options are being promoted to negate considerable losses from meeting emission reduction targets. The twenty-five percent sectoral ceiling for agriculture will incur a significant cost burden for farmers, as Teagasc has confirmed. Any assurances to the contrary are at variance with the economic reality of food production costs on Irish farms.

What farmers need, most of all, is some degree of certainty. There is more than enough uncertainty in farming without adding to it by way of setting percentage targets for emission reductions without any clear strategy as to how they are to be accomplished, how much they will cost the sector and how the targets will impact on individual family farms. There are other unresolved questions around the value of carbon sequestration and storage, and whether farm-based renewable energy production should count towards the reduction of agricultural emissions rather than accruing towards the energy sector's targets. What should strike even the casual observer is how ill thought-out the entire exercise is. There has been no cost analysis carried out by Government, or at least no published data on the financial and social effects on rural Ireland, the Irish dairy sector or farm families.

CONTENTS

- 4 Upfront
- 8 Business News
- 14 **KERRY:**
50 years of Sustainability
- 16 Signpost update
- 20 Beef farmers: weaning, sales and housing
- 40 IGA celebrates 75 years
- 46 Being Aware - Agri Aware's vision
- 48 Management Hints
- 52 Machinery
- 62 ICMSA
- 63 Farm Safety
- 64 Rural Life
- 66 Very End

FOCUS RESEARCH & INNOVATION

- 24 The Future of Food
- 28 Innovative Moves
- 30 ICBF to introduce methane index
- 34 IFA on carbon reduction targets
- 36 Grass 10



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GREAT CONTRIBUTION TO OUR INDUSTRY

The Editor and CEO of the Irish Farmers Journal is stepping down from his role later in the year. Justin McCarthy has achieved a lot during his 17 years in the Farm Centre. He has made a major contribution to the agriculture industry during that time. We will cover Justin's achievements in greater detail nearer his departure, but for the moment, we wish him and the IFJ continued success. Another stalwart of the publication leaving in the summer is Mary Delaney, Commercial Director of the Irish Farmers Journal. Mary,

during her time in the IFJ, has worked steadfastly to increase the IFJ readership. She is highly regarded and respected in the industry. A founding member of the Ceres Network, Mary is a council member and former president of the ASA and previously worked for Glanbia, heading up the company's Equine and Tillage sales divisions. Mary was awarded a Nuffield Scholarship in 2015 and studied Sustainability and Climate Action under the title 'The climate change challenge in Irish dairying'.



ONE IN A MILLION

We are delighted to report that the RDS have made Tom Arnold an Honorary Life Member. The honour is conferred on people who have made a significant contribution to Ireland and Irish Life.

Tom is one of the most significant thinkers and leaders in Ireland. Over a long and influential career, Tom has a proven track record of delivery across all aspects of agriculture with a myriad of roles in his career to date ranging from former Chief Economist with DAFM, former CEO of Concern, DG at the Institute for International and European Affairs and Special UN Hunger Representative. He worked for the European Commission for 10 years and was chairman of the OECD Committee for Agriculture for five years and was a member of the Irish Government's Commission on Taxation at one stage. In 2010 Tom was elected to the Board of the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) charged with leading the reform of the international agriculture research system. He is a member of the International Food Policy Research

Institute's (IFPRI) Advisory Board and a Director Governor of the Irish Times. That edited biography leaves out his central role in chairing Citizens Assemblies on critical national topics. Tom Arnold is a graduate in Agricultural Economics from University College Dublin and has Masters Degrees from the Catholic University of Louvain and Trinity College Dublin. He has received honorary doctorates from both UCD and the National University of Ireland.

A modest man, Tom is, in essence, an agricultural economist and public policy advisor. To say this RDS award is long overdue, is an understatement. However, this award is not given out each year, and is recognised by RDS members and board as the highest accolade awarded by the society. Other notable recipients were Dermot Desmond, Jim Gavin, Lord Puttnam, Dr Martin McAleese and two Nobel Prize winners Prof Ernest Walton and Seamus Heaney. The award was presented last month to Tom by Professor Eoin Lewis, President of the Royal Dublin Society.

METHANE VERSUS ELECTRIC

Now that we have a commercially available methane-powered tractor, courtesy of CNH's huge R&D efforts, should these renewable energy-fuelled machines be treated to the same tax allowances as purchasers of electric cars receive? The New Holland T6.180 Methane Power unit was on display at Punchestown last month as part of the FTMTA's Machinery Show. Models are now rolling off a dedicated assembly line at the company's Basildon factory and the hope is that localised AD plants will soon provide the renewable fuel for these tractors as agricultural machinery transitions from almost total reliance on diesel to a range of alternative, renewable fuel options.

The methane powered tractors do come at a price premium to diesel powered units, in the same way as electric cars are more expensive than conventional petrol and diesel models. The same case can be made for encouraging the purchase of methane-powered tractors as for encouraging people to transition to electric cars. Maybe even more so, as none of the electric cars I see, even the SUV types, can pull a plough, power a feed wagon or generally contribute to the production of food, our most important activity at a time of food insecurity,





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DON'T BONUS

A broad ranging discussion at the IGA conference around labour management on Irish farms threw up several gems of wisdom. Chief among them was a statement from Dr. Nollaig Heffernan, a management consultant, that farmers should not engage in the practice of providing bonuses for their employees. Nollaig was blunt in her advice, saying that no one should be paid a bonus for doing what they should be doing anyway. She highlighted how the bonus culture in the banks led to our economic and financial collapse just over a decade ago, adding that bonuses promoted dangerous and highly risky financial practices that would not otherwise have been even considered in previously conservative and cautious financial institutions. The demand for a return of bonuses for certain banking staff is increasing at the same time

as those same banks continue their retreat from rural Ireland. The latest attempt to reduce front-line services was met with such criticism that AIB reversed its decision to remove cash services from seventy of its branches. The original gambit was based on the premise that person-to-person customer contact in AIB's branches had reduced by fifty per cent, while mobile and online payments had increased by eighty per cent. There had also been a thirty-six per cent and fifty per cent decline in ATM cash withdrawals and cheque usage, respectively. Maybe they didn't notice that this was primarily driven by a certain pandemic. I guess there will be no bonus for whoever came up with that ill-advised cost-saving proposition. Anyway, who wants to queue in a bank forever to experience understaffing and long delays?

TEAGASC REINFORCES ITS EDUCATION COMMITMENT

Anne Marie Butler, as Head of Education at Teagasc, fully realises the importance of the organisation's educational commitment: "With full time, part time and distance learning courses, the choices for potential students have never been more varied. We also offer options to people to undertake specific components of courses at any one time. Horticulture course and component offerings at Kildalton and at the Botanic gardens, for instance, are attracting great interest." Heading into August and September the focus is now on the coming period's student intake as Anne Marie points out: "All of the colleges will be building their educational resources in preparation for the Autumn. People appreciate the variety of agricultural education options open to them. The practical blend is especially attractive to many of our students. That mix of practical education balanced with the necessary theoretical aspects is very important. The collegiality of our courses is also attractive, so that everyone can share their common interest and enthusiasm for farming and food production at every level. The fact that there are career options outside front-line farming provides opportunities for students to undertake further advanced study should they wish to do so in pursuit of a variety of career options. You can walk in one door initially for a one- or two-year course and eventually walk out another door with a PhD should you have the desire and

inclination."

Anne Marie is particularly excited by the renewal of a Farm Apprenticeship course, after a lapse of over twenty-five years or more: "We were delighted to be offered a licence to develop five land-based apprenticeships in horticulture, sports turf, equine as well two apprenticeships in agriculture devoted to farm management and farm technician careers. The apprenticeship courses are structured so that eighty per cent of course time will be allocated to working on host farms or enterprises/businesses.

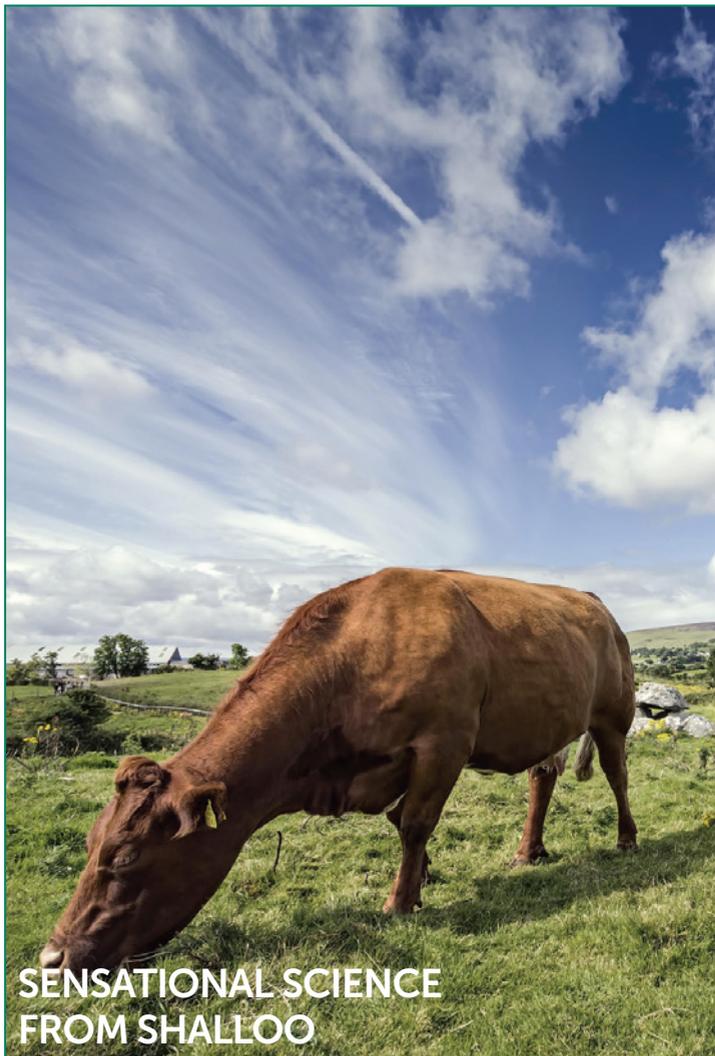
Twenty per cent of the time will be occupied by attendance in colleges to undertake formal classes. It is an exciting initiative, opening up new opportunities for people to develop alternative career choices. Some of the courses will be up to Level 7 degree course standard. In Teagasc we recognise this as another educational pathway beyond the Level 5 and Level 6 points on the educational scale. The emphasis is on practicality and learning on the job. We, in turn, will also be learning how to improve the courses as we go on in response to student reactions and suggestions. We already have people who host our Level 5 and 6 students so we are well prepared for these new Apprenticeship initiatives. Our longer-term ambition is to grow the Apprenticeship offering, offering a wider variety of ways for people to enter the broader agri employment sector."

NUFFIELD IRELAND OPPORTUNITY

On the subject of Scholarships, we hear applications are now open for this year's Nuffield bursaries. The Scholarships consist of bursaries of €16,000 towards travel and accommodation costs and involve at least 9 weeks travel. Applicants should be 25-45 years with at least five years' experience in farming or agribusiness. For further information, contact Catherine Lascurettes at exec@nuffield.ie

BORD BIA AND SMURFIT TEAM UP ONCE AGAIN

Last month Bord Bia launched a new executive programme in partnership with the Smurfit Business School. The new Sustainable Programme was unveiled at an event marking 10 years of the development of the Origin Green programme. Recently, Bord Bia announced that 80 per cent of its client companies would like to receive more training for senior leadership teams to better understand and embed sustainability across their businesses. Designed in conjunction with Bord Bia, the new programme will focus on developing skills at board level for Irish companies.



SENSATIONAL SCIENCE FROM SHALLOO

The messages delivered by Laurence Shalloo to the IGA Summer Dairy Conference last month can only be described as sensational. The Teagasc researcher outlined ongoing research and revisions of previous research findings which are indicating that methane production from grazing cows may be grossly overestimated. Using American-developed technology to provide more accurate measurement of the GHG emissions from Irish cows, Laurence and his colleagues are sufficiently confident in their research findings that they are already liaising with the EPA and subjecting the research results to peer review. While games are difficult to change, all the indications are that the so-called problem of Irish cows belching methane may be a lot smaller than previously estimated. Many of the international estimates used to determine methane production from cows fail to take into account the singular characteristics of pasture-based grazing systems in influencing methane production. Could this mean that the simplistic cow-culling remedy proposed by Eamon Ryan and Co. will also have to be reviewed? Don't hold your breath, cows.

SCIENCE TO THE FOREFRONT OF SUSTAINABILITY AT THE ASA CONFERENCE

The ASA Banquet and Conference will take place on Thursday, September 8th at the Lyrath Estate Hotel, Kilkenny. The Conference, once again sponsored by FBD insurance, attracts 400 people each year from across the country. This annual event has become one of the highlights of the year for those working in the Irish agricultural and food sector. The theme for this year's conference focuses on Keeping Science to the forefront of Sustainability and is divided into three sessions. The first session will address Science and Agricultural Sustainability from the perspective of European and international agriculture. The plenary presentation will be delivered by Teagasc director, Professor Frank O'Mara with responses to his presentation from Professor John Roche, Chief Scientific Advisor to the Minister from Primary Industries, New Zealand and a representative of the USDA. The session will be chaired by RTE's Damien O'Reilly. Session two will address the topic of teaching, communicating and marketing Science and Agricultural Sustainability. Justin McCarthy, Editor, Irish Farmers' Journal will facilitate a panel discussion on the topic with panellists Professor Frank Monahan, Head of the School of Agriculture and Food Science, University College Dublin, Dr. Siobhan Kavanagh, Communications and Engagement Specialist, SignPost Farms Programme, Teagasc and Mr. John Murray, Director of Meat, Food and Beverage, Bord Bia. The last session will feature a panel discussion of industry facing agri-professionals and farmers and their engagement with Science and Agricultural Sustainability. The session will feature a panel discussion on the topic with panellists Thomas Ryan, Senior Sustainability Manager, Glanbia, Oliver Tierney, Brandon Bioscience, Dr. Siobhan Walsh, Farm Sustainability Specialist, Irish Farmers' Journal, Fergal Morris, General Manager, MSD Animal Health Ireland and John Egerton, an environmentally aware dry stock farmer from Northern Ireland. The ASA Banquet, a key event of the agri-calendar will take place at the Lyrath Hotel in the evening immediately after this year's conference.



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AUTUMN A TIME TO RECHARGE AND FOCUS

CATHAL BOHANE, HEAD OF INTOUCH NUTRITION

The arrival of Autumn brings unique challenges. Days are getting gradually shorter, and our interest turns to other duties around the farm. Of course, it is also a period to take some time off the farm to recharge the batteries. Having the freedom to focus on something completely different is an important tonic before arriving back fresh with clearer thinking and purpose.

Breeding on spring-calving farms should be finished, no matter what the outcome. At all costs, we should not be calving late cows as it can cause multiple issues, including putting pressure on workload next summer to breeding sub-fertile cows and possibly creating new sub-fertile offspring. Over the next few weeks and after a possible scan, decisions must be made on any empty cows based on cull value, milk price return, feed supply and future housing.

Grazing supply must also be managed, as we have come through a turbulent July, where a dry spell has been greeted with some welcome rain, only for a further dry spell to come again. As always, keeping checks on the grass supply and the demands of the cow is crucial, and only you can make that decision for your system and farm. Not being afraid to add supplements when needed is critical, as most of the significant milk drop of >2% per week occurs during this time when we assume they have enough grass.

For autumn-calving herds, the focus needs to be on the dry cow and the management of that animal. Reassessing last year's outcome will focus the mind on what needs to be done this year. Not just the clinical issues but the sub-clinical issues. Grazing animals are more predisposed to issues at calving due to the high levels of potassium in the grass and the higher energy content that can sometimes lead to increased body condition score, making cows up to nine times more likely to get a metabolic issue at calving. While magnesium can be added, to have full control over the situation, you need to have control over their intake and diet, resulting in the use of a bare paddock or housing these animals on a typical winter dry cow feed program. Finally, as second silage has settled in the pit or bales, it is also important to test your silage for both nutritional and mineral analysis. Knowing the quality and quantity of silage will be the final piece of the jigsaw in developing a winter feeding plan. While winter seems far away, making decisions and provisions now will be more cost-effective than delaying these steps.

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SAFETY AND INNOVATION AT THE PLOUGHING

The Ploughing and FBD: Keeping You Safe child safety wristband project will be an important feature again at this year's National Ploughing Championships, which will take place in its full entirety for the first time in three years in Ratheniska, Co Laois on September 20th, 21st & 22nd. This important endeavour will involve the distribution of over 40,000 white wristbands at all of the event entrances, which will allow a contact phone number to be written on the band in case the wearer wanders off amidst the large gathering.

"We are delighted to be partnering up with FBD again on this excellent safety concept as all can now rest assured that loved ones will be returned safely in case they wander away in the massive crowds that will be in attendance. With 300,000 visitors expected over the course of the 3 days these wristbands give reassurance and great peace-of-mind to all attending the event and add immensely to visitor experience," said NPA MD Anna May McHugh.

FBD CEO Tomás O'Midheach added: "Everyone at FBD Insurance is delighted to return and support Ploughing this year. We are especially pleased to continue our support for the wristband child safety initiative. Over the years, this important initiative has proved incredibly useful in protecting children should they become separated from their parents or loved ones while attending the largest event in the Irish farming calendar." Meanwhile, the Enterprise Ireland Innovation Arena is back showcasing the very best in ag innovation in Ireland today – as well as announcing this year's winning innovation, the Innovation Arena will be feature previous winners also. The Overall Winner, and the winner of the Sustainable Agriculture Award last year, was marine biotech company Brandon Bioscience in Tralee, Co Kerry. Developed in collaboration with the fertiliser manufacturer Target Fertilisers, the winning entry was an innovative new biostimulant product using extracts from common brown seaweed that has the potential to reduce nitrogen use on farms by up to 20 per cent. *Ascophyllum nodosum*, also known as Knotted Wrack, is one of the most commonly found brown seaweeds in the Irish shoreline. The algae have evolved to thrive in its challenging tidal environment and, as such, is packed with many thousands of unique biochemical compounds and properties. This is why it has become such an attractive source material for plant biostimulant producers.



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KERRY REPORTS STRONG GROWTH

Kerry Group has reported revenue in the period increased by 13.3 per cent to €4.1 billion, reflecting a volume increase of 6.8% for the first six months of the year. Group EBITDA increased by 13.1 per cent to €518 million with EBITDA margin maintained at 12.8 per cent, primarily driven by the benefits from operating leverage, mix, efficiencies and portfolio development, offset by the impact of passing through raw material cost inflation. Constant currency adjusted earnings per share increased by 9.0 per cent to 176.4 cent, which represented an increase of 16.1 per cent in reported currency. The interim dividend of 31.4 cent per share reflects an increase of 10.2 per cent from the prior year interim dividend. Edmond Scanlon, Chief Executive Officer, stated: "We are pleased with our overall performance and business momentum across the first half of the year despite inflationary challenges and geopolitical volatility in places, in what remains a highly dynamic

marketplace. Volume growth was very strong in both retail and foodservice channels, driven by an increased level of innovation activity. This growth was broad-based across our regions, led by excellent performances in Beverage, Meat and Bakery end use markets in particular.

We continued to make good progress in actively managing the unprecedented inflationary environment in conjunction with our customers, as we support them in developing their offerings to meet the rapidly evolving marketplace. We also made good strategic progress by expanding our footprint and completing a number of strategic acquisitions in the period. While recognising the marketplace is facing into a period of heightened uncertainty and volatility, this also presents significant opportunities. We remain confident in our outlook and are reaffirming our full year earnings guidance."

MAJOR INVESTMENT IN FARM SAFETY ANNOUNCED

Minister of State with responsibility for Farm Safety at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Martin Heydon, T.D., has announced the provision of funding to Teagasc for the procurement of farm machinery simulators for use in agricultural colleges.

Making the announcement about the investment Minister of State Heydon said: "My priority is the health, safety and wellbeing of our farmers, and this investment of over €1.25 million in 18 agricultural machinery simulators represents a significant step up in the efforts of my Department and Teagasc to improve the safety record around farm machinery and tractors. They will be ready and in use in all the agricultural colleges in the coming academic year."

Farming has a poor safety record, accounting for approximately 42% of fatal workplace incidents in the period 2011 – 2020, yet only 6% of the working population is employed in the sector. Over half of fatal farm incidents are associated with tractors, farm vehicles and machinery. Teagasc National Farm Survey data indicates that about 700 farm vehicle and machinery incidents take place annually.

Driver operation has been identified both internationally and in Ireland as one of the major causes of incidents involving tractors and machinery. Thus, provision of enhanced training on agricultural machinery is an essential tool to improve the safety record of the agriculture sector in Ireland.

Minister Heydon added: "These simulators will be a great asset in

teaching students the key safety elements of operating farm machinery. The simulators will enable students to train in the operation of a range of machinery. These include tractors with different implements such as balers, mowers and tedders, and also forage harvesters, combines, and telescopic handlers, covering all the common machinery operations carried out on farms. I am confident that this investment in safety around machinery will yield dividends long into the future."

The simulators will be used at all agricultural and horticultural colleges and will be available to students completing courses at the colleges and also to students at the universities and technological universities who use the college facilities for practical learning.

Welcoming the announcement, Teagasc Director Professor Frank O'Mara stated: "Teagasc is delighted to obtain DAFM funding for state-of-the-art machinery simulators to enhance its training programmes in health and safety. This development is very much in line with our strategy to embed digitalisation in all our programmes. We acknowledge Minister Heydon's particular interest and leadership of this project." Teagasc Head of Education, Dr. Anne-Marie Butler said: "The Simulator training is becoming increasingly adopted internationally in a range of work sectors, including agriculture. Simulator use allows training in high-risk machinery use in a safe environment. Evidence also exists that simulator training with young operators cuts accident levels."

ICOS EXPRESSES CONCERN AT 25% TARGET



ICOS President James O'Donnell has expressed his extreme concern at the 25 per cent emission reduction target set for agriculture by the Government yesterday. He said that ICOS, as the representative body for the co-operative movement and representative body for the dairy co-operative and mart sectors, recognises the responsibility to reduce emissions to prevent global climate change. "That said, the goal of reducing emissions must be balanced against the need to protect food security and the viability of our rural

businesses and communities," said Mr. O'Donnell. "The target set is legally binding and must be met by the sector. This will result in significant change at farm and co-op level as a result. We need to be honest about the implications. Unfortunately, again we see a target established without a concrete plan as to how the target will be achieved." The reality is that there isn't a clear pathway to a 25 per cent reduction in emissions from agriculture without new technologies and innovation. Co-ops are responsible businesses and we have an important role in supporting and helping our shareholders with our sustainability goals, which we are currently doing and this will intensify over the coming period. There are measures that we need to progress urgently such as the widespread use of protected urea in the short to medium term for example. "However, be in no doubt. The odds are stacked against agriculture in its efforts to reduce emissions as the current accounting framework for emissions is not fit for purpose. Farmers and the sector will not get credit for adopting renewable energy nor will they get credit for sequestration from grassland and hedgerows. This remains an unacceptable element of the Government's approach to climate change."

BORD BIA CALLS ON ORGANIC PRODUCERS TO ENTER THE NATIONAL ORGANIC AWARDS

Bord Bia is calling on all Irish organic farmers, growers, producers and manufacturers to submit their entries for the National Organic Awards, taking place on Thursday, October 13th. The ninth National Organic Awards, held in association with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, celebrates the achievements of the increasing number of organic growers, producers, and manufacturers in Ireland. There are seven award categories, chosen to recognise key developments in the organic sector: a retail award; a private label award; export award winner; new and innovative award; e-commerce award; marketing campaign award; and business in the community award. Judges are drawn from across the Irish food, drink and horticulture sector and include leading organic producers, academics, and food writers. Applications can be made online at www.BordBia.ie/organics. Entries close on August 26th. The event will take place at Bord Bia's Global Hub in Dublin, with the awards presented by the Minister of State for Land Use and Biodiversity, Senator Pippa Hackett.



Autumn reseeds – don't delay!

Maeve Regan,
Head of Ruminant Nutrition, Agritech

For many, autumn reseeding is the preferred option due to reduced pressure on grass availability, increased availability of grazing ground after second cut silage, while the fear of drought has also subsided in drier regions. However, the weather can change quickly as autumn progresses, so timing is critical; However, the weather can change quickly as autumn progresses. Timing is critical and the earlier we plan on completing our reseed, the more flexibility we have regarding grazing and weed control.

Remember, an unproductive sward could be losing you 3t of dry matter/ha/year. Swards with a low percentage of perennial ryegrass that are not producing sufficient levels of grass in the shoulders of the year and have a poor response to N shouldn't be tolerated on the grazing platform.

As ever, the target turnaround should be 50-60 days with a reseed. Therefore, if we complete spray-off by mid-August, target first grazing should be approximately the same date in October. Ideally, we should aim to graze at least once before closing for the winter to create a more established sward for the following spring.

With late autumn reseeds, avoid jeopardising your investment in reseeding by skimping on weed control or missing the window of opportunity. Post-emergence spraying is always your best chance to control weeds, typically applied approximately 5-6 weeks after sowing. When using a clover safe spray, keep in mind these can only be used until the end of September 2022.

Get the seedbed right

One of the most common issues seen this summer has been inadequate rolling of new reseeds. Rolling is essential to create good soil-to-seed contact and it also helps maintain moisture within the seedbed.

Often new plants emerge quickest where the tractor tyre marks are, or in the headlands due to greater contact; this is a sure sign the field has been inadequately rolled. Ensure the seed bed is firm, not fluffy - roll prior to sowing if necessary to firm it up.

For more autumn reseeding advice or to find out about our Tipperary Grass Seed range, contact your local Agritech Sales Advisor or visit www.agritech.ie.



www.agritech.ie

ABP FOOD GROUP APPOINTS NEW NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ABP Food Group has announced the appointment of Sharon Whitehead to the Board of the company as a Non-Executive Director. Sharon is the Group Vice President of HR at Smurfit Kappa plc. Prior to joining Smurfit Kappa plc she worked with Kerry Group plc in various international HR leadership roles, including Global Vice President of HR. She is a fellow of the CIPD, the professional body for Human Resources and People Development, and holds a bachelor's degree, in addition to various industry qualifications.

Commenting on the appointment, John Moloney, Chairman of ABP Food Group said: "I am pleased to welcome Sharon Whitehead to the ABP Food Group Board. She brings a wealth of international leadership experience to the role, particularly in the areas of HR, talent development, food science and food processing. Her appointment further strengthens the Board as the business continues to grow and evolve across each of our divisions. We look forward to working with Sharon."



NEW PROGRESSIVE GENETICS HQ IS OPENED

The opening of the new headquarters of Progressive Genetics Co Op Society Ltd. last month, in Enfield, Co. Meath, was officiated by Minister for Justice and local TD for Meath East, Helen McEntee.

Minister McEntee complimented Progressive Genetics on their farmer centred approach and contribution to Irish agriculture and the local economy. "It is brilliant to see a farmer owned co-op based here in the county of Meath build a business that employs some 300 people across the country with technicians driving into farmer's yards up and down Ireland from Belmullet to Bunclody. The science and innovation that is at the heart of the sector and the work farmers do is phenomenal and Progressive Genetics is a huge part of that as well", she said. At the opening ceremony, the CEO of Progressive Genetics, Brendan Scanlon, highlighted the services and technologies Progressive Genetics has to offer Irish farmers

and the role they play in keeping Irish agriculture on the top tier of the global stage. "We are very proud to be 100% Irish farmer owned and we are very proud of what we do at Progressive Genetics. Following our initial establishment in 1995 and of the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF) in 1998, this facilitated the development of the Economic Breeding Index (EBI). EBI is now a well-established measure of progress in the dairy sector and we have made significant gains in genetics in the intervening years. "The average EBI of first calving heifers in 2022 is €214 higher than the first calving heifers 20 years ago. This equates to an extra €428 per lactation for heifers calved this year, compared to the heifers of 2002. The annual gains in EBI are now trending at €12 per annum," he said. Brendan also commented on a number of challenges not least the environmental issues where Irish agriculture is in the firing line for contributing to greenhouse gas emissions.

He said: "Research by Teagasc has shown that for every €10 increase in EBI there is a reduction of 1% in GHG emissions per kg of milk solids as well as improving the profit per cow by €20. "This is where Progressive Genetics plays its part by providing farmers with the technologies to reduce their herd's carbon footprint and become more efficient and profitable. The technologies of AI (including the sexed semen) and milk recording are key to genetic progress and we complement them with herd health testing from Independent Milk Laboratories (IML) and our farm software tools from Agrinet. Today we provide services across 20 counties with a team of 150 AI technicians and 120 milk recorders." Brendan concluded: "Progressive Genetics has also been taking part and investing in sexed semen trials since 2013 and this year we saw the establishment of a sexed laboratory in Moorepark which facilitates the availability of our top EBI bulls during the peak breeding season."





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According to research conducted by the Kerry Group, 44 per cent of consumers are willing to pay extra for food and beverage products that help to solve the problem of food waste.

50 YEARS OF SUSTAINABILITY

AS THE KERRY GROUP CELEBRATES ITS 50TH BIRTHDAY, WE TALK TO JUAN AGUIRANO, HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY, ABOUT HOW THE GROUP IS LEADING IN SUSTAINABLE NUTRITION

It started in 1972, as a small dairy company in the southwest of Ireland, but these days the Kerry Group is a leading global taste and nutrition company, employing more than 26,000 people around the world.

Headquartered in Tralee, Kerry, the company supplies over 18,000 foods, food ingredients and flavour products to customers in more than 140 countries. Increasingly, these products are produced in a sustainable fashion, according to Juan Aguirano, Head of Sustainability at Kerry. "Sustainability underpins everything we do at Kerry and all our of key strategic growth pillars," he says. "What's more, it's in our DNA because we started as a small rural dairy coop and it's part of our heritage," he says. "Now, more than ever, we're working with customers on sustainable nutrition and on environmental and social impacts."

RESPONSIBLE CHOICES

Given its influence and reach across the world, the Kerry Group believes it has a responsibility to attempt to negate the negative impacts of climate change, the accelerating loss of biodiversity, and widening social and economic inequalities, both for current and future generations. "Every organisation has the opportunity to make improvements, incremental or otherwise, whether that be product by product, country by country, or customer by customer," says Juan. "There's no magic wand that can be used. What's important is the desire to do better and supportive leadership to deliver on these commitments."

SUSTAINABLE NUTRITION

To this end, the company is aiming to become a world leader in sustainable nutrition. "Sustainable nutrition refers to our ability to provide positive and balanced nutrition solutions that help maintain good health, while protecting people and the planet." For example, the group recently worked with a customer who wanted to extend their beer range in the low and no alcohol categories, whilst also improving its efficiencies and yields. "We used our brewing ingredients and applications expertise, combined with our enzymes and process technology know-how, to create a range of products with low alcohol and lower calories," explains Juan. "This new beer had the same authentic taste but was made in an improved process. It's better for the planet as carbon emissions in production

are reduced by up to 41 per cent. There's also a \$2 per hectoliter saving, with reduced waste, energy, and water usage."

Another example is chicken. The Kerry Group provides coatings and taste technology for its customers that produce chicken nuggets. It takes back the frame of the chicken however and transforms it into stock for soup, that can be sold to consumers for use in other foods. "We then use the rest of the chicken frames and convert them into fertiliser, which ultimately can be used to nourish chickens through their feed," adds Juan.

CONSUMER DEMAND

Initiatives such as this not only have a positive effect on the environment, they're also economically beneficial to the company, as consumers are increasingly conscious of the link between diet, health, and the environment, and are seeking out products and brands that make a positive impact on both their health and the world around them. According to research conducted by the Kerry Group, 44 per cent of consumers are willing to pay extra for food and beverage products that help to solve the problem of food waste.

ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

In the past 10 years, the group has already reduced carbon emissions in its operations by almost 30 per cent, and it's aiming to be net zero before 2050.

This is important given that the food and beverage industry is responsible for over 25 per cent of greenhouse gases.

Another issue is food security and the fact there is massive disparity in the availability of food in different parts of the world. "There are 2 billion people who are either overweight or obese," adds Juan. "And to that, 700 million people that go to bed undernourished. We need all stakeholders to be committed to overcoming hunger and malnutrition."

FOOD WASTE

Food waste is also worrying given that 30 per cent of food around the world is wasted. If, as a society, we could reverse the trend of food waste there would be more than enough food to feed the world. "Consumers are waking up to these facts and it's a situation that simply cannot continue," says Juan. The acquisition of Niacet, a global leader in preservation, is an attempt to tackle the problem. Bakery products is the highest volume category of food waste globally. In 2021, after Niacet had been purchased, Kerry and Niacet extended

the shelf life of approximately 34.5 billion loaves of bread by up to 75 per cent therefore eliminating a huge amount of food waste.

GOAL TO REACH 2BILLION

And while much has been done so far, there is still more to do. In 2020, Kerry launched a framework to track its progress in reaching 2 billion people with sustainable nutrition solutions, assessing its entire portfolio against a range of nutritional criteria. "We currently reach 1 billion people with positive and balanced nutrition," explains Juan. "In late 2021 we announced accelerated sustainability targets to align with the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global temperature increases by 1.5 degrees Celsius." The company has since increased its targets for scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions reduction from 33 per cent to 55 per cent by 2030. It also has a strategy for 2030, called Beyond the Horizon, which it sees as an opportunity to create a more balanced food system, one that creates prosperity while protecting people and the planet.

SUSTAINABILITY IN IRELAND

In Ireland, the Kerry Group is working with over 3,000 dairy farmers, providing financial and technical support to help them transition to more sustainable farming practices. "Feeding a growing population while agricultural practices and dairy production are under environmental scrutiny is a huge challenge," says Juan. "We recognise that our farmer suppliers need support. The potential incentive for the average milk supplier is up to €2,000 per herd."

In general the company is proud of its sustainable achievements so far. "Given our scale, reach and ability to impact on consumer health and wellbeing, we're committed to creating a future of sustainable nutrition, providing positive and balanced nutrition solutions that help maintain good health, while protecting people and the planet," says Juan. "Our growing and increasingly urbanised global population has high expectations regarding the broader impacts of food. However, it also demands high standards in terms of taste, convenience, and value. "As the leading global expert in taste and nutrition, Kerry creates a crucial link between the capabilities of manufacturers and the expectations of consumers," he adds. "It's firmly at the forefront of technological innovation within the food and beverage industry - a critical foundation for building a more sustainable future food system."

LEADING THE WAY WITH SIGNPOST FARMERS

LAUNCHED IN MAY 2021, TEAGASC'S SIGNPOST PROGRAMME IS NOW IN ITS SECOND YEAR. TOM O'DWYER, HEAD OF THE PROGRAMME

Tom O' Dwyer ran a series of discussions at the Teagasc Beef Open day at Grange, last month. The discussions - involving Signpost farmers, researchers and advisors - ranged across the practicalities of reducing emissions on farms in the years ahead. The ambitious nature of the Signpost programme came across clearly: the ultimate aim is to facilitate significant emission reductions on the farms involved in the Programme and then progress the rapid implementation of those practices on most farms across the country.

"We have 117 farmers involved in the Signpost programme, including 50 dairy farmers, 35 livestock farmers involved in either suckling or dairy calf-to-beef production as well as tillage and sheep farms. We are treating 2021 as a baseline year. What we set out to do in the initial period was to very accurately measure the performance levels of each of the demonstration farms involved in the programme. We used our National Farm Survey team to visit the farms and gather data to allow us to measure their performances for 2021. Recently, we have been getting those reports back and the first thing we are doing is making sure those reports are going back to the individual farmers involved. It is very important that the farmers are fully aware of their own farm performance. Very shortly, we will start compiling those individual results into a full report featuring all the farmers involved. That data will then be made known to the other farmers in the programme and

to the general public. First and foremost, however, was the need to baseline the individual farmers and provide them with that baseline measurement information. That then allows those farmers, together with their advisors, to make decisions around how they can further improve the sustainability of their farms."



If it doesn't happen at a fast enough pace, there is every likelihood that regulation will come in to force change on farms.

MAKING PROGRESS

Tom is confident that significant progress can be made: "There are very practical steps that farmers can take that will reduce their emissions. The biggest one is correcting soil fertility through the application of lime and correcting P&K deficiencies. That, in turn, will allow farmers to incorporate and/or increase the success of clover incorporation on farms. Consequently, there will be an opportunity to reduce chemical nitrogen fertiliser applications. Ultimately, from the perspective of greenhouse gases, it boils down to reducing chemical nitrogen usage and, in order to do that, other building blocks have to be put in place, so that when chemical nitrogen application is reduced, the productivity of the farm (in terms of producing adequate grass and silage for the livestock on the farm) is not impacted." "The next opportunity to increase farm sustainability is around genetics and

ensuring that the right genetics are in place, in cattle production for instance, to ensure that animals grow and finish at an earlier age. The third important strand is to manage grass production and genetics to ensure that the optimum outcomes are secured."

VOLUNTARY VERSUS MANDATORY

Many of the components, as Tom O'Dwyer confirms, are or will become mandatory on most farms in the years ahead: "In terms of low emission slurry spreading systems there are already regulations in place for certain farmers. The more intensive farms that are in Derogation are obliged to use low emission slurry spreading systems. Will that become more commonplace for more farmers? I think that is likely in the time ahead because it has a clear environmental benefit. What I would like to see is farmers adopting these technologies voluntarily. The research shows the benefits in environmental as well as productivity terms so I hope that more and more farmers will become early adopters without any regulatory imposition being placed on them. If it doesn't happen at a fast enough pace, there is every likelihood that regulation will come in to force change on farms."

IMPLEMENTATION COSTS

While Tom agrees that many of the necessary changes in management practices are win-win in terms of lowering emissions and raising productivity, there are also costs involved in implementing some measures: "Teagasc has identified technologies that can improve profitability while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We are probably not going to get all the way to the minimum



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We must be honest and face up to the fact that there will be changes in farm practices that will cost farmers financially.

targets by just relying on management changes that will deliver profitability gains at the same time. We must be honest and face up to the fact that there will be changes in farm practices that will cost farmers financially. In those instances, I believe Irish farmers should be looking to Government and the EU to incentivise and support the necessary changes that involve a cost to farmers. Some initiatives are currently being financially supported. The use of low emission slurry spreading equipment is an

example. Another potential avenue is that industry could work with farmers as well and incentivise certain sustainable practices.”

ACHIEVABLE TARGETS NEEDED

The sectoral targets had not been announced when Tom O’Dwyer was interviewed, but he did assert that too high a sectoral target for agriculture would pose huge problems: “Teagasc is of the view that the technologies we have identified through our research, if adopted on a widescale and at an early

stage, can deliver reductions of up to twenty percent on current emission levels. The current range of technologies available can do that if most farmers adopt them. There are other technologies and developments in the pipeline that we anticipate will be available before the end of this decade.

Together that should give us the twenty percent target by 2030. Any target above that is going to make implementation very challenging for farmers. In profitability, productivity and sustainability terms.”

DRINKS IRELAND PARTNERS WITH TEAGASC SIGNPOST PROGRAMME

The Teagasc Signpost programme has announced a partnership with Drinks Ireland, which represents Irish drinks manufacturers and suppliers, to further reduce the environmental footprint of grain production, which is key to underpinning the future sustainability needs of Ireland’s drinks industry.

Working with Drinks Ireland and four of its leading member companies (Diageo, Heineken, Irish Distillers and William Grant), the partnership will lead and support the transition towards climate smart cropping systems that advance reductions

in greenhouse gas emissions, while maximising carbon sequestration. Each year, the Irish drinks industry is supported with grain production from more than 2,000 farmers producing 300,000 tonnes of grain from 45,000 hectares. The environmental sustainability credentials of the tillage sector are strong, with crop production producing the lowest greenhouse gas emissions per unit area of our main agricultural production systems. To maximise sustainability and increase climate resilience in cropping systems, the tillage farms in the Teagasc Signpost

Farm Programme are taking a lead in the adoption and demonstration of key actions to further reduce environmental footprint of production.

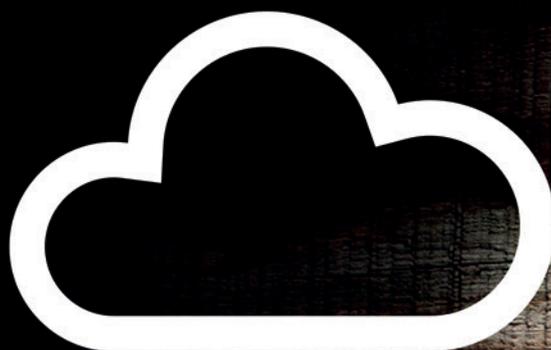
Some of the indicators of success will include establishing ground cover for spring cereal production and exploiting all appropriate IPM measures available to reduce pesticide use on farm, developing a plan to improve fertiliser use efficiency while replacing chemical fertilizers by up to 20% with organic manure as well as implementing a soil C enhancement programme.

Pictured, from left are: Stan Lawlor, William Lavelle, Claire MacCarrick, Minister Martin Heydon, Shane Kelly, Avril Collins, Tom Tierney and Tom O’Dwyer.





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BEEF FARMERS, ARE YOU READY FOR WEANING, SALES AND HOUSING?

SARAH HIGGINS MVB, RUMINANT & EQUINE VETERINARY MANAGER, MSD ANIMAL HEALTH OFFERS ADVICE ON ENSURING BEST HEALTH AND REDUCING STRESS AMONG BEEF CATTLE IN AUTUMN.

Cattle are exposed to many stressors during the autumn period. Weaning, sales and housing result in a stress response in cattle and negatively impact their immune system. Weanlings are then susceptible to developing diseases in particular bovine respiratory disease (BRD).

Pneumonia is the main feature of BRD complex. The most frequently diagnosed cause of mortality in cattle greater than one month of age in Ireland is respiratory infections. BRD can seriously effect productivity and profitability. It is associated with substantial economic implications which include treatment costs, decreased feed conversion efficiency, decreased daily

weight gain and deaths. It is worth noting that it can take 59 days longer to finish cattle which presented with obvious clinical signs of pneumonia. In Ireland there is a seasonal peak of BRD cases from September to February. BRD is a multifactorial disease entity which involves the animal, infectious agents and the environment.

Bacterial agents and viruses often result in concurrent infections while lungworm can also be associated with BRD. Prompt treatment of clinical cases is essential. When there is an outbreak of BRD it is vital to contact your veterinary practitioner to diagnose and treat accordingly. In order to prevent pneumonia, it is important

to maximise the animal's immunity and minimise infectious pressure.

WEANING

Weaning is a major source of stress for calves as they are removed from the dam in conjunction with dietary and environmental changes. Removing the calves abruptly from the cows can cause distress and behavioural alterations. Castration, dehorning and dosing coupled with variation in weather can exacerbate the stress response in calves. These additional stressors should be avoided at weaning while vaccination should be considered prior to weaning to maximise the animal's immunity. Weaning



does not just affect calves as cows are predisposed to grass tetany at this period. It is therefore important to supplement cows with magnesium when suckling and especially during this risky time.

VACCINATION

Vaccination of calves for respiratory disease is recommended as it will stimulate their immune system and produce antibodies. It will reduce infection and clinical signs of pneumonia. It is advised to vaccinate in advance of the risk periods such as weaning and housing to enable the animal to respond. Ensure to store, handle and administer vaccines correctly. Vaccination programmes vary depending on the vaccine used. For example, Bovilis Bovipast RSP protects against both viral and bacterial agents namely PI3, RSV and provides the broadest protection against Mannheimia haemolytica, which is the principal bacterial agent implicated in pneumonia cases in weanlings. The primary course for Bovilis Bovipast RSP involves two subcutaneous injections administered four weeks apart. For calves the second injection should be given two weeks before the known risk period of weaning, housing or sale. For bought-in weanlings

Bovilis Bovipast RSP can be administered any time after arrival, ideally allowing a short rest period before handling, and followed up with a second dose four weeks later. Bovilis Bovipast RSP can be administered at the same time as Bovilis IBR marker live. Bovilis IBR marker live can be administered intranasally or intramuscular two weeks before the risk period and provides six months protection. It provides the fastest onset of immunity of four days post intranasal vaccination.

A vaccination option to consider when there is a short time-frame before the known risk period is Bovilis INtranasal RSP Live. This live vaccine provides fast protection against RSV and PI3 as a single dose and can be administered at least one week before the risk period.

Recommendations at pre/post weaning:

- » Castrate 4 weeks prior to weaning or 2 weeks post weaning
- » Introduce concentrates to calves four weeks prior to weaning, gradually increasing to an allowance of 1 kg/day at weaning (voluntary action of BEEP-S programme)
- » Provide fence-line contact with cows or other methods of gradual weaning such as drafting individual cows from a group or creep grazing calves prior to weaning
- » Conduct a two-stage weaning approach (anti-suckling device with fence-line contact)
- » Remove cows and leave calves in familiar surroundings
- » Avoid abrupt weaning/ group disruption by removing several cattle
- » Implement a strategic worming programme during the grazing season particularly for lungworm
- » Carry out a vaccination programme for respiratory disease (voluntary action of BEEP-S)

HOUSING AND SALES

It is vital to provide housing with good ventilation and no draughts to weanlings. Good ventilation will help decrease airborne infectious agents. Adequate space allowance should be provided for stock. It is recommended that animals less than 275kg have 1.2-2.5 m² while animals greater than 275 kg have 2.0-2.5 m². Weanlings fed ad lib roughage are recommended to have 225-200 mm feed space allowance.

Buying or selling weanlings inevitably

involves transportation; this too is a major stressor to cattle. Ideally a closed herd is advised as mixing weanlings from different sources is a major risk factor in BRD. If possible, newly purchased animals should be kept in a separate shed or, weather permitting, a well sheltered pasture with double fencing for at least 4 weeks. Monitor newly purchased and recently housed stock for clinical signs of BRD which include off-form, poor appetite, increased rate and effort of respiration (panting), coughing, watery or mucous nasal and/or ocular discharge and fever (39.5oC or greater).

Recommendations for housing and sales:

- » Avoid overcrowding or mixing age groups in the same air-space
- » Delay housing for a period post-weaning
- » Quarantine newly purchased animals
- » Provide ample supply of fresh clean water
- » Dose animals after housing with an appropriate anthelmintic and consider fluke control if this is relevant to the animals' risk profile
- » Vaccinate all animals in a group pre-housing and newly purchased when settled
- » House on a dry day
- » Sell at least 2 weeks post weaning
- » Quarantine returning animals from sales or shows
- » Have adequate lighting in sheds so sick animals can be detected early and isolate/treated while it also helps animals to find feed and water in their new environment
- » Isolate sick animals and treat appropriately

PREVENTION

With the recent changes in antibiotic usage, it is important to implement disease prevention strategies. This will also address the major public health threat of antimicrobial resistance. Now more than ever good husbandry practices and vaccination are integral to beef farming. Vaccination alone is not sufficient to prevent disease. A correctly timed vaccination programme suitable to your herd, in addition to good husbandry practices, can reduce incidence and severity of BRD. Implementing the recommendations outlined above will aid in reducing cases and deaths associated with BRD. Act now to reduce potential losses and contact your veterinary practitioner to discuss vaccination programmes suitable to your herd and for further information.



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THE FUTURE OF FOOD

ONGOING RESEARCH AT UCD'S SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SCIENCE IS EXPLORING THE MYRIAD OF AREAS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR IRELAND'S FARMING COMMUNITIES: INCLUDING DIET AND HEALTH, BIODIVERSITY, WATER QUALITY, GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND EFFICIENCIES ON FARM. HERE, WE TALK TO SOME OF THE RESEARCHERS AT UCD WHO ARE AT THE FOREFRONT OF THIS WORK.

Sustainability, as Professor Tommy Boland explains, is a broad term and at UCD's School of Agriculture and Food Science researchers are focused on a range of projects - from nutrition to mental health - that are each tackling different challenges within the agri-food sector with the key aim of improving Ireland's sustainability credentials for the future. "Sustainability is not just about Greenhouse Gas Emissions," says Tommy. "It is far broader than that. Here, at UCD, we want to encapsulate all of these issues - all of the links in the chain."

SUPPORTING FARMERS

Dr Tomás Russell is part of a team working on a group of projects with the overarching theme of examining ways to encourage farmers to adopt the latest digital and technological advances: "Looking at the latest innovations in the sector, specifically those contributing to sustainable practices on farms, we are focusing on the drivers and barriers for farmers with these

innovations; and ways in which to engage farmers more interactively with these innovation processes. These approaches can be applied for a wide range of situations whether it is for farm health and safety or, soil management."

Under the Masters in Agricultural Innovation Support Research Projects, current projects include:

- ▶ Examining how dairy farmers make decisions about their time and task prioritisation
- ▶ Farmer preferences for actions needed to adhere to changes in the Nitrates Action Programme (NAP)
- ▶ Engaging farmers in conversations about climate change
- ▶ An intervention study to increase the area sown in catch crops as a mitigation strategy in a catchment with high stream water concentrations of nitrate N.
- ▶ Achieving improvements in water quality through targeted Organic Manure Storage advice
- ▶ Evaluation of the Teagasc podcast

as a virtual advisory method and recommendations for future development "While there is a wide range of topics, the whole focus is on how we engage better with farmers to support their adoption of best practices. For example, we have a student developing, in conjunction with Teagasc, an effective communication method for supporting biodiversity on farms - we have created biodiversity maps that are improving the uptake of biodiversity measures. Students are also looking at updating digital tools and creating user-centred designs. If we want farmers to use sensors and digital tools we need to get the farmer involved in the beginning to design them and make sure they are user-friendly and relevant to the work being done." Tomás notes that many of these studies may result in guide books or support tools that farmers or advisors can use in their decision-making.

NUTRITION FOCUS

Dr Breige McNulty's field of research is in the area of nutrition and a current

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project of note that she is working on is establishing baseline environmental impact data constructed on the population's food consumption, with the aim of using this to look at modelling the impact of change.

"When we look at sustainability in the agri-food sector, the first thing we need to know is where we are at in terms of food consumption. We need to create a baseline level for different population groups based on the foods they are consuming in order to assess the overall environmental impact. The plan then would be to use this evidence base and examine, if we are changing our food to reduce greenhouse gas emissions - the types or amount we consume or the production of our food - where does that leave us as regards consumption? We need to look at modelling that impact on our diets to ensure that, from a nutritional point of view, we don't have any negative consequences. We know, for example, that meat and dairy provide huge nutritional benefits, so we don't want to cause deficiencies with any changes we make. Overall, if we are to develop sustainable dietary guidelines, we need to ensure that nutritional quality of the diet is there but also that we tackle greenhouse gas emissions."

Breige highlights the fact that the limitation with the current data is that it is from 2010. "We are in the middle of conducting a second national nutrition survey that will present updated data next year so we will be able to see, for instance, if there is a real trend towards plant-based diets or not and looking at that consumption in relation to its environmental impact. This is not easy, because it is very difficult to assess the environmental impact of a product, especially GHG emissions. But we need to do the groundwork and have that baseline data to move forward."

BIOCROP

Angela Feechan, Assistant Professor at UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science, is part of a team working on research which is examining bio-based products in crop production as alternatives to fertiliser inputs and pesticides. The project - BioCrop (@BioCropIRL) - sets out to explore the possibility of utilising bio-based products

and innovations as viable alternatives while addressing sustainability and the environmental impacts of these. It aims to produce new algal and fungal derived biopesticides and biostimulants while engaging with industry and collaborators to test existing biofertilisers (algal and bacterial based) and biostimulants (endophytes) for efficacy. The existing products are being compared to fossil fertiliser applications and investigated for their ability to control disease (focused on aphid-borne disease and Ramularia Leaf Spot, RLS) in barley in field trials. Life-cycle analysis will deliver a system-level life cycle analysis of bio-based fertilisers and pesticides considering impacts across the full life cycle to avoid 'burden shifting' from one environmental impact to another. This analysis will assess the use of bio-based products in an integrated management approach. Furthermore, BioCrop will undertake economic modelling to assess the impact of these biobased fertilisers and pesticides on production costs and the profitability for Irish growers. Therefore, BioCrop will develop new and test existing biofertilisers and biopesticides for Barley production providing alternatives for growers in the face of EU regulations on fertiliser use and the loss of plant protection products. "The project has already been running for a year and a half and over that time we have been doing field trials with commercial biostimulants at UCD Lyons Farm and they have just been harvested. We also have seeds coated in endophytes and we have screened these friendly fungi to see if they could inhibit Ramularia. Results so far are looking good in the laboratory - the endophytes look interesting. It is promising from lab results so let's see what happens in the field."

Additional funding from UCD Earth Institute, Angela says, is also allowing a collaborative team to look at the social science aspect of the research also. "We have now put out a survey and are undertaking interviews to discover stakeholder's opinions on biostimulants and their knowledge around this topic. Generally, we have found so far that farmers are using them and want to know more."



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INNOVATIVE MOVES

DR PATRICK WARD, EUROPEAN APPLICATIONS MANAGER AT ALLTECH, DISCUSSES THE IMPORTANT WORK ONGOING AT ALLTECH'S NEW APPLICATIONS LABORATORY, WHICH IS DRIVING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR CUSTOMERS AROUND THE WORLD.



As a global leader in the animal health industry - producing specialty ingredients, premix supplements, feed and complete feed - Alltech has been at the forefront of innovative developments within the sector for over 40 years. More recently, the establishment of a European applications laboratory is further evidence of the CEO of Alltech, Dr. Mark Lyons' commitment to driving innovation and ensuring research is matched with practical application.

Dr Patrick Ward, European Applications Manager at Alltech and Head of the EU Applications Lab explains: "At Alltech we are always focused on innovation from both a regional and global perspective.

I have been with Alltech for nearly 14 years, previously working in our research labs for 8 years before managing our 37+ commercial mycotoxin lab which served Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Two years ago, I was asked to be involved in setting up a new applications laboratory in Europe, where we focus specifically on product research for commercial opportunities. Providing solutions for our customers is at the heart of what we do. We are looking to address challenges and provide innovative solutions for the agricultural industry. We are constantly carrying out novel research and as science evolves, we develop, design and reformulate new products as needed. Alltech's primacy has always been science.

This new laboratory is essential for our EU growth ensuring that innovation and application go hand-in-hand. Solving problems and using the latest science to deliver for our customers is key. Continuous improvement is what we work towards."

AREAS OF FOCUS

Commenting on the areas of work ongoing at Alltech's laboratories, Patrick explains: "We are focused on numerous projects in our EU applications lab at the moment including anti-methanogens. We are exploring natural ways to reduce methane emissions from dairy cows with the caveat that by reducing

methane we are not reducing milk yield or milk profile. Farmers are constantly in the headlines to reduce emissions and we are doing our part to help them find solutions. We are also developing new slurry additive products. Farmers are feeling a lot of pain with the high price of fertiliser. My uncle is a dairy farmer in Moylough, Co. Galway so I'm all too aware of the daily struggles famers go through. We need to provide products that optimise their slurry and improve the availability of nutrients thus creating a more sustainable and readily available fertilizer. Luckily we already have products in these areas but we are committed to develop new and improved formulations of these slurry additives." "We are also working on numerous other projects from next generation mycotoxin binders to novel protein sources for the feed industry. Another big industry focus for Alltech is anaerobic digestion. We are one of the few companies that can support the AD industry from start to finish, whether that is our Alltech Crop Science products to improve crop yield and quality, our KEENAN mixers to help mix AD substrates before introduction to an AD digester, our InTouch centre which can monitor the inputs into a digester or our Digest P3 range of enzymes to help improve the liberation of methane from substrates. We have recently invested in new biomethane potential (BMP)

THE STATS - ALLTECH BY NUMBERS



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More than **80**
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communities served



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100 universities



600 patents = more than one
patent for every month we have
been in business

capabilities in our EU applications lab to allow us to quantify how much extra biomethane we can extract from these substrates. This has allowed us to create new products for this industry and optimise potential methane yield not just in Ireland but across the 20,000 biogas plants in the EU." Patrick also explains that data management is crucial: "It is not until you can measure something that you can look to improve it so data management is very important. This is where our InTouch team excel. When covid hit everyone struggled with on farm remote support and accessing on farm data, but our InTouch team, based in our European Head Quarters in Dunboyne, had already been providing this service to our customers for years. There was no change and that consistent data monitoring of on farm diets remained, enabling Alltech's InTouch team to provide essential information at a time of need."

EFFICIENT APPROACH

Improving efficiencies is something Patrick stresses is necessary. "It is as much about efficiency as it is about innovation - to be ready to take the opportunities as they present themselves. And having research laboratories all over the world, and the new applications lab, means that we can be very proactive and can offer tangible results. We focus on trying to turn these products and projects around in weeks rather than months or years. Yes, some of our research is longer term, but we try to offer as quick a turnaround as possible to get new products out to the market and continue with our product development."

Patrick points to Alltech's founding ACE principle, which demands safety and benefit for the Animal, Consumer and Environment. "We have focused on these principles for over 40 years and at its core is sustainability. If you have a more efficient animal and a healthier animal, it will all tie into less inputs, less waste and overall, a greater benefit to the consumer and environment. Our 'Planet of Plenty' vision is committed to supporting the agricultural industry which has the greatest potential to



positively shape the future of our planet. Show me a farmer that does not want to safeguard the land being farmed. Show me a farmer that doesn't want to get more yield from less input. Farmers are the original stewards of the land and they are the people who ensure a safe supply of food to our tables and deserve more credit and support than what they get."

GLOBAL APPROACH

Patrick highlights the collaborative work between Alltech's laboratories across the world, which adds to the company's ability to be agile and to deliver practical results efficiently. "We work closely with our applications colleagues in Ireland, Europe, Brazil and the US, led by Becky Timmons our Chief Product Officer. These locations might have instrumentation that we can access to speed up our efforts and we can lean on each other's expertise to solve problems. It is a great help in expediting the duration of projects that come through the door." Concluding Patrick says: "A lot of this innovation comes directly from the needs of farmers. Today a lot is expected of farmers, they have to be scientists, agronomists, environmentalists, investors, renewable energy experts, understand and adopt cutting-edge science and every time something is asked of them, they are always willing to implement changes for the betterment of the land and environment they oversee. The research we undertake is to benefit these farmers and the global agricultural industry"

ABOUT ALLTECH

Founded in 1980 by Irish entrepreneur and scientist Dr. Pearse Lyons, Alltech delivers smarter, more sustainable solutions for agriculture. Its products improve the health and performance of plants and animals, resulting in better nutrition for consumers and a decreased environmental impact.

Alltech is a global leader in the animal health industry, producing specialty ingredients, premix supplements, feed and complete feed.

Strengthened by more than 40 years of scientific research, the company carries forward a legacy of innovation and a unique culture that views challenges

through an entrepreneurial lens. Alltech's more than 5,000 team members worldwide share our vision for a Planet of Plenty™. The company states that it believes 'agriculture has the greatest potential to shape the future of our planet, but it will take all of us working together, led by science, technology and a shared will to make a difference.'

Alltech is a private, family-owned company, which allows us to adapt quickly to our customers' needs and maintain focus on advanced innovation. Headquartered just outside of Lexington, Kentucky, USA, Alltech has a strong presence in all regions of the world.

Figure 1: Solar-powered Green Feed machine which were installed on selected farms last month



ICBF TO INTRODUCE 'METHANE INDEX' BY THE END OF 2023

THE IRISH CATTLE BREEDING FEDERATION - OR ICBF AS IT IS MORE COMMONLY KNOWN - RECENTLY INTRODUCED SEVERAL OF ITS SOLAR-POWERED 'GREEN FEED' MACHINES TO SELECTED FARMS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, WITH THE CORE PURPOSE OF MEASURING THE AMOUNT OF METHANE EMITTED BY ANIMALS AT PASTURE. NIALL CLAFFEY REPORTS.

The introduction of the Green Feed machines follows on from the methane emissions data, collected in an indoor system, at the ICBF Progeny Testing Centre in Tully, Co. Kildare - which commenced in late 2018 - managed by Westmeath native, Dr. Stephen Conroy.

The 12.5ac test centre site is the final link in the chain of the Gene Ireland Beef Breeding Programme, where data including the feed intake, feed conversion efficiency and the average daily gain etc. of commercial progeny from selected AI sires is collected. Additionally, slaughter data including meat yield and eating quality is also obtained and evaluated. All of this allows for increased accuracy and reliability to an animal's sire's breeding index.

Now, the ICBF will use this data in relation to methane to introduce a new 'Methane Index' that will be available at the end of 2023, which will allow for more informed decisions in

terms of climate efficiency when choosing a particular sire. "Improved breeding practices can give us a 1% reduction in methane emissions across the entire suckler herd annually - if we do it right. So over 10 years that's a reduction of 10%," Dr. Conroy said. "Our research is already showing a 20% difference in methane emissions - for animals of the same breed - achieving the same weight gain. Also, methane production is highly heritable at 19-30%, so there's lots of positives to take from this research. Therefore, improved genetic gain, better grassland management, feed additives - which will play a smaller role - and age at slaughter, will all have a massive effect when it comes to reducing methane gas emissions from the livestock sector," he added.

The concept of measuring methane gas emitted from livestock is relatively new, and there is a long way to go, but an early analysis (Table 1.) carried out by Dr. Conroy says that

through the Euro-Star Index, we are already moving in the right direction, with 5-star animals producing over 30g less methane than 1-star animals.

ANIMALS ON 'TEST'

As part of the Gene Ireland programme, Tully test centre works with Irish AI companies to identify superior bulls of various breeds. Semen from these sires (500 doses) is dispersed to commercial suckler and dairy farms. This typically generates 300 live calves, split 50:50 between bulls and heifers, which are sourced from a computer based on their sires and age. These animals are weighed and linear scored on farm regularly and all data is recorded.

Purchased at market value on the given week, animals, either in groups of bulls, steers or heifers arrive at Tully in batches of 30-50; approximately 20 progeny per sire will be chosen. The only other selection criteria are



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		g	g	kg DMI	g/kg DMI	kg/day	kg	kg		Days	€
Terminal Index (avg € value)	Number of Animals	Methane	Carbon Dioxide	Feed intake	Methane Yield	ADG	Final Live-weight	Carcass Weight	Carcass Conformation	Age at Slaughter	Commercial Beef Value
5 star	15	218	9146	11.26	19.58	1.30	647	385	10.66	573	139
	140								U=/U-		
4 star	53	240	9120	11.24	21.94	1.33	657	381	10.358	582	120
	119.89								U-/U=		
3 star	147	248	9359	11.85	21.107	1.39	666	377	9.78	584	94
	93.107								R+/U-		
2 star	70	255	9570	12.43	20.697	1.44	660	362	8.869	577	60
	64.7								R=/R+		
1 star	32	254	9231	12.32	21.51	1.44	644	349	8.218	595	26
									R=		

Table 1. shows the analysis of 317 suckler-bred steers - based on their own Terminal Index - and indicates that 5-star animals had, on average, lower feed intake, lower methane emissions, better carcass weights and a lower age at slaughter.



Figure 2: Insentec box at ICBF Tully Progeny Testing Centre

animals that are free from horns and injury. "Historically, it was all beef-bred animals; now 55% of the progeny here come from the dairy herd - either dairy-beef or dairy X dairy, and even jersey-bred progeny; 45% will come from the suckler herd - bulls, steers and heifers," he noted.

Each animal type has a specific shed, which are split into four sections that house 20 animals; all have access to a Green Feed machine and every three animals have access to an Insentec box - which holds the total mixed ration (TMR) and measures feed intake etc. Insentec boxes are filled using a diet feeder and each animal is fed efficiently at 2% of its body weight daily.

After the climatise period which has now been reduced to 25 days, animals are started on test; heifers typically spend 75-80 days in the finishing period, while steers and bulls are slaughtered after 100-120 days.

MEASURING METHANE

The Green Feed machine measures the methane produced by the cattle. Working off EID tags in the animal's ear, a hopper located at the top offers 30g of meal, every 30

seconds for a duration of three minutes. Small holes located in the feed dish suck the breath and the belches from the animal and sensors record how much methane is produced through algorithms and it's relayed back to the ICBF's database. Commenting on the accuracy of the machines, Dr. Conroy said: "We're calibrating these machines regularly to see the ambiance of methane in the air - so that's accounted for. Animals can use it every four hours, so that we record the methane produced throughout the day as they feed and as they are ruminating."

COMMENT

With methane emissions data on approximately 1,200 head of beef cattle to date - it's one of the largest methane collection centres in the EU, if not the world, and it's hard not to be impressed.

As part of the wider Green Breed Project, and with more methane collecting machines heading for farms, it's exciting to see what this research will do for the beef industry - and indeed the agriculture sector going forward. It's also pleasant to hear that genetic gain

made over recent years through schemes such as the Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP) have had a positive effect for Irish farmers in terms of emissions, with higher star-rated animals producing less methane than lower star-rated animals. If the Irish agricultural sector is to reach its emissions reduction targets, a holistic approach is needed, but with research such as the this, we certainly have the tools, knowledge, and the expertise in this country.



Figure 3: The feed dish of the Green Feed machine

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IFA STANDS FIRM ON CARBON REDUCTION TARGETS

BRIAN RUSHE, DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF IFA, IS UNEQUIVOCAL IN HIS OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT DECISION TO INTRODUCE A CARBON REDUCTION TARGET FOR THE FARMING SECTOR BEYOND THE BASELINE 22 PER CENT CONTAINED IN THE SECTORAL TARGETS FOR AGRICULTURE.

“The IFA policy is that it should have been at the lower end of the spectrum. We know that Minister Eamon Ryan pushed for an even higher figure than the 25 per cent now agreed. We have been clear that, for farming to continue, that 25 per cent reduction is not a viable option. It presents a huge challenge to Irish farming. The implications are massive in terms of increased production costs on farms. A reduction in livestock numbers would be required, no matter what assurances are given that farmers will not have to cut stock numbers. This sectoral emission reduction target for farming will lead to significant falls in economic output and in employment in the farming and food sectors. We can become jaded listening to numbers but the real impact on farm families and on people relying on agricultural activities for their livelihoods has not been quantified by Government. It is very frustrating for me to listen to ministers saying that agriculture must reduce its carbon footprint but when asked about any

plan or impact study on the effects of this reduction they are very short on answers or ideas.”

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR FARMERS

Brian outlined the huge financial costs to farmers and the agri sector: “There is a massive cost involved in chasing targets that are unattainable without huge damage to Irish farming. There is a real danger in politicians adopting targets without fully understanding or fully calculating the long-term cost to our largest indigenous sector in rural Ireland. Our political representatives in rural Ireland have been made fully aware of the implications of this carbon reduction agenda. Outside of the agri and food sector, I don’t believe there is a full understanding of what is involved. Neither is there a full understanding of the efforts and initiatives already being undertaken by farmers to reduce their carbon impact. Farmers are taking their responsibilities very seriously and they need time to implement change and

deliver results, based on what is practically possible right now. The IFA is involved in the Signpost Programme with Teagasc. I’m a member of the steering committee. The way research is moving, and the way new technologies are being adopted on farms, there are huge strides being made. It makes no sense to take the legs off farmers when they are running hard to change and adapt.”

GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

IFA has been in a significant lobbying campaign in recent months, as the organisation’s deputy president confirmed: “The message we have been giving public representatives is that reducing carbon output by 22 per cent is a serious challenge and would be achieved with difficulty. Anything higher is unachievable without financial, employment and sustainability damage to the sector. The 22 per cent target would have needed every farmer adopting every change in management required, adopting every piece of technology and



incurring a big financial cost. That's the reality. The higher 25 per cent target imposed will not be achieved without a near wipe-out of the ruminant sector."

FOUR KEY POINTS

"We have been very strong in our stance. We know what is possible given the technologies currently available. There are four key points to be made regarding the legislation around sectoral targets. The government must recognise the special economic and social role of agriculture. It must pay heed to the unique characteristics of biogenic methane; that's the methane produced by ruminants. The government must consider the potential for carbon leakage; that the food will be produced elsewhere at a higher carbon cost to the environment. Finally, the government is obliged to ensure that food production is not threatened. When producing carbon budgets, the government must acknowledge those four points, which are in the legislation because our lobbying led to amendments taking those points on board."

THREATS TO NITRATES DEROGATION

Brian Rushe also highlighted the threat to farming from changes and challenges to the Nitrates Derogation: "There is a threat to the upper limit of the derogation, coupled with the changes in nitrates banding rates. These would force reductions in stocking rates. In fairness, the Department has said that it

needs to see an improvement in water quality. Farmers understand that and are taking it very seriously.

Reductions in fertiliser use for environmental reasons as well as the current high costs of fertiliser, better use of slurry, careful management of watercourses and a greater awareness of the need to protect the environment and particularly water quality, are all pointing towards positive progress in improving water quality and the figures will bear that out. I haven't met any farmer who is not taking the water quality issue seriously. There has been full cooperation from farmers in the ASSAP and other water improvement programmes. Farmers understand the threat to their livelihoods and the absolute need to deliver on their responsibilities in that regard so that the Nitrates Derogation can be retained."

An Taisce is again going down the legal route. Notice has been given by the body that it is seeking a Judicial Review of the Nitrates Derogation with the ultimate aim of abolishing the Derogation entirely. The farm leader responded: "It would be hard not to believe that An Taisce has dairy farming as its single greatest preoccupation. The Glanbia objections bear that out. The cheese development was a Brexit mitigation initiative and its loss would have severely impacted on the viability of Irish milk production in the Southeast. One of the ironic aspects of An Taisce's latest efforts is the fact that

farming under Derogation is the most regulated farming activity in the country. Water protection, fertiliser use, nutrient management plans and high inspection rates are all indicative of this. An Taisce's target is the very farmer making the greatest strides to protect water quality."

THE CAP DOES NOT FIT NEW REALITY

A particular frustration for the IFA representative is that many of the environmental schemes are not targeted at the very cohort of farmers who can make the most difference in terms of achieving environmental improvements: "All of these supports need to be open to all farmers, regardless of size or intensity or enterprise. The CAP was put in place to ensure an adequate supply of quality food. The focus has turned to the environment. There is now an open acknowledgement among legislators and policymakers that the war in Ukraine has refocused everyone towards food security, not only for Europe but as a global issue, particularly in countries where food availability and affordability are precarious. There needs to be a full realisation that the CAP budget and programme cannot deliver on food security and environmental gain as it is currently structured and financed. There is a growing fear that Europe risks being blamed for mass migration, starvation in parts of the world and huge political unrest caused by food scarcity."



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ONE OF THE MOST INNOVATIVE AND AMBITIOUS ADVISORY INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY TEAGASC IN RECENT YEARS IS GRASS 10. JOHN MAHER OF TEAGASC WAS ON HAND AT THE GRANGE BEEF OPEN DAY TO OUTLINE PROGRESS IN DRIVING GRASS PRODUCTIVITY ON IRISH FARMS

“The bottom line is that we are trying to get more grass consumed by animals. If animals go into the correct quality and quantity of grass they perform better, there is better grass recovery and we grow more grass over the season.

The figures show that we are making progress. It is a slow burn. There is variation in grass growth, depending on factors including weather, temperature, time of the year and so on. This year shows the variables that can influence grass growth and consumption, before the primary factors of quality, fertility and management are considered at all. Grass production has nothing to do with enterprise. Dairy, cattle and sheep farms are all capable of high levels of productivity from grass. Management is the primary influencer of grass productivity. There are many cattle and sheep farmers who can match dairy farms, growing high grass tonnages and achieving nine or ten grazings per year. It's all about

having the right physical structures in place, such as adequate paddocks, soil fertility must be right, quality grasses in place. That can deliver high grass production.”

CONSTANT EFFORT REQUIRED

“If the effort is put in, the results will be achieved. It does take constant effort. Grass production vectors change every week, month and year so farmers must have the skills to cope with and deal with those ongoing changes and be as flexible as necessary. We had assumed that farmers on heavier soils and elevated ground could not grow high tonnages of grass. That's not a correct assumption. They can, though the growth profile is different with lower and slower Spring growth, and then high growth across the summer months, often exceeding what is possible on lower elevations in dry periods, especially. Late autumn growth on elevated farms is also restricted past the

first of November in most cases. In summary some farms have a shorter season but that does not necessarily impact on productivity. The secret is to take surpluses as they come available to feed in the off season. Our research and advice provide blueprints to carry this out successfully on farms.”

The demand for lower carbon footprint on farms does not negate the aims of Grass 10: “Absolutely not. Grasslands are a natural carbon sink if we leave the peatlands out. If we grow grass well it takes carbon dioxide out of the air and converts it to oxygen. That's the big win from grass production. If we add in clover, extend the grazing season the carbon emissions fall rapidly.”

THE CASE FOR CLOVER

Mike Egan was fronting a clover establishment stand at Beef 22. He confirmed the challenge of clover establishment and durability, which has been a focus of much



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For queries on the scheme, please e-mail acafarmsafetyequipment@agriculture.gov.ie



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

research by Teagasc in recent times: "It is a challenge but there has never been such interest and importance in clover given the huge increases in fertiliser prices and especially nitrogen prices. The two alternative establishment choices are a full reseed or stitching/oversowing, into an established grass sward. We know from all the work we have done in our research stations and on commercial farms that a full reseed is going to give us the best chance of long-term success because there are two seeds being sown that are not competing at the same stage of establishment. With a full reseed, we opt for two kilos of clover per acre, together with a quality grass mix, and then manage it successfully afterwards, with a post-emergence spray and tight grazing to encourage clover establishment."

OVERSOWING CLOVER

"The challenge really comes into play when oversowing. It is not always feasible to reseed a large proportion of a farm in one operation. So, we must look at other options such as oversowing. It does take a little more management and guidance. Planning must include timing, adequate soil fertility and sward condition because the clover seedling will be competing against fully established grass. An open sward with light getting down to the base is important. Low weed levels are also important. Paddocks which meet those criteria will offer much higher success rates for oversown clover seed establishment. April/May is the best time of year, because there is normally adequate soil moisture for the clover seed, together with high soil temperatures. The machine used is less important so long as the clover seed makes contact with the soil, with three kilos of clover seed sown per acre. Post sowing management requires plenty of light at the base and that is determined by sward management. Low cover grazing every fourteen to sixteen days for two months is important. Clover needs low cover in the winter months so that it can survive and thrive in the following Spring."

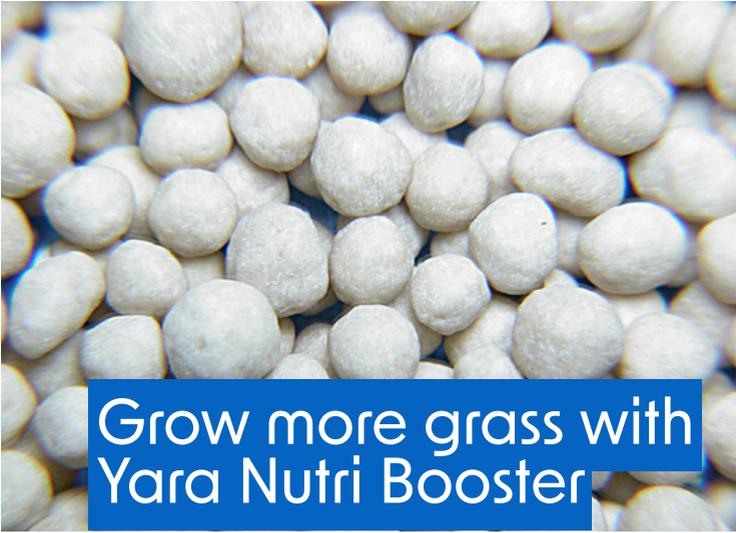
WEED OPTIONS

He also notes that there is confidence that there will be weed suppressant options in the future for clover-rich swards: "New herbicide formulations coming to market next year and 2024 should assist both in eradicating weeds during the clover establishment phase and also in mature swards."

BLOAT PREVENTION

Mike recognises the potential problems of bloat in cattle grazing clover-rich swards: "Excessively high clover content in swards is an issue with above forty-five percent presenting a bloat risk situation. Damp morning grazing conditions heightens bloat risk as well as excessively hungry animals entering a clover-rich sward.

These are areas to manage not to rule out the benefits of clover. Bloat oil in the water the day before entry to a clover-rich paddock is one protective option to reduce the risk of bloat. Our research has shown the most effective bloat preventative is the use of a strip-wire. If bloat is a potential problem, depending on conditions, restrict access for a period after animals enter the paddock. The cows or cattle will have to graze the higher fibre grass instead of selecting only the clover. This prevents gorging on clover which is a critical factor in bloat threat."



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75 YEARS OF GRASSLAND ASSOCIATION

AS THE ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES AND COMMEMORATES ITS FOUNDING, CHRISTY WATSON, THE CURRENT PRESIDENT OF THE IRISH GRASSLAND ASSOCIATION, TAKES TIME TO LOOK BACK ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE IGA AND THE CONTRIBUTION IT HAS MADE TO IRISH PASTURE-BASED FARMING SINCE THE 1940S.

As Christy Watson, the current president of the Irish Grassland Association, puts it, the IGA has 'stood the test of time.' "When you look back at what has been achieved, the consistent goal –first encouraged by the twelve founding members–is encouraging better use of grassland on livestock farms. That aim has been maintained consistently through the 75 years. Various aspects of grassland use and management have been developed and prioritised over the years and all the time the central ethos of maximising the growth and use of grass as the essential diet of our livestock has been carried through. It is a credit to everyone involved in Irish agriculture and especially farmers. Back in 1946 when the IGA was established, there were three major concerns about Irish livestock farming and the pastureland that supported it. Soil fertility had been depleted after the shortages of fertiliser during the Second World War. We can resonate with that predicament given the cost and shortage of fertiliser today. Ground limestone supplies were also scarce

and much of the land was low in pH. We look at those issues and see that very similar challenges are being faced today. The biggest positive aspect is that those who have gone before us, in the IGA and farmers generally, along with the industry across research and advisory services, overcame those obstacles with far fewer resources than we have at our disposal today. Back in the 1940's there was an eye on the UK as an example of better grassland management that could be replicated in this country. Over time, New Zealand also was studied to learn advanced grassland management practices. It is quite remarkable the progress that has been made over those seventy-five years. We now have people visiting from the UK and New Zealand to learn lessons around sustainable grassland production here. The advances in grassland in this country have been revolutionary. Irish grassland management has reached the stage that we are internationally recognised for the standard of productivity of our grassland farms."

NEW CHALLENGES

Christy recognises the challenges now facing grassland farming in Ireland: "If we look back at the events the IGA has organised this year alone, we see the renewed emphasis on clover in the sward. That reflects a focus on cost efficiency as well as an environmental need to reduce the use of chemical nitrogen applications to produce forage."

A TEAGASC PERSPECTIVE

The diverse make-up of the Irish Grassland Association is reflected in the fact that Christy Watson works in Teagasc and fully understands the importance of the research, education and advisory roles of the organisation in promoting good grassland management: "Teagasc is involved with farmers in every part of the country supporting livestock enterprises. We have worked hand in hand with farmers and learnt from farmers as well. It is a good success story with a lot achieved over the years and Teagasc fully recognises and supports the important role that IGA plays in the promotion

and dissemination of information around grassland management. This role will be at least as important, if not more so, in the coming years as the need for sustainable food production systems becomes even more important."

FUTURE POTENTIAL

The IGA president agrees that there is still huge potential in Irish grassland: "Greater production efficiencies are constantly being achieved. The average production on Irish livestock farms is well below what is possible, given the many farms around the country on a range of soil types are achieving grass production and utilisation figures far higher than that average. Because of cost pressures on fertiliser application, farmers have shown this year that high levels of production are still possible with lower fertiliser inputs. More emphasis on slurry application timings and volumes are delivering positive results. Higher levels of clover inclusion in swards are also assisting in delivering production efficiencies for grassland farmers. If we can get the

soil working better for the farmer, there is potential there to grow more forage with existing inputs."

UNIQUE LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION SYSTEM

Moving outside the farmgate and the country, Christy acknowledges that there seems to be a growing realisation that what Irish farmers have in terms of a livestock production model, is quite unique: "Producing livestock in a fully grazing regime is a minority pursuit internationally, with most livestock housed year-round. There is a big potential to market our dairy and meat as being produced in a unique and environmentally positive manner. Equally, the welfare benefits of grazing systems can be a positive attribute for marketing our produce. I think that will come increasingly to the fore in the coming years."

A DIVERSE MEMBERSHIP

The fact that all aspects of Irish grassland farming are represented in the make-up of the IGA is a very positive aspect of the association, as Christy Watson emphasises:

"The fact that the Irish Grassland Association is populated by members from every aspect of grassland agriculture is one of the association's greatest strengths. Over the years we have always made sure that we have a good representation across the industry. That is critical. There are farmers from all enterprises, advisors, researchers, industry all working together with the single focus of promoting grassland farming. A very notable feature of membership generally, and the Council in particular, is that everyone leaves their personal interests or agendas outside the door. It is totally voluntary and that is the big strength of the Grassland Association. Everyone puts in an effort no matter what enterprise or business or advisory or research role they pursue in their day job. That community spirit of collective support for grassland production is one of the main reasons that the IGA has survived and thrived for seventy-five years. That critical balance of cross-industry representation has been preserved and nurtured right through its history."

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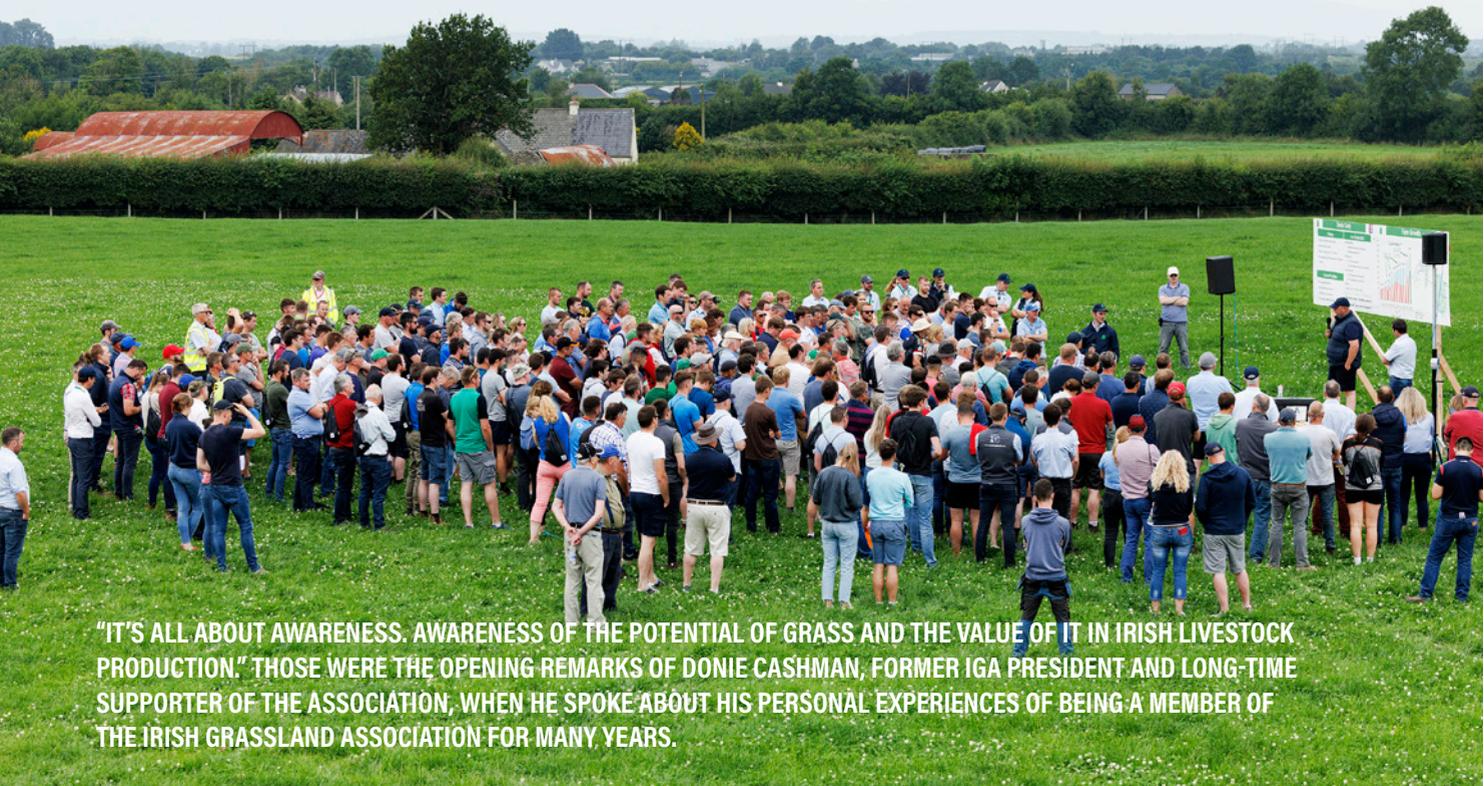
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"IT'S ALL ABOUT AWARENESS. AWARENESS OF THE POTENTIAL OF GRASS AND THE VALUE OF IT IN IRISH LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION." THOSE WERE THE OPENING REMARKS OF DONIE CASHMAN, FORMER IGA PRESIDENT AND LONG-TIME SUPPORTER OF THE ASSOCIATION, WHEN HE SPOKE ABOUT HIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF BEING A MEMBER OF THE IRISH GRASSLAND ASSOCIATION FOR MANY YEARS.

GRASSLAND AWARENESS

Donie served as president of the Irish Grassland Association in 1979 and highlights several of the key moments he witnessed over the years: "The IGA took the initiative in developing discussion group type farm visits for dispensing information before they became the norm in farming, especially dairy farming. The results of the efforts made by IGA and other organisations can be seen

across the country with so many well laid out grassland farms, well managed swards, fertile soils and good herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. That wasn't always the case, and the Grassland Association can take its share of the credit for what has been achieved over the past seventy-five years."

REFLECTIONS ON NEW ZEALAND TRIP

Donie was present 50 years ago for one of the most seismic events to take place in terms of advancing Irish grassland management: "When I saw the cost of the journey, I thought about it before committing to that trip in 1972 to New Zealand. I had no regrets after the experience. It was organised and led

by Paddy O'Keeffe, and I believe it was a game changer for Irish farming in the years afterwards. Many of the researchers and advisors who led the advances in Irish grass management subsequently were on that NZ trip. People like Dan Browne, who was in Moorepark before going on to manage Dawn Meats. Tight grazing, strict paddock rotations were all well established in New Zealand before they became commonplace here. For many of us on the trip it was ground-breaking in terms of the knowledge and advice we gained and then put into practice at home."

WHAT NOT TO DO

During Donie's presidential term he organised a trip to the UK to meet the IGA's counterpart organisation and view progress on British farms: "The biggest lesson learned was that UK farmers were moving away from intensive grassland management. We learned a lot about what not to do if we were to maintain the competitive advantage offered by grass-based livestock production. UK farmers had moved away from prioritising grazed grass in the animal's diet. Most of the cows had been

moved to an indoor system so that trip had nothing to offer in terms of what we were attempting to achieve in Ireland."

LIKE-MINDED FARMERS

The Corkman reflects on the value of IGA membership: "You are in the midst of people who are serious about the business of farming and the business of growing quality grass and managing cows and cattle and sheep. Because we are all learning constantly, it can never be said that the IGA's work is complete. There is still enormous potential to improve grassland productivity in this country. Even more widespread adoption of basics such as paddock grazing and higher fertility in soils would deliver at least a thirty per cent increase in output from Irish grassland farms. That's before you add in improved animal genetics, improved swards with regular reseeding and higher fertility rates. The imposition of quotas in the 1980s was a disaster for Irish farming. The developments since quota abolition show the huge potential that is there to produce more food on this island."

Matt Dempsey was awarded the IGA Lifetime Merit Award in 2015. Pictured here with members of the Irish Grassland Association council and colleagues of Matt Dempsey from the Irish Farmers Journal.

MATT DEMPSEY REFLECTS ON THE VALUE OF HIS MEMBERSHIP WITH THE IGA.

Matt Dempsey recollects an important piece of advice he received when he started his first job: "When I left UCD at the age of 21 I first went to work in RTE.

My boss, Joe Murray, who will be known by thousands of farmers for his agricultural programmes, strongly recommended that I join the Grassland Association immediately. You will meet people, he added, at the forefront of Irish agriculture, at the forefront of grassland management and also it is an unusual organisation in that you will be exposed to the latest research, you will meet excellent farmers, and you will find it an invaluable source of information because you will have access to farm walks and conferences allowing you to listen and learn



A LIFELONG MEMBER

from people from all over the world who are absolutely expert in their subject. I have often thought back on Joe's words and how right and wise he was."

VARIED PERSPECTIVES

Matt reflected on the value of having so many strands of agriculture within the IGA fold: "The backgrounds of people involved over

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the years is extraordinarily broad. People like Henry Kennedy, Dan Browne, Padraig Walshe, Paddy O'Keeffe, Tom Walsh, Michael Drennan are examples of the various perspectives that come together in the Association with a common purpose." Like Donie Cashman, Matt Dempsey recollects the importance of that IGA trip to New Zealand, which Paddy O'Keeffe, then editor of the Irish Farmers Journal, organised in 1972: "Up to then, Irish milk production was dominated by heavy meal-feeding practices to chase yield. Paddy knew precisely the message he wanted farmers to get from studying their New Zealand counterparts.

From that trip, involving up to 300 farmers and others, grew a consensus that grass production and utilisation would deliver a key competitive advantage to Irish dairying. The participating farmers helped revolutionise the approach to Irish dairy farming and Irish grassland management. We are still building on the lessons learned from New Zealand all

those years ago and which are still delivering results today. After joining the Common Market Irish milk production grew strongly until the imposition of quotas.

Now we have witnessed further evidence of the growth potential of Irish dairy since 2015."

OPEN-MINDED APPROACH

Matt commented on the open-minded approach of the Irish Grassland Association: "There is no hidden agenda. If a new system is developed, if a new concept in grazing is found to be better than previously, then the knowledge is widely shared.

Some of my most memorable visits have been to farms where novel ideas are being implemented. Every innovation is explored by the Grassland Association and if successful, transmitted to the wider membership and farmers in general. It's this great openness among farmers, researchers, advisors and the whole agri-business sector involved in the IGA which makes it so successful. It is

an organisation of which we should all be justifiably proud as it continues to serve the cause of Irish grassland farming."

A CHANGED GRASSLAND PROFILE

The former Irish Farmers Journal editor looks back at the changes over the course of the 75 years of IGA activity: "Set stocking was the norm, little or no reseeding on most farms. The IGA fostered the belief that Irish farmers could do things with grass that no other country could achieve. It has been a constant source of information, of energy and ongoing commitment to progress and efficiency at farm level. Grassland management, animal health and welfare, time management, land management, fencing, water, roadways. All those lessons were promoted to farmers over the years, almost sinking in by the osmosis of being exposed to their implementation on visited farms. All promoted in the belief that there is often a better way of farming than tradition dictates."

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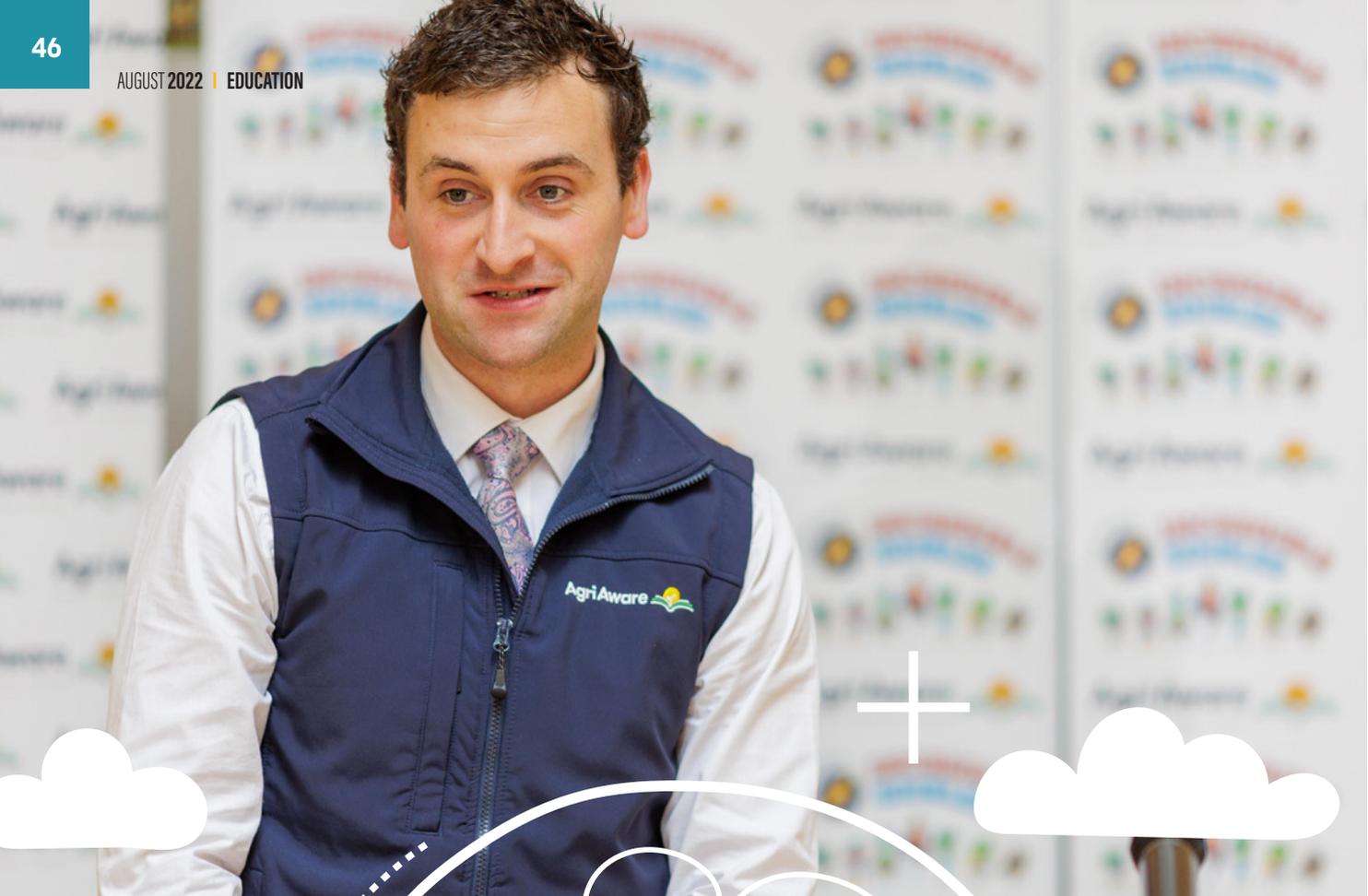
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BEING AWARE

AGRI AWARE HAS HAD AN EVENTFUL 12 MONTHS, ADAPTING TO COVID AND CONTINUING TO EDUCATE ABOUT FARMING AND RURAL LIFE.

The perception of Irish agriculture has been in flux in recent years. Farming households are declining in numbers. And agriculture is frequently cited in media reports about the environment, the economy and, most recently, food security.

Agri Aware's self-proclaimed remit is based on "creating a national awareness of the value of modern agriculture and farming, the stewardship of the rural environment, animal welfare and the benefits of nutritious Irish food". Marcus O'Halloran, Executive Director, says that "there's a huge divide" between urban and rural communities. "We're pretending that everyone in the city is one generation away from farming," he says, "whereas these days, they're two or three steps away. People [in cities] used to go to the countryside in the summer to visit or work on the farms with relatives. That day is gone. And it has been gone for more than one

generation."

Farming populations have been on the decline for years in Ireland, and many Irish residents have never so much as set foot on a farm. Indeed, a statistic from Agri Aware puts that figure at 10 per cent (others place it even higher). Marcus says that, consequently, there is a knowledge gap: "We see a lack of understanding in milk coming from cows and cows are milked. Milk and meat don't grow on shelves. "When it's explained, they appreciate it; and for us, at the moment, it's important to grow that engagement, so we can broaden the reach or lessen the disconnect.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Much of Agri Aware's work involves in-person outreach programmes to schools. "I'm not from a farming background myself," says Ellis Greene, Programme & Events Manager. "I learned how much of a

disconnect there was [between perception and reality of farming] and it's only growing as time goes on. Farming is a huge part of our heritage, to connect with nature, to connect with food. There are so many people – even in rural communities – who still don't know what's happening on farms."

"Plenty of children don't realise that green tops on carrots are not just on bugs bunny cartoons and that milk comes from cows, not just the supermarket."

One of Agri Aware's best known initiatives is Incredible Edibles, which promotes healthy eating and teaches children where food comes from – even encouraging them to grow their own, in some cases. "With Incredible Edibles, especially with our horticulture project, we started from less than 1,000 schools taking part," says Ellis. "But that's grown to 1,800 – over half of all primary schools. "They appreciate food more



“We’re custodians of the land. And that’s lost on people sometimes”

when they pull it out of the ground, bring it into the kitchen and use it to make a snack or smoothie; it helps them appreciate what farmers do on a larger scale.”

THE ‘C’ WORD

In-person events are a huge part of what Agri Aware does. As well as school visits and organising school trips to farms, they also have a presence at events like Bloom and the National Ploughing Championship every year (when they’re not prevented by a pandemic). “In some ways, Covid has benefited us,” says Marcus. “Shifting to online forced us to look at our programmes and how we could do them better. In terms of school offerings, we’ve come out better as a result of that.” “As Covid started, we had a footprint of 70,000 [students reached], now it’s 120,000 through primary and secondary schools. That’s not a rough estimation – that number is based on each teacher signing up students.” “We had to adapt,” says Ellis of the past year, “and diversify online materials. So, now we have more material accessible online. For instance, we host several webinars, and we have students meeting farmers on Zoom. Plus, we now offer online videos and content.” “At Incredible Edibles, we really saw a difference. Normally they’d grow food in

school, but some students were lucky enough to bring plants home, or teachers would do that, and then do videos with their plant.” “In schools and in the greater world, people found solace in gardening, growing and nature. And through different initiatives, we helped people stay connected, too.”

FOOD SECURITY

Along with the environment, another urgent issue has raised its head in recent months; food security “This has come into our and a lot of radars in the last 6 -12 months,” says Marcus. “There are numerous issues, including Ukraine, cost of production, and farmers questioning whether they should continue to produce.” “We’re looking at it and a new module for transition year students. This means looking at what we can do personally and as a nation regarding climate change. So, food waste, land use and climate are all discussed.” “As far as a campaign, we’re looking into food security. It’s never been more important. Food security and the environment are issues in tandem at the moment, you can pick up two publications and the questions of one or the other is being raised. As an agricultural industry we have to be able to tackle both together, as opposed to tackling one or the

other. And we are in a position to do that in this country.”

IN YOUR CORNER

Agri Aware will continue to expand their reach, both on the education side and in communicating with the public in general. “We’re excited to expand our projects and get back to connecting online and in person,” says Ellis. “We’ve made great progress in schools, but we’re hoping to continue sustaining Ireland campaign and work on perceptions with the general public.” “When we speak to farmers focus is letting them know that we’re speaking on their behalf,” says Marcus. “Our message is only as strong as the support of the strength of our patrons. We let them know what we’re doing for ag science on a comms front. We’re doing it alongside the NDC, Bord Bia, and a number of other organisations.” “There is perception that farming is destroying the place – and there is a job to do by the industry to educate the non-farming audience about what farming is doing for the countryside, as opposed to harming it. We’re trying to get the word out that there are assurances that we’re bound by. We’re custodians of the land - and that’s lost on people sometimes.”

MESSAGES

- Have you adequate winterfeed? Check it out!
- Assess your winterfeed options carefully.
- If short of grass what are your options?
- Start grass build-up now.
- End your breeding season with a scan and begin the next one now.
- Change milk liners now!



By Matt Ryan

HAVE YOU ADEQUATE WINTERFEED?

That is the question, and you must methodically take steps to answer.

» **The first thing to do is estimate the amount of feed you have and are likely to get between now and September, if any.**

- I think everyone is able to estimate the amount of silage in a pit and count the number of bales available- anyway do this calculation.
- However, because silage was very dry at cutting it would be advisable to get it analysed – do that now.
- I suggest, until you know exactly, that you use 22% DM for pit silage and 35-40% DM for bales, unless you have reason to believe otherwise.
- Therefore, if you have a pit of 300 tons that is 22% DM, then you have 66,000 kgs DM (300 x 1000 x 0.22); if you have 60 bales (600kgs each) that are 35%DM, then you have 12,600kgs DM (60 x 600 x 0.35).
- Therefore, there is a total of 78,600kgs DM of feed available. Maize, straw, hay, kale etc. should be added in the same way.
- Then, list out all the cows, weanlings and incalf heifers plus other stock and decide on your length of winter, allowing 15-20 days extra to risk manage for a longer winter. See Table1.

Table1: Calculating the kgs dry matter required on a farm for winter

Type/ Nos	Winter	DM/ (Days)	Planned hd/day	Net Roughage	Total meal
50, Cows	120	11	0	11	66,000
7, In calf Hfs	120	9	0.5	8.5	7,140
7, Weanlings	120	5	1.0	4.0	3,360
2, 1.5 Yr Males	100	9	0	9	1,800
TOTAL:					78,300

- » Therefore, this farmer has adequate silage, but a reserve of 10% would be advisable.
- » From what I have seen so far, some overstocked farms are 10-20% short while many ordinary guys are tight. The question is what can, and should farmers do now who find themselves in a deficit.
- » There is a computerised programme to do this calculation for you – talk to your Teagasc Adviser or I can send it to you.

OPTIONS IF SHORT OF FEED?

- » Several options are available at this point in time:
 - Sell off cattle/cows between now and winter – that will save grass now for other stock and reduce winter feed needs.
 - Forward buy meal and straw now for feeding next winter. (Buy barley off combine).
 - Sow, redstart, rape, early in month, for feeding with straw or silage to dry cows or cattle.

- Buy maize or grass silage, being careful not to pay too much.
- Westerwolts, Hybrid Italian or Italian ryegrass will also contribute both in autumn and in spring – giving 12-16% more grass. Therefore, shortening the winter. I favour HI.
- Any of these forage crops or Italian ryegrass could be sown on some badly damaged dry grass field or fields burned up by drought, to give extra winter feed.
- Rent dry grazing fields now and build up grass to 2500 kgs DM/ha for feeding from November onwards.
- As a general principle now if short of grass for grazing, try to avoid feeding large quantities of pit silage. Use meal, 4 - 6 kgs, zero graze grass from outside farm or buy from local farmer, graze 2nd cuts etc.
- » **Forage Crops could be considered in tillage area:**
 - Rape: must be sown in early August and it should yield 3 - 5 tons DM per hectare. The maximum feed per cow per day that can be fed in November-December is 2 Kgs DM. The seeding rate is 3.5-4.5kg per acre.
 - Stubble turnips: Yield expectations are 3.7 tons DM per hectare and can be fed ad lib. The seeding rate is 2.0 kgs/acre.
 - Kale: Could be sown in early August but yield will only be 4-8tons/ha. The seeding rate is 3.5-4 kgs/acre.
 - Redstart: will yield 4-6 tons DM/ha. Some tillage farmers in Glas have to sow a 'hurse crop' and a dairy farmer could do a deal, at low or no rental cost, with them for this venture. Germinal Seeds have a grass/redstart combination for this purpose.
- » **Westerwolts/HI/Italian (grass) could be sown in August-September and yield could be 3.5 - 4.0 tons DM per hectare.**
 - It will cost €300+ per hectare to sow.
 - It should be sown after early harvested barley, drought damaged pastures
 - It will be grazed over winter and again in early spring before cutting for an early silage crop or sowing corn.
- » **"Winterage" represents an option for most farmers with some dry land on an outside farm block:**
 - It involves building up grass from August-September.
 - High stocked farmers might rent land nearby for this purpose (€20-40/acre).
 - The fertiliser required should not be more than 20 units of Nitrogen per acre, because these fields will not be grazed until November, and we do not want more than 2,500 Kgs DM per hectare cover.
 - If there is more, too much decayed grass results.
 - The daily allowance for a dry cow should be 13-15 Kgs DM per cow per day.
 - Therefore, one hectare will feed 50 cows for 3-3½ days.

S.R. Cows/ Ha	Rotation Length (Days)		Target/LU (Kgs DM/Ha)			Av. Farm Cover (Kgs DM/Ha)	Pre-graze Cover (Kgs DM/ha)
	15Aug	30Aug	1Aug	15Aug	30Aug	15 Aug	15Aug
2.0	25	30	180	200	300	400	950
2.5	25	30	180	200	300	500	1162
3.0	25	30	230	250	330	750	1375
3.5	25	30	200	220	310	770	1590
4.0	25	30	200	220	310	880	1750

Table 2: Target Grass Covers for Various Stocking Rates in August.

- » **Silage (grass) could be bought.**
 - Get it analysed first (do not buy a pig in a poke).
 - But it should not cost more than €45 - 60 per ton (72% DMD)
- » **Maize and whole crop silage purchased at €85 and €110 per ton respectively represent an option also.**
 - Green barley could be bought off the combine and stored using propionic.
 - Easy, but a corn roller is required during winter.

IF SHORT OF GRASS?

- » **A serious issue at this time of year!**
- » **What is the solution?**
 - More nitrogen is part of the answer.
 - Blanket spread as per Table 1 and a little more (10-20+%) if you under used it during the summer.

Table 1: Nitrogen Recommendations (Units/acre) for Various Stocking Rates in August-September

Cows/Ha	August	September
2.1 or less	None	14
2.2 - 2.4	14	14
2.5	26	14
2.6 +	28	20

- » To maximise benefit from N (make sure Sulphur adequate), the next most important point is to slow down the rotation so that you are at least grazing pre-grazing covers (PGC's) of 1100+, approx. 10-13days after rain comes. And then achieve 1600 -1800kgDM PGC, the grazing target, within another 5 -7days.
 - You must let grass build up, otherwise, you will be chasing your tail for the remainder of the year.
 - Rotation then would need to be 25-30 days anyway but large growth rates, expected, would lower the rotation.
- » **This is done by:**
 - Feeding meals (6-7kgs), 5-6kgsDM silage (the highest quality you can manage) and a little grass (in fact some farmers may not be able to feed any grass because they have none, therefore cows may be housed full time for a week or so).
 - Reduce stocking rate (demand for grass) by selling off stock now rather than in a few months' time. These may be excess cattle or non-pregnant cows
- » **Graze very tight, down to 4 cms. This will have the effect of:**
 - Slowing down rotation (every ¼ day in each paddock adds up).
 - It will set up the swards for quality autumn grass and can make it easier to graze them out then.
 - The effect on milk yield will be minimum if meals are being fed.
- » **Table 2 indicates the approximate target grass covers for various stocking rates for August.**
 - This Table shows the cover we must aim for in August but if

growth rates are higher than normal, we must adjust these targets per LU downwards – maybe by 20%.

- Farmers short of winter feed, and with very high growth rates, should target a stocking rate of 3.5 to 4.0 cows per ha on the grazing area.
- The table also shows that farmers can get by on no unnecessary meal expense on low grass covers at low stocking rates.
- For example, a farmer with 2 cows/ha (1.23 acres/cow) only needs a cover of 1070 kgs DM/Ha on the next paddock if his overall average is 680 kgs DM/Ha.
- » **Some farmers who are short of grass and silage are planning to milk OAD. There will be a few benefits and costs:**
 - Feed requirement will be reduced by approx 2kgsDM/hd/day, saving 50cents, but milk yield will be reduced by 25%approx 2-4 litres, valued at €1.20 - 2.40.
 - The big payoff will be in terms of improved BCS; therefore, worth doing with thin cows.
- » **Other farmers are drying off cows producing less than 0.8kgs MS/day, that are not in calf or have high SCC or lame.**
 - Some are considering fattening these on outside blocbs. They will eat up to 14gs DM/hd/day or 1.5 tons over 90 days. They are not the most efficient at putting on weight, requiring 70mj to put on 1 kg weight gain.
- » **You could lease your cows to another farmer from NOW who is ok on ALL of the following:**
 - Ok for grass and silage,
 - Ok with a good milking set-up, good roadways, and a careful operator; so that cows do not get damaged while he has them.
 - Cows must be tested going and coming off that farm.
 - The fee could be small or give them free.
- » **When the rain comes it will be difficult to get the cows to graze out paddocks because it will be low DM and be 'sour'. Fibre may be necessary to encourage them; they will have to be "bossed" a bit to make them clean out paddocks; some pre-cutting may have to be done if it can be wilted.**

GRASS BUILD-UP TIME!

- » This sounds like a contradiction this year but must be the plan.
- » It must be done if you are to capitalise on the high milk with low-cost inputs.
- » It starts now - even though it seems impossible for some farmers who are short of grass. But you must plan to get it; growth rates may outstrip demand on many farms from mid-August on - we hope!
 - So, it should be possible to build up grass.
- » **The solution is:**
 - To reduce stocking rates by selling (must be seriously considered from a winter feed point of view) or moving stock to an outside farm. You will not be able to build grass if you are

- stocked at greater than 2.9 cows/ha on the milking block.
- Feed supplements, meals (soya hulls), or silage, to reduce daily grass demand. (This is not a sin, but a good practice).
- » **Close up ground for a "Third Cut/Graze"**
 - Do this by grazing cows at 2.9 per hectare (see above recommendations for this year's expected growth), staying on a minimum of 25 days rotation.
 - This means, if you are stocked at 2.5 L.U. over the whole farm, you have 0.4ha per cow left for a "3 cut-graze" area.
- » **This 3rd Cut- -Graze should get the following management:**
 - It should be a clean-cut silage field or a severely topped grazing field.
 - Apply 50 - 60 units per acre of nitrogen at closing with 2,000 gallons of slurry, if available.
 - Leave for 42 days before grazing.
 - If you are running short of grass on the grazing area during this period, then you can graze some of this before 42 days, so you lose nothing by this plan.
 - In fact, you grow more grass - enough to feed 10-12 cows for one day for each acre devoted to this - because you have used 30 units per acre more Nitrogen applied.
- » **The big benefit of doing this is that the grazing season will be extended:**
 - Therefore, the winter will be shortened.
 - Also, an extra profit of €2.80 per cow per day for every extra day a cow is at grass in Autumn/Winter (even for 3-4 hours).
- » **Associated with this issue is getting into the correct "lane" of grazing paddocks.**
 - You are now on the 3rd last grazing rotation. What responsibility does that carry?
 - It means that paddocks being grazed first next spring will have to be grazed first in this rotation.
 - That means the first week of August.
- » **Failure to plan this event will mean you won't have grass in the paddocks next spring where you want it, that is, nearest the milking parlour or dry fields.**

ACTIVE CLOVER MANAGEMENT?

- » **Continue to care for clover swards sown this year by:**
 - Using a clover safe spray to kill weeds if it not to late to do so,
 - Graze swards at a cover of 800kgs DM down to 3.5 to 4. Cms, that is very tight,
 - Apply zero or little nitrogen (5-7units/acre),
 - Apply 1 bag 0:7:30 per acre after every second grazing,
 - Increase rotation length to 42 days over the next 4-6 weeks,
 - At closing the paddock must be grazed down to 100 -200 kgs DM cover.
- » **Where red clover is grown on an outside farm block for silage it should now be receiving no nitrogen, but 2 - 3 bags 0:7:30 per acre after each cut.**
 - Continue cutting for silage up to September, tedding, wilting and baling for silage. Thereafter, zero graze the grass because it would be impossible to preserve as silage, and it should never be graze because of the damage done by animals' feet.
- » **In late-July - early August reseed pastures on the milking block by ploughing on preferably by mini-till, sowing ryegrass and 1-2 kgs white clover per acre.**
- » **It is imperative you identify field into which you intend sowing clover next year. Manage them as follows now:**
 - Spray with dock spray NOW because it cannot be used in the

- year of sowing clover as its residue kills the clover seedling - roundup doesn't have the same effect.
- Apply adequate lime to bring the pH over 6.5,
- Apply P & K to bring them to Index 3 or 4.
- » **Where clover is very plentiful feed Bloatguard through the water - in water troughs and moving the container daily.**

BREEDING COMPLETE - NEW ONE STARTS:

- » **I think there is a great need to scan all cows and heifers in August to confirm pregnancy now - stock bull must have been out for last 30 days.**
 - The value of this is that cull cows can be identified. Due to a shortage of grass and winter feed they can be dried off and culled.
 - As well as this, it gives you the information to Review the success of your breeding season just ended. This is a vital chore so that you have a better year next year.
- » **If cows are getting thin put them on OAD milking.**
- » **The breeding plan is divided up into four key stages of lactation, i.e. mid-lactation, dry period, calving and mating.**
 - With this seasonality of management, you need to write down a "plan" for each season and when that period is over, "review" the plan and achievements for the period.
 - Each farmer needs to do this for on his own or with the help of advisers/vets/discussion group; all of whom are well informed of fertility management. The things to examine based on scanning are:
 - Conception rate to first service for both cows and R2's,
 - Conception rate to sexed semen,
 - 3-week submission rate,
 - Repeat intervals, that is, the % repeats (a) less than 18 days (Target being less than 10%), (b) % Repeats between day 18 and 24 (the target is 70+%), and (c) % Repeats greater than 24 days (Target = less than 20%).
 - % not In-calf at the end of 11 week breeding season (Target = 10% or less).
 - Number of dairy AI straws used (Target = 1.5/cow in the herd),
- » **Mid-lactation fertility action plan:**
 - The next breeding season starts now.
 - During the next few months identify thin cows, because we want a drying off Condition Score (BCS) of 3.0; with a BCS of 2.75 or less and act.
 - BCS all cows visually in the field, giving the first calvers particular attention,
 - If more than 20% of your herd are thin (BCS<2.5), then your overall feeding/management must be suspect.
 - If the whole herd is marginal, you must increase the availability of energy in the diet.
 - If some young cows and others are particularly thin and suffering, ask yourself do you need to go on once-a-day milking.
 - Fat cows that are not in-calf could be used to clean up paddocks to the grazing height required so as not to force young cows not to do that chore.
 - If you have low BCS cows, ask yourself are all health issues, such as fluke, worms and IBR, lameness an issue?
- » **Replacement weight targets should drive your current management decisions:**
 - Calves (R1's) should now be 30% of their mature weight (at 6months). That means 150, 165 or 180kgs for animals whose mature weights are 500,550 or 600kgs, respectively.

- For the same mature weights, incalf heifers (R2's) should be 350, 385 and 420kgs at 18months old (now, 1st August) or 70% of their mature weight.
- Any R1's and R2's under these weights now must be separated out for special attention. Give them preferential grass or some meal (barley) in the diet.
- To establish the mature weight of your herd they should be weighed in June/July but do it now to get a rough idea. On the ICBF, EBI page you will see the maintenance figure for your herd and that will give you a pretty accurate mature weight for your herd as follows:

EBI Maintenance Figure	Estimated Cow Weight (Kgs)
0	640
10	591
20	542
30	493
40	444

- » R2's should get their first treatment for leptospirosis at end of August and the second one in mid-September with all the cows
- » They should get their first injection for Salmonella at end of August and again the second one with all the cows in mid-September. I consider the Lepto and salmonella vaccinations essential for every dairy herd.
- » Try to keep the R2's in a fly free area to avoid mastitis infection.
- » Treat them with Stockholm tar as a preventative.
- » Farmers who have R1's with a contract rearer should make certain that they are on target weights. The only way to do this is to have them weighed independently or be there yourself.
 - Any contract rearer not providing regular heifer weights is not serious about the job.

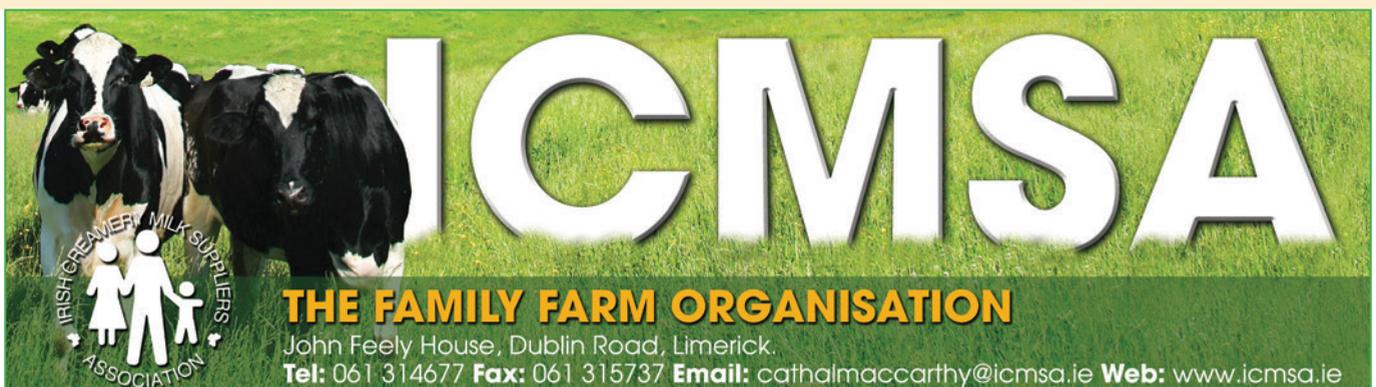
FINALLY:

- » **Meals for other stock:**
 - The response of meals to R1's is probably 4:1 in August and definitely that when grass is scarce. So, 1-2 kgs/hd/day is justified.
 - Make sure R2's, particularly those under target, are not suffering. Palm kernel would be an ideal "grass stretcher" as it is easily fed.
- » **Reduce your workload by:**
 - 13 times per week milking.
 - Spreading nitrogen one per month.
 - Use a contractor (or neighbour) to spread slurry, do maintenance work etc.

- » **Take a few weeks holiday:**
 - A neighbour, family member or discussion group friend could oversee an in-experienced relief person doing the work while you are away.
 - A few days away with the mobile phone on are no use to you.
- » **Dosing calves for hoose and stomach worms may be necessary:**
 - If calves start coughing it may indicate the onset of hoose,
 - If calves exhibit sticky dung around the tail-head, it indicates the presence of stomach worms.
 - Take a dung sample to check for parasites before dosing,
- » **Change milk liner now to prevent mastitis/high SCC's, and reduced milk yields.**
- » **To avoid big tax bills this year, talk to your accountant now.**
 - For sole traders' income averaging will not be much of a help this year because the last few years were good,
 - Some of the following might be considered:
 - Formally paying a spouse and family members a wage, a family member over 14 years can earn €16,500 tax free,
 - Increasing your own pension contribution,
 - Taking an agricultural education holiday/sabbatical,
 - DNA testing the whole herd plus the R1's and R2's – the benefits would be huge in the long-term,
 - Repair work, fencing, electrical, building/machinery repairs, roadway repairs, upgrading water system, reseeding, small drainage works, batch latch, electronic heat/health detectors, etc, is tax deductible at the higher marginal tax rate,
 - Make judicious capital investments to help you achieve environmental requirements and make life easy for yourself and your family,
 - Consider investing in renewable energy where the tax write off could be 100%
- » **If you are not generally paying tax at the high rate and availing of all the tax planning options within the farm gate don't jump into becoming a company without very good tax advice. Consider it if:**
 - You are paying tax at the high rate,
 - You have high living expenses,
 - You are considering high borrowings for big capital or land investments/purchase,
 - You have significant off farm income.

"THERE IS NO CORRELATION BETWEEN THE AMOUNT OF MONEY ONE EARNS AND THE AMOUNT OF MONEY SAVED!"

An interesting statement!



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IRISH CREAMERY MILK SUPPLIERS ASSOCIATION



VALTRA Q SERIES IS HERE!

Valtra's 5th generation model range is now complete with an all-new series that fits between the popular T and S Series. The Q Series, designed, engineered, and manufactured in Finland, is the ideal tractor for large farms and contractors that seek performance and integrated smart technology in the 230-305 HP range. By combining industry-leading design, high quality components and finishing, and outstanding aftersales support, the Q Series has the power, intelligence, and versatility to maximise productivity while driving down costs for large farms and contractors. According to Valtra, the Q Series is an easy-to-use, intelligent machine built for Pros allowing customers to perform any farming or contracting task and handle any implement with ease and efficiency thanks to the reliable 74 litre AGCO Power engine and the industry-leading AGCO CVT transmission. Operator comfort is outstanding thanks to the large comfortable cab offering great visibility, excellent suspension and the award-winning SmartTouch user interface.

Valtra notes that easy-to-use precision farming solutions, a powerful, robust and reliable design, and excellent customer support enable Q customers to maximize their performance and ensure fuel efficiency, efficiencies in working hours, and reduced inputs.

"The Q Series is a high-quality tractor with a capital Q and customers deserve an equally high-quality service. To ensure the best tractor experience we have introduced a certification programme for Q Series dealers," comments Sales Director Matti Tiitinen. Q Series dealers offer expert knowledge in sales and aftersales service, a high level of spare part availability, service contracts, and flexible finance options for complete cost control. Furthermore, Q certified dealers offer a 100 per cent connected fleet to guarantee maximum uptime using the latest remote diagnostic tools to schedule predictive maintenance for when it best suits customers. At handover, special attention will be made to making sure the customer's Q Series is set up with their implements and all smart farming





capabilities from day one. The 74 litre engine features the biggest displacement in the market for this size tractor ensuring reliability and fuel efficiency. Maximum power is available at very low engine speeds of 1850 rpm and the maximum torque stays consistent in the range of 1000 to 1500 rpm. The long stroke engine easily generates the high power and torque that is available in the Q Series. Valtra's EcoPower principle has been applied to the entire Q Series range, further reducing fuel consumption. Maximum driving speed is achieved with only 1500 rpm.

The transmission is easy to operate. The Q Series' electronic transmission management automatically selects the lowest possible engine revs for the work to maintain the lowest fuel consumption, and distributes the power accordingly to the hydraulics, PTO, or transmission. The driver simply adjusts the settings to whichever best suits the driver or task. With droop control the operator can change the behaviour of the tractor for even more economic or intensive operating to save either fuel or time, depending on customer's cost-saving preferences.

The Q is not too light, not too heavy with a weight of 9.2 tons and protects soil from compaction. The maximum gross weight is 16 tons which guarantees a high payload and it means always transporting load legally.

The Q Series is compact, has a low total height and a long wheelbase. Therefore, the centre of gravity is low which makes the Q extremely stable. The Aires Suspension in combination with the long wheelbase increases the pulling force of the tractor and reduces power hopping. The grip to the ground is increased because the air suspension has a faster reaction time compared to industry standard hydraulic suspension. At road speeds, power is transmitted almost purely mechanically, which means fast and smooth acceleration. Both the cab and the front axle are air-suspended and they are perfectly synchronized to ensure a smooth ride in any environment and any temperature, whether harvesting on a hot summer day or clearing snow from the roads in winter.



Well readers I am starting this month's column with some sayings and quotations by some famous people - and some not so famous people - over the last few decades about the importance of agriculture and its people...the farmers.

"My grandfather used to say that once in your life you need a doctor, a lawyer, a policeman and a preacher; but every day, three times a day, you need a farmer," Brenda Schoepp - farmer.

"The farmer is more than just a person working in the fields and caring for his animals...no, the farmer is much more. They are the ones that feed you."

"Agriculture is the most healthful, most useful and most noble employment of man," George Washington.

The very social fabric of farming is not just about producing food, it is a way of life. They are the stewards of the land they farm and they are the employers and the roots of what is rural Ireland. Currently, our food trollies are getting more expensive to fill. As the cost of living starts to spiral out of control we need to try to buy Irish produced food where possible. Our food is of a high standard and it will make a difference to our farmers if we try to buy local and protect Ireland's largest indigenous industry in the face of the one of the biggest crisis that is facing Irish agriculture today. Proposed emission cuts in agriculture is a real concern and there seems to be a clear lack of direction on this in my opinion. This is a global problem that has to be addressed as a local problem to get results. Farmers have got to embrace change and make changes to their farming practices - they have to be part of a solution going forward instead of being perceived as part of the problem .

Yes, agriculture emissions are too high; yes, we have to reach acceptable targets; but we have to put a plan in place that protects our farming livelihoods and our food industry or we will not be able to create a sustainable food system. Farmers are the great embracers of change; they have been changing farm practices for decades. By the end of this decade we have to reduce our emissions by 50 per cent. Farming will play its part but reality must come in to play; we have to come up with a solution that protects farm families and their incomes and our food supply going forward.

Now down to business. It has been reported that the average suckler or sheep farmer could get paid a sum of €61,600 over a five-year period in the next organic farming scheme if they go organic.

June milk prices have topped 52 cent per litre. As the harvest progressed, barley yields improved with reports of 4 to 4.5 ton per acre being quoted in some places. Record numbers of cattle are being killed in the factories and reports from marts is that trade is steady and prices are remaining strong.

On the machinery front the very well run FTMTA Machinery Show was a huge success. Elsewhere at the National Ploughing Association Championship site the trackways are going down as we speak.

In industry news, Kehoe Brothers, with branches in Wexford and Carlow, have been appointed PÖTTINGER dealers; farm machinery simulators will now be installed in Agriculture colleges nationwide; and WBD Farm Machinery finally got to officially open their new premises in Blake's Cross, Co Dublin. Finally, I would like offer my condolences to the families of Jim Butler, formally of Murphy Machinery Ltd Littleton, and Trevor Lyons of Lyons and Burton Kilcock. Both men were well known and respected in the machinery industry.

Until next month farm wisely and farm safely.



Tom Murphy
Professional Agricultural
Contractors of Ireland



COMPETITIVE FINANCE

The announcement by the Government to give low cost finance to help to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) including farmers and those in food production is welcome news.

Under the COVID-19 Loan Scheme (CLS) you can get very competitive rates on loans over 1 to 6yrs with unsecured loans between €25,000 and €1,500,000 and with an interest cap of 3.7 per cent for loans under €250,000.

Loans can be used for:

- Liquidity/working capital
- Investment
- Refinancing - Up to 30 per cent of new loans may be used for refinancing of existing short-term credit, for example if arising due to Covid-19 impacts.

Guidelines state quite clearly that businesses eligible for the scheme include primary producers and businesses engaged in farming. Now the big question is: will Agricultural Contractor's be eligible? They are engaged in farming work and should be allowed to avail of this scheme under the Department of Agriculture. However, some bright spark will probably be quick to shout out that Agricultural Contractors are not part of agricultural sector and the Department of Agriculture have no responsibility for them. They don't even know how many there are in the in the country! Well, on this occasion I don't care because, as we have always been told by the Department, agricultural contractors are service industry so either way - whether under agriculture or the service industry - Agricultural Contractors must be entitled to have the this scheme made available to them. I will be interested to hear from any Contractor who makes an application.

THE EUROPEAN MODEL REPORT

In April this year a report by "The European Model of Agriculture", a body that provides research for the Commission, which in turn sets EU policy on agriculture, shows a considerable decline in the number of farms across the EU. Between 2003 and 2016 there was a decline

of 32 per cent, which is equal to 5 million farms. Many can be accounted for by farm consolidation; however, this only resulted in a larger farm increase of 7 per cent. Ireland in general has followed this pattern but still faces the challenge of attracting young people to stay on the land which is seriously affecting succession.

The report congratulates farmers in Ireland for maintaining high output, but does not acknowledge that this is mainly due to the high investment and dedication of Professional Agricultural Contractors and the services they provide. Another report, this time from "The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations", pays tribute to farmers for embracing new methods, technology, and investment. Again, no acknowledgement or mention from these prestigious organizations for the role of Agricultural Contractors or their contribution in the chain of food production. It is only by their dedication and huge financial investment in machinery and the latest technology, (without any grants) that has made it possible to increase agricultural output year on year. Agricultural Contractors are the life blood of agriculture in Ireland and therefore our agricultural exports. This is why I will always applaud and give them my utmost support.

A LONG WAY TOGETHER



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KVERNELAND ENDURO T NEW TRAILED MODEL

Kverneland has enhanced its stubble cultivators by adding a folding trailed model to the Enduro and Enduro Pro in working widths from 4.0 to 5.0 metres.

"Efficient stubble cultivation is the basis of success for the next crop establishment! Especially within a farming system of minimum tillage, stubble cultivation conserves soil structure and moisture and limits erosion,"

explains Guillaume Pignon, Product Application Specialist. "After harvesting it's necessary to speed up, therefore, a cultivator is required which offers the right performance to do so."

The new trailed models, the Kverneland Enduro T and Enduro Pro T, meet the requirements of the medium-sized farmers. Flexible in combination and with no need for a large lifting capacity, the 3-bar Enduro/Enduro Pro T carries out tillage of the soil, levelling and consolidating in one pass. It is very efficient and contributes towards cost saving. The tine distance of 280mm, row distance of 750mm and a high underbeam clearance of 870mm leads to a nice mixing and finishing without any risk of blockages. A maximum working depth of 35cm is possible with the models of the Enduro Pro and 30cm with the Enduro. Soil consolidation is of major importance within cultivation. It accelerates straw decomposition, reduces slug damage and preserves moisture by leaving a fine levelled and weatherproof finish. For best performance, the roller needs to perfectly meet the various conditions and requirements. In order to extend the wide choice of following rollers even further, the Enduro T and Enduro Pro T can also be combined with the new Actipress Single, Actipress Twin and Double Cage Rollers. By adding the new following harrow, an even surface is ensured with fine soil on top, permitting weeds emergence in first stubble operation. The Enduro T /Enduro Pro T is offered with two type of tines which can be equipped with a wide choice of bolted shares (heat-treated or carbide) and Knock-on shares to adapt to different working depths and tasks.

VISITOR RECORD AT E-FARM.COM'S FTMTA FAIR BOOTH

Ireland's farmers have set visitor records at E-FARM.COM's booth at the FTMTA farm machinery show at the Punchestown Exhibition Center. According to Maryam Mahjoub, responsible for E-FARM's fair management, Irish attendees have outnumbered all international shows the company has attended post-Covid so far.

It was the online platform's first participation as an exhibitor at FTMTA. Farmers from all parts of Ireland took the chance to talk to Joshua Belmonte, Country Manager for the Irish market. Well-known customers, just as Mr. Crean Murphy, who recently got featured in a nationwide publication, paid E-FARM a visit. In addition, many visitors used their time at the show to finally see a face to the name of a company they have come across on the internet recently. Joshua Belmonte, Country Manager for the Irish market, explains: "Despite the modern approach of an all-online machinery purchase, we never forget that it is two actual people doing business. That's why we make sure to keep in touch via phone, e-mail, or - as seen here - personally at fairs and trade shows."

"We can proudly say that we've established a profound connection to farmers and contractors from the region. We are grateful for the trust in our business model that differs from what has been the standard for decades," reports Joshua Belmonte, Country Manager for the Irish market. Over the course of the two-day show, the Hamburg-based company offered an introduction to their personalised machinery search, and fair-exclusive discounts for their pre-purchase inspection.

E-FARM.COM offers thousands of used agricultural machines to choose from online.

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SHALLOW SOIL TILLAGE WITH THE AMAZONE C-MIX DUCKFOOT SHARE

Due to increasing requirements for field hygiene and more attention to ground water conservation, shallow soil tillage is becoming increasingly important. Weed seeds and volunteer grains need to be kept near the soil surface, whilst germinated plants are completely cut off at the root. Full-surface, light soil movement not only fights weeds, but also disrupts negative water capillary action near the surface. This allows valuable ground water to be preserved for the subsequent crop. New soil tillage tools are constantly being developed to meet this need. When it comes to cultivators, the most suitable tool for shallow, full-surface soil tillage is the duckfoot share. Compared with a wing share, the duckfoot achieves significantly shallower working. For cultivators in the Cenio and Cenius product ranges, AMAZONE offers the C-Mix

duckfoot share with a width of 320 mm. With a maximum tine spacing of 30 cm, there is a 2-cm overlap between the shares. This ensures uniform, full-surface movement, whatever the conditions. In addition, the C-Mix duckfoot share is extremely flat along its entire width, so that it remains parallel to the ground surface and ensures a uniform, shallow cut. Germinated weeds and volunteers are cleanly cut, so they can dry out. For optimal results, the wear condition of the share is extremely important. For a longer lifespan, AMAZONE now offers the duckfoot share in a highly wear-resistant HD variant. This features additional hard metal plates that are soldered into place and continually self-sharpen during the soil tillage process. This extends the service life of the share considerably and ensures consistent, clean results.



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A SNAPSHOT OF THE FTMTA MACHINERY SHOW 2022

THE SUN SHONE AND THE MACHINES GLISTENED IN THE JULY SUNSHINE AT THE FIRST IN-PERSON FTMTA SHOW FOR A WHILE, HELD AT PUNCESTOWN EVENT CENTRE A FEW WEEKS AGO. AFTER AN ABSENCE OF OVER TWO YEARS OF A MACHINERY TRADE SHOW, ORGANISERS WERE VERY HAPPY WITH ATTENDANCE AND THE LEVEL OF ENQUIRIES GENERATED AT THE SHOW. BELOW IS A SNAPSHOT OF SOME VISITORS AND ATTENDEES AT THIS YEAR'S EVENT.



Current FTMTA President and General Manager of Pottinger Ireland Diarmuid Claridge at the show.



Simon Cross, Managing Director, Cross Engineering.



Pictured at the Argo Tractors stand was Ben Agar, Business Development Director, with the all new McCormick X6 Series tractor.



Pictured on the IAM stand was Pat Kenny, Sales and Business Manager IAM.



On the ECI JCB stand was Denis O'Kelly, Sales Director and Aishling Osborne, Head of CRM and Digital Marketing ECI JCB.



Pictured on the Kverneland stand at the show was Aaron McStay of Roger Perry Agri Contractors and Leonard Hovenden Product Manager, Kverneland Group Ireland.



On the Teagle stand was Frank Byrne, Ireland Sales Manager with Paul Curnow, UK and Ireland Sales Manager.



Alan Douglas of Alan Douglas Farm Machinery and Conor McCarthy, McCarthy Plant and Agri on the Claas stand.



On the Agriquip and Murphy Machinery stand, in front of the HE-VA tillage range, was Billy Ayres, Pat Kearney and Eoin Higgins.



On the Quaille Machinery stand, in front of the new Dewulf potato harvester, was Brian Finnegan and Ian Rooney from Quaille machinery and Ruben Weltens, Dewulf Belgium.



Michael Farrelly, Executive Director of the FTMTA and organiser of the event.



On the Lemken stand at the show were Paul O'Connor, TFM; Peter Breen, TFM; Craig Brown, Lemken; Duncan Duthie, Lemken Scotland; and Derek Delahunty, Sales Manager, Lemken Ireland.



MASSEY FERGUSON MF ACTIVA COMBINE RANGE

Massey Ferguson, a worldwide brand of AGCO (NYSE:AGCO), is delighted to announce the introduction of its completely renewed MF Activa range of five straw-walker combines, which deliver more power, additional features and the option of the renowned, performance-enhancing Multi Crop Separator option on all models. Three new, straightforward and dependable models are designed to deliver flexible and high quality harvesting in a wide range of crops for small to medium sized farms. On top of the standard grain configuration, all are also available in Anti-wear and Rice versions. A completely new 260hp model, the MF Activa 7344, now heads the range. This is joined by the new 226hp, MF Activa 7343 and 185hp, MF Activa 7342 – all available with the option of the well-proven Multi Crop Separator as well as electronically controlled hydrostatic transmissions and significant cab upgrades. "These superb machines are designed specifically for those looking to secure their own harvests. MF Activa combines offer users an unrivalled combination of the latest technology with exceptional comfort and control, ease of use and well-proven features," says Jérôme Aubrin, Director Marketing Massey Ferguson, Europe & Middle East. "Like their predecessors they are



easy to use and deliver reliable and outstandingly versatile harvesting performance," he adds.

NEW MF ACTIVA COMBINE FEATURES:

Updated MF Activa combine range offering three models from 185hp to 260hp with an extremely well proven threshing system as well as being available in special rice and Anti-Wear versions
Independent concave adjustment – front and rear – set electrically from the cab
Sectional Concave design enables concaves to be quickly and easily changed when moving between different crops
Multi Crop Separator (MCS) option increases overall separation by up to 20% on all models
New modular grain pan with removable plastic inserts to ease cleaning
Choice of Freeflow or Powerflow headers for MF Activa 7343 and MF Activa 7344
Latest Stage V, four-cylinder and six-cylinder engines specifically tuned to deliver economical

high torque and power for harvesting operations
Redesigned, electronically controlled, three-speed hydrostatic transmission
Upgraded cab provides more comfort and ease of control with seat-mounted armrest, air-suspended seat and electronic transmission operation
Three new models, with powers from 185hp to 260hp, share a similar drum and concave threshing system. All are also available in versions to work in Rice or with 'Anti-wear' specification, which is specifically designed to handle the rigours of operating in heavy soybean and maize crops. The well-proven, dependable threshing system employs a 600mm diameter, 1,340mm wide drum fitted with eight rasp bars. A perfect grain sample is ensured thanks to independent – front and rear – electrically operated concave adjustment. Switching between crops is straightforward, thanks to the Sectional Concave, which enables operators to quickly change between a large or small grain sections.

COMPACT-SOLITAIR PRECISE WITH HIGH IMPACT

Contact your local dealer to arrange demo of LEMKEN 3 meter Compact Solitair.



The Compact-Solitair can be used for both mulch and conventional plow seeding. It combines high impact with optimum seedbed preparation and can be combined with a wide range of tillage implements. Convince yourself of the many advantages:

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- Large volume wheels for optimum reconsolidation and precise depth control
- Optimum seedbed through use of power harrow/ compact disc harrow under all operating conditions
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Contact: Derek Delahunty, LEMKEN Area Sales Manager
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GRASSLAND SPECIALIST PÖTTINGER HAS ONCE AGAIN TIED UP A COLOURFUL BOUQUET OF INNOVATIONS FOR THE NEW SEASON. THERE IS SOMETHING NEW FOR EVERY LINK IN THE HARVESTING CHAIN: FROM MOWING, TEDDING AND RAKING TO LOADING.

NOVACAT V 10000: THE NEW STANDARD IN MOWING

The new mower combination combines high output with the best possible ground tracking and the greatest reliability thanks to intelligent technology. The NOVACAT V 10000 is available with a headstock for 3.0 or 3.5 metre wide front mowers. This makes working widths of up to 9.62 and 10.02 metres possible.



New HIT V 11100

NEW HIT V 11100 – POWERFUL AND COMPACT

With its 1.42 metre rotors and 10.70 metre working width (DIN), the HIT V 11100 combines excellent tedding quality with maximum output. While the HIT is inconspicuously small during transport, it unfolds to reveal stunning dimensions in the field. It also boasts an impressive array of technical refinements.



JUMBO 8000

TOP 882 C: THE NEW LARGE CENTRE-SWATH RAKE

Pöttinger has added the new TOP 882 C to their range of popular centre-swath rakes. The TOP 882 C demonstrates its full capabilities at a working width of 7.70 to 8.80 metres. The longer boom allows very flexible swath width adjustment between 1.30 and 2.60 metres. Flexibility that offers the advantage of wider swaths for forage harvesters and narrower swath widths for small loader wagons. Despite the impressive rotor diameter of 3.70 metres, the transport height without removing the tine arms is still below 4.00 metres.

NEW BELT-TYPE RAKE MERGENTO VT 9220

The new MERGENTO VT 9220 belt-type rake (with working widths of up to 9.20 metres for a central swath and 8.70 metres for a side swath) is designed for alfalfa, clover, and a wide variety of crops from permanent grassland to straw. MERGENTO collects the forage using the pick-up. Without further contact with the ground, cross conveyor belts transport the forage to the swath.



NOVACAT V 10000

THE NEW JUMBO 8000 CHOPS MUCH SHORTER

With the new short chop system, the world market leader in loader wagons has taken another step further. The new JUMBO 8000 chops the forage almost 30 percent shorter: This means even higher forage quality without compromising on loading performance. Protected to a torque of 3,500 Nm, the loader wagon can now deliver higher throughput rates than a self-propelled forage harvester.

CONTACTLESS STEERED AXLES ON THE JUMBO

Agricultural machinery manufacturer Pöttinger underlines its world market leadership in loader wagons with innovative developments to its flagship, the JUMBO: Convenience and safety have a very high priority. The new contactless, electronic steered axles on the JUMBO loader wagon significantly improve operating and driving comfort as well as the reliability of the steering system. Developed together with ME MOBIL ELEKTRONIK GMBH, the system was launched on the JUMBO loader wagon first.

BOSS 3000 MASTER, THE NEW BENCHMARK

The BOSS 3000 MASTER complements the product range of loader wagons for smaller scale farm businesses and farms in the foothills of the Alps. The engineers have succeeded in reducing maintenance requirements to a minimum with a loading unit developed from the ground up, while at the same time significantly increasing throughput capacity. In addition, new smart options, previously only available on the larger wagons, are now also available for the BOSS. It is available in four sizes from 18.7 to 26.5 m³ (DIN). Two of them also with beater rotors. The BOSS 3000 MASTER series is available from 01 August 2022. Without further contact with the ground, cross conveyor belts transport the forage to the swath.

ICMSA



Pat McCormack,
President, ICMSA

WHEN 'DIFFICULT' BECOMES 'IMPOSSIBLE'

The full importance and impact of the July 28 Government announcement on the emissions reductions to be demanded from the agri sector will take a very long time to work through. The exact nature of the blow the announcement has aimed at the economic heart of rural Ireland is yet to be determined. But there's no point in pretending that it is not a most grievous setback for those of us who know that the welfare and viability of rural communities is ultimately dependent on commercial farming.

There's absolutely no way of tap-dancing around what happened last week: emissions reduction targets that were supremely challenging but worth an attempt have now been pushed out to levels that are unachievable and impossible. ICMSA and others repeatedly pointed to what was at stake and the fact that any reductions beyond the 22 per cent originally communicated would have wholly negative and predictable economic, social, and demographic consequences for the massive areas of the state that depended on farming and food production. The facts of the matter are that the Government – encouraged and cheered on by the usual vociferous and mysteriously funded 'environmental activists' – looked at the facts of the matter and still decided to go with the impossible over the possible. That's where we are now; absolutely legitimate questions and self-evident contradictions were waved away,

and a policy has been embarked upon that no-one with any real knowledge of our farming and agri-food sector thinks is really either coherent or achievable.

ICMSA will continue working with anyone who wants to know the real facts of the matter. But we cannot pretend that we are not disappointed by the lack of commitment and grit displayed by so many politicians from whom we had a right to expect much more and who we thought would stand their (and our) ground. There were too many rural politicians with nothing to say about a policy that will have nothing but negative impacts on their communities. ICMSA is not interested in hearing any more platitudes from politicians and groups who profess to appreciate the dilemma faced by farming communities but who cheerfully signed-off on policy that 'at a stroke' made whole classes of farms unviable.

It was now clear that faced with the choice of doing anything that impinged upon more favoured sectors – like aviation – or undermining our irreplaceable family farm system, those same politicians – with a few notable exceptions – were happy to sacrifice the one sector in which Ireland enjoyed a unique natural benefit, global reputation, and which had been the one and only economic sector left working after the crash of a decade ago. Nor are we interested in hearing those who pretend that it's 'just' an additional three percent on top of the 22 per cent already

communicated.

ICMSA has repeatedly stressed that if we are to move forwards together towards the new low-emissions farming and primary food production now set as policy, then the ambitions and targets must be possible and achievable. If the historic process and transition is to win the confidence that will be necessary for it to succeed, then it simply must be realistic. If it is not realistic – and 25 per cent is not realistic – then the whole process loses all momentum, trust, and confidence.

The decision will be presented as a 'win' for the environmental element in Government; it will transpire to be nothing of the sort. What we got last week – and what our most valuable indigenous economic sector will have to struggle with for the next eight years – is no more than a PR stunt and pointless over-reach that will inflict incalculable harm to long-term ambitions for lower emissions and sustainability. Insult was added to injury by the shameless parroting of the line that this attack on farming was actually an opportunity to open up other income streams. The Government's decision badly let down family farms and their communities and we won't be bobbed off by vague promises of future income streams. Our livestock industry – both dairy and beef – is the lifeblood of rural Ireland and I believe that Minister McConalogue and the three leaders of the coalition parties have struck it at its very heart.

FRS TRAINING

'FARM SAFETY LIVE' IS MAKING A RETURN TO THE TULLAMORE SHOW ON SUNDAY 14TH AUGUST 2022.



FBD Insurance is delighted to be continuing our partnership with FRS and the Health and Safety Authority to bring Farm Safety Live's interactive farm safety demonstrations back to the show this year. The demonstration area will be officially opened by Minister Martin Heydon and Minister Charlie McConalogue at 10.30am.

The aim of these demonstrations is to encourage farmers to think more about safety on the farm. Practical tips that can be applied on the farm will be demonstrated and discussed.

This year, the Farm Safety Live demonstrations will be focusing on safety around tractors, quads, machinery and handling livestock. In this article, I am going to look at some key safety points to keep in mind around these topics.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER FOR SAFE TRACTOR OPERATION

- Always maintain tractors in good condition, in particular the brakes, lights, mirrors and wipers. Special attention must be given to ensure that all brakes are serviced on tractors as there have been a significant number of fatalities due to brakes not working effectively.
- 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.

Launching Farm Safety Live at the Tullamore Show 2022 (Left to Right) Pat Griffin, HSA, Ciaran Roche, FBD Insurance, Joe Molloy, Tullamore Show and Peter Slattery.



- Avoid rushing and always be vigilant
- Always park the tractor safely and remove the keys
- Always be aware of the blind spots

KEY STEPS TO REMEMBER FOR SAFE QUAD OPERATION

- Quad bike training is vital. The new regulation regarding ATV and Quads means that safety training and use of helmet will come into force in November 2023
- Head protection is critically important while operating a quad. Helmets significantly reduce the number and severity of serious head injuries.
- Don't overload the quad or trailed implement
- When towing implements, ensure that you are complying with the manufacturers' specification for weight and size
- Safety checks and maintenance are key. It is essential that tyre pressures are checked regularly and servicing should be undertaken in accordance with manufacturers' guidelines.

- Never carry a passenger on a quad bike
- Remove keys and keep in safe place away from children

KEY STEPS TO REMEMBER FOR SAFE HANDLING OF LIVESTOCK

- Always be vigilant and aware of the risks.
- Watch for warning signs of animal aggressiveness, especially in bulls and newly calved cows.
- Cull fractious and difficult bulls or cows as soon as possible.
- Always use safe handling facilities.
- Always have an escape route for emergency situations while working with animals.

FBD aims to support initiatives which will make the farm a safer place for all and so we are pleased to be supporting Farm Safety Live and to see the question of farm safety being acknowledged at the Tullamore Show. We urge visitors to the show to visit the Farm Safety Live demonstrations at stand L100 and we look forward to seeing you there. Remember: always think Farm Safety.

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THATCH 22

IT'S THE OLDEST FORM OF ROOFING IN THE WORLD, AND YOU MAY THINK IT'S A DYING ART, BUT CONTRARY TO BELIEF, THE CRAFT OF THATCHING IS STILL VERY MUCH ALIVE IN IRELAND OF 2022

It's the oldest forms of roofing known to man. As a craft, it's thought to be over 5,000 years old and can be carried out using oat, rye, wheat, straw, hazel or even palm leaves. In fact, thatching has been found on every continent around the world, except Antarctica.

These days thatched roofs are a rare sight, but according to master thatcher Kyran O'Grady, the craft of thatching is still very much in demand in Ireland. "There are still quite a few houses with thatched roofs around the country," he says. "Some are old, and some are new, but there's still a need for it."

The traditional thatching methods used here in Ireland are the same ones employed in times gone by. One of the first records of thatching in Ireland was carried out by the

well-known UCD professor and folklorist, Caoimhín Ó Danachair, (Kevin Danaher) who, in the mid-19th century, travelled up and down the country, recording elements of Irish life, including the different thatching methods used at the time.

PRACTICAL CHOICE

To this day, thatching is still a practical option for roofs. It offers excellent insulation and, according to Kyran, is relatively easy to repair. "A roof thatched with water reed (a more durable and water-resistant material than straw) can last for as long as 35 to 40 years in Ireland, with very little maintenance," he says. "When the roof is eventually in need of repair, a new layer can be placed over the old. Old buildings here, often have up to four feet of thatch which has accumulated underneath

over the years."

While in the past the thatch could easily go up in flames, these days fire regulations demand that a fire barrier be laid underneath it and on top of the rafters which makes it safer. "In addition, there's nothing more sustainable than thatch. It uses completely natural materials that take in carbon as they grow," adds Kyran.

THE ROUTE TO THATCHING

Kyran comes from Howth, Co. Wicklow, but is now based in Wicklow and does not have a family background in thatching. He did, however, become fascinated by the thatched cottages he saw on holidays in Sligo as a young boy. After school he enrolled in a B-Comm in UCD but left to do a year-long ANCO course in thatching in 1981. "After that,

“

In addition, there's nothing more sustainable than thatch. It uses completely natural materials that take in carbon as they grow.



I worked with a master thatcher in a huge house on the way into Strabane, which had a lot of windows, valleys and hips, so I got thrown in at the deep end," he says.

He never planned to make a business of it: "I just wanted to know how to thatch a roof so that I could buy old houses and do them up," he says. After the course, which has since been discontinued, he decided not to return to university, however. "One thing led to another, and I got so far into it the thatching that there was no turning around."

These days, he travels up and down the country, thatching roofs of all kinds. Some are old cottages, others new buildings, such as pubs that are going for a traditional look. "There was a fad that started in the 1980s for traditional Irish pubs to be thatched," he says. "In Dublin, one of the first was the Orchard in Stillorgan, Co. Dublin.

Others included The Glenside in Churchtown, the Playwright in Blackrock, Courtney's in Lucan, and the Lord Mayor in Swords." It's not just pubs. He's been asked to thatch the corporate headquarters of Kepak meat processors in Clonee. He also worked on a

golf club in Bunclody and on an early Christian dwelling, using circular willow and reed thatch, in Armagh, near to the Navan Fort.

THE ROUTINE

He harvests his own reeds in Wexford and has designed and made his own machine, in tandem with another thatcher who is a steel fabricator, for cleaning, raking, and making the bundles for his work.

He points out that there are different types of thatching and that the style depends on which part of the country you find yourself in. Long-straw thatching is predominant in the East of Ireland. In Donegal and the North meanwhile, tie down thatch is most common. This was done every year or every second year and had a net thrown over it. "Some of that tie down, can still be found as far as the Aran Islands and along the west coast of Ireland," says Kyran.

In Wexford, Waterford, and the South of the country, reed thatching which uses reeds instead of straw, is the most common type of thatch. "The bulk of the thatched roofs in Ireland are these days thatched in reeds and

could last up to 30 years. "Most of the roofs I've done are still there. They could last longer if they are taken care of."

These days, Kyran works alone but, in the past, has had a team of people helping him. In addition, he has on occasion, trained other people in how to thatch roofs as there are no longer courses on the subject available in Ireland. Thatching is not unique to Ireland. England still has a lot of thatched roofs.

"Traditionally in Ireland a thatched roof was found on a poor man's house, but this is not the case in the UK where many big and expensive houses are thatched," says Kyran. "There are also still a lot of thatched houses in the UK, Germany, Holland, Austria, and in Eastern Europe."

It can sometimes take up to two months to complete a thatched roof. While Kyran enjoys the finished product, the process of thatching can be laborious and physically hard work. "When you have it done, it's very satisfying," he laughs. "But when you're up that ladder and actually doing it, it's hard. You just have to keep the head down and get it finished. Then it's all worth it."



SIMPLISTIC CULL COW COMMENTARY

Glib commentary that Irish dairy cows must be culled to curb methane emissions, reflects a lazy and simplistic attitude. Yet, in the lead-up to government decisions being made to set sectoral targets for carbon reduction in the Irish economy we saw several instances of this simplistic approach.

Much of the 'cull the national herd' commentary lacks scientific credibility, balanced analysis or objectivity. A stabilisation of Irish cattle numbers is achievable within the required timeframe, given current cattle population trajectories. That would go a considerable distance towards meeting our emission obligations within the agriculture sector.

The widely held belief that there has been an exponential explosion in dairy cow numbers needs clarification. In fact, there are fewer than 20% more dairy cows on Irish farms than were grazing there in 1984. Productivity per cow has increased substantially in the interim. Such efficiency improvement should be a cause of praise, not criticism and scorn. The development of an internationally competitive indigenous dairy sector is a credit to all concerned. Environmental or carbon output challenges should be solved within the parameters of protecting this rural-based industry that is

rightly lauded across the world for its high-quality dairy produce. Why, we should be asking, do the Germans and the Americans buy Kerrygold butter in such quantities at a premium above alternative offerings? Because it is recognised as superior, in taste, texture and production standards. Shouldn't we be seeking to solve perceived emission challenges while at the same time safeguarding a unique and high-value grass-based dairy production platform?

There is criticism that Irish milk producers are not doing anything to become more efficient, especially in terms of reducing emissions. Such commentary is disappointing given that both farmers and researchers are engaged in adopting and developing various environmental protection strategies, many of which are already being implemented on Irish farms at considerable cost. Yes, some early-stage methane-suppression technologies will require more research and development to be viable, especially for Irish cows that are outdoors grazing for ten months of the year. Methane suppression strategies should not be dismissed based on extended lead-in times. Universal electric car adoption also needs a long lead-in. So too do solar and offshore wind energy infrastructural developments. No one is suggesting that we scrap twenty

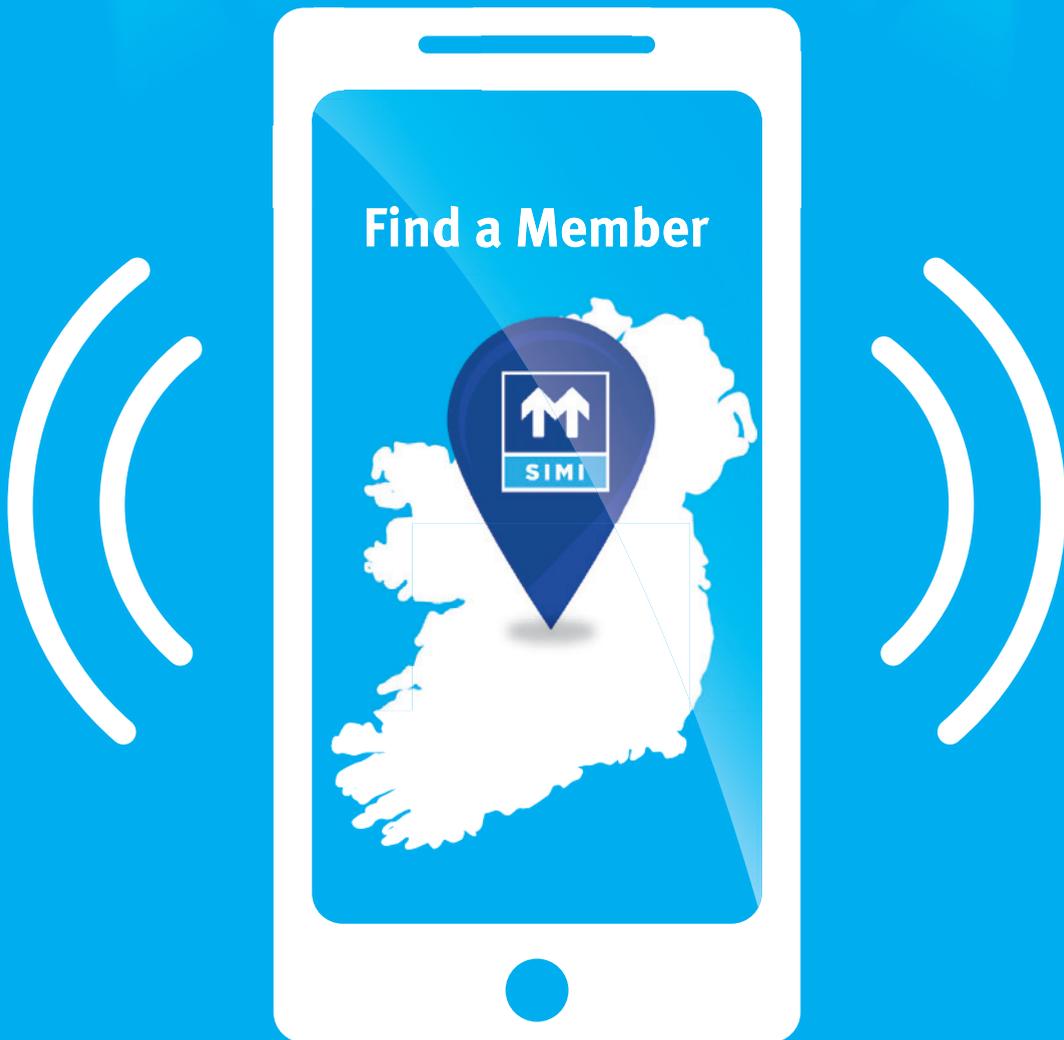
percent of our cars while waiting for the electrification of the entire fleet or that we stop using energy until it is all produced from fully renewable sources. Dismissing carbon leakage as having no basis, as some commentators do, also betrays economic ignorance. If product demand exists and the original producer exits the market, that demand will be filled by another producer. Ireland has a finite agricultural land base. Brazil creates new land by ongoing Amazonian deforestation and announced an intention last year to increase cattle numbers by twenty-four million head by 2030, an increase equating to fifteen times Ireland's entire existing dairy herd. That is a double blow for the environment - more cattle using more deforested land. There is even a belief that production should move to more efficient countries with lower carbon output figures than Ireland. This mindset conveniently ignores scientific data confirming that Irish dairy has a lower carbon requirement per kilo of product than any other country in the EU. Where are these more efficient countries globally, if they exist?

Those who want our dairy herds decimated should at least try to understand that there is no 'national herd'. There are only individual herds owned by farm families who devote their lives to producing high quality food.

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**Lovatt F. Causes, control and costs of lameness in sheep. VIJ 2015 Vol 5 No 4. As per exchange rate June 2017.

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