

Messages:

- ▶ Put your 'Oxygen Canisters' in place for September
- ▶ Build reserves of silage by making a 3rd cut
- ▶ Build reserves of grazed grass
- ▶ Build reserves of body fat from now; BCS
- ▶ Build reserves of soil fertility
- ▶ Build up CASH reserves and pensions
- ▶ Act on replacement heifer weights
- ▶ Consider OAD milking

PUT YOUR 'OXYGEN CANISTERS' IN PLACE

- ▶ What is an 'oxygen canister'? We know we can't survive without oxygen, therefore, in life and death situations, such as deep-sea diving, high mountain climbing, medics dealing with accidents/injuries, etc., it is essential to have reserves stored in 'canisters'.
- ▶ What are dairy farmers' 'oxygen canisters' for this month? That means building up:
 - ▶ Reserves of silage
 - ▶ Reserves of straw: at €13-14 per bale it is good value for money,
 - ▶ Reserves of body fat on cows, BCS.
 - ▶ Reserves of grass to ensure grass in cows' diet until housing in late November
 - ▶ Reserves of cash for the rainy day that is inevitably coming
 - ▶ Reserves of soil fertility; lime, P & K
 - ▶ Reserves of animal health
 - ▶ Invest in accommodation etc. for employees
 - ▶ For the long-term: a retirement pension and a retirement strategy.
- ▶ This month, we remind you to check if these 'canisters' are full, half-empty or empty.

BUILD RESERVES OF SILAGE

- ▶ Some farmer's think that building up silage reserves isn't justified because it ties up money. That may be true but there are advantages and the old saying "old hay is old gold" stands the test of time, as many recent winter experiences show. Some have cut back on nitrogen use, which doesn't make sense.
- ▶ When God is good and gives you weather to grow lots of grass, like this year, we must capitalise on it and make reserves of silage – next year may not be as good.
- ▶ If you have silage left over from this coming winter you have options:
 - ▶ You can buy more stock/keep cull cow for this winter if you calculate the venture to be profitable.

- ▶ You will be able to carry more cows/replacements next year as you will need to cut less silage
- ▶ You will be able to reseed more ground next year
- ▶ You will be able to cut lighter, high quality silage next year
- ▶ Therefore, make a 3rd cut of silage if you have too much growth for your demand.

BUILD RESERVES OF GRASS

- ▶ Autumn/Early Winter grass will increase net profits by €1.20 per cow per day (€0.85 for winter calving herds), with only three hours of grass in the cows diet each day.
- ▶ Therefore, you must keep grazed grass in the cows' diet as long as possible and September is key to achieving that.
- ▶ Good grassland planning now will minimise costs and increase the benefits, including profit, later in October/November.
- ▶ Do a grass budget now.
 - ▶ Now is THE best time to do it.
 - ▶ Pasturebase has a very simple, easy to do one on the web page.
 - ▶ Get help if you unsure of what to do. But there are certain things you must know "why" and "how to do" and this is one of them. Learn now.
- ▶ A grass budget will allow you to:
 - ▶ Decide on the number of cows to carry this autumn so as to have an all grass diet for the cows while milking.
 - ▶ Ration grass by day so that you can stay out longer with grass in the diet.
 - ▶ Plan the type and quantity of meal (or silage) to feed to cows this autumn.
 - ▶ Plan housing date, but aim to stay out by day until 20th November on dry land and 5-10th November on wettish farms.
 - ▶ Plan let-out date in spring for cows, calves and cattle.
- ▶ To extend the grazing seasons this autumn and have early grass next Spring, you must meet certain targets as per Table1.

Date	2.5	3.0	3.5
1st September	300	330	280
15th September	440	370	340
1st October	400	380	335
15th October	350	330	280

Table 1: Target average farm covers (AFC) (kgs DM/Cow) for different stocking rates.

- ▶ If your stocking rate is 3.0 cows per hectare on MP in mid-September, then your your average farm cover (AFC) requirement is 990kg DM/ha (3.0 X 330).
- ▶ You will be aiming for highest farm covers in mid-

September. But pre-grazing covers (PGC) should not be greater than 2,300 Kgs DM; otherwise, quality will be very poor. Rotation length will now be 35 days (approx)

- ▶ Sell cull cows in early Sept to build grass:
 - ▶ Between 1st Sept and 20th Nov a cow will eat 920 kgs DM of grass,
 - ▶ In 100 cow herd at 20 per cent replacement rate, equals 20 cull cows, that means there will be an extra 18,400kgs DM available for the other 80 cows,
 - ▶ If replaced by meals would be worth €5,152 and €2760 if replaced by silage
 - ▶ If the cull cow remained the same value in Dec as Sept the would be no extra change in the financial gain.

- ▶ Use the strip wire to ration grass if covers are greater than 2,000 Kgs DM and/or if cows are remaining in a paddock/field longer than 2½ grazings; and/or if weather is wet.
- ▶ Paddocks must be grazed out tight to 3.5 - 4.0 cms. This encourages winter tillering - 40% of tillering is done in late autumn.
- ▶ Where grass demand is greater than grass growth quality round bales and meals must be introduced, otherwise, grass will run on in late October. Most highly stocked farmers will have to feed 1 - 2 kg. meal/cow/day (14% P ration or soya hulls). Because silage is plentiful this year quality silage should be fed instead or with reduced meal levels.
- ▶ Unless grass on the strong paddock is excessively heavy, over 2,300 Kgs DM, no cutting or topping should be done in September. It will have a very big detrimental effect on the quantity of grass in the last rotation.
- ▶ Fertilisers: only highly stocked farms will need 20-28units of N/acre (protected Urea with S) in early September.
 - ▶ Where soil indices are low, farmers should apply 2-2.5

bags 10:10:20 per acre now.

- ▶ Soiled water or slurry can be used in early October as a source of Nitrogen.
- ▶ Do your autumn rotation plan NOW. This is the most useful tool to ensure you have adequate grass in the diet for as long as you have planned to keep cows out. It also ensures, with the knowledge that your closing farm cover should be 600-700 kgs DM/ha, that you will have adequate grass next spring
 - ▶ PastureBase web site has a very simple to use one:
 - ▶ Put in the area (ha) in MP; the start of last rotation date; the date when you wish to have 70% of MP grazed; and the date you plan to finish grazing.

They don't understand the science but they do know fine forage when they're fed it



Come see us at The Ploughing Championships:
Stand No 167 | Row No 7 | Block No 3

Containing MTD/1, the world's most proven *Lactobacillus* strain, Ecosyl ensures more consistently reliable silage, whatever the weather.

- Reduces fermentation dry matter losses by 50%
- Enhanced milk production (average 1.2 litres/cow/day over 15 trials)
- Increased digestibility and improved palatability

For further information:
 Freephone | 00800 86522522
 Email | enquire@volac.com
 Visit | www.ecosyl.com



ECOSYL™

For consistently better silage

- ▶ Many farmers, on wet land and in northern areas will be starting the last rotation between 25th and 30th September. But most will not be doing so until 5 to 13th Oct.
- ▶ Remember every 1kgDM/ha of grass left on paddocks in early November will result in 1.6 kg DM/ha available in springtime.
- ▶ There is no point in having grass and complaining about the weather, wet ground etc. – you must get on with using all the recommended practices to graze grass under these conditions.
 - ▶ Cows eat most of their grass feed in 2.5-3 hours after each milking (so leave them out to graze for 2.5 hours after each milking and then remove them off the paddock).
 - ▶ Cows eat very little during the night but become active again at sunrise, probably 6a.m. (if it rains during the night they will have little or no damage done by 6 a.m., because they will have not been walking, so take them in early for milking on wet mornings).
 - ▶ In wet weather cows eat with ‘5 mouths’ because of all the damage they do with their feet (therefore, reduce walking in paddocks).
 - ▶ Cows do 2-3 times more walking in long narrow paddocks or strip grazed areas than in square blocks (allocate cows’ square areas).
 - ▶ Cows do most walking when it is raining (therefore, never let out cows when it raining and always bring them in when it starts to rain).
 - ▶ Soiled grass by clay or dirt will not be eaten by cows (so, keep roadways, paddock entrances and around water troughs clean – and use several entrances into the paddock)
 - ▶ Water saturated fields should not be grazed (too much poaching and low intakes)
 - ▶ Uneaten grass will prevent poaching (therefore, walk cows over good grass to the back of the paddock).
 - ▶ Grazed ground poaches very easily (never, ever let cows walk over paddocks that were grazed yesterday or the day before).
 - ▶ Grass regrowths appear 2 days after grazing (so, always use a backfence to prevent animals eating regrowths).
 - ▶ Heavy grass covers take too long to graze which means cows are too long in small areas of paddocks. The pre-grazing yield should never be more than 2,000-2,300 depending on stocking rate)

with very few options:

- ▶ Of 6 recommended annual BCS assessments this is the 1st of the season.
- ▶ Herd BCS average must be 3.0 with a range of 2.75 to 3.25,
- ▶ Cows must calve down in BCS of 3.25.
- ▶ Each BCS is 40-50kgs in liveweight.
- ▶ To gain a kg of BCS requires 4.5kgs of meal. To put on 25kg (0.5BCS) of weight will require 113kgs meal.
- ▶ While on normal quality silage, a cow will only gain 1/4 BCS (12kgs) in 30 days; and she will gain no BCS in last month of pregnancy.
- ▶ With these facts you can plan your herds’ BCS management from now to calving down.
- ▶ The target cow condition now is 2.7 or greater. You must identify cows that are thinner than that now and plan some course of action for them. If you wait, they will calve down thin and not milk well next year or go incalf.
- ▶ Your options for these thin cows are to:
 - ▶ Feed meals now, at 1-2 Kgs per day of a low protein/ high energy ration.
 - ▶ Or dry off 12-14 weeks before expected calving date, or,
 - ▶ Put on OAD milking from early September.

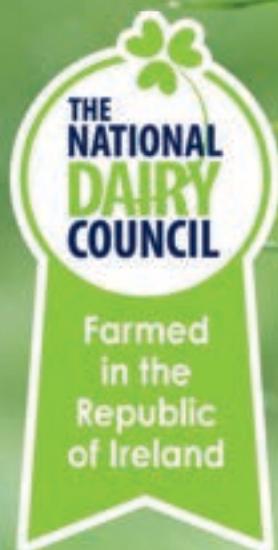
BUILD UP RESERVES OF SOIL FERTILITY

- ▶ Lime is to a farm what oil is to a car!
 - ▶ The return on money invested in lime is 150-200 per cent. Phenomenal!
 - ▶ It is not restricted by nitrates. Maybe it should and then farmers would want to use it.
 - ▶ It makes Nitrogen, phosphorous and potash more available. There is, on average 115units/acre of N available as background N – most of it can be released if pH is 6.3.
 - ▶ Therefore, apply lime NOW to all fields with a low pH. Do it while fields are dry. As rotation length is now over 30 days and growth rates are low, it will be possible to apply lime every 10-15 days after grazing and be ok for next grazing.
 - ▶ If you do it now you will be able to use all Urea next year as a cheap Nitrogen source. Phosphorous; if low and you have the facility to apply some then use 2-3 bags 10:10:20 now instead of straight N. It is good value for money.
- ▶ If Potash is low and you can’t apply P, apply one bag Muriate of Potash per acre.
- ▶ Soil test whole farm now.
- ▶ BUT LIME IS AN ABSOLUTE PRIORITY NOW.

BUILD RESERVES OF BODY FAT = BCS!

- ▶ Do it in late Sept, as later is too late because it leaves you

**Always natural.
Always fresh.
Locally sourced.**



**Our thriving dairy industry is good for
farming families, co-ops and local communities.**

Check your milk for the NDC Guarantee.
ndcguarantee.ie



Visit us at #Ploughing19 - Block 3, Row 18, Stand 397

BUILD RESERVES OF ANIMAL HEALTH!

- ▶ Prevention of animal health problems is essential to staying in business.
- ▶ Salmonella abortions at 7-9 months is the one disease that could put you out of business
 - ▶ To prevent abortions vaccinate now, early September,
 - ▶ The chances are in-calf heifers are being done for the first time and need two injections, 3 weeks apart, the second one before mid-September. This is very important because the animal has no protection for 2 weeks after the 2nd injection. So, she could abort.
- ▶ Weanling replacement heifers should be done for Leptospirosis now – essential.
- ▶ Watch out for hoose among weanlings:
 - ▶ Yellow/white doses will kill hoose worms and give 2-3 weeks protection and longer with good grassland management.
 - ▶ Other products will kill hoose and give protection for 5 weeks or longer but they are 4 times more expensive than the white/yellow drenches.
- ▶ If calves have stomach worms (sticky dung around tail head) they must be dosed.
- ▶ Lameness is becoming a very costly issue on farms. The following causes were identified but take veterinary advice and get the FRS to do annual maintenance on herd:
 - ▶ Poor roadway maintenance and design,
 - ▶ Impatience whilst moving the cows on the roadway or in the yard
 - ▶ Long periods of time spent on concrete, or cows twisting and turning on concrete yards.
 - ▶ Excessive moisture,
 - ▶ Nutritional effects and effect of trace element and minerals.
 - ▶ Infectious agents,
 - ▶ Genetic factors (record all lame cows on ICBF site)
- ▶ Fluke may be an issue this year:
 - ▶ Get your fluke dose now for dosing at housing.
 - ▶ It is worth getting dung samples analysed (cost €50) to confirm presence of fluke (particularly for dry farms)

BREXIT BLUES.

*Tough times for
Agri-Food Business.*

In these challenging times you need to employ the best available talent!

Are you in the agri/food business, environment, forestry or rural development?

For experienced management, clever marketing, enthusiastic sales or bright technical people contact us.

You are assured of a cost effective & personal service for your personnel requirements.

From creative adverts in the media, recruitment PR to selection & interview, you can rely on us.

For further information please call us today.

THE
dePaOR
CONSULTANCY

Loreto Road, Cavan, Ireland

Tel +353 49 4361158

Mobile +353 86 2557643

E-mail recruit@depaor.ie

www.depaor.ie



RECRUITMENT

advertising strategy · copywriting & design · exhibitions
· e-commerce · IT · market research · public relations
· relationship marketing · sales promotion · sponsorship

- ▶ Mastitis is next to infertility as the reason for culling cows.
 - ▶ If you didn't change liners since springtime, they must be changed now because old ones are going to cause mastitis, results in lower yields and will be harder to clean.
 - ▶ Continue teat dipping at 15-20ml/cow/day.
 - ▶ Identify chronic cows and cull NOW, otherwise they will continue to infect other cows in the herd.

ACT ON REPLACEMENT HEIFER WEIGHTS

- ▶ In-calf heifers should be 73% of mature cow weight now or 380 and 403kgs for 520 and 550 mature cow herd, respectively. While the equivalent weanlings should be 172 and 183kgs.
 - ▶ Animals less than these target weights should get preferential treatment, possibly 1-2 kgs meal/day.
 - ▶ For ever 4kgs of meal we would expect a weight gain of 1 kg.
- ▶ Small heifers calving down will milk less (455litres per 100 Kgs weight) and a higher proportion of them will not go back incalf.
- ▶ Do not overfeed weanling replacements at this stage in their life:
 - ▶ If they gain more than 0.8 Kgs per day from 4-6 months of age, they will put on too much fat.
 - ▶ This fat will prevent mammary gland development and, consequently, they will milk poorly.
- ▶ Don't forget their salmonella and leptosporosis vaccines as advised above.
- ▶ Hoose and stomach worms can be a problem in 1½ year olds, so be alert.

CONSIDER ONCE A DAY MILKING

- ▶ Once per day milking (ODM) must be considered as a serious option as a short-term solution,
- ▶ Moorepark compared twice a day milking (TDM)

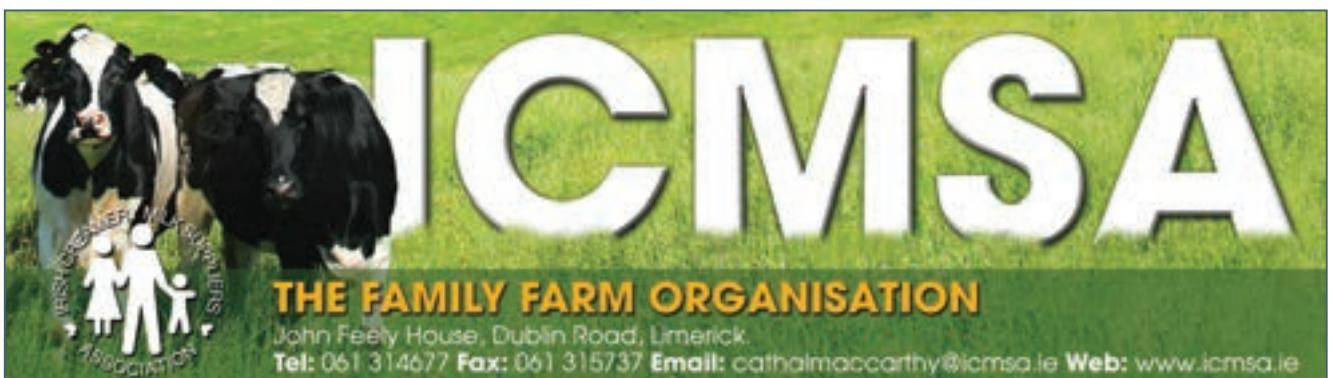
with ODM milking and with 13 Times/week milkings (13TWM). The trial lasted 10 weeks from Oct 4th to Dec 12th and cows were fed 2kgs/day meal during the whole period. Pre-trial, the cows were milking 19.1 litres/cow/day and were, on average, 218 days into their lactations.

	TDM	13TWM	ODM
Milk yield (litres/cow/day)	12.52	12.43	8.84
% Fat	4.43	4.39	4.86
% Protein	3.90	3.92	4.19
Kgs Milk Solids (kgs/cow/day)	1.07	1.06	0.82

Table 2: Milk yield and composition of cows on various milking regimes.

The results in Table 2 can be summarised as follows:

- ▶ ODM resulted in a 29 per cent drop in milk yield/cow/day and an accumulated drop of 258 litres/cow over the 10 week period.
- ▶ ODM resulted in a drop of MS/cow/day of 23 per cent because the % constituents increased substantially, the accumulated MS/cow loss was 17.5kgs (approx valued at €100)
- ▶ SCC levels were similar on TDM and ODM routines. However, the average SCC in the pre-experiment period was 122,000 and none of the trial cows were infected.
- ▶ 13TWM did not affect milk yield or composition. Therefore, farmers should consider 13TWM to free up labour/time off on Sunday.
- ▶ The following few observations may help:
 - ▶ Jersey X more suitable than Holsteins,
 - ▶ Milking take 30 minutes longer per 100 cows, and greater ensures mastitis is kept under control,
 - ▶ Depending on cow type, one would get away with lower quality winter feed as there will be a danger that cows will calve down over fat.
 - ▶ Milk early in the morning to avail 100 per cent in night rate electricity.



BUILD RESERVES OF CASH

- ▶ With all the uncertainty associated with Brexit, world markets, price-cost squeeze etc the “rainy day” or tight financial requirements will come.
- ▶ The value of this reserve was clearly demonstrated by the Greenfield Site in 2018 where, over the years, they had put aside over €60,000 and because of circumstances all of it was required in 2018 to pay their bills.
- ▶ Farmers have a tendency to spend it when they make it but that isn’t a good idea long-term.
- ▶ This year, being a good year should enable most dairy farmers to “put aside some money”

BUILD YOUR RETIREMENT RESERVES

- ▶ Most farmers are badly fixed on this front because they don’t have “a permanent pensionable job”.
- ▶ Remember what I said last month: “Victimhood is optional” and there is no reason for any farmer to say when he reaches 70 years that he cannot retire.
- ▶ Therefore, plan now for your retirement by having a succession plan and pension in place. Seek out good professional advice and chat with family members and then decide your course of action.

“We cannot force someone to hear a message they are not ready to receive. But we must never underestimate the power of planting a seed”

IRISH
FARMERS
MONTHLY

F M

Subscribe to
Irish Farmers Monthly



Subscribe at www.irishfarmersmonthly.com