



AHI Cellcheck Awards

At a presentation ceremony in Kilkenny to acknowledge the best 500 herds in the country for Somatic Cell Count in the year 2015. Each of the 500 farms received a plaque in recognition of their achievement and the best farm in each Co-op area received a hamper. Our top herd for the year was Robert Muir from Bridgetown.



Robert Muir and his wife Denise being presented with their hamper by Jerry Ryan.

AREA MEETINGS

The following Area Meetings have been arranged for the December / January period.

Limerick	Kilmurry Lodge Hotel	Mon. 19th December 2016	2.00pm
Athlone	Athlone Springs Hotel	Tue. 20th December 2016	2.00pm
Nenagh	Abbey Court Hotel	Wed. 4th January 2017	2.00pm
Birr	County Arms Hotel	Thurs. 5th January 2017	7.30pm
Athenry	Raheen Woods Hotel	Mon. 9th January 2017	7.30pm
Southern	Hibernian Hotel Mallow	Thurs. 12th January 2017	2.00pm
Eastern	Talbot Hotel Carlow	Mon. 16th January 2017	2.00pm

We look forward to meeting you at one of these locations.

Arrabawn Co-op Stores Christmas Trading Hours

CHRISTMAS EVE 24th DECEMBER - 9AM – 1PM
CHRISTMAS DAY 25th DECEMBER - CLOSED
ST. STEPHENS DAY 26th DECEMBER - CLOSED
TUESDAY 27th DECEMBER CLOSED
WEDNESDAY 28th DECEMBER NORMAL TRADING

THURSDAY 29th DECEMBER NORMAL TRADING
FRIDAY 30th DECEMBER NORMAL TRADING
SATURDAY 31st DECEMBER NORMAL TRADING
NEW YEARS DAY 1st JANUARY CLOSED
MONDAY 2nd JANUARY CLOSED

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

WE WISH ALL OUR MILK SUPPLIERS, CUSTOMERS AND STAFF A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A PEACEFUL 2017

AHI Cellcheck Awards for 2015

On Nov 24th last AHI had a presentation ceremony in Kilkenny to acknowledge the best 500 herds in the country for Somatic Cell Count in the year 2015. Each of the 500 farms received a plaque in recognition of their achievement and the best farm in each Co-op area received a hamper. Our top herd for the year was Robert Muir from Bridgetown. To make this top 500 herds list one required an average SCC of less than 90 for the year, Arrabawn had 74 farms in the top 500, of this achievement we are very proud, we congratulate all these winners and compliment them on their success, they can be justifiably proud of this award and we hope that these plaques will be displayed in a prominent place in the dairy. Here is a listing of the prizewinners sorted in creamery number order.

Michael McLoughney	Ballyrickard	Patrick Kennedy	Ballingarry
Tom Hogan	Clooneen	Joseph Gohery	Eyrecourt
Joe Mounsey	Elysium	Oliver Claffey	Shannonharbour
Fergal Ryan	Ardcroney	Sean Daly	Banagher
Robert G O'Leary	Beechwood	Kieran Kelly	Banagher
John Mooney	Congor	Thomas A Turley Jnr	Banagher
Michael Quinn	Ballinwear	Cronan Kelly	Lusmagh
Matt Cleary	Ballyluskey	James O'Brien	Dolla
Brian Mooney	Eminiska	Tim Minogue	Curraghmore
Eileen Quigley	Knockinglass	Robert Muir	Ballycorney,
Patrick Kennedy	Garwafana	Tom Ryan	Newport
John & Eoin Toohey	Cullenwaine	Denis O'Brien	Gorey
William Downes	Clash	Martin Flynn	Kilmacthomas
Alfred Mooney	Modreeney	Nicholas & Mary O'Donnell	Graiguenamanagh
John W Armitage	Towra	John & Trevor Kelly	Kilconnell
Michael O'Meara	Clicka	Richard Kilgannon	Laurencetown
Michael Cahalan	Coolagorna	Noel Harney	Aughrim
Thomas J Hough	Coorevan	Francis Lydon	Ballymacward
Seamus Brennan	Ballyrourke	Enda & Maura Barrett	Kilconnell
Liam & Enda Moran	Derry	Ignatius Grealish	Carnmore
Gary Horan	Terryglass	John Fox	Oranmore
John O'Rourke	Bawnmore	Joe Healy	Athenry
Francis Guinan	Lorrha	James Kavanagh	Athenry
John O'Meara	Lorrha	Thomas P Mahon	Kinvara
Declan Madden	Lorrha	Martin Burke	Abbeyknockmoy
Patrick O'Meara	Coolbawn	Peter Joseph O'Dea	Bellharbour
Patrick G Hanrahan	Killimor	Martin Coffey	Athenry
Barry Donnelly	Abbey	Gerard Forde	Corrandulla
Michael Burns	Eyrecourt	Brendan Creighton	Moycullen
John Guinan	Birr	Patrick Curley	Ballinasloe
Gurteen Ag College	Ballingarry	Michael McDonnell	Athlone
Donal Younge	Shinrone	John J Egan	Ferbane
P J Teehan	The Leap	Michael J Burke	Dunmore
Francis Molloy	Birr	Tom Roache	Dunmore
Larkin Dairies	Lusmagh	Joseph Fallon	Tuam
Jermiah Glynn	Lusmagh,	Aidan Casey	Spittalstown
Gabriel Hackett	Borrisokane	Thomas Cahill	Corrandulla

Thermoduric Testing

By now everyone should have received a result for Thermoduric bacteria in their milk, if you have not yet got one you will very shortly. In the Oct newsletter we gave some background to this family of bacteria and now that you have a result the big question is how are you fixed. Top quality milk should not have a detectable level of thermodurics, our test is sensitive down to a level of 100, below that we are not concerned at the level and report the result as less than 100. We are analysing results to see what the spread of values are but traditionally a level of less than 1000 was considered acceptable and initial analysis indicates that about 80% of the milk last month was less than 1000. If you got a result of over 1000 or where the quality is very poor we report the result as greater than 5000 you have a bit of work to do to get this back under control. Presently this test is for advisory purposes only, in time it will be included in milk payment so use this period to resolve any issues that are highlighted for your farm. Quality improvement does not happen without some effort, if you have a few high results consecutively do not just hope that the next one will be better you must be proactive to bring about improvement. The established procedure for counting thermoduric bacteria in milk uses agar plates to determine the count and take 3 days to give a result. The new Oculer method employed at Arrabawn uses a liquid medium to grow the bacteria, this is a new technology developed by a local company and already making a big impression on the world dairy scene, analysis take 30 hours, thermoduric testing was difficult in the past, this technology is a big help to the industry and we are very happy to be at the forefront in it's development. In conclusion, thermoduric bacteria are a problem for the dairy industry. However, with good farm hygiene, clean cows and adequate cooling of milk the numbers can be minimised leading to products with a longer shelf life and less risk of spoilage.

Winter Milk Quality – Recommencement of Milk Collection after the dry period

The importance of the quality of raw milk is paramount to ensuring safe and high quality finished products all year around. For Quality and economic reasons the minimum collection volume in the winter period will be 400 litres per collection with at least two collections per week. Before recommencing of Milk Collection after the dry period a current animal health certificate must have been submitted.

Suppliers must give at minimum five days notice to the Co-Op during normal working hours (Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. at 067-41800) of their intention to resume milk after the dry period. The Co-op will monitor and reserve the right to visit the farms and take samples if deemed appropriate.

Milk containing colostrums/biestings and stale milk will be rejected. The first milk after the winter break should be tested at Arrabawn to ensure that the milk is free of inhibitors and residues and suitable for collection. Under no circumstances should any of the milk at first collection be more than four days old.

Health Certificates

Time is running out: from Jan 1st we can only collect milk from farms with a current health Cert.

Act now to avoid milk being rejected, talk to your Vet, arrange to get the form signed and returned to us before the end of December.

Milk Quality - Mastitis and SCC

This is the time of year to think about cow performance and milk quality records over the last number of months. Think about it – had you many cases of mastitis during the year? How much did Somatic Cell Count cost you in penalties? Did the antibiotic tubes work? Did some cows repeatedly get mastitis? What's the big deal about mastitis / SCC? Mastitis is the result of an udder being infected by bacteria. These bacteria stimulate the cow's body to release white blood cells in defence and these white blood cells are measured as Somatic Cells in the milk - in a way the level of somatic cells in the milk is a measure of the cow's health. Everybody would like to think that they are drinking milk produced by healthy cows! This is particularly important when you consider that 15% of the world's baby food / infant formula is produced from Irish milk. Many of our customers are multinational companies who specialise in the production of baby food and their standards are getting higher every year. These companies are expecting to purchase milk with a SCC value of less than 200,000/ ml. Can you meet this standard? It is not just the baby food business which is affected – cheese, butter and fresh milk products are also depending on the best possible milk in order to meet the higher standards demanded by the consumer. The lower the SCC the better the shelf-life of the end product. Also, manufacturers have more options with regard to what products can be produced when they are dealing with low SCC milk. Mastitis is controllable, by applying certain simple procedures to your milking routine – you might be missing out on just one of the 5 or 6 steps in the mastitis prevention programme - 'Mastitis Control is a cumulative effect of adopting best management practices' – every step you take will give some return, but the benefit of adopting all the steps will be massive. **Remember**, mastitis is caused by bacteria entering the teat canal – stop this happening and SCC is under control. So, keep bacteria away from the teat and keep equipment clean – simple! For some people it is not so simple and they continue to have problems. For the next few weeks farmers have a chance to think about SCC and maybe put a plan in place for next season. Paying close attention to teat hygiene during the first six weeks of lactation will pay huge dividends – be extra careful by :

- Cleaning and disinfecting calving boxes
 - Provide clean fresh bedding
 - Keep cubicles as clean as possible – use cubilime
 - Use the Californian Milk Test on freshly calved cows.
 - Pre-dip and post-spray with an effective teatcare
 - Know what tubes you are going to use in the event of mastitis
 - Have your milking machine serviced and get the written report
- Remember, SCC is not affected by **Breed**, Milk Yield, **Stage of Lactation**, Nutrition(except for Selenium and Vitamin E) or **Cow Diseases**, But is affected by **Management Practices**, **Milk from Affected Cows** and the **Environment** (dirt, mud and manure) – **farmers who adopt recommended practices(gloves, CMT, ACR) produce better milk.**

Of course there are chronic cases of mastitis on most farms. These will be a constant source of contagious mastitis-causing bacteria. The challenge is to identify these cows and deal with them, either by culling or giving them an intensive treatment programme. Testing individual cows during the year is a good way of monitoring the situation – either by fore stripping or by lab testing (no fore stripping = no detection!). In this respect, milk recording is invaluable - **if you're not doing it, do it next year!** Don't cull a cow based on just one result – give her at least 2 or 3 tests first ! Be ruthless when the results are clear – keeping a 'millionaire' will cost you money - loss of milk, poor milk quality and infection spread to other cows!

So, what are you to do?

- Work with your milk advisors, get them to organise a **CellCheck workshop** before the new season starts
- Identify chronic cases
- Have a team talk - yourself, your advisor, your workmates, your family

- Focus on prevention – write down a plan and stick to it. For more information contact your Arrabawn Milk advisor.

Arrabawn takes the Stress out of Housing/Weaning

Weaning and, or, housing is a particularly stressful time for calves – it often coincides with a deterioration of the weather; mixing of animals and sometimes ventilation is less than ideal. Research indicates that the stress involved can cause a severe reduction in the antioxidant status of the weanling, which makes the young animal more susceptible to respiratory illness.

EasyWeaner is designed to support the weanling's immune system during the housing / weaning period, by stimulating appetite and easing the stress associated with weaning.

Trace Pack **EasyWeaner** contains a unique herbal blend to specifically support the immune system in the lung. EasyWeaners' herbal blend supports the animals ability to fight respiratory infection by helping the efficient production and subsequent function of naturally occurring immunoglobulin in the lung tissue.

EasyWeaner has been shown to support

1. Lung function
2. Appetite : before and after housing/ weaning
3. Post weaning growth rates.
4. Easier, reduced stress, at housing and weaning - for the animal and the owner.

Just add Trace Pack **EasyWeaner** to the feed for 7 – 10 days before and after weaning or housing. Feed at 30 grms/day – it's an ideal tonic for weanlings. For further information contact your local branch of Arrabawn Co-op.

www.arrabawn.ie/divisions/agri-business.html



TRACE PACK® EasyWeaner

Respiratory support for calves & weanlings



Arrabawn

www.arrabawn.ie
email: info@arrabawn.ie
Tel: 087 669 7010
NATIONWIDE DELIVERY AVAILABLE



CALFCARE OPEN DAY

On Friday 20th January 2017 @ 11am
At John, Brian & Barry Powell Farm,
Ballycrinnode, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.

For Sale

Round Bales of Silage - Lorrha Area
Contact 086 3096591

For any further information or advice
on any subjects or products
mentioned in this newsletter
please ring **087 6697010**

Email: farmsupport@arrabawn.ie
Check out our Website: www.arrabawn.ie

‘Purple for Crumlin’

From the sales of Purple Silage Wrap through Arrabawn Stores a cheque for €14,000 was presented to our Lady's Children's Hospital Crumlin.



At the presentation was Gavin McCarthy, Zeus Packaging Group, John Heaphy, ATC and Sarah O'Suilleabhain, Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin."

Pushing ahead in Tyone

Work progressing on the new Arrabawn Store at Tyone, Nenagh due for opening week beginning 19th December 2016



Annual review of Milk for Profit Development farms

Maximising performance within the farm gate is not only desirable but essential to protect ourselves from milk price volatility. But how can we improve if we don't know our current position. Monitoring farm performance extends beyond the milk docket. Performing routine assessments of the key areas (herd fertility, soil fertility, grass growth, silage, heifer weights, finances etc.) that influence profit

Over the past few months we have monitored the performance of our five development farms and identified areas that they have excelled on and areas for improvement. Do not consider for a moment that this level of analysis is exclusively for the development farmers, this is necessary for all farmers that take their businesses seriously. Once we have a comprehensive picture of the farms performance it is relatively easy to identify targets and goals that can improve its performance.

Milk Solids:					
Jan - Sept 16	kg/cow	Fat%	Protein %	SCC	Milk Price
Development farmers	364 (314-420)	4.10 (3.97-4.16)	3.41 (3.3-3.51)	126 (103-148)	26.5 (26.2-27.1)
Arrabawn average	296	4.02	3.35	197,000	25.5
Arrabawn Top 10%	371	4.23	3.50	88,000	26.8

Improving milk solids per cow is a goal on two of our development farms. Due to recent expansion Trevor and Steven Cole have a relatively young herd (50% in first and second lactation) and hope to see an increase in milk solid production as the herd matures. Already this year milk solids have improved by 23kg/cow. Their 6 week calving rate has also improved from 69 to 74% which will further improve milk solid production as cows will have longer lactations with more days at grass. Brian and Seamus Molamphy aim to increase milk solids per cow from 400 to 450kg. Since Brian came home to farm full time with his father Seamus, the farm has to provide two incomes. With no option to expand increasing milk solids per cow can bring in additional income. Brian aims to achieve this through selectively breeding cows for more milk solids, voluntary culling of cows with low milk solids, targeted feeding towards peak lactation and increasing the amount of grass grown on the farm (improving soil fertility and more reseeding).

Grass growth and soil fertility		
	Development farmers	Pasturebase average
Grass grown tDM/ha	10.5	14
% Soils	Development farmers	National average - 2015
Index 1 & 2 for P	52% (18-100%)	59%
Index 1 & 2 for K	66% (21-91%)	63%

There is huge potential to increase grass growth on our development farms. Improving soil fertility is one way of trying to achieve this. John Dowd wants to increase the milking platform SR from 3 to 3.3 (10 more cows) and at the same time reduce meal inputs. By improving his soil fertility John can achieve this goal as the land will be capable of growing more grass. The majority of his land is in soil index 1

Herd Fertility				
	Calving interval	6 week calving rate	% calved 22-26 months	Herd EBI
Development farmers	373 days (364-390)	75% (66-80)	85 (52-100)	€85 (76-94)
Arrabawn average	388 days	62%	56%	€63
Arrabawn Top 10%	363 days	83%	100%	€90

and 2 for P and K. Rectifying the soil fertility has the potential to grow an extra 1.5t of DM/ha on the farm which would meet the additional feed requirements. John spread 18:6:12 on every round this year and spread lime to combat the poor soil fertility. While current nitrate regulations can limit the farmer's capacity to spread P, there are no restrictions on the amount of K or lime that can be spread.

Improving the six week calving rate from the Arrabawn average of 62 to 80% would be worth almost €15,000 on a 100 cow herd. Potential exists to improve the 6 week calving rate on Charlie Whiriskey's farm. Currently his 6 week calving rate is 66% and the calving and breeding seasons overlap resulting in a very heavy workload for Charlie. Tightening up the calving period will improve profit but will also allow Charlie to take a few days break in April between both tasks which is vital for one man operations. This year Charlie synchronised a batch of heifers and pulled the bull earlier than usual to improve his six week calving rate. Already it is estimated that 85% of the herd will calve in February and March next year.

Silage			
	Development farmers	Target	Comment
Silage DM%	25.42	28-32%	Influences intake and indicates quality of preservation
Protein %	11.29	9-15%	
DMD%	69	68-70% dry cow feed >74% milking cows	Determines quality. Quality falls if silage cut after heading date
UFL	0.8	0.70-0.90	Energy value. The higher the better
PDI	65	>60 dry cow feed >75	Measures true protein value
Magnesium	0.16		Supplementation always required dry cow mineral should have more than 24% Mg
Potassium	2.5	<2.4	Don't feed high K silages 2 weeks before calving - major risk for milk fever

Body condition (3.00-3.25) at calving is crucial to avoid metabolic issues at spring. Knowing the quality of the silage being fed over the dry period is essential in order to achieve this target body condition. Last year Pat and Eddie Kennedy had a problem with cows (10%) retaining their cleanings. This year close attention is being placed on the mineral quality of the silage particularly K and Mg levels. The dry cow mineral will then be tailored to meet the herd's specific requirements in order to try solve the problem for next Spring.

As year-end approaches it is worth taking a step back and looking at your herd's performance for the past year and set realistic goals for the upcoming season. Next month the financial performance of the development farms will be reviewed.

Seeking participants for a discussion group dedicated to financial management

Milk price volatility is here to stay and so in order to survive we must run resilient dairy enterprises. An essential part of running a robust dairy farm is keeping a closer eye on the farms financial health. With this in mind Arrabawn, Teagasc and AIB have come together to facilitate a discussion group dedicated to financial management for willing participants. The purpose of the group is to provide the necessary tools and support so that each member will be able to complete an annual budget, monitor monthly cash flows and record the costs of production for their own enterprise. Meetings will be held at the Arrabawn head office in Nenagh beginning January 2017. The first meeting will focus on the preparation on a budget for 2017. If interested in participating please contact Aine at 087-0963869 for further information.