



## Farm Survey

Over the past few weeks many of you would have taken a call from us to determine your view on milk production over the next few years. Our target was to survey 25% of suppliers spread across our full collection area. The survey confirmed what most people would have guessed.

1. Milk output will grow on a lot of farms, where output is restricted by land availability there is a determination to increase output with better yield.
  2. Lack of labour on the farm is the second biggest obstacle to expansion.
  3. While inadequate facilities is a recognised issue it is not considered a major obstacle, I think farmers know how to and are prepared to address this issue but lack of land and help on the farm are more difficult to overcome.
  4. After this year which looks like being up 10% output from current farms will grow by approximately 5% for the next few years.
  5. The average farm surveyed had 73 cows in 2016 and this has risen to 82 cows this year.
- We would like to thank everyone for the courtesy and cooperation during the survey. It is helpful to have a picture of what is likely to happen in the immediate future.

## Bord Bia SDAS

Presently a small number of farms are being penalised 1cpl because they are not approved under this scheme. This penalty was brought in to encourage farmers to come forward for certification and has been reasonably successful. We need ever farm approved by the end of the year this is expected by our customers. As segregation of milk from certified and uncertified farms is not practical either at collection or in the factory for processing, if your farm is not approved it is highly likely that we will be unable to collect milk from your farm after the end of this year.

There is nothing to fear with the certification process, your neighbours have already been certified, speak to them and contact us we will help you prepare. The consequences are serious if you are not certified.

**For any further information or advice  
on any subjects or products  
mentioned in this newsletter  
please ring 087 6697 010**

**Email: [farmsupport@arrabawn.ie](mailto:farmsupport@arrabawn.ie)**

**Check out our Website:  
[www.arrabawn.ie](http://www.arrabawn.ie)**

## EU Milk Rejection Standards

EC regulation No 853/2004 stipulate the rules governing the rejection criteria for both TBC (Total Bacteria Count) and SCC (Somatic Cell Count). For TBC the geometric average is a rolling average over two months with at least two test per month, this must not exceed the rejection standard of > 100,000 TBC /ml. For SCC the geometric average is a rolling average over three months of all tests in that month, this must not exceed the rejection standard of > 400,000 SCC /ml.

There are 3 warnings allowed over a 3 month period and suppliers are issued with a warning letter W1, W2 or W3. At the end of the 3 months the supplier will move into the Reject category if the geometric average does not come back into compliance. Once a supplier

moves into Reject status delivery of milk must be suspended and re admission is only on the basis of sampling and testing the milk until the required standard is achieved. If there is a break in milk supply for a period of least one calendar month the SCC calculation starts afresh for the purposes of the geometric calculation, however, this does not apply to TBC where the results of the last month prior to the break in supply are include as month 1 for the geometric average when supply resumes. Suppliers who are issued with a warning letter should take immediate action to ensure compliance, and to avoid penalties and suspension, it is often too late to react by the time a warning 3 letter is issued.

## Cell Check Tip of the Month

### **Sun, green lush fields and summer mastitis...**

July, August and September are the months of the year we tend to enjoy the most. Spring is over and summer has started. But we are not the only ones enjoying it-the larvae of the Sheep Head fly (*Hydrotaea irritans*) favour this period too, to develop into adult flies and emerge. Although other types of flies have not been ruled out, it is this particular fly which is thought to be the main mode of transmission of summer mastitis. It lives in bushes and trees and flies out to feed on cattle when wind speeds are low and when it's dry. It usually lands on the cow's legs, abdomen or udder. They irritate the cow and she will try to swat them away with her tail, and this explains why summer mastitis is more common in the front quarters. The fly prefers to feed on damaged skin sites, like teat sores. It ingests the bacteria commonly found on these sores and regurgitates them at its next feed, thus facilitating the spread of bacteria that cause summer mastitis.

A healthy teat has a properly functioning teat canal which acts as a barrier, preventing bacteria from entering the cow. At drying off a seal should be formed in the teat canal to naturally prevent infection. It can take several weeks for this seal to close the teat canal fully, and in some instances (usually when the teat end is damaged or in poor condition) this seal does not completely form, leaving the quarter vulnerable to infection. This is why infections like summer mastitis are mostly seen in dry stock or cows in late pregnancy during summer. Sometimes it is seen in heifers or lactating animals, though in lactating animals the infection is usually prevented as bacteria are flushed out at each milking.

A 'classic' case of summer mastitis has a hot, hard and swollen quarter, often with a tense, enlarged teat. The quarter is painful and when drawn a foul smelling, thick, clotted secretion or pus comes out. Usually the cow is not sick, but she could appear lame and may even have swollen hocks. If left untreated the disease could progress with the cow developing symptoms like fever, loss of appetite; she may abort or even die. When it goes unnoticed, the cow may recover and it then only becomes apparent after calving on finding a blind teat, so prompt treatment is important.

Seek advice from your veterinary practitioner. Frequently an abscess is present, making it difficult to cure with mastitis tubes alone. Thus treatment with a course of injectable antibiotics is indicated along with frequent stripping (at least 3 times per day). Stripping it is the best way to try and prevent 'losing' the quarter, although this often still happens. Stripping also helps in preventing an abscess from bursting out

through the side. If this happens flush the area with an antiseptic solution to keep the wound open for drainage.

Prevention relies on maintaining good teat condition, having a good dry cow therapy protocol including the use of sealants, fly prevention (leave tails long and clean, and use fly repellents). Where possible graze cattle in open fields on ground exposed to wind and away from bushes or trees during warm dry weather.

**Katie Nanne, Veterinary Practitioner, Clare.**

## **Calf /Weanling Health - Blindness, CCN and PEM.**

Over the last few weeks it appears that there is an increasing incidence of Vitamin B1 deficiency (CCN) showing up in calves. This is largely related to lush grass leading to acidosis and preventing the absorption of thiamine (vitamin B1) in the bloodstream leading to blindness and staggers. Can often be mistakenly diagnosed as meningitis.

CCN (CerebroCortico Necrosis) is a disease of the central nervous system. The symptoms of the disease seen are weakness, blindness, head pressing, uncoordinated movement and sometimes death. CCN in calves, or PEM (Polioencephalomalacia) in Sheep.

CCN is a condition affecting growing cattle (up to 18 months typically) and sheep of all ages, tending to occur in outbreaks and is associated with high concentrate rations, low roughage diets, including lush grass which is high in sugars but low in structural fibre which is associated with Sub-Acute Ruminal Acidosis and acute Acidosis. The condition has been associated with well-nourished calves that have been left hungry or find themselves on a poorer plane of nutrition suddenly.

The presence of excessive levels of Sulphur in the diet can have an inhibitory effect so care must be paid to water sources which contain high Sulphur levels and also the spreading of certain fertilisers which are high in Sulphur.

**SucklerMate, GV calf muesli and GV calf rearer** will contain Vitamin B1 so if feeding enough (2kg/hd/day) of this should be guarded against it. Veterinary treatment will be to give large doses of Vitamin B1 via injections for a number of days and get it in the diet then.

For more information contact your local Arrabawn Store or Dan O'Connor Feeds (061 414988)



## Farm Walk at Pat and Eddie Kennedys

The latest farmwalk on the joint Arrabawn/Teagasc Milk for Profit program was held at Pat and Eddie Kennedys farm in Ballingarry, Co. Tipperary on Wednesday June 28th. Over 100 farmers attended, and heard presentations on a range of issues including mid-season grassland management, the costs of dairy farm expansion, labour management and the optimal stocking rate.

The Kennedys are currently milking 161 cows on a milking platform of 56.6 ha, with a milking platform stocking rate (SR) of 2.84 LU/ha. A total of 91 ha are farmed including an outfarm which is used for silage and young stock, and the overall farm SR is 2.6 LU/ha. The farm is fairly dry and 13.8 t DM/ha was grown on the milking platform in 2016, with cows producing 472 kg of milk solids at an average of 3.59 % protein and 4.31% fat. A total of 585 kg of meal/cow was fed in 2016. Both Pat and Eddie stated the main focus is on increasing the amount of grass grown and utilised, while keeping costs down. Much of the milking platform has been reseeded in recent years, and additional underperforming paddocks (12% of MP) are marked out for reseeding in the next month once aftergrass comes back into the grazing rotation. Current farm cover is 154 kg DM/cow. Improvements in autumn grazing management will allow for greater yields of DM/ha. In 2016, peak average farm cover was just 775 kg DM/ha in October when a target of 1100 kg DM/ha is recommended at this SR. Moving reseeding forward from August to July will allow these paddocks get back into the rotation quicker in autumn to help achieve this.

Whilst soil pH is adequate on the farm, 41% of paddocks were Index 1 or 2 for P and 21% Index 2 for K. Eddie stated that nitrates derogation limits prevented them from applying as much chemical P as they would like to address this issue. Silage testing from last year showed a selenium deficiency,

which they suspected was related to a high number of retained cleanings (10% of cows). Eddie said these incidences were much reduced this spring and felt that the use of Selinigrass fertiliser contributed to this improvement.

Going forward, they plan to add another 10 cows to the milking platform in 2018, which requires an extra tonne of grass DM/ha to maintain the same SR. Milk yield increased from 459 to 472 kg MS/cow from 2015 to 2016, and the target in the coming years is to achieve 500 kg MS/cow. Maintaining a replacement rate of 18-20%, culling high SCC cows and increasing the average age of the herd will help achieve this target. The Kennedys have been routinely milk recording since 2011, and this has helped them produce higher quality milk and identify non-performing cows for culling and high-performing cows to breed replacements from. Average EBI is €102, with a six-week calving rate of 81% in 2017 and a 21-day submission rate of 89%.

In terms of financials, the Kennedys operate one of the lowest cost systems around. Total variable costs were 8.93 c/l, lower than the figure of 10.33 c/l for the top 25% in the Teagasc profit monitor. Common costs (total production costs excluding labour, interest and land rent) were 14.33 c/l in 2016, which also puts them in the top 25% of Teagasc profit monitor farms in 2015/16 for this parameter. Patrick Gowing of Teagasc provided some excellent information to farmers considering expanding their farms. In particular, he stressed that the returns on expansion investment will not be seen until the full expansion is complete. He encouraged farmers looking to expand to consider capital loans instead of stretching themselves by fully funding the expansion costs from cashflow. Given the volatile nature of milk price fluctuations, having some cash saved for a rainy day is important.

Pat Clarke of Teagasc spoke about managing the

## Farm Walk continued

extra workload that comes with expansion. Options like contracting fertiliser application in spring to lessen the workload were outlined for farmers. Local teagasc Dairy advisor Michael Hogan talked about matching SR to concentrate use and pasture growth. For example, a farm feeding 580

kg/cow of concentrate with a SR of 2.2 LU/ha, increasing to 2.5 LU/ha, needs to increase grass grown from 12 t DM/ha to 14 t DM/ha. See our website for the Farmwalk handout for more information. Special thanks to our speakers Patrick Gowing, Pat Clarke and Michael Hogan. Finally, thanks to the Kennedys for participating in the programme.



## Monitor Farm Performance Table – to 10th July.

	Litres/cow	Milk fat%	Milk protein%	kg MS/cow	Meal fed/cow
Kennedys	23.2	4.02	3.52	1.8	1
Coles	20.8	3.81	3.48	1.6	1
Molamphys	21.8	3.90	3.47	1.7	1.5
Dowds	27.3	3.74	3.51	2.0	3
Whiriskeys	22.8	3.61	3.31	1.6	2

## Save the date! It's coming!

**Thursday August 31st., 2017**

**“Farming Smarter - Not Harder”**

### Gurteen Agricultural College

- **Animal health**
- **Agtech**
- **Milk quality**
- **Reseeding demo**
- **Product launches**
- **Trade stands**

**More details next month**



Ruairi McDonnell has joined Arrabawn as the new Milk for Profit co-ordinator in place of Aine O'Connell. Ruairi completed a Masters in ruminant nutrition in UCD in 2008, where he looked at feed efficiency and methane emissions from cattle, before working in New Zealand and Australia for several years. He has worked in dairy research in Australia for the last 4 years, and prior to that on a couple of large dairy farms in New Zealand. Ruairi can be contacted on 087 096 3869.