



Origin Green Carbon Footprint Reduction Winner

We congratulate Patrick Brennan Ballingarry on his success in the Bord Bia Origin Green Sustainability Producer Awards announced last month; Patrick was the winner of the Carbon Footprint Reduction category. Finalists for this competition were selected based on their score in the SDAS audit and a short list of farms was then visited by a panel of judges who made the final decision.

Patrick is milking 171 cows on a 73 hectare acre grazing block in Ballingarry, Co Tipperary, with a further 24 hectares on outside blocks for young stock and silage ground. In recent years this farm has been converting from tillage, therefore a lot of the ground has been relatively freshly reseeded. On the grazing block a lot of investment has been put in place in infrastructure to facilitate grazing with reseeding, new roadways, changing of field layouts, replacement of hedgerows, installation of extra drinkers in the collecting yard and throughout the fields.

This is an early grass farm. Calving starts on January 20th with 80% of cows calved within 6 weeks and cows are turned out during the first week of February. Average production is currently 430 kg MS/year with 500 kg of concentrate fed per cow. Surplus breeding heifers are sold from the farm. Patrick is an exceptional example of a farmer who has been through the Sustainable Dairy Assurance Scheme (SDAS) audit, who



Paddy Brennan being presented with his award by Aidan Cotter, CEO, Bord Bia.



Present at the awards ceremony Pat Stapleton, Jerry Ryan, Paddy Brennan, Padraig Brennan and Ronan Moran.

has taken the information and feedback provided from the audit and has small changes within the farm gate. These changes have had the impact of lowering his carbon footprint but more importantly saving him money. While Patrick passed his initial farm audit, scored very well and many would be satisfied with that, he had an issue with his energy efficiency. As a result this year Patrick, replaced 2 electric water heaters with an external, wall mounted gas water heater which is twice as economical and has hot water available on demand.

Attracting young people is one of the largest issues facing the sector. Patrick's attitude in encouraging and facilitating young people into the industry was highlighted by the judges as a leading example for others to follow.

Patrick and his family were presented with the award at a presentation dinner in Portlaoise last month and all the finalist will next year be taken on a tour by Bord Bia.

Feeding and Breeding for Winter 2016

The message was clear and simple for the 80+ suppliers that attended last month's workshop at Michael Freeneys – **We have to calve heifers down at 2 years old and then make sure that they calve down every 365 days thereafter.** Why? To reduce costs and maximise profit. Rearing heifers to 2.5 years instead of 2 years costs an extra €10,000 (based on rearing 17 heifers) with the majority of this cost attributed to increased feed costs. To make matters worse when heifers calve down at 2.5 years they end up having a lower lifetime milk yield and take longer to get back in calf. Maintaining a 365 day calving interval is equally important to maximise profit. Though perceived to be less important for farmers supplying liquid milk there is significant losses endured when calving interval stretches to over 400 days. For a herd with one hundred 7000L cows the loss in milk revenue when calving interval is over 420 days was estimated to exceed €13,000. Ideally we want to calve all spring cows between February and April and all the winter cows between Oct and Dec. When the calving spread extends to most months in the year we end up supplying more winter milk than what's required for our liquid quota (subsequently paid at manufacturing price) and have higher feed costs (don't maximise grass). Not to mention the increased labour requirement to manage cows and young stock throughout the entire year. The average calving interval among liquid milk herds in Arrabawn is 409 days while only 34% of heifers calve down at 2 years of age. There is plenty of scope to improve profitability on farms by tackling these two parameters alone.

Breeding for fertility and keeping cows in good body condition throughout the year helps maintain a 365 day calving interval. A recent experiment carried out at

Moorepark compared 2 groups of cows with similar EBI for milk production but with low or high EBI for fertility. The cows with high EBI for fertility took less time post calving to conceive (-4 weeks), expressed fewer silent heats (-20%) and lost less body condition between calving and breeding than cows with low EBI for fertility. Breeding for fertility on the EBI gives more fertile cows without compromising on milk production. Therefore incorporating fertility into the breeding plan is an absolute must to improve calving interval and cow longevity.

Cows need to calve down with a body condition score of 3.25 in order to optimise her chances of going back in calf. Calving down thin or fat cows brings its own issues and reduces the chance of getting cows back in calf. The majority of metabolic issues experienced at calving can be prevented by proper nutrition, Doreen Corridan emphasised. "Too many farmers are caught up with treatments rather than preventing the issues in the first place" Ensuring sufficient supplementation of Magnesium (dry cow mineral must contain more than 24% Mg) and avoiding high K silage (>2.0%) in the weeks before calving will mitigate most issues. When formulating diets Joe Patton highlighted that in order to be cost effective we must feed to a realistic milk yield rather than feeding the herd based on the production of the top 10% of cows. Silage analysis is a must to determine quality. Silage offered to milking cows should have a DMD >70%. Knowing the DMD of silage offered to dry cows will tell you how much, if any, concentrate is needed to maintain/gain condition (see table in Teagasc corner). The handout from the day is available on the Arrabawn website.

Special thanks to our host farmer Michael Freeney and the speakers Pat Clarke, Tom Murphy, Doreen Corridan and Joe Patton.

NDC & Kerrygold Quality Milk Awards 2016



Gary and the Horan family Terryglass being presented with his award at the NDC Kerrygold Quality Milk Awards Ceremony in Kilmainham Hospital last month. Gary was our quality milk award winner for 2015 and our nominee for this competition. He is pictured here with Zoe Kavanagh CEO NDC, Kevin Lane CEO Ornua and guest of honour Henry Shefflin.

Drying Off

Many Farmers are starting to dry off cows at present and at this stage of the year body condition score is of the utmost importance. Cows should be dry for at least 8 weeks while thin cows and heifers should be given a 12 week dry period to give them a chance to put on body condition. One body condition score equals 50kgs of live weight gain.

So why is it so important to condition score cows?

A stitch in time...

1. The energy reserves of dairy cows fluctuate throughout the year and need to be carefully managed.
 2. In early lactation cows dry matter intake is reduced and cows utilise their body reserve for energy. Therefore cows must build up adequate body reserves before calving.
 3. The target condition score for cows at calving is 3.0 – 3.5 at calving so body fat can be used to meet energy requirements after calving.
- Remember it's too late to put on condition once cows calf down in poor body condition!

Dry Cow Therapy

What dry cow tube should I use?

There are many dry cow tubes on the market so it's often difficult to know what to use. If there is a recurring problem of dry cow mastitis on the farm then you should consider sensitivity testing a sample of the cows. Whatever dry cow treatments you use remember the basic principles.

1. Clean teats thoroughly with methylated spirits.
2. Gently insert the tube into the udder and massage upwards making sure the solution is evenly dispersed within the teat canal and gland.
3. Teat dip.
4. Record the date and the product used. Some dry cow antibiotics last longer than others, if you have an 8-week dry period don't use a tube with a 10 week withdrawal period.

Feeding

Silage makes up 70% of a cow's winter feed requirements. This year's silage quality is variable and on some farms the quality is very poor. It is crucial that you know the feeding value of your silage, and feed accordingly. It costs one euro per cow to test silage. One body condition score equals 50kg, it costs €32 to put on one body condition score with good quality silage. Poor quality silage will not maintain cow condition. Can you afford not to test your silage?

Minerals

Get the balance right.

Dry cow minerals are an essential ingredient in the winter diet of dairy cows. Minerals should be fed at least once a day and if possible twice. Selenium and Vitamin E can

help in the reduction of mastitis and high somatic cell counts. Zinc will help improve skin and hoof quality and reduce cell count. Copper has been associated with fertility and iodine is essential for calf vitality at calving and heat detection.

The Arrabawn Co-op **Pre-calver + Trace Pak** has been designed with the Arrabawn Co-op area in mind.

Need Help Preparing for an Audit

Agri Audits is an audit preparation and record maintenance service that elevates the pressures, stresses and strains of farm record keeping and audit compliance. Agri Audits works as a support service to educate and guides farmers through stressful but necessary farm inspections. Agri Audits works in collaboration with Dairy, Beef and Lamb farmers to ensure that their farmyard, facilities, and records are maintained to the highest possible standards.

Agri Audits have a team of experienced advisors who will visit the client's farm, conduct a full physical check of the farmyard and facilities. The advisor will then update all necessary documentation (health and safety statement, bait plan, etc) the advisor will then collect, input, and correlate feed and animal remedy purchase and usage records in an effective, efficient and professional manner using our specialised software programme, developed by Agri Audits. Records are then reviewed by the Agri Audits team before they are printed and bound in a professional format before being returned to the client. These records can then be presented by the client for their Bord Bia, cross compliance and department inspections. For further queries please do hesitate in contacting Stephen on 0857461543 or 0238847007.

**VACCINE SERVICE AVAILABLE
CONTACT YOUR LOCAL STORE OR
SALES REP FOR DETAILS**

**FOR SALE: 10 INCALF FRIESIAN HEIFERS
CALVING FEBRUARY/MARCH
Portumna area • Contact: 087 2787908**

Transition Cow Minerals

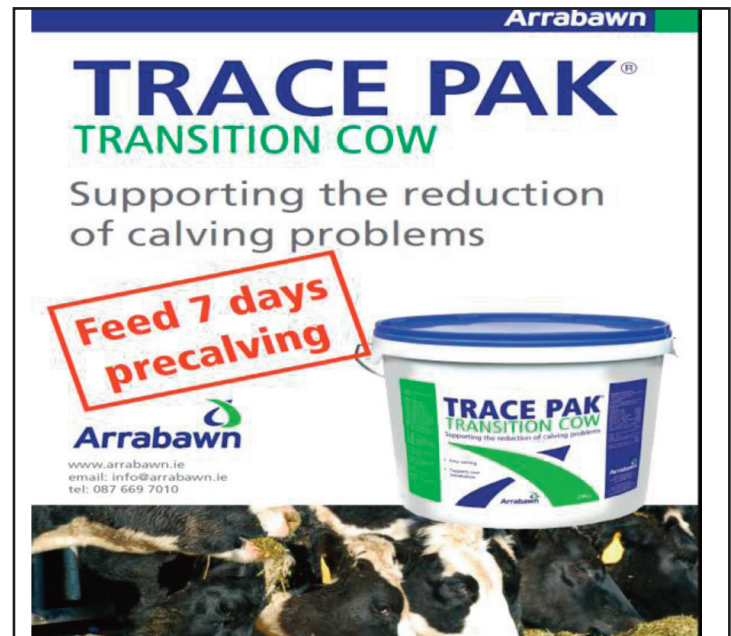
The period from a few weeks before calving to about 30 days after calving is known as the transition period, as the cow progresses from being dry to reaching maximum milk yield. It is a critical period, as everything must go right for the cow if she is to avoid all sorts of problems associated with the calving period

- **Slow calving / dead calves**
- **Retained afterbirth** and subsequent uterine infections
- **Milk fever**
- **Ketosis / downer cow syndrome** (high yielding cows being underfed!)

Even if you haven't experienced these problems in the past, it is a good idea to have your silage analysed for any mineral imbalances which may trigger some of the above – any one of which is a major inconvenience and costs a lot of money in vet fees and milk loss.

The most obvious problem, retained afterbirth / slow calving and milk fever, can be predicted by checking for high potash in your silage. This high potash could be the result of late potash uptake in the grass for silage – this can be counteracted by the application of a suitable pre-calver mineral, such as the **Trace Pak Transition Cow** mineral or feeding the **Greenvale Eazy Calver** nut.

Ring Tom Starr – 087 669 70 10 for more information.



- **Silage Analysis to determine the risk**
- **4 – 7 days pre calving**
- **Mix into silage in the calving area**

Getting ready for the new calving season – already!

Most cows are only just dried off due to a number of factors:-

- Perfect grazing conditions
- Good milk yields
- Excellent milk solids

Some farmers have continued to milk cows well into the autumn at the risk of wearing down the cow's body condition. This could have implications during the next lactation with regard to fertility and milk production. Feeding Easycalver from Dan O'Connor Feeds during the last 4 – 6 weeks of pregnancy will help the cow build up her body reserves – the high quality protein content will help the developing calf as well as contributing to improved milk protein in early lactation. This year many silage samples are showing lower than optimum protein - low protein in the pregnant cow's diet has been linked to dwarfism, short legs, in calves.

Another issue which could arise as a result of the late spring is the possibility of difficult / slow calving, retained afterbirth and milk fever. All of these could be related to the timing of fertilizer applications for the silage crop last spring. Although fertilizer was applied a correct time, because of delayed grass growth, much of the potash may have been taken up by the plant very close to silage being cut - leading to a mineral imbalance in the grass which makes the cow prone to milk fever, retained afterbirth and being slow to calve. A simple silage mineral test can indicate if there is a likelihood of any problems occurring at calving time. EasyCalver from Dan O'Connor Feeds and Greenvale Animal Feeds is the perfect feed for cows in the run up to calving. This ration has been formulated to meet the cow's requirements for protein energy and minerals, without running the risk of having an over fat cow at calving time. By giving the cow 2kg of **EasyCalver from Greenvale** for 4 weeks they receive enough minerals and are fit for calving and not too fat, therefore allowing her to have a trouble free calving.

In the event that the cows are in good condition and just need a mineral top-up it is advisable to feed the **TracePak Pre Calver** from Arrabawn Co-op. This mineral supplement has been formulated over many years to meet the requirements of the Arrabawn area – with particular regard to areas where molybdenum is interfering with copper, zinc and other elements associated with animal performance.

For further information regarding the correct feeding of your stock contact your Dan O'Connor feeds representative, or ring 061414988.



Trace Pack EasyWeaner has been formulated for Respiratory support for Weanlings and Calves at a time of stress. Trace Pack EasyWeaner contains a unique Herbal blend which supports the Immune system in the Lung. Trace Pack EasyWeaner stimulates Immunity, Improves appetite and reduces stress. The benefits of Trace Pack EasyWeaner are improved Animal Health, easier breathing and improved animal performance.

Weaning and or housing is a particularly stressful time for calves - research indicates that you can get a significant reduction in the antioxidant capacity of the weanling, causing stress which make 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. EasyWeaner's herbal blend supports the animal's ability to fight respiratory infection by helping the efficient function of naturally occurring immunoglobulin in the lung. This helps maintain the integrity of the epithelial tissue, the integrity of lung tissue lining is an essential component of the animal's defence against infectious pathogens and their toxins.

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



TEAGASC CORNER

Spring workload

Don't wait until after Christmas to start planning for the calving workload, it's too late. Preparing now will save you hassle in the long run! If you don't start thinking about doing things differently now – you will end up doing the same as last year.

Cow Condition: It takes time to get cows in correct condition for calving. Plan your winter dry off and feeding so that cows calve in correct body condition. A herd calving in correct body condition is less work than a herd calving too thin or fat. Plan to get cows to grass after calving – close up the farm in November with an average farm cover of 550-650kgDM/ha. Put an appropriate dry cow mineral feeding programme in place for 8 weeks pre-calving.

Calf care: Calves that get off to good start are less work. Put some thought on how calves born during the day and night will be fed colostrum. Have a supply of colostrum and veterinary supplies in advance of calving. Get a fridge for storing colostrum.

Access the calving and calf rearing facilities now. What is calf space in calf shed(s)? A calf in the first weeks of life needs a floor space of 1.7m². It's too late to build a new facility so you must plan with existing ones. Can you modify existing houses? Does the floor need resurfacing and drainage? Alternatively, quick housing (hutches) could be the solution. Moving cows/calves around some yards can be very laborious. Get someone else to check animal flow around your yard. Some simple changes may make this movement easier e.g., gates, new entrances to sheds

Labour: You must also prepare yourself for calving. Take a break in January from milking and the farm. If you have decided that additional help is need in spring, start looking now. Talk to neighbours and other farmers. Perhaps using a contractor e.g.

Silage DMD	BCS 2.5 (12-14 weeks dry)	BCS 2.75 (8-10 weeks dry)	BCS >3.0 (8 weeks dry)
>72	Silage +1kg meals	Silage ad-lib	Silage Restricted
68-72	Silage +2kg meals	Silage +1kg meals	Silage ad-lib
64-68	Silage +3kg meals	Silage +2kg meals	Silage +1kg meals

National Dairy Conference

TUESDAY, 6 DECEMBER

Rochestown Park Hotel,
Douglas, Cork.

WEDNESDAY, 7 DECEMBER

Mullingar Park Hotel,
Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

Teagasc invites all involved in the dairy sector to these premier dairy events. Both conferences feature a mixture of lectures and workshops.

The keynote Teagasc lecture will assess where Irish dairying stands in 2016, and will be provided by Dr. Pat Dillon. Teagasc has assembled a stellar line-up of Teagasc, other professional, and farmer speakers to share their experiences with you.

Pre-booking is essential

Conference fee: €60/€120

To register log onto www.teagasc.ie

Make sure to book your place...it will be worth it!



slurry, fertiliser, and some milkings will be a solution. Consider once a day milking of cows during February.

Use a discussion group meeting in November/December to discuss options for reducing workload in February/March. If you are not in a group, get another farmer to look at how you will manage next spring. Many farmers have been forced to change their calving, calf rearing and work procedures during February and March as herd sizes increased. But it is better if you plan the changes in advance rather than if they are forced upon you at the peak of calving.

Dry Cow Feeding

Although cows are generally in good condition this autumn, there is no for complacency with management this winter, especially with milk price prospects for next spring. Remember, every condition score (~ 50 kg liveweight) below target at calving results in the cow milking 450 litres less during the next lactation and reduced fertility next spring.

- Ideally dry off cows in the desired body condition score (BCS) for calving (3.0-3.5).
- Allow 12-14 week dry period for heifers, 2nd calvers and thin cows, and 8 weeks for other animals.
- Allow a longer dry period or supplement with concentrates for cows in low BCS at drying off.
- Grass silage of 68-72% DMD will maintain cow body condition.
- Supplement with dry cow minerals

Embrace FARM

To Host Accident Support Group Meeting
in **Corralea Court Hotel, The Square, Tuam, Co. Galway**
at **8 PM on Friday November 25**

for bereaved families in the Galway, Mayo and Roscommon area.
Peter Gohery the meeting facilitator from Eyrecourt, Co. Galway is a leading member of the IFA, an accident survivor himself and is also a Health & Safety consultant to the Agri and construction sectors.

Light refreshments will be provided

Spraying Testing and Repair Service

All sprayers 5 years and older must be tested by
30th November 2016.

ALL AREAS COVERED.

Call for more information

Paul Kelly Ballinasloe

087 9247 625

*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