



Development farm walks at John Dowds and Molamphys

Over the last few weeks, farm walks took place at John Dowds, Kilconly and Seamus and Brian Molamphys, Portroe; both farms are development farmers on our milk for profit programme. The purpose of the development farmers is to showcase how best practice in dairy and technology adoption can improve farm profitability and sustainability. John Dowd milks over 90 cows outside Tuam and in recent times has taken on considerable farm development. In the last year he has purchased land beside the milking platform and next year he plans to build a shed for 70 cows. Martin Clarke from IFAC was present on the day to discuss the importance of business planning when taking on such development. He highlighted that farmers must take ownership of their own plan, understand it completely and set realistic goals. "Paper never refused ink" and so setting targets above what's attainable in a plan can be dangerous. Be aware of the repayment capacity on the farm and of any upcoming demands on drawings such as third level education.

Seamus and Brian Molamphy are milking 90 cows outside Portroe. In the past year Brian has come home to farm full time on the farm. Therefore the farm now has to sustain two incomes. The milking platform is stocked quite high at 3.3LU/ha so further expansion in cow numbers is not possible. While efforts can be made to increase milk solids sold per cow, Brian will have to look at expansion opportunities beyond the farm gate to increase output. Tom Curran Collaborative farming specialist with Teagasc was present on the day to discuss the process of succession and the benefits of forming a partnership. To get maximum benefit from forming a partnership Seamus and Brian will wait until they are in a position to carry more stock. In this way they will get the most from the stock relief incentives the formation of a partnership offers.

On both farms there is significant potential to improve soil fertility with the majority of samples in index 1 and 2 for P and K. To combat this John has spread the land with 18-6-12 all year. While the restrictions of the nitrates directive was discussed at Molamphys, Pdraig Costigan from Teagasc highlighted that there are no limit restrictions for lime or K. Lime can increase the amount of available P and K in the

soil and should be the first action to take when rectifying poor indices.

Heifer rearing was discussed at both farm walks. Pat Clarke from Teagasc outlined the importance of identifying the light heifers now and feeding them extra meals. Heifers underweight at breeding and calving are underweight for the first 3 lactations and produce less milk for 3 lactations. John is considering availing of contract heifer rearing to reduce labour, free up shed space and land. Setting out a clear contract with the contract heifer rearer beforehand is crucial Michael Donoghue advised. Farmer can expect to pay €1-1.20 per animal/ day.

Handouts from the walks are available on the Arrabawn website. Special thanks to our development farmers for giving up their time and sharing their farm information.

Farmer	J. Dowd	S. Cole	C. Whiriskey	B. Molamphy	E. Kennedy
Location	Kilconly	Aghancon	Kiltulla	Portroe	Ballingarry
Fat %	4.58	4.81	4.06	4.65	4.54
Protein %	3.84	3.93	3.57	3.73	3.94
L/cow	17	13	13	15	17
MS/cow	1.5	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.4
Meal	3	2	3	2	1.5
Avg farm cover	829	797	612	739	821
MP Stocking rate	2.5	2.6	1.7	3.3	2.6
Cover/LU	333	321	362	225	316
Growth rate	42	46	16	30	45
Demand	38	34	22	43	36

Milk collected between 5th and 6th October
Grass measured between the 5th and 10th October

Breeding and feeding decisions for winter 2016

Friday 28th October, 11-1pm

Michael Freeney, Derrydonnell, Oranmore, Co. Galway

Controlling metabolic disease through improved nutrition

Breeding for better cow longevity

The economics of herd fertility

Diet guidelines for the winter milking herd

Special guests

Doreen Corridan, DVM, Munster AI

Joe Patton, Nutritionist, Teagasc



Discussing succession planning and farm partnerships on Molamphy's farm was Tom Curran, Collaborative farming specialist with Teagasc

Bord Bia SDAS Certification

Good progress has been made in having farms certified under this scheme for which we are grateful, however there are still a significant number of farms yet to be certified and time is running out. From Jan 1st next the bonus currently being paid for having applied to join the scheme will only be paid to farms that are actually certified. You need to seek an audit now to ensure you will be certified in time, while there are a lot of auditors in the area it will not be possible to audit all the remaining farms in the last couple of weeks of the year. This scheme is making a difference in the marketing of Irish farm produce be it Dairy or Meat and for that reason we are determined that all our milk suppliers are certified to strengthen our position as much as possible in the market place.

Annual Health Certificate

As the year draws to a close the urgency of obtaining an annual Health Cert for your herd increases, we will not collect milk after Jan 1st next from any farm where we do not have a valid health certificate. Act now and return your cert if you have not already done so, this is a legal requirement.

What are *Thermophilic* Bacteria?



Unlike most bacteria that are found in milk, thermophilic bacteria are capable of surviving the pasteurisation process. These organisms can multiply rapidly in milk and go on to cause spoilage of dairy products. They cost the dairy industry millions of euro each year because of their detrimental effect on product shelf life. Thermophilic bacteria form a proportion of the total count of bacteria, (TBC) but there is often little or no correlation between the total number of bacteria present and the thermophilic count. Some thermophilic species, such as *Bacillus* and *Paenibacillus* spp are also capable of growth during refrigerated storage and, in the absence of post pasteurisation contamination, represent one of the main spoilage bacteria present at the end of milk shelf life. Thermophilic bacteria are mainly found in silage, faeces, animal bedding and soil. It is common for the cows to become carriers of these organisms and the teat can become a major source of contamination. Some types are also capable of growing on the internal surfaces of milking machines and bulk tanks where inadequate cleaning practices are employed. Once thermophilic bacteria enter the milking system they can be very hard to eradicate. This can be due to certain types of bacteria forming endospores which are a resting stage of the bacterium and which are resistant to many forms of disinfection. Other types of thermophiles can grow and establish themselves within equipment forming biofilms. Biofilms are collections of microorganisms that form at the interface of a solid surface and the liquid. The bacteria produce a type of slime which protects them from the action of many disinfectants. Once established, biofilms can be very difficult to eradicate. Thermophilic bacteria are an indicator of overall farm hygiene, and are used to inform on the likelihood of downstream product degradation. Proper milk parlour hygiene and the correct cooling of milk in bulk tanks both play a significant role in reducing the numbers of thermophilic bacteria present in raw milk. A good wash routine for the machine and bulk tank are an essential part of the control of Thermophilic counts in milk. Milk cooled slowly or inadequately will result in higher thermophilic counts. In conclusion, thermophilic 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.

**Clearance Sale of 20 Young Cows & InCalf Heifers,
all AI bred and incalf to AI bulls.
Calving February onwards.
In Birr Mart on
Monday 24th October @1pm**

Focus on fertility - Drying Off

Cows are milking well, mainly due to good grass and extra concentrates being fed - many farmers should be feeding cows well into the autumn. It is now time to plan for next year's calving and breeding season.

The main area of attention regarding infertility in dairy cows is the body condition score of cows at drying off. This is highlighted as the main contributor to fertility/infertility in the following breeding season. Body condition score is measured on a scale from 1-5 and should be greater than 3 at drying off. Cows are more efficient at putting on condition in the later stages of lactation. Dry matter intake is stimulated by milk yield and dry matter intake will decline to about 10-11 Kg/day during the dry period approaching calving, in heifers dry matter intake will drop to about 7 kg / day.

This is normal enough but it is crucial that cows are in good condition going into the dry period. When a cow calves she will immediately start losing body condition. The biggest loss in body condition will occur in the first week after calving. A high yielding cow with a body condition score of 3 at calving could arrive at a body condition score of 1 by week 12 of her lactation. A cow with a body condition score of 1 has only a 17% chance of going in calf at the first service. An average cow might only drop to a body condition score of 2-3 at 12 weeks - so high yielders are most vulnerable if they are dried off in poor condition.

At the other end of the scale, fat cows will have dry matter intake problems as they are likely to eat less as a % of their body weight and are therefore prone to disorders such as ketosis, mastitis etc.

Body condition at drying off has implications for weight loss after calving, heat detection, interval to 1st service, milk protein %, milk yield and ultimately culling rate.

Plan of action – aim to have cows drying off in reasonable to good condition, with a body condition score greater than 3. It is recommended to feed while the cows are still milking for the most efficient weight gain. Feeding a high energy ration with medium to low protein is best. Fat cows may need to be restricted in their energy intake, possibly by the inclusion of extra straw in their diet in late lactation and the dry period. The consequences of a high body condition score in fat cows is a low dry matter intake pre calving, which will result in a much higher % weight loss in the 3 weeks after calving.

Minerals - Get the balance right

Dry cow minerals are an essential ingredient in the diet of dairy cows during winter. 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. 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.

Rats and Mice about the Farm

Now is the time to control the level of rodents about the farm. Rats and mice cause a lot of damage about the farm and can spread disease among farm stock.

Arrabawn Co-op branches stock the full range of

- STORM
- KLERAT
- PIED PIPER
- RODILON (NEW ACTIVE)

Call to your local branch of **Arrabawn Co-op**.

HARDWARE

That time of year again,,,time to get set up for animal housing your local branch of Arrabawn Co-op has the full range of :

- Circular feeders
- Cattle feed troughs
- Calf troughs
- Hay racks
- Creep feeders
- Gates
- Water troughs and fittings
- So check out the value at your local branch of Arrabawn Co-op

Sample – Analyse – Interpret – Plan

As we enter the last quarter of the year it's time to take stock of the ingredients that will influence how your farm will perform next year. Milk prices are low at the moment and maybe it's even more important to measure what you have and maximise the return by making decisions based on solid facts.

Soil - The single biggest element of your farm is the top 4 inches of soil growing your grass. How often do you check it out for the major elements, Lime, Phosphate and Potash. By taking a soil sample now you will have time plan your fertiliser programme for next year. You can check out the wide range of fertilisers available and select the most suitable fertiliser for your farm. Using the wrong fertiliser could be costing you a lot of money.

Silage Feed Analysis - on most farms, silage is the mainstay of the winter feeding programme, yet its true feed value is taken for granted. Often protein values are less than ideal for cows in the dry period not to mention the effect of low protein on freshly calved cows. Low dietary protein in the dry period can lead to smaller calves and poor quality colostrum at calving. Low protein in the diet of the milking cow can lead to depressed appetite and lower milk yield.

Silage Mineral Analysis – wouldn't it be useful if you knew there was a problem - such as milk fever, retained afterbirth or even a dead calf due to slow calving - coming down the line in a few months time. You could make plans to deal with the problem! A silage mineral analysis can establish the mineral status of your silage and indicate any deficiencies which may cause problems at calving. **Slurry** – what's it worth? The slurry from the dry cow pen will be different from the slurry from the cattle or milking cow pen! If you get a sample tested you can make a better job of balancing with bought in chemical fertiliser.

Milk – a simple milk sample can give a lot of useful information. **Sensitivity testing** can show which bacteria might be the cause of mastitis in the herd. It might also indicate if dairy hygiene could be better. A milk test can also indicate the presence of Liver fluke and worms in your herd.

Talk to your Arrabawn / Dan O'Connor Feed Rep or contact your local branch of Arrabawn Co-op to arrange on farm sampling.



TEAGASC CORNER

Keep replacements thriving this autumn

Latest data from ICBF indicate that less than two third of replacements calve at 24 months of age. Reaching target weights at the different stages of heifer rearing is the key to calving at 2 years. The target breeding weight for HF heifers is 330kg. This requires that heifers must gain 0.7kg per day up to breeding date, which is the equivalent to 20 kg / month.

Difficulties in achieving this gain in Oct/Nov arise due to:
Inadequate supply of grass offered to heifers.
Lower energy value of grass in autumn.

What to do now?

1. Weigh your heifers – this is an extra job, but a worthwhile one. The target weight for mid-November is 220kg for HF heifers.
2. Estimate how much grass will be available for heifers in October / November.
3. Decide on how much meal is needed. Weanlings of 200 kg will eat about 2.3% of their bodyweight, which is about 4.5kg dry matter per day. Where there is adequate grass feed 1kg meal/day to weanlings on target. However, where grass is scarce, then 2kgs meal/day must be fed.
4. Close heifer grazing ground as you would dairy grazing ground. Aim to have yearlings at grass in early March.
5. Autumn grass must be managed in rotation as for milking cows i.e. rotational grazing and move at least every 5-7 days.
6. The first paddocks for grazing next spring should be closed on 10th October. In slower grass growing regions closing may begin earlier. Have at least 60% of the farm closed by end of the first week of November. All paddocks should be grazed to a post-grazing height (4cm) during the last rotation to encourage winter tillering.
7. Remember 60% of the grass available for first grazing next spring will be grown this autumn after paddocks are closed. Each 1 day delay in closing from 10th October to 11th December reduces spring grass supply by 15kg DM/ha.

Reminders

β On-Off Grazing: On/off grazing will allow utilisation of grass during wet weather and poor ground conditions. Let cows out to graze for two intervals of three hour grazing sessions after milkings. This plan of 3 hour grazing periods will give the cow 90% of her daily feed requirements with the balance given as meal at milking.

β Last date for spreading slurry is 15th October, with November 1st the last spreading date for farmyard manures.

β Foot bath your cows early this month and again towards the end of October to harden hooves and eliminate Mortellaro before housing starts.

β Lactose – must be above 4.2%; watch cow nutrition and overall yield up to drying off.

β Reseeds – don't forget post emergence spray for seedling docks/chickweed, best time is 5-8 weeks after sowing to protect clover.

Dry Cow Treatment

The cow's udder is particularly susceptible to new infections during the 7-14 day period following dry off. The factors affecting this risk may include level of milk production at dry off, teat end condition and level of contamination of teat ends. To minimise this risk, most cows receive dry cow tubes at drying off.

The cure rate following dry cow treatment of persistently infected cows is dependent on:-

The number of teats infected,

Age of the cow,

Whether or not high cell count problems have recurred over more than one lactation.

A high cell count cow is a cow with a somatic cell count average of greater than 150,000 cells/ml. Cows with chronic persistent high cell counts and recurrent cases of mastitis should be culled from the herd.

Drying off the dairy cow should be an abrupt process. Once a day milking will result in an almost immediate doubling of SCC and may increase the incidence of clinical mastitis in high SCC cows. Stop meal feeding 7 days before dry off & reduce feed allowance to maintenance requirement 3 days before dry off. Such actions should reduce milk yield to less than 12 litres/day.

Dry cow tubes used alone or in conjunction with a teat sealant are recommended to reduce the rate of mastitis during the dry period and help cure existing infections. Dry cow tube administration is as follows:

1. Mark the udder before you start treatment, to prevent dried off cows from being accidentally re-milked.
2. Disinfect the teat end.
3. Insert the dry cow tube just inside the teat end & gently infuse the antibiotic.
4. Massage the tube contents up the teat canal into the udder.
5. Teat dip the teats completely.
6. Record the date, product details and cow ID in herd register.
7. If using teat seal, remember:
8. Close off the junction of the teat and the udder between your fingers before instilling the tube.
9. Do not massage the teat seal tube contents up into the udder.

From your local Arrabawn Branch Household Fuel

- 2 X 25kg Polish coal + 2 bags of Homefire KILN dried logs €29
- 2 x 40kg Supertherm + 3 bags of Homefire KILN dried logs €49
- 5 x 40kg Supertherm + 4 bags of Homefire KILN dried logs €99
- Wood pellets €5.50 for a **15KG BAG**.
- 2 bags coal for €20 from October
- 10 bales briquettes for €38

Animec Super 1550ml

Promotional Pack complete with a Rechargeable LED Spotlight

Farmcal Cubicle Lime

Promotion for the month of October
at €120 per tonne **COLLECTED**. €125 delivered.

Fluke and Worm Control

- ENDOFLUKE 5LT + 1LT FREE WAS €128 NOW €109
- BIMECTIN POUR ON 5LT WAS €96 NOW €86
- ENDOFLUKE 6L AND BIMECTIN PO 5L BUNDLE €190
- LEVAFAS DIAMOND 10.5LT + SPOTINOR 250ML FREE ONLY €169
- IVOMEC SUPER 500ML WAS €210 NOW €190
- IVOMEC SUPER HOUSING PACK 1.2LT WAS €450 NOW €399
- IVOMEC POUR ON 2.5LT €90 EACH OR TWO FOR €149
- EPRIZERO 6LT WAS €395 NOW €375
- TRODAX 250ML WAS €68 NOW €59
- TRODAX 1LT WAS €208 NOW €190

Circular Feeders

on promotion for October €179

For any further information or advice on any subjects or products mentioned in this newsletter

Please ring 087 6697010

E: farmsupport@arrabawn.ie

Check out our website: www.arrabawn.ie

Beef Rations

Arrabawn / Dan O'Connor Feeds has the complete range of cattle feed for you this winter:-

U-Grade beef nut 16%

Premium Bull Nut /Coarse with High Performance Pack

Beef Finisher

Beef Finisher + Maize

For the weanlings choose from

Weanling Ration

Wean & Grow Pellets or Coarse

Stock Mix – Coarse

H E Beef Nuts 16%

SucklerMate

Contact your local Arrabawn representative or call to your local Arrabawn Branch for more details.