



To All Our Suppliers

We would like to advise that the Co-Operative is working to ensure that in this unprecedented situation all measures are being adhered to for the safety of our suppliers, employees and customers. Contingency plans are in place in our three key plants to ensure all milk is collected and processed and animal feed is available. Our stores continue to service our farmer customers with some limitations on non-essential products.

In the manufacturing plant in Nenagh, segregation of operators is in place across the site, all employees' temperatures are checked before entering the site and contingency plans are in place to operate the plants from alternative locations. The commissioning of the Casein plant has progressed well and is now running for the last three weeks. Our project in the Effluent plant has reached its target completion on phase 1 and work continues to ensure that phase 2 is completed by end of the summer. We are fortunate to be deemed a state critical industry and are therefore allowed to work to ensure milk is processed and food products are made available.

Our hauliers have all being provided with sanitisers and disposable gloves and have back up plans in place to ensure continued collection of milk.

The liquid milk plant in Kilconnell has followed similar protocols to Nenagh and has worked through the last few

weeks without any problems. We experienced exceptional demand for a week to 10 days in mid-March, but trading has resumed back to normal levels since an increased demand from retail customers compensating for lost business in the foodservice area.

We would like to thank farmers, hauliers and employees for their co-operation and help in the last few weeks.

We have seen in the last two weeks a significant drop in demand for dairy products in a market that is changing day by day. Butter and skim milk powder being the two most affected initially, but the cheese market has weakened considerably in the last few days also. The supply chain continues to function and products are being shipped daily and we envisage no change to this situation.

Whereas dairy markets will continue to be under pressure in this environment we are confident that milk collection will operate as normal as will all other functions of the co-op. It is important to keep in mind that while there is significant anxiety brought on by the virus, over the next month or two we will see a return to normality. For further information see Covid-19 Update on the back page.

Edward Carr
Chairman

Conor Ryan
Chief Executive

Useful Tips for April:

Number of straws: It takes about 5.5 straws to end up with one heifer milking in the parlour in 2021. How many heifers do you want entering your herd in 2021? If you want 25 milking heifers then you must use at least 140 dairy straws across cows and maiden heifers this season.

Labour saving: How many grazings are you getting from each paddock? Are you using a 12-hour wire throughout the summer? Farmers experience suggests that three grazings per paddock minimises work with wires and is ideal for grass growth and animal performance.

Grass tetany: Cows require 30gms of Magnesium (Mg) daily to prevent tetany. This is the equivalent to 60mg of Calmag.

Sulphur: 30% of Irish soils require sulphur for optimal growth. Soils which most likely show deficiency are sandy free-draining soils with low organic matter. When purchasing Nitrogen in bulk, use a sulphur-containing product in high risk areas.

Heat detection: Over 70% of cows come into heat between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. On average each heat lasts for 9 hours (range 3-30 hours). This is a very short window of opportunity to identify cows. Also as the number of cows in heat in the herd decreases, so too does mounting activity. Therefore, after the first

three weeks of breeding, it is critical that you continue to use a heat detection aid.

Grass Wedge: Farmers who walk the farm each week and use the grass wedge to make decisions have full control over the nutrition of their herd. They know for the next week or 10 days if there is too much feed (grass getting stemmy) or too little feed on the farm. Neither is good for the cow. Aim for a pre grazing cover of 1300-1400 kg DM/ha.

Fertiliser N: 100 units/acre of N by May 1st. Aim for 1 unit of N per day of rotation. First cut silage requires 100 units of N, 16-20 units of P and 120 units of K.

April grazing: Grass growth from the 1st to the 10th of April is usually around 30kgDM/day while at the end of the month it is likely to average 70kg-90kgDM/day. This means that we often go from a period of grass shortage to surplus very quickly. At this time of year, it is essential to get out and walk the farm. Estimating the average farm cover will help you make the correct decisions over the next few weeks. From now on, we want to consistently feed cows grass covers of 1200-1400kgDM/ha. These covers have a greater proportion of leaf and thus are better quality than covers of more than 2000kgDM/ha which have a greater stem proportion. Feeding cows appropriate covers ensures they reach their potential at peak milk

production.

- 1. Highly stocked farm (3.6 MP SR) where daily grass growth meets daily herd demand.** Average farm cover is 450kg DM/ha. No formal first cut silage is planned to be taken from the milking platform, instead weekly surpluses should be taken out as bales. When herd demand matches grass growth it is easier to manage grass and feed adequate covers of 1200-1400kgDM/ha to cows.
- 2. Lowly stocked farm (2.5 MP SR) where daily grass growth exceeds daily herd demand.** Average farm cover is 950kg DM/ha. This farm should close 30% of the milking platform for silage. This should reduce average farm cover to the target of 500-600kgDM/ha. Failing to take out these paddocks will result in "an explosion" of grass at the end of the month, rotations will slow down resulting in cows consistently grazing high covers (>2000kgDM/ha) which will impact milk protein and yield.

Milk Quality Advisor:

Factors effecting Thermoduric Bacteria Count (THD) in Milk

Thermoduric bacteria (THD) have a considerable impact on the product produce by the co-op and the quality of milk on farm. These bacteria cannot be killed by pasteurisation so they must be minimised on farm level. As a farmer you should be aiming for levels <200 cfu/ml which can be achieved by using the following checklist.

The main source of these bacteria come from:

- Dirty teat ends lead to high thermodurics (THD)
- Uncleaned cubicles and milking parlour floors can lead to dirty teats
- Very wet weather will dirty teats
- Cows tails can become dirty and harbour bacteria

Inside the milk plant can also lead to high thermoduric levels when:

- Rubber wear is old or cracked
 - Liners need to be changed every 2,000 milking's.
 - Long milk tubes, from the clusters up to the milk-line, have a life-span of about three years.
- Insufficient wash routines in the parlour
 - Regular descaling three or more times per week.
 - Cleaning the external surfaces of the parlour (cleaning clusters after each milking)

The most important aspect of the wash routine is the pre-rinse, **14L (3 gals) of clean water per unit** should be passed through the plan and then dumped. The pre-rinse ensures that the machine is cleaned out of milk residues and will make the detergents work. With inadequate cleaning, thermoduric bacteria in the milk attach to the inside of the rubber ware and milk-line forming a biofilm - a brown, waxy film. This biofilm builds and grows over time and the detergent will have no effect whatsoever. If a biofilm is present in the plant it indicates that the water used in the hot wash isn't hot enough as it needs to be 70-80°C and mustn't drop below 55°C.

In summary:

- Cows should be kept as clean as possible
- Rubber wear should be in good condition

- The appropriate wash routine should be used.

Example of Non-chlorine Wash Routine

After each AM milking

Remove or replace the milk filter sock

- Wash outside of clusters and jettets. Attach jettets to clusters.
- Rinse plant with 14 litres (3 gals) of warm or cold water per unit.
- Add an approved acid detergent at the recommended use rate in hot water at 70-80°C, allowing about 9 litres (2 gals) of solution per unit.
- Circulate the solution for 6-8 min, having allowed the first five litres to run to waste.
- Rinse the plant with a minimum of 14 litres (3 gals) of water per unit immediately after the 6-8 min wash cycle.

After each PM milking

Remove or replace the milk filter sock

- Wash outside of clusters and jettets. Attach jettets to clusters.
- Rinse plant with 14 litres (3 gals) with warm or cold water per unit.
- Add an approved acid detergent at the recommended use rate in cold water allowing about 9 litres (2 gals) of solution per unit.
- Circulate the solution for 6-8 min, having allowed the first five litres to run to waste.
- Rinse the plant with a minimum of 14 litres (3 gals) of water per unit immediately after the 6-8 min wash cycle.

Important:

- Hot water used on minimum of four wash occasions per week.
- Hot wash must be 70-80°C going into the plant and mustn't drop below 55°C.
- Option to replace the acid detergent with an alkaline detergent solution on one or two occasions per week to reduce overall cleaning costs and maintain plant cleanliness.



Super Grazing Bolus



- Controlled trace element release that lasts for 250 days
- Industry leading levels of Copper, Zinc, Iodine, Selenium and Cobalt
- Helps bridge any shortfalls in grass
- Trace element support for breeding, pregnancy and lactation
- Weighs 220g

For further information please contact your nearest Arrabawn store or your local rep:
 John Ryan Bawn: 087 1774434 Joe Egan: 087 2168646
 John Butler: 087 2779888 Darragh Dolan: 087 9178522
 Sean Whiriskey: 087 2591520 Cianan Garrahan: 087 7417354
 Brendan Collins: 087 6408549

Electromin boluses are distributed by: PharVet (Ireland) Ltd, Unit 29, Cookstown Industrial Estate, Dublin 24
 Aaron Feehily, Western Region: 086 0297273; Shane Kehoe, Technical Support: 087 2611840 www.pharvet.com



Liver Fluke Warning

Levels of Liver Fluke may be higher than normal in the coming weeks due to the excessive amount of rainfall early in the year. Some tips to reduce the burden:

- Fence off wet or water logged areas of fields or drains/ rivers
- Fix leaky water throughs, the mud snail (carrier of larvae) can also survive here.
- Monitor levels through dung samples or milk samples for antibody testing
- Strategic dosing - if cows are dosed early in the year to remove all adult fluke it will prevent contamination and build in the grazing paddocks
- Ask for abattoir reports or study factory reports.

Side effects of Liver Fluke:

- Low milk yield
- Reduced fertility
- Poor weight gain and thrive - Reduced feed conversion ratios.
- Diarrhoea/scour
- Severe cases bottle jaw or anaemia

Letting Calves Out to Pasture

As the weather begins to improve, farmers will be contemplating letting the first of early born calves out to grass. This comes with its own challenges such as feeding and parasite control.

Weaning: Calves should be slowly weaned off milk over the period of 7-10 days. A sudden stop in milk feeding will cause stress and upset their digestive system. Slow weaning will help them to adjust to the new diet. Calves should be at least 100kgs and consuming 1kg of concentrates. Suckler Mate from Dan O'Connor Feeds contains a unique blend of milk powder and coarse grains to provide roughage. The inclusion of milk powders helps to ease calves into their new diet gently. The roughage will greatly benefit the continual development of the rumen, while the use of grains makes the feed more interesting and encourages intake.

The heifer over 3 months of age can be fed HeiferMax. It is a low starch, high energy, protein (20%) and phosphorus feed. It encourages good bone and frame development without fat being laid down. The heifers will grow to be fit not fat. Fat building up in a heifer's liver and udder will affect milk yield and longevity in the herd.

New Diet: A new lush, green paddock may seem like the most ideal place to put young calves. However, some precautions are needed to avoid "Summer Scour Syndrome". The rumen is not fully developed in calves 12 weeks old just yet, and lush, green grass hitting the rumen will cause upsets. The digestibility of the grass is so high the grass is very quickly broken down and gas is formed creating an acidic condition. The full nutrient value of the grass is not absorbed and can be passed out in the dung. Calves will show a pot belly, scouring and not thriving. Two ways to correct this would be to put calves out on older slightly stemmy grass or offer roughage (hay/straw). The roughage will help develop the rumen further and encourage chewing. The saliva produced from chewing will

help neutralize the acid produced from lush grass. Second method is including RumBuff in the animals' feed. It is fed at 80grms/head/day. This product helps to control the acidity of the rumen to ensure it is optimally functioning and absorbing all nutrients.

Parasite Control: The aim is to allow for some exposure but preventing a large burden of worms developing. Exposure is required for an immune reaction and response. Low burden rate exposures are needed for immune development without causing harm to the animal. If the same paddock is used repeatedly for young calves to be let out in, the worm burden can build up very quickly and may need to be dosed sooner than the first few bunches let out. Must weigh before dosing for accurate measurements. Under dosing is worse than not dosing at all! This will lead to resistance on your farm.

- For example, Calves out in April-May, allow for 3-4 weeks of exposure. (low burden in early turnout)
- Late May/early June give an oral dose of albendazoles (e.g. Albex), not overly hard on the calves. (12-24 hours persistency)
- 6-8 weeks later in dose again with an Ivermectin, slightly stronger and harder on the system (2-3-week persistency). Monitor with FEC to determine when to dose.
- August-September, 6-8 weeks later, monitor with FEC again. Dose when required.
- October Pre-Housing dose with a long acting drug e.g. Dectomax or Cydectin both with 5-6 weeks activity. Dose so that 3 weeks activity will continue in the shed.
- General rule of thumb -> Persistency drug + 3 weeks exposure = dosing interval

*This is a rough guideline and must be adapted to all farms' individual needs.

Feeding the Dairy Cow: Protein and Energy Balance

If you have noticed low protein on your text messages and cows losing condition lately it may be down to one underlying factor: Not enough energy in the diet and/or low roughage in the diet.



When protein is consumed, the body requires energy to break it down in useable forms and get rid of the by-products such as ammonia. When excessive protein is consumed in the diet, extra energy is required to get rid of the waste products. This energy is taken from the cow's energy stores and "milks off her back" losing weight. Cows can't afford to lose too much condition as it will be needed to start cycling again for the breeding season. The right combination of dairy nut and grass quality must be balanced to ensure energy is available to remove the protein and make milk proteins. Don't be afraid to feed the higher rate of dairy ration to maintain sufficient energy in the diet. Milk production will always be second to ensuring waste is removed from the body. High

Grass Protein %
•Stemmy - 16%
•Leafy - 22-25%
•Average - 20%

Protein Requirements
•Early Lactation - 16-18%
•Mid Lactation - 16-17%
•Late Lactation - 16-18%

protein diets must be matched with high energy to balance. While keeping the energy high is key to meet the demands, a buffer can also be offered to help maintain the rumen. Some dairy concentrates already contain a buffer, however it can be easily introduced without changing feed. A bale of straw (1/2 kg per cow) can be offered. The straw will encourage chewing, saliva and chewing of the cud. The production of saliva is key to maintain and balance the acidity levels in the rumen. The cow will then get maximum efficiency from all feed consumed.

Low milk yield is a result of low crude protein in the diet. The cows may need a higher percentage dairy nut, they range from 14-20%. Look at your grass quality and take some samples to analyse quality. Consult your sales rep for more information of the range of feed available from Dan O'Connor's.

In summary:

- Low protein = low energy= feed extra concentrates to get energy up, also include a buffer
- Low milk yield = low crude protein the diet= get a higher percentage protein feed.
- Coughing up cud onto ground= acidotic conditions in rumen, give buffer to chew.

Covid - 19 Update

Since the arrival of Covid-19 in Ireland in late February, a number of precautionary measures have been put in place to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of our milk suppliers, employees, hauliers and customers. These measures are also designed to allow for uninterrupted collection of milk, processing and delivery of animal feed, and continued sale of essential agri inputs.

At plant level, the following protocols are in place:

- Temperature checking for all staff members before they start their shifts.
- Physical distancing and segregation protocol in place across the business,
- Any employee experiencing suspected symptoms of Covid - 19 are advised to self-isolate with immediate effect, minimizing the likelihood of infection spread.
- Strict hand washing and cleaning/hygiene protocols for all staff.
- Non-essential contractors and visitors are not permitted access to any Arrabawn sites.
- Contingency plans for essential roles in the event of high absenteeism

Our drivers and hauliers have been extensively briefed on strict hygiene procedures in Arrabawn. These include daily temperature checking, physical distancing, regular cleaning/washing and the necessity to wear a different pair of disposable gloves at each farm visit to prevent any infection spreading from one farm to another.

The Farmer Relations and Advisor teams will now make only essential farm visits and will do so under specified protocols.

Farmers are asked to implement the following protocols:

- **Set up clear biosecurity protocols and communicate to staff and visitors. This includes having a biosecurity sign at farm entrance.**
- **Follow HSE physical distancing guidelines by keeping 2 metre distance from others**
- **Ensure hands are washed with soap and water regularly and hand sanitizer is used often. Always follow HSE guidelines.**
- **Keep a record of all visitors to the farm for contact tracing purposes.**
- **Designate an area where visitors are received away from other members of the household with facilities to wash hands and enough room to keep a safe distance of 2 meters. This could be the dairy, the farm office or an equipment shed.**
- **Wear disposable gloves when touching shared equipment and wash hands thoroughly afterwards.**
- **Ensure all shared surfaces such as bulk tank area where drivers have contact are sanitised before and after milk collection.**
- **DO NOT touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.**
- **Place disinfectant/handwashing facilities at entrance to milking parlour for drivers to use before and after collection.**

If you or any member of your family or farm staff experience any of the symptoms associated with Covid-19 (fever, respiratory issues, sore throat, sneezing or coughing) please follow the guidelines outlined by the HSE on its website: www.hse.ie

If everyone plays their part in following the protocols recommended by the health authorities, we have the strongest possible chance of ensuring that people stay healthy, that our production sites remain operational and that milk continues to be collected.

Please contact Ronan Moran - Farmer Relations, in confidence on 0871469651 if you or anyone involved in the working of your farm has contracted Covid-19. It is critical that we protect the integrity of our food supply chain.

In the meantime, rest assured our Retail Stores remain open with various measures in place to protect the health and safety of our staff and customers. During this time we ask you to follow the relevant Covid-19 signage and protocols in place in each Store.

A call and collect service is also available for those who do not wish to enter our Stores and if this service is of interest to you please contact your local Store or Sales Advisor to discuss.

Grassland Weed Control

The recent dry weather has set the scene for a successful weed control programme. Weeds, especially docks, thistles, nettles and dandelions, have grown well and are now in perfect condition for spraying with an effective herbicide. Your local branch of Arrabawn stocks a full range of suitable herbicides to clean up your pasture, either silage or grazing. Keep the weeds out of your silage crop!

Doxstar Pro-----contains brushwood killer to kill roots. Will kill clover. Spray 4 weeks before silage or 1 week before grazing.

Forefront----- excellent product for serious weed problems including docks, ragwort, nettles and Japanese knot weed - it will kill clover. Only use on grazing ground. 2.0 lt /ha.

UpRoot---- Contains Triclopyr and 2,4D Ester - Very good on nettles, docks, thistles, briars/brambles and soft weed such as Buttercup, Dandelion, Willow Herb.

Nettles, Briars, Woody Weeds and Furze Bushes

Grazon Pro -----this contains high levels of brushwood killer and the **Grazon Pro** has the advantage of being able to kill thistles also-----this can be an advantage when spraying under electric fences, where briars and thistles can be a problem.

Thistles and Rushes and Ragwort----spray **2,4-D (D-50) 1 lt/ac + MCPA (M50) 1 lt/ac** -spray when the thistles have a flower bud and the rushes are about 24cm high and growing. Will also control creeping buttercup(crowfoot).