



NDC & Kerrygold Quality Milk Awards 2022

The Toohey Family, Moneygall, County Offaly



Arrabawn Co Op would like to congratulate the Toohey Family for representing Arrabawn at the National Dairy Council (NDC) & Kerrygold Quality Milk Awards which took place on Wednesday 14th September at [Ballyvolane House](#), Castlelyons, Co. Cork. The Toohey family were presented with "Best in Class Technical Performance" Award on the day. The Toohey family were also 2021 Arrabawn Suppliers of the Year.

FARM FACTS

Herd Size:	210
Milk Supply:	1,319,451
TBC (weighted):	9000
SCC (weighted):	100
Butterfat % (weighted):	4.49
Protein % (weighted):	3.66

Replacement Heifers- The future of your farm

Heifers are the future of our farms and must not be forgotten about. The importance of hitting target weights must not be over looked and it will have a knock on affect in the animals performance later in life.

Housing is crucial time to take note of what condition and weight heifers are currently and what needs to be achieved before turn out next spring. Heifers should ideally hit 60% of their adult weight at 15 months old to be ready for breeding.

With grass quality declining, weather conditions becoming more difficult and change of diet being housed some forward planning is needed.

All heifers should be weighed to see how they compare to target weights. Ideally they should be weighed a couple weeks prior to housing to allow you to target some under weight animals before housing.

Lighter animals should have access to the better-quality forage indoors and some additional feed to help growth rates. 1-2kgs of concentrates/head/day should be sufficient to encourage good growth rates.

**TARGET WEIGHT:
190KGS IN LATE
-SEPTEMBER
(33% of Mature Weight)**



Eoin and Colette Toohey live in Cloughjordan, Co. Offaly, with their four sons, David, Killian, Brian and Cathal. Eoin's father purchased the land in 1971 and both Eoin and Colette have been farming it since 2001. Second generation farmers, the Toohey operation is a family one through and through. The family still farms Colette's land 20 miles away, as well as owning and operating a fully-functioning heifer-rearing and beef enterprise in North Kilkenny. True advocates of all thing's nature, the Toohey's are ever conscious of nurturing the environment around them and building towards a more sustainable future.

Soil fertility trends

A recent review of soil sample results from 2021 indicate that in the last two years, soils with optimum soil fertility (pH over 6.2 and soil P and K index 3 or 4) on grassland farms has slipped from 20% to 15%. In the previous three years (2016- 2019), soils with optimum soil fertility increased from 8% to 20%. The decline in soil fertility in the last two years is due to an increase in the percentage of soils at P and K index 1 and 2.

Soil pH levels have also declined, with the percentage of soils at a pH less than 6.2 has increased from 41 to 49%. On tillage farms a similar trend has occurred in the last year with the percentage of soils with optimum soil fertility (pH >6.5 and soil P and K index 3 or 4) dropping from 24% to 18%.

In the previous six years (2014 to 2020) soils with optimum soil fertility increased from 12% to 24%. The recent decline in soil fertility is due to a slight increase in soils testing at P index 1 and 2, while soil K levels have continued to improve. Soil pH levels show that the percentage of soils pH

The above trend may be due to a new soil sampling cycle in the last two years on grassland farms and last year on tillage farms, but highlights that a large proportion of our soils are deficient in major nutrients such as lime, P and K. Lime applications were the highest in 2021 since the 1980s and optimum soil pH is key to efficient use of fertilisers. Maintaining a balanced nutrient supply (pH, P and K) during the growing season will be vital.

Test your soils over the coming weeks and months to plan your farm nutrients requirements for 2023.

Dairy Farm Trends

- 6% of soils have optimum pH, P and K (3% decrease).
- 53% of soils with a soil pH >6.2 (10% decrease).
- 55% of soils at P index 1 and 2 (4% increase).
- 48% of soils at t K index 1 and 2 (no change).

Take the first step in controlling pneumonia this autumn with a Pre-Housing Dose

Why dose cattle at this time of year? Cattle will have acquired both a gut worm and lungworm burden during the grazing season. Lungworm is the most significant parasite for Irish cattle being housed in the autumn. Lungworm cause the lungs to function less efficiently and makes them more susceptible to both viruses and bacteria at housing. Lungworm larvae and adults are killed and removed quickly after dosing, but it can take 2 to 3 weeks for the lung tissue to heal.

Would it not be better to treat lungworm infections while the weanlings are still at grass? They would be in a healthy outside environment and it would allow healing to occur without the challenges of dust, ammonia, viruses etc. This is a **Pre-Housing Dose (PHD)**. It is not an extra dose. There are wormers that have a persistent effect against both lungworm and stomach worms. Cattle that receive a PHD with a **Cydectin** or **Dectomax** product and are dosed within

5 weeks of housing, do not require another worm dose at housing.

Advantages of a Pre-Housing Dose;

1. **Cattle are housed with a "clean set of lungs"**, are free of lungworm and have recovered from the damage that the worms have caused. This means animals are healthier and better able to fight off the challenges of viral pneumonia at housing.

2. **Cattle will perform better** for the last few weeks at grass as they will be worm free, leading to better daily live weight gains.
3. **Lice control.** If a pour-on product is used, it will kill off both the adult lice and the nymphs/larvae when they hatch from the eggs in the next 5 weeks resulting in lice-free cattle entering the sheds.

CHOOSE CYDECTIN OR DECTOMAX AS YOUR PRE-HOUSING DOSE

CYDECTIN
DECTOMAX



Closing Paddocks for the Winter

As the grazing season comes to a close, some decisions will need to be made. The aim is to have 60% of the paddocks grazed by the end of October and the remaining 40% in November if weather permits.

Once a paddock is grazed in October or November it should be closed off until next spring. If weather conditions are good, it can be tempting to leave cows out for an extra few days but it will have a big impact on the covers next spring.

With lower growth rates than expected recently the average farm covers will be lower in some places so extra caution is needed when deciding to close paddocks.

When closing paddocks the order which you do so must be considered. In early February which paddocks tend to flood? Have soft ground? More difficult to graze? Furthest away from the parlour? These paddocks should be grazed towards the start of October/November so that you don't need to graze them until March next year. The cover will be slightly heavy by March but the cows diet will be adjusted to grazing again and able to manage the heavy cover. Also ground condition should have improved making them easier to clean out.

Freshly calved cows in late January or early February have a lower intake of feed, so allowing them to graze slightly lighter covers will ensure a good clean out and encourage good grass growth for the second round.

Paddocks which you intend to graze first should be closed in the later parts of October to ensure lower covers – but before the furthest away or most difficult paddocks to graze.

In Summary:

Early October – Paddocks you want to graze at the start of March. Cow will be able to manage the heavier cover in March.

Late October – Paddocks you intend to graze in February. Lighter cover in February will ensure good clean out with lower number of cows and allow their stomachs to adjust post calving.

Early November – Most difficult paddocks to graze, furthest away from parlour etc. Ground conditions will hopefully have improved by the time the cows get to graze these paddocks in late March.

Animal Feeding for the Autumn period

With the days getting shorter and grass growth receding, it is time to think seriously about animal performance. It is no longer acceptable to let animals stand still – they must be growing in order to be available for sale at the earliest opportunity.

- **WEANLINGS** need to grow good frames to carry a good carcass at 18 – 24 months and replacements need to achieve growth targets in order to survive in the dairy herd. **SUCKLAR MATE** is the ideal ration to grow your young animals during this critical period. This cubed ration is made from the finest ingredients and finely balanced and high in protein to get the best out of your growing stock. Frame building should be the aim during the first 12 months. Avoid letting heifers get too fat during this period as it will hinder their performance during the dairy herd.
- **REPLACEMENT HEIFERS** are the future of your herd and need to be treated with care, especially during the first year of life. It is important that they are growing continuously in order to achieve targets for height, weight and condition score at breeding. Dan O'Connor Feed's **HEIFER MAX** is the most suitable ration for the replacement heifer.
- **FINISHING CATTLE** need high energy, in the right form to put on condition. Too much protein in the overall diet can be a problem, so it is important to choose a ration which will compliment other elements - **INTENSIVE BEEF FINISHER** is formulated to achieve the highest level of performance from a short intensive feeding period.
- **CREEP FEEDING** – Start feeding meal to suckling calves early in the autumn. Research has shown gains of up to 1 kg per day and less stress at weaning when weanlings are fed 4 – 8 kg per day. Choose Sucklermate, Greenvale Calf- Rearer, Weanling ration or HeiferMax from your local branch of Arrabawn Co-op.
- **DAIRY COWS** are now in the last quarter of their lactation and both milk yield and quality will start to drop off. Shorter days and declining grass quality tend to make the situation worse. In order to maintain milk quality, the cow needs to maintain her energy intake. This will be difficult if grass dry matter is not very high. Increasing dry matter intake by giving a few kilos of dairy concentrate, **MILKMAX**, will help stop the slip in milk yield and maintain milk solids as we go through the autumn. MilkMax is the latest in the 'Max' range of products from Dan O'Connor Feeds – it contains high levels of cereals and digestible fibre, suitable for grass-based feeding. MilkMax is a high-performance product containing quality protein sources and rumen enhancers. MilkMax will allow you get the best return from your cows right to the season end.
- **DRYING OFF COWS!** While the temptation is to put cows on a straw diet farmers should be aware of the need to supplement with extra protein and minerals. The dry cow will require 13% protein in her diet – straw will provide 8 – 9% protein. Low protein in the dry cow diet will lead to poor appetite and dwarfism in new born calves. The dry cow will need to be eating 10 to 11 kg dry matter per head per day.

SPECIALS



**15%
OFF**

*.Brass ballcock for drinking
bowls & green float*



**15%
OFF**

Yard scrapers



**15%
OFF**

Infra-red bulb



*Clipster cordless
was ~~€350~~ now €295*



**10%
OFF**

Drencher gun 70ml plastic



**10%
OFF**

*Drinking bowl cast iron black
S/S Nose plate*



*Ritchey muscle rub
Was €19 Now €15.95*

All Offers end 30th November.

Fixed Milk Price Meeting

A Meeting for all farmers affected by the fixed milk price contracts will be held in the Abbey Court Hotel, Nenagh on November 15th at 8pm.

If you are one of the farmers affected, please come along on the night to help steer a path financially and mentally through 2023.

If you wish to be added to the group text and Whatsapp group, please forward your name and phone number to Ronan on 087 7535082.

This is a farmer lead initiative.
Ronan.

**November
15th
Abbey Court
8pm**

Dry Cow Tubes 2022

If you wish to purchase dry cow tubes from your local Arrabawn Co-Op store, please give 24-48 hour notice in advance of purchasing.

You must get a prescription from your local vet in advance. Sealers are freely available in all stores.

Monitor Late Lactation Autumn Diet:

High Energy & High Dietary Fibre is key Autumn Grass has been quite high in water, averaging 11-12% DM, in the last number of weeks, due to lush growth and rainfall, so it's important to consider adding extra fibre to maintain rumen fill and keep dung consistency right.

Grass growth has steadied recently and average farm covers overall are generous. The issue now is how to access these covers without causing damage. The addition of 1-2kg DM of Silage or 0.5-1kg of Straw will help in adding extra fibre to the diet. Each farm works differently so whatever is practical. Other farms have made alterations in the parlour, increasing feeding rates to 3-4kg +. In the case of grass silage being fed as a buffer, a 16% Dairy nut will be needed along with grazed grass. It is advised to contact your rep and test any silage to see where quality is. Going forward, it's best to assess overall winter fodder reserves with regard to housing and dry cow diet.

With regard to silage, every farm should have an idea on length of supply coming into the winter. Fibre is a 3rd of the diet so it's vital, all farms should have a budget carried out at this stage - supplies may be questionable as a result of the early season drought in some parts of Arrabawn's catchment. Currently Silage testing is being carried out and quality is coming back good but yield on silage slabs is back so contact your rep and a budget can be looked at and diets planned for housing.

Again, grass Dry Matter is very low and will be, between now and close out date, combined with shortening day length, the diet should contain a higher than normal level of concentrates 3.5kg + in most cases. Moving from Summer Grazing Dairy options in the parlour Arrabawn have a number of products such as Supreme Dairy 16% and a number of 18's specifically formulated for late lactation and work in a variety of diets. In late lactation, it's vital to have average crude protein of the diet in 16-17% range and grass CP will gradually drop approaching the backend.

Regarding ingredients, the makeup of both Supreme Dairy 16% & Milkifeed 18 (in cases of 2-3Kg DM Grass Silage in diet) contain high levels of maize and wheat giving high levels of energy to meet requirements of Milk & Maintenance. This high level of starch is backed up with MEGALAC - this oilbased energy allows the cow to build body condition towards the winter. Monitor the rumen pH through the consistency of the dung. Beet Pulp is included as a slow release fibre-based energy source. Yeast is included to offset acidosis and indirectly reduce the level of diet-related lameness. This combination of ingredients should help reduce the risk of Negative Energy Balance & Ketosis. This time of year, with large amounts of grass going through the rumen and in herds where milk yield is still very good there can be a draw on the cow and lameness can arise which is seen in a number of herds lately.

DOC have a number of different feeding rates for each which is quite important at this stage of the year so for more info on this, and other nutritional matters, consult your local Dan O'Connor Feeds representative or any branch of Arrabawn Co-op



ANIMAL HEALTH IRELAND

NATIONAL MASTITIS CONTROL PROGRAMME

FREE DRY COW CONSULT

- ✓ Are you milk recording?
- ✓ Is your bulk tank SCC consistently below 200,000 cells/mL?
- ✓ Are you ready to reduce antibiotic use at drying off?

With the right hygiene, management and support, many herds are successfully reducing their antibiotic use at drying off, by developing selective dry cow strategies in consultation with their veterinary practitioners. A free Dry Cow Consult is available again this year for eligible herds, delivered through the Targeted Advisory Service on Animal Health, funded by the Rural Development Programme and coordinated by Animal Health Ireland.

This 3-hour consultation is carried out with your selected trained veterinary practitioner and is an opportunity to assess the current drying off process and dry period performance and identify additional gains that can be made. Milk recording results and farm records will also be analysed to identify individual animals that may be suitable for a 'non-antibiotic' dry off, and the best way of implementing this.

It is important to remember that a selective dry cow strategy is not without risk and is not something to embark on without seeking professional support and advice.

INFORMATION/APPLICATION



AnimalHealthIreland.ie



AHI office on 071 96 71928

Animal Health Ireland, 2-5 The Archways, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, N41 WN27



Cell Check Event



Wednesday 5th October Arrabawn Hosted an AHI CellCheck Workshop on Peter Clarke's farm in Ballycommon. There was plenty of information about selective dry cow therapy, cow's diet around drying off and new legislation changes happening and finally a practical demonstration. Big thank you all who attended and in particular to Peter for allowing us onto his farm for the morning.

Cell Check Tip Of the Month - Move on those problem cows!

At this time of year, approaching the end of the lactation cycle for many dairy herds, the identification of problem cows is a key task in the management of cow performance.

A cow that has had at least three clinical cases of mastitis during the lactation period or has had high a somatic cell count (SCC) in two consecutive lactations despite antibiotic treatment during the dry period is a problem cow. The cure rates for each species of bacteria vary. Recurrent contagious mastitis cure rates are poor for Staphylococcal infection and can be as low as 6%. Cure rates for both Streptococcal and coliform mastitis (mainly environmental mastitis) are often in the range of 70% - 90%. Both culture and susceptibility testing with the sampling of mastitic cows during the lactation period of at least 10 cows provide an adequate pathogen profile for your herd. The cost of mastitis can amount to €117 per cow per year taking into consideration both clinical and subclinical cases.

In addition, the following questions should be considered in the further identification of problem cows:

- Did any of your cows have a history of cell count/mastitis cases,
- milk fever, retained placenta, hard calvings or chronic lameness?
- What was the drying off strategy used on your cows last year?
- Was the dry cow therapy method effective?
- Was the administration of either lactation or dry cow therapy effective?
- What is your mastitis case rate for the year?
- Are you carrying empty cows at this stage?

- For those who milk record, the assessment of mastitis performance should be based on a review of the milk recording Farm SCC report available on the ICBF website and in particular the problem cow report.

Problem cow report

The report lists and ranks any cow with a record history of a SCC > 200,000 SCC/mL which is indicative of a probable case of mastitis. The ranking of the cows is based on % contribution to the herd SCC. Age, lactation stage (days in milk), lactation number and the number of tests > 200 are highlighted in the report. This information, as well as any available mastitis treatment and culture results, should be considered as part of your treatment or culling decision in consultation with your vet or advisor. If the latest SCC is greater than 200,000 SCC/mL, the cow should have a California Mastitis Test (CMT) to identify problem quarter or quarters.

As well as identification of problem cows in late lactation, the report can be used during early lactation to prevent the spread of mastitis within the herd. A milk recording carried out within 30-60 days of drying off will also identify problem cows and provides an excellent back up for selective dry cow therapy.

The ideal replacement rate is 18% - 20% allowing the herd to achieve its full potential in terms of milk production. The rearing of a dairy heifer replacement comes at a cost of close to €1,500. It takes approximately 1.6 lactations to cover the cost of taking a home bred heifer through to calving at 24 months.

While the clinical history of your cows is reviewed to identify problems, the effectiveness of your drying off strategy will also need reviewing if culling is exceeding 18% - 20%.

If your mastitis case rate within the first month of calving exceeds 5% of your cows calved, or 2% of your cows per month during lactation problem cows should be identified.

The identification of a cohort of problem cows using your CellCheck Farm Summary Report is also possible examining mastitis control in the dry period or calving. If the new infection rate in your cows or in your heifers is greater than 10% and 15% respectively with a cure rate of less than 85%, any increase in SCC readings of specific cows between consecutive recordings before and after the dry period will also highlight possible problem cows.

The CellCheck Farm guidelines provide very useful advice during the various stages of lactation and are available on AHI website.



Tips for managing winter housing for a successful dry period

- Automatic scrapers
 - Ensure they are serviced, clean and there is no dry dirt effecting their mobility.
 - Check the timing settings - 8 times/day is recommended.
 - Check the clock is working and set at automatic and not manual.
- Clean fresh drinking water
 - Ensure there is an adequate number of troughs for the number of cows in the shed.
 - Clean water troughs every day.
- Power wash sheds before housing.
- Brisket Boards help to place the cow correctly on the cubicle. Brisket board should be 1.7 meters from the back of the cubicle for a 580Kg cow.
- Cows should be standing on all 4 on the cubicle rather than two up and two down.
- Groove floors if slippery before housing - less injuries.
- Winter milking herds- a retaining bar that will fold over and block entry onto the cubicles after milking for 30 mins to an hour will allow the teat sphincter to close after milking before cows lie on cubicles.
- Liming cubicles - twice daily for milking cows, once per day for dry cows.
- Calving pen - 1 pen per 25 cows. A straw bedded area. A drinking trough per pen containing clean water as they require a lot of clean water during and after calving. Ensure they can be easily cleaned out. The rate they can be cleaned out determines the number of pens needed and the throughput. The kneel test ensures the bed is adequately dry to prevent mastitis.

Hygiene score your farm today

Take some time out to assess the hygiene of your cows as they walk into the parlour

- Do you tick all green boxes? That's great, continue what you are currently doing.
- Do you tick some orange and red boxes? The hygiene on your farm needs to be improved, this is will help lower your SCC and less case of mastitis.
 - Follow the advice on the green recommendations on the images below to help improve hygiene.

WINTER HOUSING CHECKLIST FOR MASTITIS CONTROL • PAGE 3

► Hygiene scoring of cows

SCC ►	Q1 What was your average SCC over the last year?	<input type="checkbox"/> UNDER 200,000 <input type="checkbox"/> 200,000 - 350,000 <input type="checkbox"/> OVER 350,000
Flank ►	Q2 Cow hygiene score assessments: a. What proportion of your cows look like this?	<input type="checkbox"/> MORE THAN 80% CLEAN <input type="checkbox"/> 20-80% <input type="checkbox"/> MORE THAN 20% DIRTY
Udder ►	b. What proportion of your cows look like this?	<input type="checkbox"/> MORE THAN 80% CLEAN <input type="checkbox"/> 20-80% <input type="checkbox"/> MORE THAN 20% DIRTY
Hindlegs ►	c. What proportion of your cows look like this?	<input type="checkbox"/> MORE THAN 80% CLEAN <input type="checkbox"/> 20-80% <input type="checkbox"/> MORE THAN 20% DIRTY

Images used from Dairy NZ

WINTER HOUSING CHECKLIST FOR MASTITIS CONTROL • PAGE 4

► Examining housing and management practices

Q3 How often are cubicles cleaned and limed?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Twice a day	<input type="checkbox"/> Once a day	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a day
Q4 What is the floor surface like?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non slippery (e.g. grooved)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Slippery (e.g. not grooved)
Q5 How often are main passageways cleaned?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Six or more times a day	<input type="checkbox"/> Three times a day	<input type="checkbox"/> It is set to manual
Q6 How often are minor walkway areas cleaned?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Twice a day	<input type="checkbox"/> Once a day	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a day
Q7 Is there adequate feeding space?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0.6m/cow Up to 8 cows/bay	<input type="checkbox"/> 0.4m to 0.6m/cow 9 - 12 cows/bay	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 0.4m/cow (more than 13 cows/bay)
Q8 How many water sources are available in the housing area?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 or more large troughs per 50 cows	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 large troughs per 50 cows	<input type="checkbox"/> Cows are queuing for water
Q9 How often are the water source(s) checked or cleaned out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Daily	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than once weekly
Q10 How many cubicles are available per cow?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.1 cubicles per cow (i.e. for 100 cows need 110 cubicles)	<input type="checkbox"/> 0.8 - 1 cubicle per cow	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 0.8 cubicles per cow
Q11a In loose housing (close up pens) how much space is available per cow?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> More than 6.5m ² of bedded area per cow	<input type="checkbox"/> 4.5 - 6.5m ² of bedded area per cow	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 4.5m ² of bedded area per cow
Q11b How many additional individual calving pens are available?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 pen (16m ²) per 25 cows	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 pen (16m ²) per 25 - 35 cows	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 pen (16m ²) per more than 35 cows
Q12 How often is the straw shed bedded?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Twice a day	<input type="checkbox"/> Once daily	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than once daily
Q13 How many kgs of straw do you use per cow during the housing period?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Over 55kgs per week per cow	<input type="checkbox"/> 35 - 55kgs per week per cow	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 35kgs per week per cow
Q14 How often is the straw shed or calving pen cleaned out completely?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Every second day or daily	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than weekly or at the end of the season

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