



## A positive year for Arrabawn Co-Op was capped with an AGM and SGM on 19th April 2023

A record attendance for an Arrabawn AGM, which saw over 170 shareholders at the Abbey Court Hotel in Nenagh, got through a packed agenda, including the presentation of the 2022 accounts and the milk quality awards.

The accounts reflected a highly successful year for Arrabawn, with the highlights including turnover surpassing €500mn for the first time and suppliers achieving a record average milk price.

The AGM was also a day for celebrating the high standards achieved by suppliers at Arrabawn through the company's quality awards, with the Milk Supplier of the Year 2022 going to Ballycommon, Nenagh farmer Peter Clarke. Peter will now represent Arrabawn at the NDC & Kerrygold Quality Milk Awards 2023.

The Overall Milk Quality Winner award winner was Brian Hayes from Borrisokane, with Bernard Kelly, from Athlone taking the Overall Cell Count award and Pat Guinan from Moate winning the Total Bacteria Count award.

The AGM was also followed by a Special General Meeting (SGM) that saw a number of key resolutions carried, including for greater a geographical

spread on structure of the Representative Committee. This resolution will provide, for the first time, for the inclusion of suppliers from the east and south of the country on the Representative Committee. This reflects the growth of members in those regions over recent years.

The SGM also carried a resolution for a second independent director to be appointed to the board, a move that will bring in more external expertise and greater diversity to the board.

A motion was also carried limiting the number of terms members can sit on the board to three periods of five years, with members having to seek re-election for both the second and third term. Meanwhile, a fourth resolution was also carried to reduce the number of elected members on the board from 18 to 14.

A further motion was carried which applies minimum trading standards for all Board and Representative Committee Members.

Overall, the new rules are intended to enhance the governance of the Coop, which is very important as we continue to drive the organisation forward. Thanks to everyone who attended and voted on the day.



# 2022 Milk Quality Award Winners

ARRABAWN SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR - PETER CLARKE



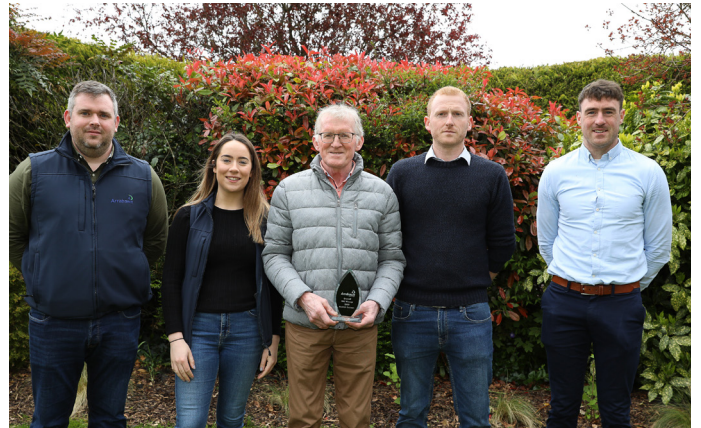
Micheal O'Kelly (CFO, Arrabawn Co-op), Edward Carr (Chairman, Arrabawn Co-op), Peter Clarke (Overall Supplier of the Year 2022), Sharon Finnegan (Branch Manager, AIB Nenagh), Natasha Clarke, Frank McGrath (Business Advisor, AIB), Conor Ryan (CEO, Arrabawn Co-op).

OVERALL SCC WINNER – BERNARD KELLY



Ronan Moran (Farm Relations Advisor, Arrabawn Co-op), Deirdre Divilly (Farm Relations Advisor, Arrabawn Co-op), Bernard Kelly (Overall Cell Count Winner 2022), Paddy Purcell (Milk Quality Manager, Arrabawn Co-op).

OVERALL TBC WINNER – PAT GUINAN



Ronan Moran (Farm Relations Advisor, Arrabawn Co-op), Deirdre Divilly (Farm Relations Advisor, Arrabawn Co-op), Pat Guinan (Overall TBC Winner 2022), Anthony Guinan, Paddy Purcell (Milk Quality Manager, Arrabawn Co-op).

OVERALL MILK QUALITY WINNER – BRIAN HAYES



Ronan Moran (Farm Relations Advisor, Arrabawn Co-op), Deirdre Divilly (Farm Relations Advisor, Arrabawn Co-op), Brian Hayes (Overall Milk Quality Winner 2022), Linda Hayes, Paddy Purcell (Milk Quality Manager, Arrabawn Co-op).



# MAY SPECIALS



**Calsea phos 15kg**  
only 2 for €70



**Pigtails €18.95**  
10pack



**Murphy concrete troughs**  
10%



**SilaSave**  
2 for €90



**Round Up/Gallup**  
save extra 10%



**Mag pack 25kg**  
2 for €60

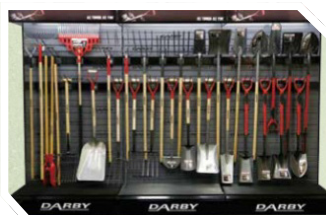
**ONLY €15**



**Voucher**  
only price  
16 litre sprayer



**ONLY 10%**



**Save 10% off**  
Darby / True Temper  
Range



# NEWS

## Gurteen College Farm

### Signpost Farm Update

Gurteen College at Ballingarry, Co. Tipperary has students coming from all counties. Gurteen offers students a level 6 qualification in agriculture with a chance to specialise in dairy, drystock or crops and machinery, the college has a proud history of providing hands on learning. This year Gurteen is also offering a degree in Ag Science and Sustainability in conjunction with Technical University Shannon. The College has a 1000-acre farm with dairy, beef, sheep, tillage, forestry, and willow.

#### THE HERD

Gurteen dairy herd has 240 pedigree Holstein Friesian cows spring calving milking 6164litres annually. We are producing 510kg milk solids with 3.55% milk protein and 4.2% milk fat. The stocking rate of the dairy unit is 2.8 LU / ha and the milk output is produced on 1.3 tonne of meal and growing 13.5t DM of grass on 85 ha grazing platform. In Spring 2023 we have 80 heifers to calf and 179 cows with 85% expected to calf in 6 weeks. Excess heifers will be sold. We rear 50 bull calves, the remaining bulls are sold through the mart and all dairy and beef replacement heifer calves been reared for 12 weeks before been transferred to the Drystock unit.

#### BREEDING

The EBI of the dairy herd is €183 with the top 10% being €194. The 2021 heifers have an EBI of €214 and the 2022 heifers have an EBI of €223. We have good breeding performance with a calving interval of 370 days and a six-week calving rate of 84%. Our replacement rate is 22%. Friesian heifer replacements are contract reared by the drystock unit. The Dairy has 2.5 full time labour units and relieve help after that.

#### PLANS FOR IMPROVING SUSTAINABILITY

This is a busy teaching farm and its important to us that there is an emphasis on sustainability on the farm across the primary areas including reducing emissions, improving water quality, and enhancing biodiversity on the farm. The next generation of farmers need to see sustainability in action on our farm. To reduce emissions, we have been using protected urea for some time with good success. A focus for 2023 is on reducing our reliance on chemical nitrogen which will be good for our pocket and good for the environment. We will achieve this reduction through a combination of good soil fertility, making best use of slurry and incorporation of clover into our grassland swards. We want to increase the potential of our soils to sequester carbon. We have a flux tower on the farm which is recording carbon exchange

in real time which will give us some valuable information. As regards water quality, we are very conscious of buffer zones, fencing our waterways and we are considering some tree planting in 2023. Part of our plan to improve biodiversity on the farm is to incorporate more hedgerows and plant trees. Reducing our energy demands is important to the farm. We have solar PV panels installed, use willow biomass to fuel the heating system for the entire college and rainwater harvesting for use in washing down the parlour. We have a miniature anaerobic digester unit which we hope to get up and running later this year. With a lot happening on the farm, I hope to share what we are doing in all these areas over the coming months.

#### 2023 TARGETS:

- In 2023 the Gurteen Cow aims to achieve:
- 510kg milk solids per year
- >8.1% combined fat and protein
- Peak 2.2kg milk solids at grass
- 85% of bodyweight as milk solids
- 82% of diet as forage
- 85% calved in 6 weeks in Spring
- Low incidence of lameness
- Correct udders with low SCC
- Herd EBI in the top 10% of Irish dairy herds.
- 70 Friesian Heifer to breed
- Plan to milk 240 cows on 85ha
- Target to improve clover is to stay below 150kg/ha, we are now one of the signpost host farms
- Target to wean calves @ 100kg



- Target to breed heifers at 330kg @ 15 months 60%
  - 550kg @ 24 months .
- Aim to produce 500kg of milk solids in 300-day lactation and building up to 550kg of milk solids when herd matures. All been done through breeding programme and grassland management.

#### 2022 PRODUCTION

Replacement Rate %	22.00%
Protein %	3.55%
Fat %	4.20%
Calf mortality	4.50%
Average EBI	€183
6 week calving interval	84%
Herd avg lact	3.2
Stocking rate	2.8LU/Ha

**Use protected urea.**  
It's cheaper than CAN



**Cut silage before the 20th of May for young stock and finishing animals**



**To help reduce age at slaughter, graze grass at 8-10cm**



**Check that silage effluent collection and storage facilities are working properly**





**Only set clover on high P & K index soils with a pH of 6.3+**



**Apply 15kg of sulphur per hectare to cereal crops to improve N efficiency & crop yields**





## GURTEEN COLLEGE FARM – MAXIMISING SLURRY!

We have considered slurry to be a valuable source of nutrients for a long time now and would have always said that we spent time planning our slurry application to make the most effective use of it. However, when the price of fertiliser skyrocketed last year, we spend double the time planning our slurry application for the year and it was at that moment I realised that even though we thought we were doing great work planning our slurry application there was much room for improvement.

Through long term planning and yard development we are in the lucky position that we are very rarely under pressure for slurry storage, which gives the added benefit of applying slurry when we want rather than being forced to spread because tanks are full. We aim to go out in February. On our bare paddocks we apply 2,000 gallons per acre, then as the cows graze the heavier covers, we try to follow them with the same application. So, ground conditions allowing, all paddocks get 2,000 gallons of slurry either before or after the first grazing. There are always some areas that are too wet to spread.

We then turn our attention the silage ground which will get 2,500 gallons per acre, at this time of year we also look at our paddocks with lower P and K indexes and try to give them an additional application of slurry. One of the interesting things our soil samples have shown us, is that our only paddocks with low P and K indexes are the wetter paddocks. We very quickly realised that this was caused by years of avoiding the wet paddocks with the slurry tanker and always applying slurry to the dry paddocks, so now when ground conditions allow we prioritise those paddocks with low indexes. Then, after first cut silage, slurry stocks are usually getting low, and we will prioritise the silage ground with the poorer soil analysis.

**This year we have started to get our slurry tested and get back a nutrient value for it.**

The slurry sample must be taken when the tank is mixed and the easiest place to get a sample is from the back of the tanker, which means the slurry is spread before we have the results for it. But that's ok, we are in this for the long haul, we will then use the test results to build a picture of what P and K value we can put on each of the different tanks. Some slurry is more watered down than others. Some is from sheds that house beef cattle on high concentrate diets, others from dry cows, others are from sucklers or weanlings, and they all produce different results. After a couple of years, we will have a good average of the value of the slurry in the different tanks and we can adjust our spread rate according to what tank we are spreading from and what field we are going to. There is an old saying, if you don't measure it, you can't manage it. Knowing what nutrient value is in our different slurry tanks allows us to better manage our slurry.

We have been spreading with a trailing shoe for 3 years now and we are definitely seeing a difference, better nutrient uptake by the plant, less taint to the grass when cows are grazing and reduced odour. We have a turbo evo pump on our tanker, which has a macerator in it. The slurry passes through this macerator while filling and emptying so the slurry is chopped twice before it reaches the distribution head on the trailing shoe. Between this and being careful about good mixing of the slurry and trying not to allow too many forging objects into the slurry tanks we find blockages in the trailing shoe aren't an issue.

## Signpost Farm Update

*Conor Camon*

Conor is farming with his parents Padraig & Mary outside Cloghan, County Offaly. The Camon's are milking 110 cows on 38 ha. April was a challenging month on farm with the mixed weather and growth has been slow. See below for updates for April on Camon's Farm



Litres/Day	27.7
Fat %	4.12
Protein %	3.40
SCC	190
MS/day	2.14
AFC	713
Cover/cow	170
N to date on MP	72 Units
Slurry to date on MP	One-third of the MP received 2500gls/acre
Breeding Start Date	01/05/2023
Breeding Finish Date	11/06/2023 Angus Bull to follow for 3 weeks post breeding date
Expected Silage cutting Date	09/06/2023

### PLANS FOR MAY

- Breeding – started on May 1st. Team of seven bulls chosen. 50% bred to Friesian AI + 50% to beef.
- Paddocks taken out for baled silage (covers post 2000kg DM/ha)
- Plan to follow baled paddocks with dairy washings + 18 units of chemical N on grazed paddocks.
- Paddocks increasing in size from 1.1ha to 1.6ha to cope with herd size increase.
- Finish off concrete work in newly constructed calf shed.
- Expected silage first cut will commence on 09/06/2023. Silage ground received 3000gls/acre slurry vis LESS plus an additional application of seventy-two units of chemical Nitrogen.

## MULTI-SPECIES SWARDS (MSS)

If you are applying/applied for the Department of Agriculture Multispecies sward scheme, you may be interested in learning a little more about how best to sow multi species swards.

**CHOOSING A SITE AND PREPARATION:** Choose grazing paddocks over silage fields and choose paddocks with low weed burden. Avoid commonage and land designated as Natura 2000 as they are excluded from the DAFM scheme. Also avoid replacing areas of existing biodiversity (naturally diverse permanent pasture that is not designated) or unused land on the farm with new multi-species swards. It is important that soil fertility is good i.e., pH 6.2-6.5 and Index 3+ for P & K.

**SEED MIXTURE:** The multi-species sward mixture must include 6 species and the inclusion rates listed below for each 12kg pack, is the minimum requirement. The species mix sown must at least contain the minimum quantities per hectare set out in the table below:

Plant Species	Weight per pack (kg)	Minimum amount per hectare (kgs)
Perennial Ryegrass (PRG)	6.6	16.50
Timothy / other non-PRG grass	0.7	1.75
White Clover	1.5	3.75
Red Clover	1.5	3.75
Plantain	1.0	2.50
Chicory	0.7	1.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.0</b>	

**WEED MANAGEMENT:** Address weed issues with herbicide before sowing. No post-emergence spray can be applied to the whole field once MSS / clover swards are established. After reseeding, the only methods for weed control are either spot spraying/ weed licking/wiping (using a spray that targets the most prevalent weed e.g., for thistles use "Thistlex"), mechanically picking/removing weeds or regular topping to reduce annual weeds. Direct drilling results in lower weed emergence as does good establishment.

**METHOD OF RESEEDING:** Similar to grassland reseeding, best conditions for sowing are

without drought or frost, and ideally a warm, moist seedbed (~10°C) between April and August. Plough/ Till / Sow o Spray-off the existing sward as per normal reseed. Then cut the existing sward as tight as possible while complying with the prescribed interval between spraying and cutting.

- Cultivate soil as you choose (disc/harrow/plough)
- Lime should be applied, if necessary. If using minimum cultivation apply 5 tonne of lime per hectare to the desiccated sward pre-cultivation. If ploughing address any lime requirement post-ploughing.
- Apply normal seed bed fertiliser at sowing (P and K with N) based on soil test results. o Sow the multi-species seed mix at a rate of 12kg/acre (30kg/ ha) at approx. 1 cm deep (choose seeder carefully to avoid seed separation).
- Roll to get fine firm seed bed and good soil and seed contact. o Allow 6-8 weeks before the first grazing to let herbs establish strong taproots, only graze if new plants are strong enough to withstand grazing Direct drilling into stale seed bed/minimum cultivation This is environmentally beneficial because it retains more soil organic matter than a full reseed. o Graze/cut off existing sward as tight as possible,
- Spray-off with glyphosate as per normal reseed
- Comply with the interval between spraying and grazing/cutting prescribed on the herbicide label.
- Sow at approx. 1 cm deep (choose drill carefully to avoid seed separation)
- Roll to ensure soil and seed contact o Seed bed fertiliser and lime as normal for reseed.
- Allow 6-8 weeks before the first grazing to let herbs establish strong taproots, only graze if new plants are strong enough to withstand grazing.

Over-sowing into an existing sward is another option but can be less reliable than a full reseed. It has the advantage of being cheaper, taking fields out of production for a shorter duration, and better protecting soil carbon. When done correctly (and with favourable conditions), it can be very successful. However, for the DAFM MSS Scheme, the grass component must be included as part of the seed mix, so over-sowing will be a less relevant option.

Applications for the scheme must be made as part of the BISS application which has a closing date of 29/05/2023.

FUNDRAISER FOR ST. MARY'S NATIONAL SCHOOL CLOGHAN & BANAGHER SHANNON BANK PARK DEVELOPMENT

**RUNNERS V RIDERS**

**RIDERS**

**19-21 MAY**  
Mizen to Malin **600 km**

**26-27 MAY**  
Cloghan to Galway **200 km**

**RUNNERS**

**27 MAY**  
Banagher to Cloghan **10 km**

**SCAN & DONATE!**  
www.idonate.ie/  
event/runnersriders23  
ALSO DONATE THROUGH  
SPONSORSHIP CARDS

**BBQ & MUSIC**  
St. Mary's National School  
**SATURDAY 27 MAY, 4.30pm**

Follow us on:

**ahi** Animal Health Ireland

**CELL COUNT SOLUTIONS**

**A FREE IN-LACTATION CONSULT FOR DAIRY FARMERS**

- ✓ Would you like to reduce your SCC and improve milk quality?
- ✓ Is mastitis costing you money or creating problems for you or your milkers?
- ✓ Would you like an opportunity to create a herd-specific plan with your vet?
- ✓ Do you know you can avail of a free veterinary visit?

The Cell Count Solutions service is a free consult delivered by a trained veterinary practitioner, chosen by you, and is an opportunity for you to begin the process of mastitis problem-solving. It is also a first step in creating a multi-disciplinary team for your farm, to support you along the road of investigating and resolving mastitis issues. The consult will look at all relevant areas, including the cow, the milking routine, the environment, records etc. so that you can develop a farm-specific plan.

You nominate the people you want to include, such as your milk quality or farm advisor, milking machine technician etc. This service is funded through the Targeted Advisory Service on Animal Health and supported by the Rural Development Programme, and coordinated by Animal Health Ireland.

**To register for the service, see the [AHI website](#).**

Animal Health Ireland, 2-5 The Archways, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, N41 WN27  
Phone 071 9671928 | Email [pc@animalhealthireland.ie](mailto:pc@animalhealthireland.ie) | Website [www.animalhealthireland.ie](http://www.animalhealthireland.ie)

Stay connected with us!! Check out our website for weekly farming updates. Find us at [www.arrabawn.ie](http://www.arrabawn.ie) Connect with us on social media on Twitter @arrabawncoop and @milk4profit for regular farming updates and promotional offers. We are also on Facebook at Arrabawn Co Op. For further information or advice on any subjects or products mentioned in this newsletter Please ring 087 0963869 • Email: [farmsupport@arrabawn.ie](mailto:farmsupport@arrabawn.ie) • Check out our Website: [www.arrabawn.ie](http://www.arrabawn.ie)