



Arrabawn Milk Supplier Sustainability Bonus 2024

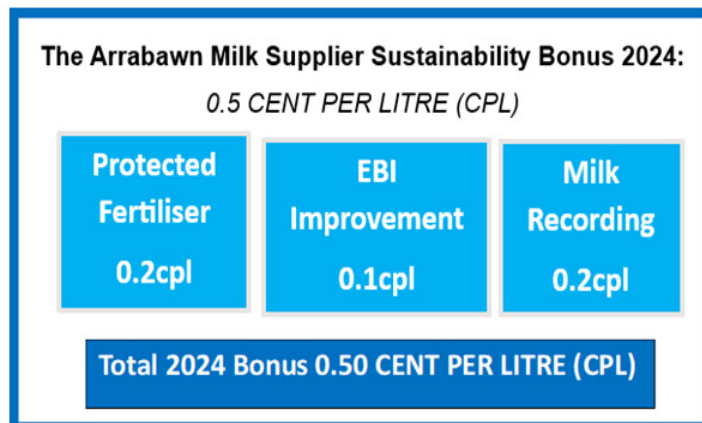
Arrabawn has an ongoing focus on sustainability and a commitment to the environment at our core. We know our milk suppliers hold similar values and are equally committed. It is our priority to create a sustainable future for Irish farming, and changing how we farm to reduce our environmental impact, will be key to ensuring we can do this.

Arrabawn Co Op has introduced a sustainability bonus, called the Arrabawn Milk Supplier Sustainability bonus, which we offer our milk suppliers who undertake impactful sustainability measures on their farm. Suppliers who opt into this scheme in 2024,

have the potential to receive a bonus payment of 0.5 cent per litre (cpl) on a monthly payment in exchange for meeting three sustainability criteria:

1. Using Protected Fertiliser
2. EBI Improvement
3. Milk recording.

Based on extensive consultation we have chosen to implement these three measures as they are impactful, measurable, and proven to work. We believe implementation of these three measures will have a significant impact on environmental indicators, especially Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Please refer to



the application form for more details.

Contact Paddy Purcell on 087 0963869 for more details.



Jordan Egan receiving his award for Dairy Student of the Year 2023 from Gurteen Agricultural College last month. The Gurteen College Dairy Student of the Year is proudly sponsored by Arrabawn Co Op. In the picture above – Conor Ryan (Arrabawn CEO) is presenting Jordan with his award.

March Animal Feed Rebate!

In recognition of the continued poor weather and the effect on milk production, Arrabawn Co Op has decided to support Milk suppliers in the form of a feed rebate of €30 a ton on all dairy feed delivered from March 11th to April 6th. Contact your sales representative for more information.

Date for your Dairy!

ARRABAWN CO-OP AGM

Our Annual General Meeting is scheduled to take place at 11am on 19th April 2024 in the Abbey Court Hotel, Nenagh. We look forward to seeing you on 19th April.

Milk Quality Standard Changes

From March 1st, 2024, the following table outlines the payment structure for Somatic Cell Count.

Quality	Payment
<200,000	0.4c/litre bonus
201 - 300,000	Base price
301 - 400,000	-1c/litre
401 - 500,000	-2c/litre
501 - 600,000	-4c/litre
600,000+	-8c/litre

Please contact your milk advisor for assistance with managing your SCC.



Milk Recording Service

James 087-6064344

How do I sign up?

Contact us and have the following details ready:

Herd Number

Number of units in your parlour

When you want your first test

www.dairydata.ie

Achieving SCC under 100,000

CLARE CLABBY, FARM RELATIONS ADVISOR

A SCC less than 100,000 is preferable as this optimises udder health and subsequently optimises cows' production performance. Arrabawn suppliers with a bulk tank SCC less than 200,000 cells/mL for the year will receive a +0.4 c/litre bonus. From January 2024, Arrabawn suppliers with a bulk tank SCC between 301,000 and 400,000 will be penalised -1.0 c/litre. This penalty increases to a maximum of -8.0 c/litre for a bulk tank SCC 600,000 or greater.

For example: if we compare a 100-cow herd supplying an annual total of 500,000 litres with three different bulk tank SCC for the entire year*

A bulk tank SCC of less than 200,000 for the year
500,000 litres x 0.4 cent = €2,000 bonus

A bulk tank SCC between 301,000 and 400,000 for the year

500,000 litres x -1.0 cent = -€5,000 penalty

A bulk tank SCC 600,000 or greater for the year
500,000 litres x -8.0 cent = -€40,000 penalty

* It is important to note that payments are based on the geometric average of the number of tests carried out in the month.

Managing the SCC of the bulk tank can a significant impact on the profitability of the herd. There a number of relatively low cost management strategies that can help play a significant role in reducing bulk tank SCC. SCC is an indicator of infection (mastitis) in the udder. Cows with an SCC greater than 200,000 (high SCC) are generally thought to have an infection.

1. Hygiene of cow housing and the environment

This includes cubicles, standing yards, walkways, and calving pens. Regular cleaning of these areas reduce the risk of new infection. Regularly running scrappers, regular cleaning out of calving pens and cleaning cubicles twice per day both in the dry period and after calving are important management factors to reduce risk infection. In addition, regularly clipping cows tails helps keeps cows cleaner which can reduce the risk of new infections.

2. Pre-Milking Routine

Fore stripping cows is recommended to identify early infections. This involves discarding 3 to 5 strips of milk on the ground before attaching the cluster. Fore strips

should be inspected for any abnormal changes in the appearance of the milk, for example lumps or a watery appearance. When fore stripping, avoid getting milk on the persons hands as this can potentially contaminate the next cow. Forestripping should be prioritised to freshly calved cows if labour constraints are an issue. Forestripping also stimulates the teat which encourages quicker let down of milk and reduces milking time.

3. The California Mastitis Test

The California Mastitis test (CMT) is a cheap and convenient test that can be used to identify cows with high SCC. This can be a useful tool to use before adding cows to the bulk tank. A sample of milk should be collected from each quarter after the first 3-5 strips of milk are discarded. A reagent is mixed with the sample of milk at a 50:50 rate. The reagent reacts with somatic cells present in the milk. If the solution becomes thick and jelly like, this indicates the quarter has a high SCC. If there is no change in the consistency of the solution, it remains liquid/watery, this indicates a low SCC. It is important to note that a change in consistency indicates a high SCC, a change in colour is NOT an indicator of high SCC. A step-by-step video showing the process can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OW56-50hnRs>

4. Teat dips

Proper application of teat dips after milking can reduce the risk of new infection by 50%. The purpose of teat dips is to kill any bacteria that may have transferred to the teat skin during milking. A minimum of 15mL of product should be sprayed per cow/ per milking. It is important the entire teat is covered with teat dip, not just the teat end, to achieve an effective kill of bacteria present. It is recommended to only use teat spray products that have been registered with the Department of Ag. A list of registered products can be found at <https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/animals/dairy/research-farms/Registered-teat-disinfectant-products-Sept23.pdf>

It is important to note the teat end takes approximately 20 minutes to fully close after milking. Lying down immediately after milking before the teat end is fully

closed can increase the risk of new infection. If cows are being housed after milking, let cows stand in the collecting yard or shut off access to cubicles for 20 minutes until the teat end has closed.

5. Milk recording.

Milk recording is an important tool to identify and monitor problematic cows in the herd. A minimum of 4 milk recordings is recommended across the lactation to give a broad view of cows' performance. It is recommended the first milk recording is carried out within the first 60 days after calving to identify cows with high SCC. This allows early identification of problem cows and reduces the risk of problem cows infecting healthy cows in the herd. Milk recording early in the lactation also gives an indication of dry cow management. Cows that had a low SCC at drying-off in 2023 and a high SCC in the following early lactation, likely picked up the infection over the dry period. Chronically infected cows, with 2 to 3 milk recordings over 200,000, and not responding to antibiotic treatment, should be considered for culling. Chronically infected cows act as a source of infection for healthy herd mates.

Stressed cows after calving can have a high SCC but may not have an infection. It is important to note that stressed cows will have a high SCC in all FOUR quarters. If a cow is high in only ONE quarter, this indicates infection rather than stress. The California Mastitis Test can be useful to distinguish between the two.

This year Arrabawn suppliers can avail of a 0.2 c/litre bonus for completing 4 milk recordings as part of the Arrabawn Milk Supplier Sustainability Bonus. To use the same example as above, a 100-cow herd supplying 500,000 litres will receive a bonus of €1,000 for completing 4 milk recordings.

There are two types of milk recording services available, the Recorder service or the Electronic DIY service. Contact your local milk recording organisation to find out more and to book in your first recording.

Munster Bovine – 022 43228

Progressive Genetics - 046 954 0606

Dairy Data – 087 6064344

**25TH MARCH
TO APRIL 6TH**

SPECIALS



Arrabawn
Co-Op

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Have you ordered protected urea for 2024?

February has been a challenging month on the grazing front, and one would have to ask - is this the norm going forward? With global temperatures predicted to rise, leading to high grass growth in spring and autumn, will the problem now be that ground conditions will prevent grazing?

At this stage, every opportunity should be taken to graze. It is important to get through the first rotation, so ideally target lower grass covers, graze parts of the farm that are dry and use a backing fence to prevent damage. It is essential to avoid a grass deficit in early April, and so it is important to fertilise grass when ground and weather conditions are favourable. Remember that slurry is a valuable fertiliser and should be prioritised for silage ground and paddocks with low phosphorous and potassium indexes. (See below fertiliser plan for 2024)

Fertiliser has been slow to move

in 2024, but really should be in the yard at this stage ready for spreading when conditions allow. In buying chemical nitrogen fertiliser, protected urea should be the product of choice. This is because it is one of the key technologies for agriculture, in meeting its 25% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Extensive research in Teagasc has shown that protected urea delivers consistently on yield when compared to CAN based fertiliser and standard urea. In addition to this, protected urea reduces nitrous oxide emissions in comparison to standard urea by 78%. By switching to 100% protected urea on a dairy farm, total farm emissions have the potential to be reduced by 7-8% at a spreading rate of up to 200 kg N/ha, while on a suckler farm spreading 60 to 80 Kg N/ha the reduction is in the region of 1-2%.

Table 1: Average price of nitrogen fertiliser in 2023

	CAN 27%	Standard Urea	Protected Urea
Kg N/tonne	270	460	460
€/tonne	€680	€750	€810
€/Kg	€2.52	€1.63	€1.76

In addition to reducing impact on the environment, using protected urea can also result in cost savings. When comparing nitrogen fertilisers in 2023 (Table 1), protected urea worked out 30% cheaper than CAN per kilogram of nitrogen.

Protected urea was also slightly more expensive than standard urea in 2023, however an 8-year trial in Johnstown Castle is showing that the grass grown by protected urea grew 13% more grass on average compared to standard urea in 7 out of the 8 years of the trial. At a time where chemical nitrogen must be reduced, moving from standard

urea to protected urea offers the opportunity to reduce fertiliser N rates by up to 10% while maintaining the same yield.

Before buying fertiliser, it is important that you know the fertiliser allowances for the farm. A nutrient management plan will identify the limits for nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. From the 1st of January 2023, all farms with a stocking rate above 130Kg organic nitrogen per hectare, need soil samples. If there are no soil samples, the phosphorus will be assumed as index 4 leaving you with no option to buy phosphorous or import slurry.

N fertiliser and Slurry application plan for 2024

Fertiliser/Slurry Split	Product	1 st 40% of Farm Area	15% of Farm Area	15% of Farm Area	3 rd 30% of Farm Area
January/February ¹	Cattle Slurry ²	2,000 gals/ac (16 units N/ac – 20 kg N/ha) Lower covers (<1000 kg DM/ha) ⁴			
February ¹	Protected Urea (NBPT)			23 units N/ac (29 kg N/ha)	23 units N/ac (29 kg N/ha)
	Cattle Slurry ²		2,500 gals/ac (20 units N/ac – 25 kg N/ha) Mid-February after grazing ¹	2,500 gals/ac (20 units N/ac – 25 kg N/ha) End-February after grazing ¹	
March	Protected Urea (NBPT)	40 units N/ac (50 kg N/ha)	40 units N/ac (50 kg N/ha)	23 units N/ac (29 kg N/ha)	40 units N/ac (50 kg N/ha)
Total N by 1 st April	Slurry + Fertiliser N Units/ac (kg/ha)	56 units N/ac (70 kg N/ha)	60 units N/ac (75 kg N/ha)	66 units N/ac (83 kg N/ha)	63 units N/ac (79 kg N/ha) Total 60 units N/ac (75 kg N/ha) ⁴

Arrabawn Water Quality Improvement Programme

Free advice to all our suppliers • Confidential service

• Focus on areas to improve water quality!

1. Farmyard Management
2. Land Management
3. Nutrient Management

Water Quality Action Plan for each Farm

For more information Contact Michael O Dwyer on 087 2667153



Funding for Water Protection Measures

Funding is available under the Water European Innovation Partnership for measures implemented to reduce the loading of Phosphates, Nitrates and Sediment entering our river network from agricultural sources.

Among the measures for which funding is available are, Hedgerow Establishment, Fencing of Waterbodies, Multi Species Swards, Pasture pumps and solar powered pumps with water troughs, Riparian Buffer Zones, Small Scale Wetland Ponds and Willow Beds, Sediment Traps and Water Bars, Farmyard Sediment Collection Tanks, Culverts and Bridges, Gateway relocation.

Teagasc/Arrabawn Signpost Update 6-3-2024

Update 6-3-2024: There is a high amount of grass on all signpost farms at present. Grazing in general has been challenging throughout February and with only 16% grazed to date, the aim is to increase grazing as soon as possible. On average, 73% of cows have calved. With cows housed early in many cases, and now are slow to get grazing, fodder reserves are being monitored carefully. If fodder reserves are impacted, this will be taken into account in planning for silage 2024. The target should be to have to 2 bales/cow surplus in the yard each year. Slurry and protected urea will be spread on the farms when ground conditions and weather allow.

		Litres/		Protein		Kg/MS		Average			
Farmer	County	Cow	Fat%	%	SCC	Cow	Meal Kg	Farm Cover	Growth	% Grazed	% Calved
Conor Camon	Offaly	28	4.29	3.47	75	2.24	5			0	65
Ned Kelly	Tipperary	25	4.57	3.3	144	2.02	6	1285	8	8	60
Conor O'Brien	Galway	23	4.79	3.38	62	1.94	5			35	85
Gurteen Ag. College	Tipperary	25	4.52	3.41	134	2.04	6	753	3	20	80
Average		25	4.54	3.39	104	2.06	5.5	1019	6	16	73

PLAN FOR MARCH:

1. Cows grazing at every opportunity
2. Slurry spread on silage ground and low index grazing paddocks
3. Protected urea as nitrogen source

AgNav – Know My Number – Make My Plan



A “Know My Number – Make My Plan” component of the programme, supported by AgNav the Sustainability Digital Platform, will allow farmers to see and understand their carbon emissions and sequestration profile as a baseline on which to act. A team of 21 Signpost climate advisors are here to support this programme.

AgNav is a programme that calculates the greenhouse gas emissions for a farm. It collates data from ICBF plus Bord Bia and uses Teagasc’s life cycle assessment models to calculate the emissions produced on a farm. To find your emissions number, you need

to sign up for the Signpost Advisory Programme.

With advisory support, farmers will make a plan to improve by adopting positive changes and technologies, and advisors will help them with the implementation of the plan and tracking of progress.

This will also create trust and build capacity for supporting the adoption of new technologies as they emerge. The ambition of the programme is to engage with 50,000 farmers between now and 2030. Use your phone to scan the image below to sign up for the programme.



Bulk Fertiliser Spreading

GPS Auto Steering
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Variable Rate
Application
Accurate Spreading
Precise Headland
Control
10 Ton Capacity

Clarkill Farming
Clarkill
Borrisokane
Contact

Stuart: 086-9888498
Mark: 087-4102556

Feeding the Dairy Cow PROTEIN AND ENERGY BALANCE

If you have noticed low protein on your test 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 into 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 cannot 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. Do not 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 protein diets must be matched with high energy to balance the diet of the cow.

Grass Protein %	Protein Requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stemmy = 16% • Leafy = 22-25% • Average = 20% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Lactation = 16-18% • Mid Lactation = 16-17% • Late Lactation = 16-18%

While keeping the energy high is key to meet the demands, a buffer can also be offered to help maintain the rumen also. 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'Connors.

In summary:

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

DIET AND ITS IMPACT ON FERTILITY.

The quality of feeding in the dry period and early lactation is important in achieving good herd fertility. Therefore, many issues cannot be solved by just looking at the diet during the breeding season itself.

It remains important to get some key targets right however, such as body condition score (BCS). The target score for cows during the breeding should be 2.75 plus to improve conception rates.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF SOME COWS ARE BELOW TARGET?

It will take a couple of months to fix very thin milking cows by feeding 2-3kg extra meal. Short-term improvements in conception rate will be minimal. If there are thin or non-cycling cows in the herd that are due for breeding, milking once-a-day (OAD) for six weeks can boost fertility. High economic breeding index (EBI) cows have been proven to maintain better BCS across a range of diets, explaining in part why their fertility is better.

Following on from this, it is very important to choose high EBI bulls to generate a future generation of high cows. These cows will sustain better BCS across a wider range of diets.

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS FOR FERTILITY

Energy intake drives milk performance, maintains BCS, and improves fertility. Ensure that the herd is grazing the best quality grass possible (1,400kg covers, three leaf stage). For herds that are currently grazing it is recommended that farmers watch residual grass in paddocks after grazing (target 4cm grass left). This ensures cows are cleaning out paddocks efficiently, but not being pinched on intake. The last month has thrown all sorts of weather and supplementation of any deficits of grass must be given in time, no delays.

High quality pasture contains a high level of crude protein (Nitrogen N) which milking cows use with feed energy to make milk protein. Surplus N in the diet may elevate blood and milk urea levels and this may give rise to concerns on fertility. Under good management, bulk milk urea does not explain much difference in fertility between herds. Apply fertiliser N small-and-often during the breeding season; do not overload fertiliser N under drought conditions; and feed high energy 14% crude protein rations at grass to control any risk.

Trace minerals (copper, cobalt, iodine, selenium, manganese, and zinc) can affect fertility, if lacking in the diet. There are many boluses on the market which ensure cows get enough of these essential minerals on a daily bolus. They need to be given about a month before breeding to allow the bolus to work most effectively.

The above mentioned is not a quick fix for poor genetics/low EBI cows, poor heat detection methods, thin cows, or lack of cow supervision. These steps are key foundation and must be right first. The diets, boluses and energy balancing will compliment and allow for continuous improvement on the basic husbandry needs.

Nutrition plays a vital role in achieving good herd fertility and that the quality of feeding in the dry period and early lactation can affect outcomes.

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For further information or advice on any subjects or products mentioned in this newsletter
Please ring 087 0963869 • Email: farmsupport@arrabawn.ie • Check out our Website: www.arrabawn.ie