



AHV Ireland Animal Health Dairy Farmer of the Year 2024



Paul Mars, Animal Health and Longevity Manager AHV Ireland, presents the AHV Ireland Animal Health Dairy Farmer of the Year 2024 at the National Dairy Awards to Peter Clarke (Arrabawn Co Op Supplier). The award recognises and rewards excellence in achieving high standards of animal health.

Successful Day at Arrabawn Open Day in Gurteen College

Arrabawn Co-Op would like to thank everyone who came out to support the open day on June 21st in Gurteen College. The Open day titled "Protecting our farming Future" was a chance for our milk supplier's family and friends to gather together for a cup of tea and a chat. The event was presented to showcase where we are as an industry in terms of water quality trends and what are the next steps for us as farmers and processors that we can take to ensure we do everything possible to help maintain the Nitrates Derogation into the future.

All the trade exhibitors put on a great display and showcased their products and services to the highest of standards. We hope that all who attended found the event informative and worthwhile. The rain in the afternoon did not dampen the spirits of our exhibitors as they made connections with plenty of new customers.

To our guest speakers on the day, they provided us with a huge amount of knowledge and expertise, and it was very encouraging to hear the positivity that was in the room from both the speakers and the attendees.

Lastly, a massive thank you and congratulations to Gurteen College and a special mention to Jon Parry, Kenneth Flynn and Maura Campbell for their co-operation and help throughout the whole process and for making the Open day the great success that it was.



Arrabawn Co Op Open Day

“Protecting our farming Future”



Arrabawn Co Op hosted a very successful Open Day “Protecting our Farming Future” at Gurteen Agricultural College, Ballingarry, Co. Tipperary. The event was designed to showcase water quality improvement actions which can be implemented across all farms and farmyards. The Q&A session outlined where we are currently regarding water quality trends in Ireland and where we need to get to in order to maintain the Nitrates Derogation as it is currently. Pictured during the panel discussion were, from left, Damien O'Reilly (ICOS), Conor Mulvihill (Dairy Industry Ireland), Edward Carr (Arrabawn & ICOS Chairman), Ted Massey (DAFM Senior Inspector), Eddie Burgess (Teagasc ACP Programme). \ Odhran Ducie



Arrabawn chairman Edward Carr pictured with Peter and Natasha Clarke at the Arrabawn Open Day at Gurteen College. Peter was recently awarded the AHV Ireland Animal Health Dairy Farmer of the Year at the National Dairy Awards. PHOTO: ODHRAN DUCIE



Mick O'Sullivan, Cian Ryan, Edward Carr (Chairman, Arrabawn CO-op) and Ailbe Ryan at the Arrabawn Open Day at Gurteen College. PHOTO: ODHRAN DUCIE



Arrabawn's Noel Kennedy (General Manager, Agri Division) with Don and Harry McLean and Jerry Moloney at the Arrabawn Open Day at Gurteen College. PHOTO: ODHRAN DUCIE



Kevin and Evan Grace attending the Arrabawn Open Day at Gurteen College. PHOTO: ODHRAN DUCIE



Arrabawn's Noel Kennedy (General Manager, Agri Division), Billy Walsh (Group Head of HR & Company Secretary) and Edward Carr (Chairman) at the Arrabawn Open Day at Gurteen College. PHOTO: ODHRAN DUCIE

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What are the targets for top quality milk?

A good indication is the criteria used for entry into the National Dairy Council (NDC) Milking for Quality Awards - all SCC must be below 200,000 cells/ ml for each month, TBC results below 15,000 cfu/ml, no thermoduric, TCM or antibiotic failures. So, what are your daily milk quality results telling you?

This table is a handy guide:

UNDERSTANDING TBC RESULTS

0-15,000 cfu/ml	Excellent Milk Quality
16,000 – 50,000 cfu/ml	Good Quality milk, minimal bacteria present
51,000 – 100,000	Fair quality milk, bacteria are present, investigate the cause and address any issues
>100,000 cfu/ml	Very poor-quality milk, large numbers of bacteria present, take immediate action.

UNDERSTANDING THERMODURIC RESULTS

0-250 cfu/ml	Good quality milk – little or no thermoduric bacteria present
250 – 500 cfu/ml	Some thermoduric bacteria present – investigate the cause
>500 cfu/ml	Large number of thermoduric bacteria present – investigate the cause immediately

UNDERSTANDING TCM

<0.0012	Low Levels – monitor
>0.0012	TCM levels must be reduced – take action

UNDERSTANDING SCC RESULTS

>150,000 cells/ml	Excellent Mastitis Control
150 -200,000 cells/ml	Good Mastitis and SCC control
200-400,000 cells/ml	Unstable control, review practices and procedures to reduce SCC levels
>400,000 cells/ml	Indicates little to no mastitis control, urgent action is needed. Seek help from local advisor or Vet.

Summer is always a time of challenge for controlling bacteria on farm. Often it is the onset of the warmer weather when problems arise and once, they get a foothold they start to build up and this can lead to mastitis spreading between cows, thermoduric or TBC problems. The below article will explain some key steps in preventing Thermoduric bacteria.

What are thermoduric bacteria?

Thermoduric bacteria are organisms that exist in the environment. They can be found in soil, water, bedding, silage, and faeces. Entry into the milk is most often through the teat skin. Inadequate cleaning results in deposits building up on the milking machine surfaces. The presence of thermoduric bacteria is indicative of ineffective cleaning somewhere in the milk production process (cow, environment, milking plant). Contamination of milk with thermoduric bacteria can cause processing problems as these bacteria are in a heat resistant form and can survive the pasteurisation process. This in turn can affect the shelf life of products and give rise to potential health hazards to consumers. For these reasons it is important to aim to always keep thermoduric counts below 100/ml. Tips to reduce thermoduric bacteria in milk

- Maintain cows in a clean environment- collecting yards and approach roads should be scraped regularly.
- Clip cow tails and udder hair- minimum 3 times/year.
- Cow's teats should be clean and dry before attaching the clusters. Dusty teats are not clean teats. Keep hands/gloves clean throughout milking.
- Keep milking clusters clean during milking and if they fall on the floor flush out completely.
- Do not wash down clusters while still attached to the cow.
- Do not wash down the platform while cows are present
- Follow a recommended descale and caustic wash program. Correct detergent strength should be used following manufacturer's instructions. Ensure adequate

volume of the detergent wash (9 Litres/ unit) so that all surfaces will be in contact with detergent solution.

- Hot washes (75-80°C) are vital for controlling thermoduric bacteria.
- Vacuum lines should be always kept clean. If the collection jar floods at any time of the year milk can travel back to the overflow jar and into the vacuum line. There is a plastic ball present to stop this from occurring but when foam is present it can bypass the ball and a milk residue can build up. If it is necessary to wash out the vacuum line, contact your milking machine service technician.
- Thermoduric bacteria can build up in perished rubber ware so liners should be changed every 2000 milking's or every 6 months depending on which comes first. Long rubber tubes on the plant should be checked regularly for perishing or cracking or changed every 2 years.
- Dirty plate coolers can also cause thermoduric bacteria - wash with a clean filter sock in so particles do not lodge in the plate cooler.
- The bulk tank should be inspected regularly so that it is washing correctly. Spray balls/jettors can become blocked or partially blocked which will affect the spray pattern around the tank.
- Disinfect the bulk milk tank outlet regularly. Blocked suck up detergent tube will result in insufficient detergent usage so these should be replaced annually.
- Avoid having the milk supply pipe immersed in milk during milk transfer.
- Cool milk to 3/4°C within 30 mins of completion of milking with the aid of a plate cooler as some thermoduric bacteria will multiply at temperatures above 4°C. If you think you have a milk quality query do not hesitate to contact your Milk Quality Advisor.

- Ronan Moran – Farmer Relations Advisor 087 1469651
- Clare Clabby – Farmer Relations Advisor 087 9152835
- Paddy Purcell – Milk Quality Manager 087 0963869

Reducing Phosphorus Loss to Water

There has been a lot of focus on Nitrogen in media coverage in recent times, but it is another nutrient, Phosphorus, that is causing issues in many watercourses draining heavy soils. Nutrient application followed by significant rainfall on poorly draining and low permeability soils leads to overland flow transporting nutrients to waterbodies. Targeted fertiliser application at optimum times throughout the main growing season, particularly on low permeability soils, along with suitable land management can help mitigate against the risk of phosphorus & sediment making their way to our rivers and streams.

Farmers should have a Nutrient Management Plan for the farm prepared and implemented to ensure the nutrients in slurry, FYM and chemical fertiliser are directed to where most needed. Slurry should only be applied when soil temperatures are above 6 degrees and ground conditions, and weather forecast are suitable. It is important that the applied



slurry gets down to the roots of plants such as grass in the growing season, preferably bare fields or fields with low grass cover. On very heavy land it may be necessary to delay spreading until after the first cut silage. Extra slurry storage allows more flexibility on spreading times, particularly in a very wet spring. Under the Nitrates Directive, slurry must not be spread if heavy rain is forecast within 48 hours, but on poorly drained soil this period should be extended further. Spreading slurry with Low Emission Slurry Spreading (LESS) equipment such as a trailing shoe, dribble bar or the injector system can dramatically reduce losses and improve nutrient efficiency. LESS results in reduced sward contamination which allows more flexibility to spread on heavier covers in improved weather and ground conditions.

A riparian buffer zone is an area adjacent to a water body where no chemical and organic fertilisers, cultivation or spraying can be carried out. These zones vary in width and are required to protect waters from diffuse losses of nutrients, sediment and chemicals. The introduction of trees or

rough dense vegetation in these areas can act as a barrier, shade streams and stabilise riverbanks while the roots can absorb soil nutrients. To be effective, riparian buffer zones must be located at the points on the farm most likely to allow nutrient, sediment or pesticides enter a waterbody. These are often low-lying parts of farms where surface runoff accumulates in high concentration.

Phosphorus does not bind to peat soil particles, so unlike mineral soils, peat soils do not have the capacity to build up a store of phosphorus. Only apply the phosphorus that the plant needs and can use for growth immediately – do not apply excess amounts of P (e.g. reduce slurry rates) as it risks being lost to waterbodies. Sediment loss to water has been identified as a major concern in recent years. If sediment finds its way to the stream, it can settle on the riverbed in slow flow areas, resulting in the loss of macroinvertebrate habitat and spawning ground. Phosphorus binds to sediment and when washed into the watercourse, can cause excess nutrient load and promotes algal blooms which reduce oxygen levels in the stream. Agricultural practices such as land drainage, cattle access drinking points to streams and poor management of farm roadways can lead to loss of sediment & phosphorus.

Mitigation options to reduce sediment loss include:

- Prevent access by livestock into drains and streams and providing alternative drinking water sources.
- Divert all surface runoff from farm roadways to a field or soak pit
- Establish targeted riparian buffer zones
- Employ proper drain maintenance practices including the following:
 - Only carry out drain maintenance during the months July to September
 - Only one side of a drain to be cleaned at a time
 - Drains should not be over-cleaned, retain as much vegetation as possible
 - Ensure the bank is sufficiently sloped afterwards to prevent collapse
 - Silt/ sediment traps should be in place prior to installing new open drains leading to streams.
 - Stone should not be filled to the surface of new field drains.
- When farmers are applying fertilisers, cultivating, grazing or draining land close to watercourses, careful, site-specific land management can minimise the risk of Phosphorus and sediment loss and help improve water quality.

As farmers you are being asked to do more to look after the environment on your farm. This worksheet sets out to identify areas of your farming system where action could be taken to improve sustainability and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Steps to action

Step 1: Complete the checklist below to help you identify actions that you might take on your farm to reduce GHG emissions

Actions to reduce GHG emissions

Actions to reduce GHG emissions	Yes/no
I am using protected urea	
I am applying lime to low pH soils	
I am building and maintaining soil fertility (P&K)	
I am maximising the use of my slurry and using low emissions slurry spreading equipment (LESS)	
I am reducing chemical nitrogen (N) by 20kg/ha	
I am incorporating clover into my grassland swards	
I am using grass measuring to optimise use of grazed grass	
I am improving the beef genetics of the beef calves produced in my herd by using the Dairy Beef Index (DBI)	
I am increasing milk solids/cow by milk recording, culling poor performing cows and milking cows for a 305 day lactation	
I am using high EBI bulls to increase herd EBI by greater than €10/year and I use sexed semen to accelerate genetic gain	
I am calving heifers at 22-26 months and aiming for a 20% replacement rate	
I have a herd health plan	



Actions to improve biodiversity

- Retain a thorn sapling (or bunch of thorns) in all topped hedges
- Do not top escaped hedges
- Don't sow – let it grow. Cherish what is growing wild.



Actions to improve water quality

- Use pollution impact potential (PIP) maps to identify if your farm is at risk from diffuse phosphorus (P)/sediment or N losses to waters
- For P and sediment losses, 'break the pathway' with a riparian margin, earthen mound or settlement pond
- For nitrate losses, improve N-use efficiency by applying N at the right time, right rate, and right locations, and using the right product



Step 2: Identify three actions that you can take in the next 12 months:



What is Summer Mastitis?

Summer mastitis is a serious condition of heifers and cows and can be fatal if not treated promptly. It is mainly caused by the bacterium *Trueperella pyogenes* and other bacteria can increase the severity of the disease. Flies are considered central to its transmission and hence the association with summer. Damage to the teat, trauma and irritation of the udder are also important risk factors. Summer mastitis is associated with late summer and autumn but can occur at other times of the year. The flies live in bushes and trees and only fly out to feed on cattle when wind speeds are low and in the absence of rain. The majority of summer mastitis infections occur in the front quarters of udders, and this is likely as these teats are reached more easily and that the swishing effect of the tail removes flies more from the hind teats

CLINICAL SIGNS

Often the first clinical sign is stiffness when the animal is walking. Other symptoms include a swollen, painful

teat or quarter, and can be easily identified by careful observation, particularly when flies become attracted to it. In most cases, once the bacteria gain entry, they produce toxins which may lead to septicaemia (blood poisoning). As the illness progresses, further signs are swelling of the hind legs, obvious lethargy and separation from the herd, abortion and even death. Some animals wall off the infection without showing any symptoms. Eventually in these cases, pus may burst out through the skin from the abscess formed within the affected quarter.

TREATMENT

Very few affected quarters recover, and treatment is aimed at saving the animal and the pregnancy. Treatment involves regular and repeated stripping of the affected quarter, to remove as much affected material as possible. The strippings should be carefully discarded because they increase the risk of spreading infection. Regular stripping is combined with anti-inflammatories

and antibiotics, both intramammary and injectable. Oral or IV fluids may be necessary depending on how sick the cow is. Getting antibiotics to where they are needed is a challenge, as a large amount of pus is present, hence the importance of anti-inflammatory drugs. Heifers and cows with summer mastitis are best isolated to prevent the spread of the mastitis between animals.

PREVENTION MEASURES

Various management practices can be put in place to help reduce the incidence of summer mastitis. The importance of having good fly control measures in place cannot be over emphasised. Flies should be controlled from early in the fly season using products containing synthetic pyrethroids which are available in pour-on preparations, or impregnated fly tags. Depending on the product used it may need to be repeated regularly, as often as every 2 weeks during the summer season. Also, the application of fly repellents around the udder area, such as traditional Stockholm tar and



teat spray help reduce the number of flies attracted to the cow's udder. It is important to avoid grazing cows/ in-calf heifers in fields that have a history of summer mastitis incidences. These tend to be fields that are near rivers or marshy areas or where there is a high density of trees/ hedges where flies tend to populate. More exposed pastures are preferred as high winds inhibit fly activity. Observing and checking animals and teats on a regular basis is essential as the earlier the mastitis is detected the better the prognosis and good teat condition will reduce the risk of infection. Good hygiene measures at drying off and the use of teat sealers are essential control measures to minimise disease as the teat seal plugs the teat, preventing bacterial transfer from the environment and especially from the fly.

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