Arrabawn NEWSLETTER

Together we grow

SEPTEMBER 2024 - Issue 9

As you are aware, Arrabawn and Tipperary Co-Operative have entered preliminary exclusive discussions regarding a possible integration of our operations, including potential amalgamation.

The exclusive exploratory process has been undertaken with a view to creating a stronger entity within the Irish dairy industry. The milk pool of both would place a combined entity in

the top four co-op processors in Ireland.

Discussions are at an early phase with no decisions made around a potential transition.

Any change in structure would be subject to due diligence and require approval of the board of directors and ultimately the milk suppliers of both co-ops, as well as regulatory approvals.

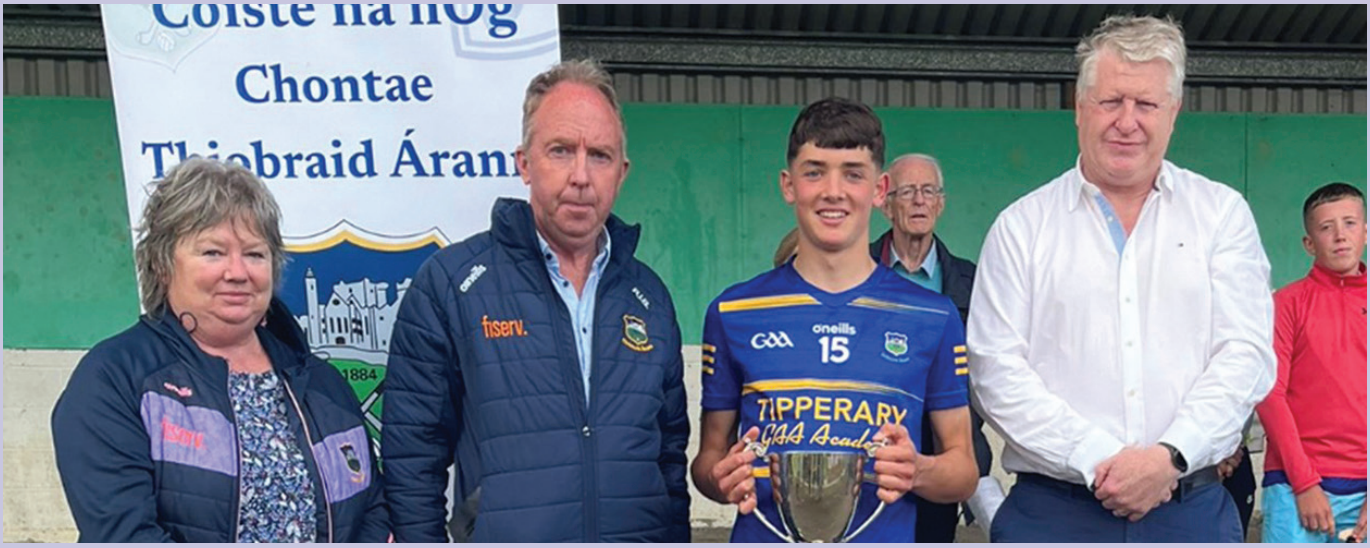
A merger will only be considered if it enhances the return for milk suppliers, members, employees, and customers, while at the same time maintaining our commitment to delivering the highest quality product and sustainable development of the Irish dairy industry.

Further updates will be provided, as appropriate. In the meantime, both Coops will continue to operate our businesses as usual.

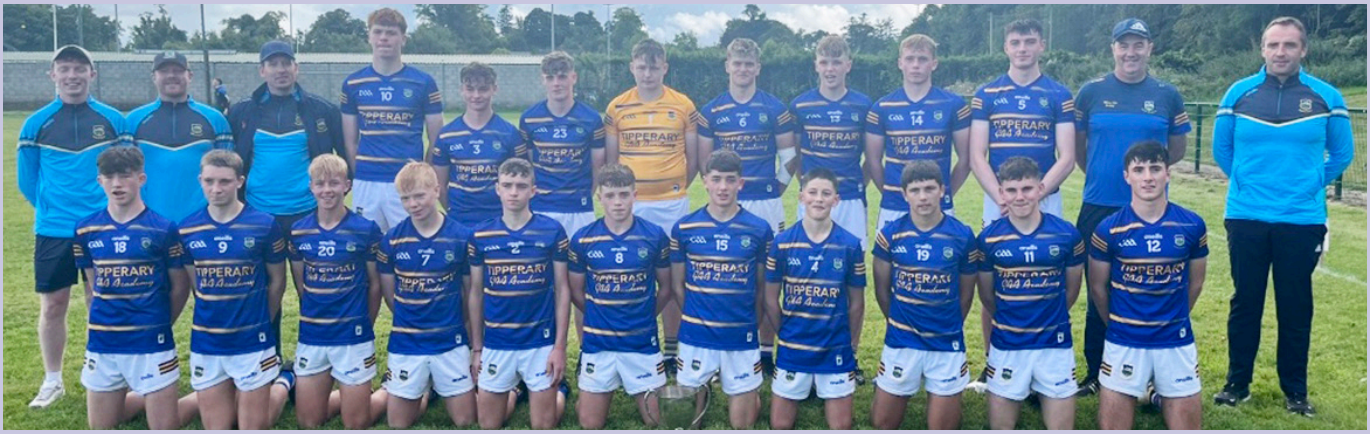
Area meetings will be arranged for discussion in due course. As Chairman, I encourage you all as Dairy farmers to please come out to attend these area meetings to gain a full understanding of the benefits of this potential merger to Arrabawn.

Edward Carr
Chairman of Arrabawn Co Op

Arrabawn U15 All Ireland



Huge congratulations to Tipperary who claimed the Arrabawn U15 All Ireland following a 6-12 to 4-03 win over Kilkenny on the 24th of August last. Captain Shane Ryan picking up the trophy from Conor Ryan (Arrabawn CEO) & PJ Bowden (Chari of BNG)



NEWS

Farming for Water Quality Farm Event

The well attended Arrabawn Farming for Water farm event took place on Wednesday, September 4th on Eoin Toohey's farm in Moneygall, Co. Offaly, and improving our waterways in an effort to retain the Nitrates Derogation was the key focus.

Toohey's farm is located in the Ballyfinboy area, which is a priority area for action for the Arrabawn river catchment water quality improvement project.

The four pillars of the Ballyfinboy project are as follows:

- Improvement of water quality in the catchment.
- Demonstration of best farming practices that will achieve good water quality.
- Showcase work carried out on farms under the water EIP.
- Good water quality benefits everyone.

The farm walk had four different stands which had speakers from Arrabawn, the Local Authority Water's Programme (LAWPRO), AGNAV, Teagasc and Tipperary County council.

Ruth Hennessy from the Local Waters Programme (LAWPRO) presented data on the quality of the waterways within the Ballyfinboy catchment. The Ballyfinboy catchment area is at risk of sediment and Phosphorus losses from poorly draining soils within the catchment. Interception measures such as buffer zones from fertiliser & Slurry as well as planting hedgerows is being recommended to farmers in the area. Nitrogen is also an issue in the catchment as some of the catchment experiences free draining soils. This was particular evident for Eoin Toohey's farm where one side of the farm is located on free draining soils and other is located on wetter poorly draining soils.

Kate Tynan from the Farming for Water EIP team spoke about the funding available for farmers to implement measures at farm level. There is €60 million available to all farmers who are in an area for action. This funding is provided to assist farmers in implementing the measures advised through the ASSAP programme, with the end goal being an improvement in water quality.

David Webster from the Teagsc ASSAP team spoke about what mitigation measures farmers can undertake on their farms to prevent nutrient losses to waterways. He said that the number one point is to have your soil tested and have a nutrient management plan in place followed by appropriate and sensible spreading procedures. David emphasised the importance of having a fence 1.5m away from the river or drain, to remain 3m away when you are spreading chemical fertiliser and 5m away when you are spreading slurry.

Conor Ryan (Arrabawn CEO), Eoin Toohey (Arrabawn Milk Supplier), Edward Carr (Arrabawn Chairman), Paddy Purcell (Milk Quality Manager)

David Webster of Teagasc ASSAP outlining the buffer zones for spreading fertiliser and Slurry

This does not apply all year-round and he urged attendees to spread when the conditions are right and that "you should not be forced out with slurry which means your capacity has to be sufficient". Gillian Delahunt from Tipperary County Council gave her perspective on the water quality challgenes facing farmers and in particular the Ballyfinboy catchment. Gillian set out to attendees the importance of reducing nutrient loss from farms and that farm inspections are "not out to get" the farmers but are there to improve water and secure the derogation.

She highlighted the importance of a well-designed farmyard with good storage facilities, and appropriate effluent run-off. Delahunty also specified that "when you are inspected and there are things that have to be improved, we give you time to get a few things sorted"

The final stand of the Farming for Water event delivered a run down on the importance of AGNAV, an online sustainability platform for farmers and advisors which provides an environmental performance of individual farms. The platform records all the inputs and outputs of an individual farm and gives the farmer back a decision support tool to identify potential measures and creates a tailored farm sustainability action plan.

Arrabawn would like to thank the Toohey Family for to hosting the Farming for Water Farm Event.

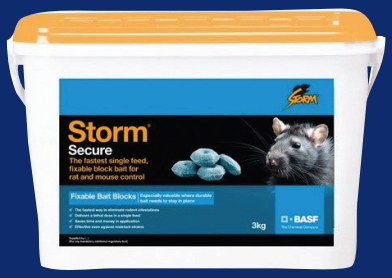
Kate Tynan of Farming for Water EIP outlining the funding available to farmers.

SEPTEMBER OFFERS

SPECIALS

Arrabawn Co-Op

STORM RAT BAIT



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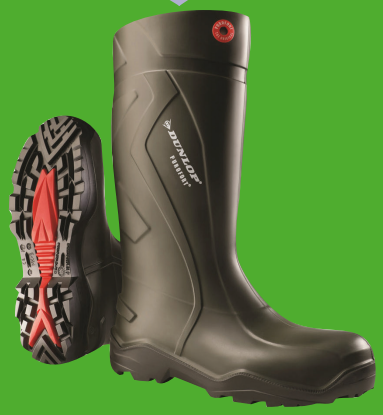

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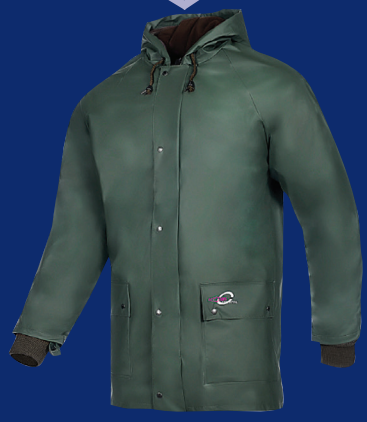

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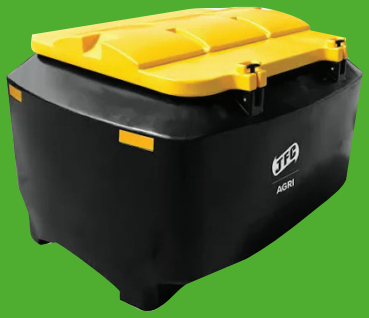

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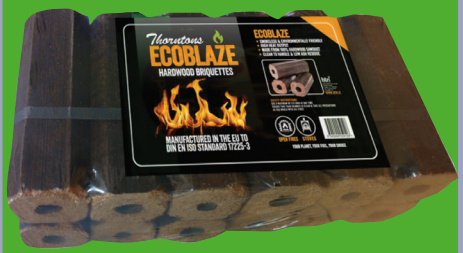


www.arrabawnstores.ie

NEWS

Order your protected urea for 2025

Apply lime to correct soil pH

Apply P & K at sowing time to low fertility fields (Index 1 or 2)

Introduce creep feed to weanlings to minimise weaning stress & maintain good live weight gain

Get your silage tested

Check that you are meeting your September grazing targets

What does a high bulk tank somatic cell count cost you?

Is your bulk tank somatic cell count (SCC) starting to creep up slightly? If so, don't ignore it! It is likely to be because the number of infected quarters in your herd is starting to increase a little, which in turn can lead to more infected quarters, and so on. Milk recording your cows regularly allows you to easily see what is happening within your herd. It is the best tool you have to establish which cows are the most profitable in your herd, while also identifying cows with a high SCC, indicating subclinical mastitis.

Don't assume that small bulk tank SCC increases during the summer will 'settle down'- act now, and set your herd up for late lactation, with minimal mastitis infections and maximum milk production.

The financial impact of a 'creeping' SCC should not be underestimated. For example, at a milk price of 30c/L, if the average bulk tank SCC of a 100-cow herd increases from 150,000 cells/mL to 250,000 cells/mL, it reduces the overall farm profit by approx. €8,200.

This reduction in potential profit increases to over €12,200 if the bulk tank SCC increases from 250,000 cells/mL to 350,000 cells/mL.

This is huge money to be losing, especially in a year such as this where margins are tight.

WHAT IS A HIGH SCC?

Any cow with an SCC of 200,000 cells/mL or higher on a milk recording, probably has at least one infected quarter. Depending on the type of pathogen she is infected with, it is very possible that she is a source of infection for other cows in the herd.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MINIMISE THE PROBLEMS CAUSED BY THESE INFECTED COWS?

1. **Know who they are!** This is where milk recording is essential, also providing reports that give an overview of the whole herd, highlighting the areas of good mastitis control and the areas that could be improved. If there are some parts of the report that you don't understand, ask for help from your milk recording organisation, vet or advisor.
2. If you aren't yet milk recording, **use a CMT (paddle)** to identity the infected cows and quarters.
3. These high SCC cows should be marked and milked last, or their cluster disinfected after milking to **minimise disease spread.**
4. Now is a good time to **collect milk samples** (at least 10) from problem cows and send to the lab for culture and susceptibility testing. Samples need to be collected as hygienically as possible or else the results will be misleading.
5. When you get these results back from the lab, discuss a suitable **treatment plan** with your veterinary practitioner - while treatment may appear to be the most logical option, remember that cure rates can range from 20-80% depending on various factors, such as the bacteria involved, the duration of infection and the cow's lactation number.
6. **Remove the source of infection** -Dry off individual quarters i.e. simply stop milking it, do **NOT** use a dry cow tube. Consider culling if the cow is a problem cow i.e. high SCC in two consecutive lactations. These problem cows are not only costing you money, which is sometimes not apparent, but they can also be a source of infection for the healthy cows.

Continue to use post milking **teat disinfection** correctly, throughout lactation

Grass Margins for Increasing Biodiversity

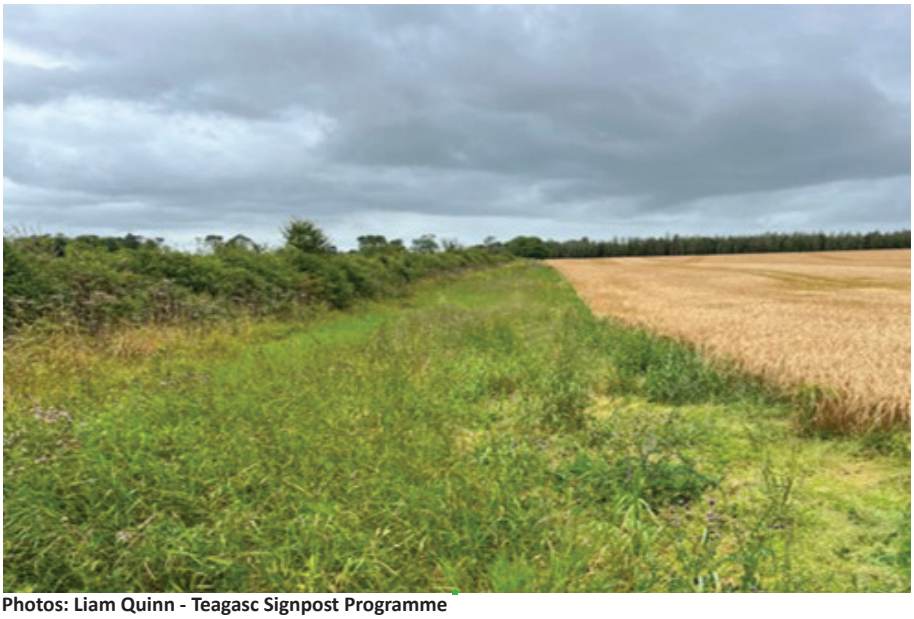
Intensification of agriculture has led to a decline in biodiversity, but it is possible to increase biodiversity while maintaining productivity. In May 2019, the Irish government declared a national biodiversity emergency. With this in mind, a conscious effort is required to increase and enhance biodiversity at farm level. Biodiversity includes all flora and fauna, as well as the habitats in which they exist.

In order to improve biodiversity, it is important to assess the quality and quantity of biodiversity that already exists on farm. Teagasc have developed a Biodiversity Management Assessment Tool, which can aid in this assessment (See link below). It is possible to restore some farmland habitats to improve biodiversity for example, coppicing or laying a hedgerow, but new habitats are required on some farms such as planting a new hedgerow, creation of buffer margins and establishing grass margins.

Grass margins are one of many methods used to improve biodiversity on farm. This is a simple measure with a relatively low cost involved. A grass margin involves establishing a field margin on a non-watercourse boundary by fencing at least 1.5m wide from the boundary. Grass margins vary in size, but generally, 1.5-to-6-meter widths are a good guide. The grass margin must remain uncultivated, unfertilised and unsprayed to allow native wildflowers and grasses grow, providing a habitat for biodiversity.

Grass margins can be established along a fence line in existing fields to provide a biodiverse boundary. They can be used to reduce overall field size while also increasing connectivity by linking up existing habitats on the farm. In large open fields, grass margins provide corridors, which help wildlife move through the landscape safely. Naturally regenerated field margins encourage the growth and seed production for native plant species. Grass margins are an essential habitat where invertebrates thrive; small mammals seek refuge, nectar and pollen establish for pollinators, as well as providing nesting and feeding sites for birds. Grass margins can also help protect water quality from nutrient and sediment run-off.

Grass margins need management through mowing or grazing but the timing of this is essential. It is important to allow the plants to flower, produce nectar and pollen, and set seed firstly as well as leaving nesting fauna undisturbed. After the nesting season, the margins need to be grazed or mown with the cuttings removed. The best time to complete this is from September to February. Grazing is likely the better option as if the cuttings are left in-situ; this will create a nutrient source for more competitive plant species and noxious weeds. The removal of nutrients from these areas allows native plants to flourish. Mowing or grazing of grass margins is also essential in controlling scrub encroachment and either method can be used to create a variation in sward structure, which will benefit overwintering invertebrates and other species.

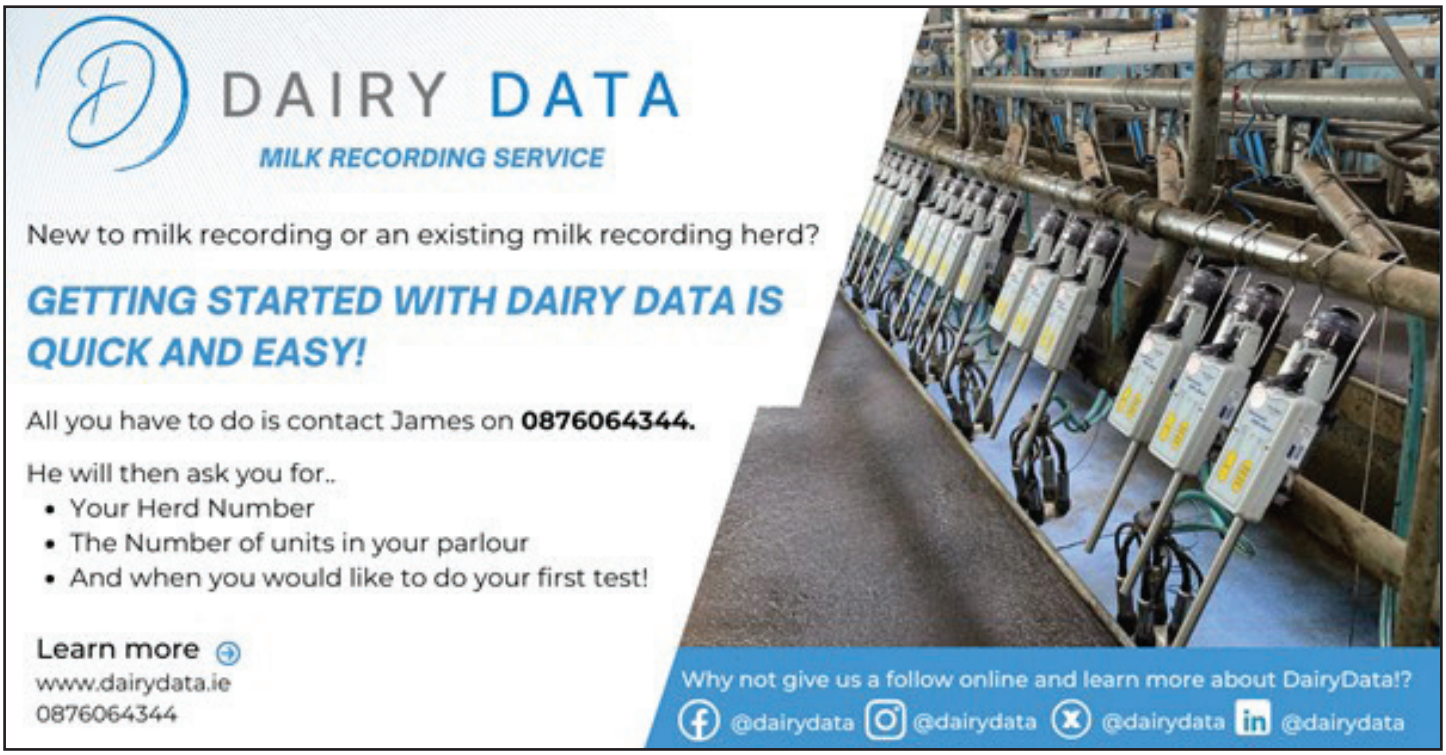


Photos: Liam Quinn - Teagasc Signpost Programme

In summary, grass margins are an option to increase biodiversity on farm. They are relatively low cost and low maintenance and can support a wide range of flora and fauna while creating a new habitat. An added benefit of the grass margin is that they are beneficial in linking with other linear habitats, reducing average field size and improving the overall connectivity of the farm.

https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/environment/biodiversity-countryside/Teagasc-Biodiversity-Management-Practice-Assessment-Tool.pdf

NEWS



Preparing for Late Lactation

A sufficiently long dry period is important to allow the udder tissue to repair and rejuvenate. Many of the cells that produce milk are removed and replaced again before the next calving. A minimum dry period of six weeks and preferably eight weeks is recommended and expected calving dates should be used to ensure all cows get the required dry period. The last month before drying off is critical for SCC levels and mastitis control. There may be a small rise in a cow's SCC in late lactation however any significant increases at this stage are a result of udder infection which is often subclinical and by now, chronic. Cows with persistent infection have the potential to spread infection, as well as raising bulk tank SCC.

If you are considering switching to once-a-day milking for farm management reasons, be aware that this may affect your bulk tank SCC. The same mastitis infection risks exist for both once-a-day and twice-a-day milking and once-a-day milking during lactation does not itself appear to significantly increase the incidence of intramammary infection, however it can increase the individual cow SCC and therefore the bulk tank SCC. If switching to once-a-day milking during late lactation it may be necessary to dry off the high SCC cows early. Once-a-day milking is not recommended for herds with a bulk tank SCC >200,000 cells/ml.

Drying off high cell count cows early will help lower bulk tank SCC and reduce the risk of spreading infection. Other considerations such as body condition score, production levels, and feed availability may also indicate that earlier drying off dates are appropriate for some cows.

Collecting data to assess the herd mastitis level is very useful when deciding which cows need antibiotic dry cow treatment, non-antibiotic dry cow treatment or culling. You will require 1) the bulk tank SCC analysis for the previous 6 months 2) at least three separate individual cow SCCs spread over the current lactation and finally 3) records of clinical cases.

When using selective dry cow treatment, it is important to look at criteria such as all cows with a peak SCC of above 200,000 cells/ml during the current lactation (assuming you have a full milk recording history for the year) and all cows which have had a clinical case in the current lactation and decide on these cows' treatment on a case-by-case basis. Treating first lactation cows has the best cure rates.

When choosing an antibiotic to use on your herd you should consider consulting your vet. They can help you assess factors such as:

- previous culture results and antibiotic responses on your farm.
- Claimed cure rates of products for existing infections.
- Required minimum dry period of cows.
- Benefits of teat sealer.

Consider culling any cow that has had three or more clinical cases this lactation. If only one quarter is involved, you may prefer to dry-off that quarter and milk the cow as a 'three teater'. Use a simple and clear identification method that all milkers are familiar with to avoid risk of accidental cluster application. Consider culling cows that have had a high cell count in two consecutive lactations despite treatment with an antibiotic dry cow treatment in the dry period in between. Do not use antibiotic dry cow treatment on cows which you are going to cull immediately, for cows that have received antibiotic treatment and are subsequently culled the withholding period of the treatment must be adhered to.