October/November 2021

TIPPERARY
COOPERATIVE

NEWSLETTER

In this newsletter we will be covering the following topics:

OCTOBER GRAZING - LOWER FEED COSTS AND SET UP FARM FOR SPRING!

Compiled by John Maher, Teagasc Dairy Specialist

There are two objectives in autumn grazing management of dairy cows. Firstly, the cows must be adequately fed using the cheapest available feed which is grazed grass. Every day at grass is worth €2 cow/day additional profit.

The second objective is set the farm up for spring grass. The most important task any dairy farmer will undertake over the next 2 months is to ensure that the farm is closed off properly to ensure that an adequate supply of grass is available early next year. The last rotation needs to be planned to have grass early in spring. The last rotation should begin in early October (5th to 10th) for most farms. This date will vary a small bit according to grass growth, soil type and to a lesser extent with stocking rate. For farms with a difficult soil type closing up should begin in last days of September. To get good clean outs of paddocks a strip wire will be necessary.

The first closed paddocks will carry most grass over the winter period and ideally should be paddocks that have been grazed out well, cut once or twice during the grazing season (this includes silage ground) as they will be cleaner and easier to graze out. Most of these paddocks will not be grazed until March, when more cows are calved and grass intake is rising.

The most critical paddocks to close up the farm though are the paddocks that are needed for the rainy day next spring. These paddocks:

- are drier paddocks on the farm
- are square in shape
- have a farm roadway on 2 sides
- have lots of access and exit points
- have good access to water
- have a medium cover of grass next spring (800-1000 kg DM/ha)

To achieve a medium level of cover on these paddocks, they will need to be closed in late October.

Every farmer should identify about 4-5 of these paddocks to close in late October to have available for grazing for the rainy day next spring.

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Pictured at the Tipperary Co-Op Annual General Meeting at Ballykisteen, Co. Tipperary are John Daly, CEO; William Ryan, Chairman; Eamon Doody, Chief Financial Officer and William Meagher, Vice Chairman.

NOTICE
UPCOMING FACTORY OPEN WEEK

During the week of October 18th to October 22nd we are delighted to welcome our milk suppliers and shareholders to come and see Tipperary's new dryer, evaporator and waste water treatment plant.

Construction commenced in 2018 and was completed at the end of 2020. This major investment by your Board of Directors underpins confidence in dairying for decades to come and puts your Co-Op at the heart of a vital and diverse international customer base.

Invitations will be issued by electoral area and tours of the facility will be conducted in small groups.

In order to manage visitor numbers, we will ask you to RSVP by phone or e-mail once you receive your invitation.

Closing up the farm on heavier land

While closing up on the farm will be influenced by ground conditions and can be challenging, paddock choice during closing is critical. To get started grazing next spring, some of the drier paddocks that have good grazing infrastructure with roadways and plenty of access/exit points will need to be targeted. So these paddocks will need to be closed earlier to ensure a grass good supply is available to start grazing next spring. There is often the temptation to graze these paddocks late on a heavy farm because of their drier soil type and good grazing infrastructure. Every day at grass in spring is worth €1/cow/day more than grass in autumn.

Date when 60% is closed

This is a very critical date. For most farms this is early November. This is because most of the grass available in early spring has been grown in October/early November. Very little growth occurs over the winter months so most of the grass available in spring is carried over from the previous autumn/early winter. The target is to have about 60% of the farm closed up by November 1st. Where higher stocking rates/very compact calving exist on the milking platform, the amount of the farm to be closed will be over 75%.

Encourage clover – close late!

The road ahead now for many dairy farms will include a reduction in Nitrogen fertiliser input. Clover in the sward will

become a source of Nitrogen to replace chemical N. Many farms will have carried out reseeding during the year. Some paddocks on farms will have some clover in the sward especially those reseeded in the last 2 or 3 seasons. This clover needs to develop well to supply N during the summer months going forward on the farm. The rule is simple this time of year to encourage clover into a greater presence in the sward for future N generation. The clover plan needs light across the winter months and light in the spring to enable it to make a successful contribution to the sward the following season and especially summer months. Therefore the swards with the best clover potential must be closed later rather than earlier. The ideal time to close these paddocks is late October/Early November.

To encourage clover, close the sward later rather than earlier!

FARM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Please see the current data on the focus farms in the Tipperary Co-Op/Teagasc Farm Development programme.

Week Ending 2nd October 2021	John, Charlotte and John G Crowe	Peter Hughes and Paul Maguire	Glen Tour Farms	Seamus, James and Janice Farrell	T.J. Ryan	Solohead Research Farm
Milk Yield (Litres)	18	20	19.6	20	20.5	15.5
Butterfat %	4.70	4.68	4.57	4.48	4.67	4.94
Protein %	4.00	3.68	3.93	3.82	3.85	4.11
SCC ('000)	60	82	51	108	92	249
Milk Solids/Cow/Day (Kgs)	1.61	1.72	1.70	1.70	1.79	1.44
Concentrate Fed (Parlour Kgs/Days)	2	3	4	3.5	4	0.5
Farm Cover (Kgs DM/Ha)	972	1405	1215	1000	978	1240
Cover Per Cow (Kgs DM)	467	450	389	350	284	485
Growth Rate (Kgs DM/Ha/Day)	62	47	70	65	69	65
Rotation Length (Days)	33	35	38	36	30	34
Scanning Results for 2021 (% Empty)	4	5	-	14	9.4	11.5

www.tipperary-coop.ie
Email: info@tipperary-coop.ie

WINTER MILK BONUS SCHEME

Your Board has decided to continue an initiative in the form of a Winter Milk Bonus Scheme covering the winter months of November, December, and January as well as continuing the existing February Bonus.

It is proposed to pay a bonus of 3.00¢ per litre for the respective months, based on achieving the following conditions:

- TBC less than or equal to 50,000/ml.
- SCC less than or equal to 400,000/ml.
- Thermodurics less than or equal to 1,000/ml.
- Lactose greater than or equal to 4.20%.
- Providing milk volumes in November of greater than 30% of the supply from the previous May.
- Providing milk volumes in December of greater than 15% of the supply from the previous May.
- Providing milk volumes in January of greater than 10% of the supply from the previous May.
- Providing milk volumes in February of greater than 15% of the supply from the previous May.

NOTE: Milk suppliers must supply milk in May to qualify for the bonus.

SNAPSHOTS FROM THE AGM

Tom Moher, Tipperary Co-Op takes details from shareholders attending Tipperary Co-Op Annual General Meeting.

Tom Downey, Golden, Billy O'Connell, Bansha and Andrew O'Neill, Tipperary Co-Op are pictured at the Tipperary Co-Op Annual General Meeting at Ballykisteen, Co Tipperary.

Donal Ryan, Borrisoleigh, Andrew O'Neill, Tipperary Co-Op and Michael Ryan, Borrisoleigh at the AGM.

Michael Slattery, Rossmore; Paul Fortune, Tipperary Co-Op and Matt Quinlan, Cappa are pictured at the AGM.

SOIL FERTILITY

Our farm services team at Tipperary Co-Op in conjunction with Farmteam Precision Agri will this year offer an enhanced digital soil sampling service to our customers. Digital soil sampling is the next evolution of soil sampling providing greater insight and making it easier to monitor and manage your soil health. Combining GPS tracking, satellite farm mapping and cloud technology the service provides soil test results in an intuitive and easy to understand map based format available accessible from your PC, tablet, or smartphone. Some of the benefits include:

- GPS Tracking – Samples locations are georeferenced to provide a record of where they were taken and full traceability
- Satellite Mapping – Easily define your sampling areas using satellite imagery to ensure samples are taken exactly where you want. Merge and split fields or target specific areas for sampling
- Easy and Intuitive Results – Test results are reported in an easy to understand map based format allowing you to understand results at a glance
- Field History – Digital records allow you to view and monitor soil status and progress over time
- Improved Fertiliser Recommendations – Using satellite mapping to calculate field areas provides the ability to accurately calculate fertiliser requirements on a field by field basis
- Web Portal – Results, maps and reports available online via PC, Tablet, and Smartphone
- Irish Laboratory – All samples tested in an accredited Irish laboratory

Grass is by far the cheapest source of feed on dairy farms. 15-20% of the total variable costs on dairy farms go towards fertiliser. In order to maximise the amount of grass grown on farms, soil fertility is paramount. The management of soil fertility should be a primary objective on farms.

Benefits of good soil fertility:

- More grass
- Increased milk yields
- Less fertiliser usage
- More Profit

A soil test will analyse the following:

- Ph (Lime Requirement)
- Phosphorus
- Potassium

Building Soil Fertility

1. Lime

Lime can be spread at any time of the year. This said it is important to spread when grass covers and ground conditions are low. September- December is best time to spread lime on grazing paddock. On silage ground it is best to spread after cutting to minimise risk of lime entering silage pits and bales.

It is recommended to spread lime on 20% of your farm every year in order to spread the cost of liming over a longer period. 2-3 T/Acre (5-7.5 T/Ha) is sufficient when spreading on fry ground and 1.5 T/Acre (3.75 T/Ha) should be spread on heavy land.

It is important to remember if lime has been spread then slurry should not be spread on that land for up to 3 months. This also applies to Urea based fertilisers.

2. Phosphorus (P)

Phosphorus is very sensitive to ph so if lime is needed, it is best to spread lime to help improve P uptake. P should be spread in the Spring and Autumn. Spreading little and often is the best approach to improving P

- 10-30kgs P/ha/yr for each index ($^1/_4$ - $^1/_2$ bag/acre of Gran 16% Super P). This is a guide of the amount of P needed depending on your soil results.

3. Potassium (K)

Potassium (K) is generally very low in silage fields due to K being available in large amounts. K is responsible for improving silage yields. It is important that 90 units/acre or 120 kgs/ha is spread for first cut silage and 28 units/acre or 35 kgs/ha is spread for second cut silage. It is important not exceed 90 units/acre or 120 kgs/ha in both first cut silage and in spring grazing swards as luxury amounts of K can cause milk fever in high K silages and grass tetany in high K grass swards. K should be spread in the Spring and again in the Autumn if needed. K is not regulated by the European Union's Nitrates Directive, so it can be spread during the closed period for slurry and chemical Nitrogen and Phosphorus if ground and weather conditions are suitable.

- 15-30 kgs K/ha/yr for each index ($^1/_4$ - $^1/_2$ bag/acre of Muriate Potash 0-0-50). This is a guide of the amount of P needed depending on your soil results.

These are the three main parameters that effect soil fertility. By analysing these soil tests and taking samples every 3-5 years you can manage your soil profile, in addition to this Andrew can create a fertiliser plan specifically designed to your soil results. These plans are designed to help improve your understanding of these results and as a result get the more value from these analysis.

If you would like to avail of this service and advice please fill out the BLUE FORM attached.

Teagasc Advisory Newsletter

ENVIRONMENT

October 2021

Key management dates

Edited by
Catherine Keena,
Countryside Management Specialist

Last date for spreading slurry, as the closed period starts on October 15.

Last date for ploughing grassland until December 1.

Closing date for online submission by derogation farms exporting organic manures and verification by receiver of Record 3. Last date for phosphorus (P) on winter cereals on soils with P index 1 and 2. Last date for spreading farmyard manure (FYM).

Closing date for Targeted Agriculture Modernisation Scheme (TAMS) applications.

Catch crops for Green Low-carbon Agri-environment Scheme (GLAS) or Greening can be grazed or removed.

Closing date for online submission and verification of Form 3 for farmers not in derogation for exporting organic manures. Closing date for submission of Form 4 (Temporary movement of livestock) and Form 5 (Short-term grazing agreements).

Teagasc
Agriculture and Food Development Authority

For further information on any issues raised in this newsletter, or to access other enterprise newsletters, please contact your local Teagasc adviser or see www.teagasc.ie.

Speak to your contractor about how you want your hedges trimmed.

Shop windows

Our hedges are like our shop window – to have our farm aesthetically pleasing is important, and the consumer is looking for biodiversity and sustainability.

Teagasc advice for farmers on hedge cutting depends on the hedge type. Firstly, for any escaped hedges which have grown up into a line of trees, Teagasc advice is to side trim only and not to top. Secondly, for any hedges that have been topped, Teagasc advice is to let them grow up to a height of 1.5m or up to the height the hedge cutter can reach. Also, it is advised to leave a thorn sapling in each hedge to grow into a thorn tree. For farmers in derogation, that means one every 300m.

Rather than negatively affecting grass growth, taller hedges break a harsh wind in spring. The shelter effect of a tree is multiplied many times in the field. On southerly-facing hedges, you have a sheltering effect where they are high. Animals like that for shade in the high summer. They'll go there to lie down to get away from the sun.

Have that conversation

Farmers and contractors need to have a conversation in order to change the perception of a well-kept hedge. The contractor is paid to do whatever the farmer wants done. Farmers need to pick up the phone, talk to the contractor and explain what they want, and the contractor will deliver.

What contractors need to do when the farmer rings to ask them to cut hedges, is to ask what way they want the hedges cut. Do they need to have thorn trees left in their hedges or do they want extra height in the hedges? Do they want their hedges to be fit for birds and bees?

Know your derogation commitments

Adopt at least one measure

1. **Leave at least one mature whitethorn or blackthorn tree within each 300 metres of hedgerow.**

2. **Maintain hedgerows on a three-year cycle.**

Cutting annually stops flowering and fruiting

Where farmers need or want to leave a whitethorn or blackthorn tree to grow up in the hedge, for example every 300m on derogation farms, the farmer should identify the thorn sapling to be retained. Mark the spot for the hedge-cutting operator. This can be done using a temporary pigtail stake or a more permanent painted fence post. After a few years, there will be no need for any marker, as the thorn tree will stand out by itself. It may be more efficient to retain a small bunch of thorn saplings in the first year, which can be thinned down to a single stem in later years.

SCANNING RESULTS – IS EMPTY COWS THE PROBLEM OR LOWER SIX WEEK CALVING RATES?

Compiled by Martin Kavanagh MVB Cert DHH

Fertility in Irish herds has been improving steadily in line with the continuous improvement in EBI. Six-week calving rate is a driver of profitability in grazing herds. Compact calving drives grass utilisation and allows for average cow lactations of greater than 270 days. Milk production is also steadily improving as EBI has increased. Our cows are producing more.

In the Autumn scanning, the focus is often on empty rate. The goal is to have less than 10% empty cows after considering cows deliberately culled. Also, this target should be achieved breeding in 13 weeks or within 4 cycles of bulling. While it is important to have a low empty rate, it is equally important not to be distracted by it – the goal is a high six-week calving rate and it is now apparent in some herds that even though the empty rate is low, the six-week calving rate in the cows is slipping backwards. This means that while the herd is going in calf, a proportion of cows are calving later each year.

The slip in six week calving rate is often masked by bringing in heifers that all calve in February either because of synchronisation or a very successful six-week in-calf rate in this group.

So, rather than looking at the empty rate alone, it is important to look at the six-week pregnancy rate in the cows which is available on the end of year fertility report on ICBF. Make sure you have uploaded the scanning or milk pregnancy test results to get this figure. The target for the six-week pregnancy rate for the cows is 75%. The national average is 71%. If the six-week pregnancy rate is slipping in your herd, check on the first service conception rate. If this figure is falling below 50%, then the mature cows are calving later, and you are losing days in milk and your grass utilisation advantage. Also, there is a risk with a too short breeding season that the empty rate also increases as these cows just do not have the chance to rebreed successfully.

One of the main issues affecting the cow herd when breeding, is energy loss after calving. There has been a revision upward in 2018 in the calculation for energy (UFL) required by grazing cows. Also, cows that are walking significant distances, over 800 meters, have an increased maintenance energy requirement.

When the new calculation is worked out, 600 kg cows producing 30 kgs of milk at 3.4% protein and 4% fat, need to eat 21 kgs of dry matter with a high energy content to avoid weight loss. Cows in early lactation will naturally lose some weight after calving because they cannot physically eat enough for 30-40 days after calving. What's important is that the weight loss is not rapid or for too long. Cows doing more than 30 kgs of milk in March may struggle to achieve high grass intakes and are dependent on concentrate supplementation to make up the energy deficit. A cow producing 30 kgs of milk, and allowed and eating 15 kgs of grass, will need 6 kgs of high energy concentrate minimum to maintain her energy intake. The cows producing 35 kgs+ will need 8 kgs of concentrate to stand still.

Every herd has 'super' cows; they eat more than the others, graze faster and compete better. Their intakes may exceed the standard allowances. What is of more concern are cows that don't compete as well but still milk to their potential.

The issue is always striking the balance between economic levels of supplementary feed and hitting the right grass residuals, so grass quality is not compromised due to poor first round clear outs.

Before the next breeding season, check your EBI and the maintenance sub-index as this will dictate how big your cow is and how much feed she needs to keep going. Check on your milk kgs PTA; the higher it is the more volume a cow can potentially produce and the more at risk she is of losing bodyweight after calving. The higher the fertility index is, the better, always over €50. The fertility subindex indicates the cow's ability to hold body condition after calving and have good uterine health. So, cows with higher fertility indices can tolerate much higher production if they are fed to appetite.

The next piece of information is to know what level of milk the top 20% of your cows are doing. Your grass and concentrate allowance can then be predicted and better consider the needs of this group. Offering an extra one kg of dry matter per day (grass preferably!) to the herd overall can make a huge difference to this higher demand group of cows.

Observe Body condition every 2-3 weeks and act if the score is slipping. Milk cows OAD or increase the herbage mass allowed. Feed low protein supplements, 14% or less at grass so more energy is in the feed per unit fed. This should be a high cereal ration with added calcium and phosphorus.

Now is the time to examine your fertility results more closely and see if you can identify issues with these higher producing cows. Maintain the six-week calving rates and don't hide a problem by pushing in heifers.

TIPPERARY
COOPERATIVE

QUALITY FEEDS

"When buying a nut for my stock it must be suitable for bulls, heifers, steers and cull cows to ensure optimum daily live weigh gain, confirmation score, fat cover and carcass weights.

I always aim also to find a ration that will be an all rounder so if I am feeding ad lib or topping up with silage that it will do both jobs.

I have found that the Beef Concentrate Range from Tipperary Co-Op have worked very well and I have always achieved the results I needed."

Gerard Nagle, Thomastown

Pictured Gerard Nagle

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