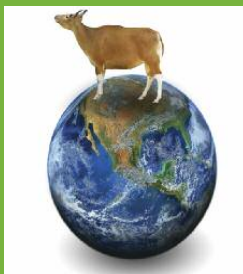




**FODDER
TILLAGE
CONTRACTS
FOR DAIRY
FARMERS**

>> SEE PAGE 44



**GLOBAL
PREDICTIONS
FARMERS'
VIEWS FROM
ACROSS THE
WORLD**

>> SEE PAGE 30



**FINANCE
REAL
TIME
TAXATION**

>> SEE PAGE 38

IRISH Farm Business

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IRISH Farm Business

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Volume 5 Issue 4

Winter 2018

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Foreword

This is the first time this year that writing this foreword we can look out the window and say the weather has been kind for a few weeks. This spell should shorten the winter if nothing else. In this edition we are publishing part two of the long article by Joe Leonard on alleviating stress, how to deal with stressful areas that arise on family farms and how to help others should it arise. It is a necessary if difficult topic.

Tillage Contracts: During the fodder shortage dairy farmers found different ways to get fodder. For some they were lucky and bought bales or other fodder through done deal, co-ops at the right price; others may have overpaid for what they got. Shay Phelan a tillage specialist with Teagasc outlines the structure of tillage contract supply so that farmers can plan further in advance and hopefully avoid disputes.

Calf Milk Replacer: We are coming into the heavy calving period and for many farmers this involves buying calf milk replacer at a time of year when you are not getting enough sleep and getting heifers used to the parlour. We would simply make the point that it is worth finding out how to understand the label to establish the merits and demerits of its contents.

World Farmer Survey: We have included in this edition a survey of world farmers who make predictions for their future in the year ahead. The most common thread is the effects of drought worldwide and its expected effect on the price of feed. Brexit and disease also come into the frame.

Taxation Changes: Mary McDonagh of IFAC writes that sweeping changes in how paye tax is recorded are coming in from the start of January 2019, and that some work is necessary on this immediately. This applies from one employee upwards.

Hope you enjoy and gain from this edition...

Until the next time.....

The Publisher,
Irish Farm Business

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Features

20 DEALING WITH STRESS FOR LONE FARMERS & FARMER GROUPS. (PART 2)

Realistic goal setting and open discussions are the way to alleviate stress. Support also needs to be available at community and national level.

28 CALF MILK REPLACER: UNDERSTANDING THE LABEL

In order to choose the right calf milk replacer (CMR) which will support successful calf growth and development cost-effectively, Cargill calf and heifer specialist, Bianca Theeruth highlights the required information needed to evaluate a CMR label.

30 MIXED PROSPECTS FOR FARMING FROM WORLD SURVEY

DLG - Agrifuture gives a snapshot of world farming from Europe to China

34 THE ROLE OF SOLAR PV AND ENERGY STORAGE IN FARMING

As electricity prices trend upwards and Installation costs (incl. grants) become more affordable, it is time to look at Solar PV for some farmers, writes Pat Smith.

38 SWEEPING PAYE CHANGES ON THE WAY

The biggest change to Ireland's PAYE system in almost 60 years comes into effect on 1 January 2019. Even if you only have one employee, you will need to get to grips with the new rules to avoid potential penalties, says Mary McDonagh.

44 TILLAGE CONTRACTS FOR LIVESTOCK FARMERS

The extreme weather of 2018 has forced farmers to plan future fodder requirements in a more structured way, writes Shay Phelan, Teagasc Crops Specialist.

58 WORKING WITH TIMBER

Weather is a large factor in the everyday life of farmers. Planning ahead by knowing the forecast for the upcoming days, weeks and months is essential.

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NEWS

HSA & HSENI FOCUS ON SAFE WORKING AT HEIGHT IN AGRICULTURE

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) carried out a fortnight long intensive farm inspection campaign in October.

Inspectors across the island visited farms and ensured that farmers were carrying out work at height safely. They drew attention to information and guidance available from both the HSA and the HSENI.

Farming on both sides of the border continues to be one of the most hazardous sectors to work in. Since the beginning of 2018 there have been 21 people killed due to farm accidents on the island of Ireland (16 in Republic of Ireland and 5 in Northern Ireland). Of these, one fatal fall occurred in each jurisdiction.

Last year (2017) there were 31 farm fatalities (25 in Republic of Ireland, 6 in Northern Ireland) with 4 due to falls, or falling objects, on farms (all in Republic of Ireland).

Serious and fatal falls can occur during the repair of buildings damaged due to storms. Many agriculture buildings use fragile roofing materials that cannot support the weight of a person.

In order to work safely at height the following principals should be followed:

- Only undertake roof work if competent to do so
- Risk assess all work at height, paying particular attention to fragile roofing materials
- Take steps to avoid, prevent or reduce risks
- Before beginning work, select a suitable system of work and suitable equipment

Pat Griffin, Senior Inspector for Agriculture safety with the HSA says that planning is a key component: "We are asking farmers to plan ahead and make sure that work at height is only carried out using the proper equipment and with protective measures in place. This can be done by carrying out a risk assessment that identifies all of the hazards especially when working to repair fragile roofs. Most falls from height are fatal, it's not worth taking a risk." Malcom Downey, Senior Inspector with HSENI said: "Sadly, falls from height are one of the main causes of tragic deaths on farms and it is essential that anyone working at height plans the work and uses the right equipment - for example using a mobile elevated work platform. MEWPs significantly reduce the chance of a fall and using the right equipment also makes the work easier and much quicker."


During the campaign Inspectors highlighted the dangers of falling objects such as round bales and other feed items. These items are sometimes stored at height and it is important that they are properly stacked and handled to avoid them falling and causing crush injuries.

Approximately 6% of the working population are involved in agriculture but the sector frequently accounts for up to 50% of workplace deaths. The HSA hosted its National Farm Safety Conference in the Dolmen Hotel, Co. Carlow, on October 26th with the aim of reviewing current approaches to safety, health and welfare in farming and improving health and safety within this important sector in challenging times.

For further information on 'Safe Working at Height' and the 'National Farm Safety Conference', visit www.hsa.ie.

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NEWS

IFA REPORT ON BUDGET 2019

The macroeconomic outlook for 2019 is generally positive, Ireland is expected to achieve GDP growth of 4%, down slightly on previous years. Levels of employment are increasing and Government debt as a % of GDP is falling, it is expected to reach 63.5% in 2019, down from highs of 120% in 2012/2013. Debt levels are more accurately reflected as a percentage of Gross National Income (GNI), which also reflect a downward trend.

Notwithstanding this, significant challenges are expected over the coming years. The planned exit of UK, our biggest trading partner from the EU in the spring of 2019 is fast approaching. This will significantly affect rural areas in Ireland due to their dependence on the agri-food sector in terms of economic activity and employment. Wider geopolitical uncertainty and possible disruptions to global trade negotiations, particularly in the US, could also present a threat to current economic growth. For the agri-food sector, 2018 was an extremely challenging year with extreme weather events impacting farming costs.

Such uncertainty and our position in the current economic growth cycle has prompted the Government to work towards building resilience in the economy and the achievement of a balanced Budget. As such the priority is to continue to reduce the Government debt without increasing borrowing.

The Stability Programme targeted a deficit of 0.1% of GDP in 2019, with a budgetary package of €3.43bn. The Government delivered total expenditure of €66.5bn for 2019, comprising of €59.2bn current expenditure, an increase of 4% and €7.3bn

in capital expenditure. A tax package worth €291m was also announced. In order to deliver this package, and to reach the target of balancing the government finances in 2019, €700m in revenue raising measures were also announced. In line with fiscal requirements based on expenditure benchmark and the achievement of the medium-term budgetary objectives (MTO), a structural deficit of 0.7% of GDP is forecast for 2019. This is slightly outside the target of 0.5% of GDP, this target will be revised in 2019.

The full IFA budget report can be viewed on the IFA website. This news article was originally published on www.ifa.ie/latest-news/



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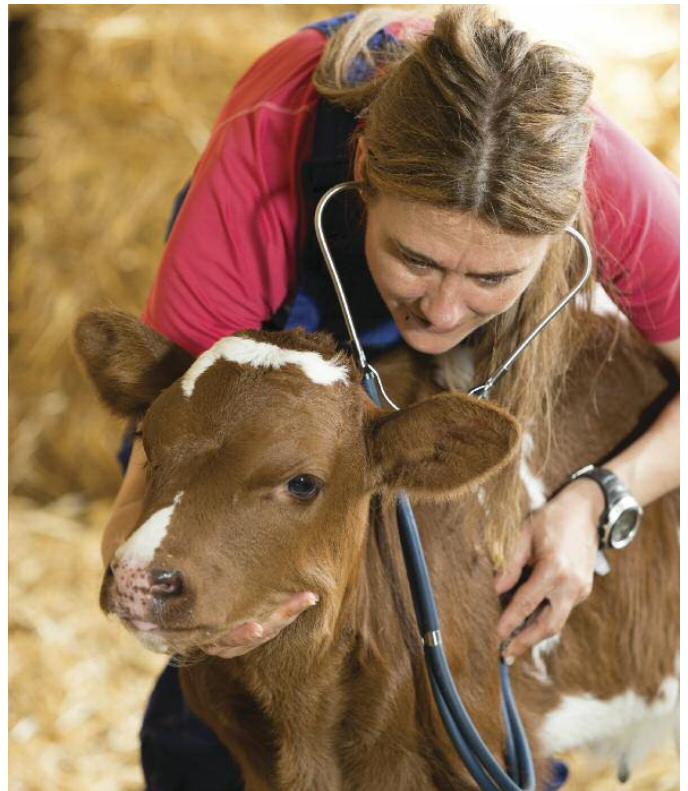
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Ainsworths manufacture a range of remedies for prevention and treatment. These are designed for simple administration to either the herd, via water troughs or sprayed on the nose or vulva for individual treatment.

Their Technical Director, Tony Pinkus, has had many years of advising farmers about which remedies to use and this has allowed him to discover what works in practice. He now shares this accumulated experience with a Self-Help Book for Herdsmen and a 42 remedy Bovine Kit which covers a wide spectrum of common bovine problems with advised homoeopathic treatments.

Tony Pinkus also provides a one day training course for farmers to assist with the principles and practice of herd treatment.



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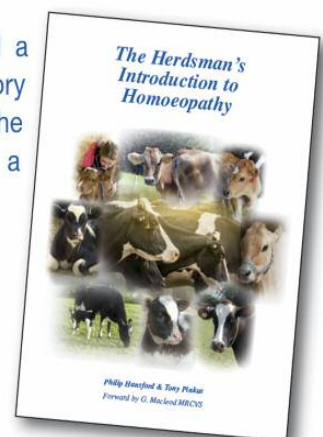
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NEWS

MINISTER CREED LAUNCHES €40 MILLION VISTAMILK SFI RESEARCH CENTRE

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed TD recently launched the new VistaMilk SFI Research Centre which is jointly funded by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and his Department.

The VistaMilk Centre will be hosted by Teagasc Moorepark, in partnership with a number of research performing organisations. Multinational and SME companies in the food and ICT sectors are also part of the consortium.

At the launch of the Centre in Moorepark, Fermoy, the Minister said, "VistaMilk will be the largest Agri-Tech Centre covering the entire dairy production chain, with Exchequer funding of €26 million provided by SFI and my Department, together with industry funding of €14 million. This highlights the strong and collaborative commitment to building research and innovation capability that ensures the sustainability of the agri-food sector."

VistaMilk will assist the Irish dairy industry to be a world leader in fundamental and translational research for precision pasture-based dairying, with the outcomes impacting positively on the environment, animal well-being and the health of consumers.

The investment is in line with the Food Wise 2025 strategy and will help to address key issues facing the dairy sector, including establishing the health and nutrition benefits of dairy products, increasing carbon efficiency, and increasing

innovation as a response to the uncertainties arising from Brexit.

Welcoming the launch of the new SFI Research Centre VistaMilk, Minister of State for Training, Skills, Innovation, Research and Development, John Halligan TD, said: "Agriculture and dairy production are crucial to our economy in Ireland. Globally, these sectors are transforming rapidly, and it is crucial that Ireland occupies a leading position within them. Alongside the other SFI Research Centres funded by the Irish Government, VistaMilk will help to improve our country's competitive edge and excellent innovation, enabling us to continue to attract and retain new investment and deliver effective and wide-ranging research outcomes."

Professor Mark Ferguson, Director General of Science Foundation Ireland and Chief Scientific Advisor to the Government of Ireland, said: "We are delighted to officially launch VistaMilk, which will join an existing network of world-leading SFI Research Centres that focus on excellent science, as well as economic and societal impact to Ireland. VistaMilk will be an agent of growth for the Irish dairy industry by being a world leader in fundamental and translational research for precision pasture-based dairying."

Professor Gerry Boyle, Teagasc Director said: "Research and innovation are the drivers of progress and VistaMilk encapsulates both. This centre will have the capacity to enhance sustainability across the dairy supply chain, positively impacting the environment, animal well-being and the health of consumers."

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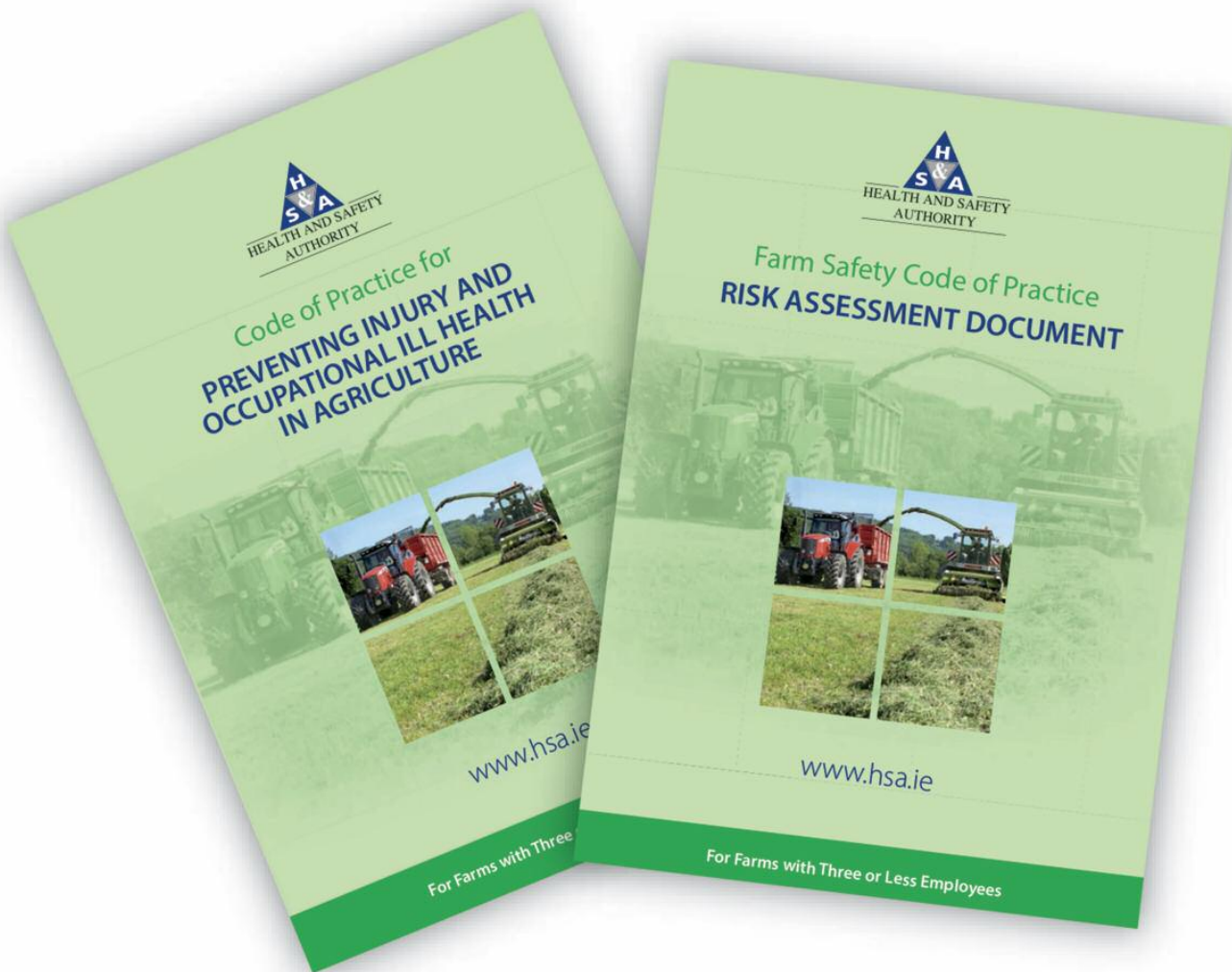
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NEWS

It will address the challenges right along the supply chain, from the soil through to the human gut.”

Director of VistaMilk, Professor Donagh Berry said: “To advance the state-of-the-art in Agri-Food and information sciences, VistaMilk has divided the problem domain into three main thematic areas; Soil and Pasture; Cow, and Food.

“Combined, these three areas cover the entire supply chain from soil to society. Within each of these thematic areas, VistaMilk has several targeted projects each of which will leverage the combined expertise of the VistaMilk partners.

“Each targeted project involves at least one industry partner, who represent the sectors dealing with grass-seed breeding, animal and human nutrition, animal health, animal breeding, dairy-food processing, data analytics, sensor development, communications and networks, and -omics technologies”.

For further information on Teagasc news and upcoming events visit www.teagasc.ie/news--events/

TEAGASC EVENT: NATIONAL DAIRY CONFERENCE

27 November 2018 - 28 November 2018 at 9am

The theme of this year's National Dairy Conference is 'Making Dairy Farming More Sustainable'

The 2018 Dairy Conferences take place as follows:

November 27th - Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork

November 28th - Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone

AGENDA													
9:00	Registration												
9:45	Welcome Billy Kelleher, Regional Manager Teagasc (Cork Conference) Tom Kellegher, Regional Manager Teagasc (Athlone Conference)												
	SESSION 1: Chaired by: Liam Herlihy, Chairman Teagasc Authority (Cork) Gerry Boyle, Director Teagasc (Athlone)												
10:00	Opportunities for Irish grass fed milk products Albert McQuaid, Global Chief Technology Officer, Kerry Group (Cork)												
10:30	Speaker TBC (Athlone)												
10:55	Dealing with weather risks; lessons from 2018 Tom O'Dwyer & Joe Patton, Teagasc New insights to the feeding value of grazed pasture Michael Dineen, Teagasc												
	SESSION 2: Chaired by: Kevin Twomey, dairy farmer & Chairperson of Teagasc Dairy Stakeholder Group (Cork) James Keane, Regional Manager, Teagasc (Athlone)												
11:20	Managing all calves to a high welfare standard: the Australian experience Natalie Roadknight, University of Melbourne The new Dairy Beef Index Andrew Cromie, ICBF What role can sexed semen play? Stephen Butler, Teagasc												
12:30	Lunch												
	SESSION 3: Choose three workshops to attend from the list of six below												
13:45 - 16:30	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Workshop 1</td><td>Managing our GHG and ammonia emissions targets</td></tr> <tr> <td>Workshop 2</td><td>Grassland decisions made easy</td></tr> <tr> <td>Workshop 3</td><td>Coping with the spring workload</td></tr> <tr> <td>Workshop 4</td><td>Contract heifer rearing</td></tr> <tr> <td>Workshop 5</td><td>Building fodder reserves in 2019</td></tr> <tr> <td>Workshop 6</td><td>Making our dairy farms better places to work</td></tr> </table>	Workshop 1	Managing our GHG and ammonia emissions targets	Workshop 2	Grassland decisions made easy	Workshop 3	Coping with the spring workload	Workshop 4	Contract heifer rearing	Workshop 5	Building fodder reserves in 2019	Workshop 6	Making our dairy farms better places to work
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NEWS

MERLO GROWTH PREDICTED ON BACK OF NEW 'STREAMLINED' SUPPLY ARRANGEMENT

Merlo distributor in Ireland, McHale Plant Sales, is anticipating a growth in their telehandler sales with the coming into force of a faster, more streamlined supply chain arrangement between themselves and the Italian manufacturer.

Replacing the via-UK plan that existed previously, McHale will henceforth be supplied directly from the Merlo factory in



Cuneo, Northern Italy. As a result, product ordering and delivery lines are shortened and customer care issues brought correspondingly closer to source.

Commenting, Michael McHale said: 'We have a goal to strengthen the market position of Merlo in Ireland, raising it towards the

position the brand holds in Germany, Canada, Australia, Finland and Italy. This new arrangement is a step in that direction.'

With its footprint expanding in farm contracting and construction applications, factors that McHale will focus on in its drive for growth will include the brand's 'excellent residual value' and feedback that describes it as 'a driver's machine'.

SHINING HOPE FOR FARM FAMILIES THROUGH GRIEF AND LOSS

With over 290 deaths on Irish Family Farms in the last ten years alone, and 16 deaths on Irish Farms during 2018, Embrace FARM is a farm accident support network being a guiding and listening ear to families after a farming accident fatality or serious injury.

Embrace FARM was founded in 2013 by Brian & Norma Rohan when Brian's father, Liam, lost his life in an accident on their family farm in Shanahoe, near Abbeylisk, County Laois. Following this, Brian found there

was no support out there for a family like them during their time of need. From this together with his wife Norma, they organised an ecumenical remembrance service to remember all lives lost in farming accidents. This service has been held every year since then on the 4th Sunday in June to all that wish to attend in remembrance from the 32 counties of Ireland.

The Embrace FARM Network is there to support those who have lost their lives in a farming accident as well as those who have suffered a serious injury, its main focus is being there for people after an accident. Grief affects people very differently, and Embrace FARM brings together people at very different stages of the process. In addition to its annual ecumenical remembrance service, family weekends are hosted for families that wish to participate and share their experiences to help one another in their own individual journeys. Family weekends with young children and older siblings are held. A gathering of spouses who have lost their partners is held once per year, where a group of people spend time together and share the space with one another. Each family weekend is coordinated by qualified counsellor who is on hand to assist families at a deeper level.

For farm accident survivors, early 2019 will see Embrace FARM hold its second farm accident survivors conference. This meeting is about helping those connect who suffered serious injury as a result of a farming accident. There are farm accident survivors sharing their stories, keynote speakers attending to the mental health & well-being of farmers that have suffered and practical advice from industry specialists. To reach out and know there is someone that is experiencing similar pain as you are, is a comfort and support during the darker times following an accident.

If you know of someone that may need this support please contact Embrace FARM on 085-7709966 or email: embrace.farm@gmail.com. Further information can be found at www.embracefarm.com or on their Facebook page.



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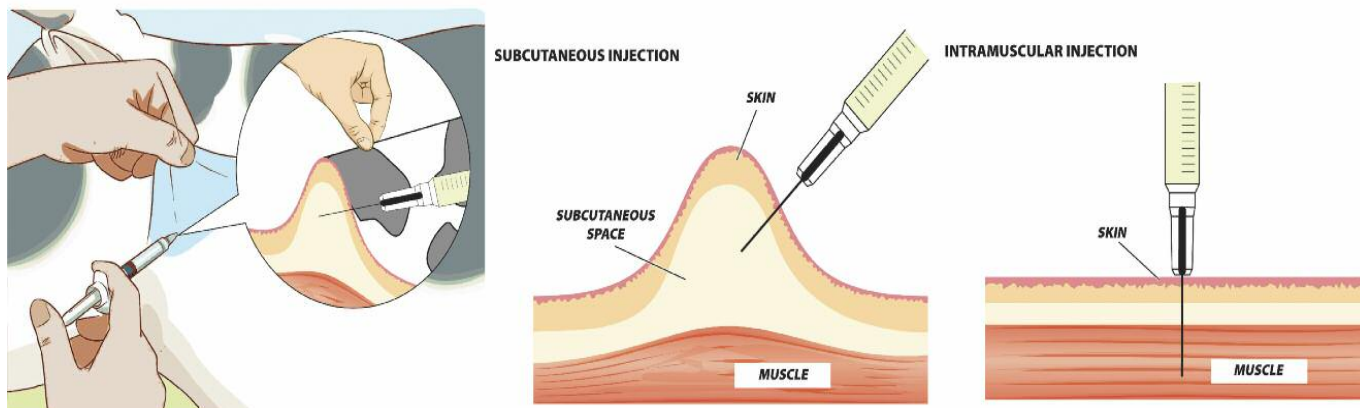
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BEST PRACTICE FOR VACCINATION

Intramuscular (IM) and subcutaneous (SC /under-the-skin) injections are the most commonly used form of administration of vaccines. A number of steps should be followed to ensure safety and best practice.



VACCINATION ROUTINE

A good vaccination routine is needed to ensure animal health and welfare. Records are essential of when vaccination was carried out, the vaccine used including batch and animal identification. It is good practice to consult your Vet regarding the best regime for your herd.

Check if vaccinating pregnant animals is advisable, especially within the last 14 days of gestation. The dam's immune system is suppressed at this stage and this can lead to a poorer vaccine response. In addition, some vaccines should not be administered at all during pregnancy.

In very young cattle (< 3 months), maternal antibody from colostrum can interfere with certain vaccines leading to a lower vaccine response.

Unless intentionally using vaccination when there is an outbreak of disease it is better not to use a vaccine when an animal is in poor health, has poor body condition or is highly stressed (e.g. at times of transportation, castration or dehorning) as the immune response may be compromised.

HANDLING

Livestock should be handled in secure facilities that include a secure head-locking gate that restricts movement to prevent a needle breaking, incorrect administration of vaccine or injury to operator or animal. Long reach injection bars and attachments are available for some medicine delivery devices that can aid in the safe delivery of products to animals.

CORRECT SIZING

When vaccinating, smaller syringes are generally used as they are more accurate. Both syringes and needles are available in reusable or disposable forms. There are many automatic types of syringes on the market that make vaccination easier. Whatever type used it is essential that they are clean and sterile before use.

The gauge of the needle is important depending on how viscous (thick) the solution is. The gauge of the needle relates to its thickness. The higher the gauge, the finer the needle. Lower-gauge needles which are thicker are advisable for extremely viscous products and vice versa.

The length of needle is also important, shorter needles (0.5 - 1.0in.) are generally used for subcutaneous injections and in younger animals.

Longer needles (1.5 in.) are generally used for intramuscular injections. Needles should be sterile and the injection site clean to avoid injecting bacteria into the animal which can lead to a poor vaccine response and an abscess forming at the injection site. A new needle should ideally be used for each animal.

SUBCUTANEOUS OR INTRAMUSCULAR

Injecting an animal in the neck is just as effective as injecting into the muscle in the hind quarter though the neck area is usually cleaner. It is best to avoid injecting in the loin or hind quarter as it can lead to scar tissue or abscesses on a high-value part of the carcass.

If vaccinating with more than one product at a time use both sides of the neck. Do not mix vaccines in the same bottle or syringe unless directed to do so. There are now vaccinators on the market that can deliver two vaccines at the same time however the instances where this is possible or necessary are rare. If unsure consult your vet.

Accuracy is vital in ensuring the correct dose levels. Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully for all products. Vaccines cost exactly the same whether they are used correctly or incorrectly but the value to your herd will be greatly reduced if they are used incorrectly. The standard of vaccinator should also be considered to ensure less risk of inaccurate dose rates.

When injecting into the muscle, the best site is in the neck, just in front of the shoulder. When injecting under the skin, inject just behind the shoulder. Lift the skin and pull tight before inserting the needle at a 30 degree angle. If unsure on the method of administration consult your Vet.

STORAGE

Most vaccines need to be kept chilled until they are used and should be used once seal is breached. Follow product instructions for storage advice and guidelines. Store discarded needles, syringes and empty vaccine bottles in a secure container and dispose of them safely.

It can take up to three weeks for a vaccine to give protection, longer if the manufacturer's instructions recommend a booster. Time your vaccination routine accordingly. Find out more information on various equipment available from Agrihealth.ie or for information on your nearest stockist of vaccine equipment ring – 04771800

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- EU Regulations/IARC
- Potential prosecutions for
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- Copper Sulphate cannot legally
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- May result in lifetime contamination of
soil - Hoards Dairyman

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DEALING WITH STRESS FOR LONE FARMERS & FARMER GROUPS. (PART 2)

Realistic goal setting and open discussions are the way to alleviate stress. Support also needs to be available at community and national level.



GOAL SETTING AND CLARITY OF VISION

'Farmers who felt that they had chosen their work and had alternative options, and who looked upon it more as a business venture than a way of life, reported higher levels of occupation satisfaction than those who felt pushed into it because of family pressures.' Parry et al (2005).

Peter Clough, (interviewed as part of this study) is Professor of Psychology at Manchester Metropolitan University and is a leading applied academic authority on mental toughness.

'Mental toughness describes the capacity of an individual to deal effectively with stressors, pressures and challenges, and perform to the best of their ability, irrespective of the circumstances in which they find themselves.'

Clear goals help us to see the longer term view which in turn removes the anxiety and stress caused not only by on farm events but also from events which are beyond our control such as market volatility, political or legislative changes or climatic events. As long as the business is moving towards the set goals within the set time frame day to day issues can be met and dealt with without causing undue stress.

There is nothing more stressful than following a path that is not your own. It can be very easy to get 'swept along on the band wagon'

particularly if involved in dairying at the moment as there is so much 'hype' and expectation surrounding the removal of milk quotas. If your ambition is to milk an extra 100 cows and reach every benchmark set and you have the physical and management capabilities to succeed then expansion is for you. How many Irish farmers who are expanding today know why they are expanding? All too often farmers take on expansion because 'it's the thing to do' or 'everyone else is doing it', when in reality they do not always have the skills to make it work. In such a case where a farmer is working longer hours and with a higher debt level for little added financial gain is he any better off?

Specific 'benchmarks' are important indicators as to how well a farmer is doing in relation to industry 'best practice'. Widespread promotion of these targets needs to be cognisant of the huge variation in farm and farmer capabilities. Farm production and financial performances that are achievable on an ideally located research farm, such as the Teagasc dairy farm in Moorepark, are certainly attainable by some commercial farmers. However there are such physical and climatic variations on farms across Ireland that individual benchmarks are more realistic. Success is different for each individual and having clearly defined targets and goals makes it much easier to attain one's own success. It is important to have goals that are realistic and achievable as attaining them will lead to feelings of wellbeing and success while failure can lead to feelings of disillusionment and stress.



MENTORING AND TEAM BUILDING

The discussion group model is one such recognised forum for support with over 700 groups throughout Ireland. A group is usually comprised of 10-15 farmers and is usually enterprise and location specific (ie; spring calving dairy farmers from Meath). A group's aim would be to meet once a month on a member's farm to discuss relevant farming matters. Though a discussion group's primary function is to aid knowledge transfer, it also plays a vital role in providing emotional support through peer interaction. The discussion group model will not appeal to everyone, and indeed will significantly add to some people's stress levels if they feel compelled to engage. Therefore a more one to one support structure needs to be considered for some people such as a peer mentoring scheme.

Peer mentoring works in a number of ways. In a strong family structure when a father and son work well together there is a natural mentoring process. In this scenario the father imparts his practical knowledge and experience to his son while at the same time encouraging innovation and ceding responsibility of decision making. This allows the son to grow in knowledge, build resilience and gain the confidence that is needed to drive the farm forward.

disease, limiting illness and restoring health'. Woods (2015)

Farming is a unique environment as in most cases, it is both a work place and a family home and as such it can be very hard for farmers to separate the two environments psychologically. Being able to mentally separate these two environments is a great help towards reducing stress as it gives the farmer a chance to relax and leave the 'worries of the day' at the back door. Aspirational as it sounds - it is not an unrealistic goal and is achievable through good planning and discipline. A family mind-set that understands the value of spending time together or with friends, in keeping up sporting interests and hobbies and one that values holiday time is important for maintaining a realistic good work life balance. All too often younger farmers are made to feel guilty for wanting to take time off.

Joe Patton, a Teagasc dairy specialist and discussion group facilitator, described a meeting of a young farmer group that he leads. At the end of their last meeting he introduced the topic of stress and how they were feeling.

'Instead of this taking the last 20 minutes as I had envisaged the discussion lasted two hours'.

"Things that matter most should never be at the mercy of things that matter least"

Unfortunately all too often a father and son struggle to work together in a supportive way. The father can either be overly cautious or be very resistant to change. As one Nuffield scholar's father replied when he announced his intention to change farming enterprise; *'why do you have to keep challenging yourself, can you not be happy with what you have.'*

In a case where there is little or no parental support, or as is more commonly becoming the case, where a young farmer is starting out on his own, a positive successful mentor could act as the missing supportive 'father figure'.

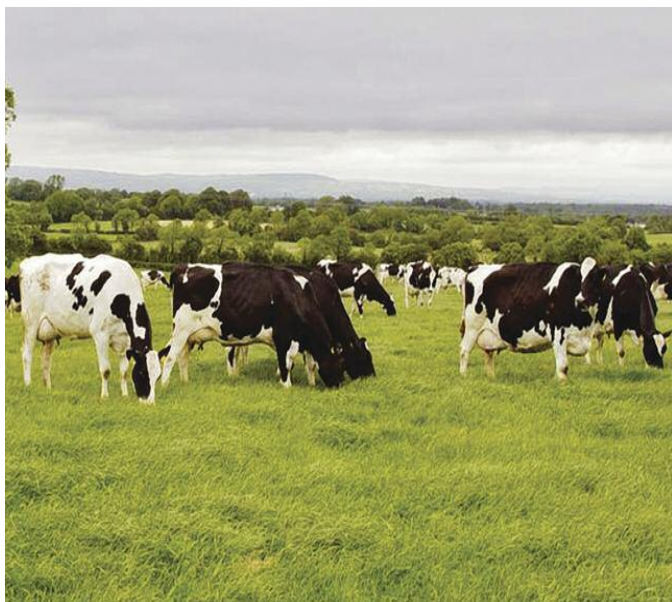
In finding a mentor it is important to look for someone who is successful and innovative, who will challenge ideas and practices in an open and honest way and who can be respected and worked with.

SELF-CARE

For attitudes towards 'mental' health and safety to change farmers need firstly to recognise their own importance within their businesses and adopt a proactive attitude to self-care.

'Self-care in health refers to the activities individuals, families and communities undertake with the intention of enhancing health, preventing





The young farmers, most of whom worked 'with' their fathers, vented their frustrations mostly with their lack of influence in the farm and how they were made to feel guilty for any time they took off. This highlights that when working as part of a team either with family or with outside labour it is important to recognise that everyone's social needs vary.

NAVAN DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY

A study by the Navan Discussion Group (2012-13), a group of 15 Irish dairy farmers, looked at ways they could learn to identify what was causing them stress in their lives and at ways of how they might best deal with these stressors. The study started with an educational phase to inform them about mental health in general: what were the main types of mental illness such as depression or bi-polar disorder; how to recognise some of the major symptoms; where to access help; and how best to support family or colleagues who might be suffering.

This was followed by a comprehensive on-farm survey to identify triggers that were causing stress and the degree of the severity of that stress. This revealed the major stressors to be fatigue and lack of personal time, bad weather and associated management problems, office/paper work and dealing with regulations. Interestingly, financial and succession issues were not deemed major stressors for the group perhaps because they are all established farmers running financially robust farming systems and within an age bracket where succession is not a pressing concern. It was a particularly wet year in 2012 when the surveys were carried out, which may also explain why the weather and associated management issues were cause for such high levels of on farm stress. However just by undertaking the study the group members found they were more able to discuss their feeling around dealing with such a tough year.

Ultimately the major concern for the group was the number of hours they were working. The survey revealed that on average the members were working 65-70 hours a week all year – CSO statistics put the average working week at 35.7 hours (CSO 2015). For a group of spring calving farmers this was a shock; they assumed that their long spring hours would be balanced out by much shorter days in the latter half of the working year. In response to this, workshops in time management and on farm labour efficiencies were carried out to compare the working practices of the most efficient members and see what they were doing differently to those less time efficient. Hobbies, sport and off-farm interests seemed to be the key driver. The most efficient time managers were ultimately those who had interests away from farming and who valued their time greatest. Like the majority of farmers, most group members had given up their sporting and off farm interests due to the pressures of work and young families. Joe Kirk, who gives a time management lecture to students on the Apprentice Farm Managers course in Moorepark, says he always starts his lecture by saying 'get a hobby'. Off farm interests help to maintain connections and perspective that are vital in maintaining emotional well-being.



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FINDING SUPPORT

Getting farmers to engage with support services is still a tough task. Men in general are not good at talking about their personal problems and farmers are worse again. The nature of farming is such that a strong degree of self-reliance and independence are needed to get along, but these characteristics can be at odds with the idea of asking for help.

‘rural people helping rural individuals and communities to cope during difficult times.’

Lindsay Wright, an ex-sheep farmer and past chairman of Southland Rural Support, explained that he joined the organization after his own fight with depression led him to leasing out his farm and leaving sheep farming. For him, as their website ‘tagline’ says ‘The unique circumstances of rural life can only be truly understood by rural people who share the same challenge.’

CONCLUSIONS

Through the series of interviews and case studies with farmers it is possible to conclude that farmers everywhere struggle with very similar challenges. The findings in this study lead to the following conclusions;

- Managing stress involves the ability to cope with or lessen the physical and emotional effects of everyday pressure and challenges. These challenges can often seem insurmountable at first, but with the right support, advice and by tackling them in a structured way they can be successfully overcome.
- By giving young people an insight into what sort of challenges they will face in starting out in farming, they will be better equipped to overcome these issues. ‘An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure.’
- Succession planning and intergenerational relationships need to be tackled in an open manner early in the career of the succeeding generation to avoid conflict and familial stress.

- Realistic goal setting and proper planning help to identify a clear path to achieving ones ambitions. This clarity of vision helps to insulate against stress caused by unforeseen events.
- Farmers are more likely to talk about their problems to support personnel who have a strong rural connection/empathy. Therefore support services would be better able to engage with farmers in need if they were manned by farmers or rural based staff/volunteers.
- Developing a ‘farmer experience’ lead debate in the media and in education will resonate far more strongly with the farmers than one lead by non-farming examples.
- Managing stress is not an independent task, rather it is part of ones’ overall personal and business development. Following practices that limit stress will overlap with farm business viability while at the same time help to strengthen personal relationship which will enhance success and ‘quality of life’.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the research conducted, this report identifies the following initiatives as being of benefit to helping maintain farmer welfare standards by helping to reduce the level of stress experienced by some farmers. Through the open promotion of the need for higher standards of ‘farmer welfare’ there will be a reduction in the ‘stigma’ that surrounds asking for help.

- The setting up of a single, central farmer help line to deal with the concerns and worries of all aspects of a farmer’s life by connecting him or her to all relevant bodies. To be funded by European money to train farmer volunteers to become counsellors. The Farm Community Network in the UK ensure that all their counsellors have a strong rural/agricultural connection as it has found that farmers talk best to those with similar backgrounds.
- Teagasc to set up of a farm mentorship scheme to connect inexperienced enthusiastic farmers with experienced successful farmers. Access to the experience and knowledge of older farmers who model the resilience farmers need, is an invaluable resource that not all young farmers have. To be coordinated through regional Teagasc offices on a volunteer farmer basis.
- The development of an education module to highlight ‘mental health and safety’ and ‘self-care’ to agriculture students and farmers. To be delivered and promoted jointly by Teagasc, the Health and Safety Authority and UCD’s Agricultural Science Department, through courses, discussion groups and agricultural open days. To help farmers deal with ongoing education surrounding succession and intergenerational relationships, planning and financial viability, dealing with paperwork, staffing issues and stress management. Thus providing the skills to build resilience and mental strength.
- Teagasc to rethink the promotion of benchmarking targets – individual targets need to take account of regional differences, age and needs of farmers (life stage and financial commitments required). Targets that are unattainable can have a negative effect on farmer morale.

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BONANZA CALF NUTRITION

University trial records higher weight gains in meadow hay-fed beef calves, writes Simon Marsh of Harper Adams University.



Dr. Christine Cummins

Calves fed hay in conjunction with a high-quality milk replacer have achieved higher weight gains than those offered straw.

A recent trial conducted by Harper Adams University in conjunction with Bonanza Calf Nutrition involved 44 British Blue x Holstein bull calves at a mean age of 22.6 days.

One group was offered good quality meadow hay and a skim milk based calf milk, and the other, good quality winter barley straw and the same milk replacer.

The calf milk replacer was initially fed at a mix rate 125g /litre fed at 2 litres twice per day to provide 500g of milk powder with the feed rate gradually reduced one week prior to weaning.

zero calf mortality in the study.” The hay used had a good ME value of 10.3 MJ/kg DM, a crude protein of 10.3% and high sugar content (5.8%) so could be termed as ‘sweet meadow hay’. Feeding a well formulated and palatable concentrate is also important and this should be monitored regularly, advised Dr Christine Cummins, of Bonanza Calf Nutrition.

This trial also showed that feeding a good quality milk replacer can save money as the calves require less milk powder and eat more dry feed so weaning can take place sooner, she added.

“This trial also showed that feeding a good quality milk replacer can save money as the calves require less milk powder and eat more dry feed so weaning can take place sooner”

The calves were also offered ad lib 18% CP early weaning concentrates and fresh water. When weaned at day 42 they were grouped and fed their respective forages until 12 weeks.

The trial showed that hay had a significant ($P < 0.05$) effect on daily liveweight gain (DLWG) until weaning. There were no significant differences in DLWG from weaning to 12 weeks i.e. the straw fed calves didn’t ‘catch up’.

The calves received a maximum of 500g of milk powder a day - 19 kgs over the six-week feeding period. Those on hay recorded DLWGs of 0.70kg to weaning with the straw fed calves growing at 0.60kg. The hay fed calves weighed an impressive 144.9kg after 12 weeks on trial.

Simon Marsh, principal lecturer and cattle specialist at Harper Adams University, who jointly supervised the study, said forage intakes were significantly higher with hay and with slightly higher concentrate intakes, resulting in an additional 70MJ of energy intake from start to weaning, resulting in the improvement in DLWG. It might have been predicted that with the hay fed calves eating more forage it could have reduced their concentrate intake but this did not happen.

The total feed costs per calf were slightly higher with hay - however feed costs per kg gain were lower due to the improved performance of the hay fed calves, Mr Marsh explained.

“Overall performance of the calves was very good, meeting the recognized targets for rearing calves to 12 weeks. This excellent performance is likely to be partially due to the standard of stockmanship and feeding a high-quality milk replacer. There was

Table 1: Effect of hay versus straw on DLWG (kg)

Treatment	Hay	Straw	s.e.d	P value	Sig
Start - 1 week	0.59	0.39	0.055	0.017	*
Start - weaning	0.70	0.60	0.044	0.014	*
Wean - 12 weeks	1.36	1.33	0.095	0.649	NS
Start -12 weeks	1.03	0.97	0.050	0.112	NS

NS = Not Significant, * = $P < 0.05$, ** = $P < 0.01$, *** = $P < 0.001$

Table 2: Feed intakes (kg) and Feed Conversion Ratio (FCR) to 12 weeks

Treatment	Hay	Straw	s.e.d	P value	Sig
Milk replacer	19.2	19.2			
Concs/day - start to wean	0.96	0.91	0.059	0.569	NS
Concs - start to wean	40.4	38.4	2.49	0.569	NS
Concs - start to 12 weeks	201.9	199.2			
Forage/day - start to wean	0.24	0.17	0.017	0.020	*
Forage - start to wean	9.9	7.4	0.718	0.020	*
Forage - start to 12 weeks	29.4	23.8			
FCR - start to weaning	2.37	2.59	0.061	0.279	NS

Offering hay had a significant ($P < 0.05$) effect on daily and total forage intake to weaning. This did not result in a reduction in concentrate intake with the hay fed calves.



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Redhouse 1980 Frazzled Jem (26/9/17)

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CALF MILK REPLACER: UNDERSTANDING THE LABEL

In order to choose the right calf milk replacer (CMR) which will support successful calf growth and development cost-effectively, Cargill calf and heifer specialist, Bianca Theeruth highlights the required information needed to evaluate a CMR label.

Feed costs pre-weaning is the most expensive period in the animal's life and producers are spending significant sums of money. It is therefore important to know what's in the CMR and its feed value.

A list of ingredients in descending order; constituents, additives and directions for use, are included on the CMR label. Providing this information is a legal requirement.

To evaluate and compare products, and to make a sound buying decision, more information is required above what is provided on the CMR label. "The label provides only basic information, therefore, I would encourage producers not to take this at face value but to ask your CMR supplier for more details about the ingredients in the CMR," says Ms Theeruth. For example:

1. Check the basic information on the label. Constituent levels should fall within those listed in Table 1.
2. Determine whether the CMR is skim-based or whey-based. If whey powder is the first ingredient listed, then the CMR is whey-based and vice versa for a skim-based CMR.
3. The type of CMR required will depend on your rearing system, disease risk and rearing objectives.

Table 1.

Label inclusion range of key constituents in CMR

Nutrient	Min Level	Max Level	Comments
Protein %	20	26	Higher level for greater frame growth
Oil %	15	22	Main energy source alongside lactose
Fibre %	0	0.5	Higher levels indicate inclusion of non-milk protein
Ash %	6	8	CMR ingredients can affect ash
Vitamin E mg/kg	0	250	Higher levels costly but show improved immune function in animal
Selenium mg/kg	0	0.3	0.3mg/kg is the legal maximum inclusion level in complete feed

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Analytical constituents

Crude protein	24.0	%
Crude fat	20.0	%
Crude fibre	0.0	%
Crude ash	7.4	%
Calcium (Ca)	0.99	%
Phosphorus (P)	0.67	%
Sodium (Na)	0.56	%

Additives per kg

Nutritional

3b103 Fe(Iron(II) sulphate monohydrate)	91	mg
E4 Cu(Cupric sulphate pentahydrate)	10	mg
3b503 Mn(Manganous sulphate, monohydrate)	40	mg
3b603 Zn(Zinc oxide)	40	mg
3b202 I(Calcium iodate, anhydrous)	1	mg
E8 Se(Sodium selenite)	0.3	mg
3a672a Vitamin A	25000	IU
3a671 Vitamin D3	6000	IU
3a700 Vitamin E/all-rac-alpha-tocopheryl acetate	150	IU

Technological

E433 Polyoxyethylene(20)-sorbitanmonooleate	0.1	g
E321 BHT	2	mg
E320 BHA	1	mg

Zootechnical

E1700 Bacillus subtilis	640	MCFU
E1700 Bacillus licheniformis	640	MCFU

Sensory

Directions for use

Take 2/3 of the required amount of water at a temperature of 55°C. Add the milkpowder to the water at the ratio of 125 gram powder to 875 ml water and mix thoroughly.

Add the remaining water cold and mix thoroughly. Optimal drinking temperature is 41-42°C. Milk needs to be fed out straight after preparation.

Best before : Expiry date

Creditation number : αNL01979

Code: 49331 108

4. In the case of skim-based CMR, find out the inclusion rate of the skim milk or skim derivatives, as this will determine clotting ability. Note, skim derivatives can include butter milk, whole milk powder and casein.

5. Skim derivatives are usually cheaper, but it is important to know the quality and processing method of these derivatives; these factors can affect feeding characteristics and nutritional value.

6. CMR that include skim milk powder are considered premium products.

According to Ms Theeruth, "this information won't be found on the label, but it will affect how the product performs, its suitability to your system and its value for money."



According to Ms Theeruth, all ingredients should be high quality, free from anti-nutritional factors and correctly processed. Crude protein, crude fat, crude fibre and crude ash are indicators of the CMR nutritional quality.

PROTEIN:

Protein provides essential amino acids for tissue synthesis required for lean structural growth. The amount contained in the CMR and its source should be evaluated. Protein sources can vary in bioavailability to animal and presence of anti-nutritional factors.

Calves have a requirement for specific amino acids for muscle growth and optimal immune system function, therefore a quality CMR should be formulated specifically to meet the amino acid requirement.

Vegetable protein sources can be used successfully as an economic alternative to dairy protein sources in CMR. They are listed on the label as, for example, hydrolysed wheat gluten, soya protein concentrate and pea protein. Vegetable proteins contribute to the fibre content in a CMR, whereas dairy proteins do not contain any fibre. Note that a CMR with a zero fibre content could have up to 0.04% vegetable protein as values are rounded down if below 0.05 % and up to the nearest 0.1% if above 0.05%.

FATS AND OILS:

Fats, oils and lactose in CMR fill the frame and make up the energy fragment of milk replacer. They provide a concentrated energy source; 2.25 times that of carbohydrate. They also provide essential fatty acids and are important in maintaining a shiny coat.

Fats in CMR are plant based from sources such as palm, coconut, rapeseed and soya oil. These will be listed on the label. Palm and coconut oil are the most commonly used in CMR as they have similar digestibility to milk fat (+/- 96 %).

ASH:

The ash content in a CMR represents the overall level of minerals in the product and it is listed as a percentage of total composition on the label.

Ash in a CMR is comprised mostly of ions of sodium, potassium, chloride and trace minerals that come from whey or skim ingredients. Ash is not added to milk replacers as fillers; it is a natural and variable component based on ingredients and the CMR formula; these will determine the ash content.

FIBRE:

Fibre quoted on the CMR label is related to the amount of vegetable protein, such as soya or wheat. Fibre content will vary depending on the sources and fibre content is not a reflection of the CMR quality.

Some plant protein sources, such as soya protein products, contain a variety of anti-nutritional factors that decrease their digestibility. However, recent advancements in processing have improved the quality of soya protein products and they can be well utilised at moderate inclusion levels.

In conclusion, although CMR labels have a broad outline of the nutritional content, they are not enough detail on which to base a sound buying decision.

Farmers are encouraged to buy a reputable brand from a reputable company known to specialise in dairy and calf nutrition.

The importance of asking questions and taking advantage of the manufacturer's technical support team and additional product information must be emphasised.

MIXED PROSPECTS FOR FARMING FROM WORLD SURVEY

DLG – Agrifuture gives a snapshot of world farming from Europe to China.



MIXED PROSPECTS FOR FARM BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

October's "Chart of the Month" from DLG-Agrifuture Insights survey, which includes China for the first time, focuses on farmers' future business expectations – Drought conditions have resulted in smaller crop yields and higher dairy farm costs – African Swine Fever presents a greater risk to Europe's pig sector. Farmers from Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, Russia, Brazil and China participated in the survey.

Germany: The financial situation for many farms is currently strained, with the risks they face in the next 12 months difficult to calculate. Drought conditions have left arable farms with smaller yields, while dairy operations have had to buy-in feed as a result of compromised grass growth. Pig farmers, meanwhile, face the growing threat of African swine fever (ASF). Not surprisingly, therefore, agricultural professionals view their prospects for business development in the coming 12 months as mixed.

In addition to a loss of sales due to lower yields, arable farmers must also be prepared for the risks attached to sowing during the continuing drought. Oilseed rape crops are currently most vulnerable, but continuing dry weather could affect winter cereals if they do not establish themselves sufficiently before the winter.

Dairy cattle farmers, meanwhile, are lacking the basic feed supplies due to the drought, which means higher costs. Pig farmers face big economic risks from ASF, which is encroaching from the East, and has also recently been found in wild boar in Belgium, and this has tempered their expectations for business development. Despite these insecurities, farmers in Germany assess the business expectations for the upcoming 12 month compared with the last ten years time course at an average level.

Netherlands: The business outlook has deteriorated significantly compared to the survey conducted in autumn 2017. Here, too, the drought is causing torment to arable and dairy farmers, while all livestock farmers are faced with making the expenses of complying

with new phosphorus quotas. ASF is again clouding expectations of business development for Dutch pig farmers in the coming 12 months. Furthermore, governmental restrictions for production are leading to less optimism for business development.

United Kingdom: The focus of farmers in the UK is very much on future agricultural policy after Brexit. Current signs are that existing levels of support will continue for a time, but it is expected that payments will become more linked to public benefits. However, as in the EU, a degeneration of agricultural subsidies cannot be ruled out.

China: Farmers in China were surveyed by DLG-Agrifuture Insights for the first time this autumn, and they also have average expectations for business development in the coming 12 months. Outbreak of ASF in the Far East have already resulted in stock culls and restrictions on the movement of pigs. Fear of further spread of the disease is leading to uncertainty about further development, and consequently muted business prospects. However, dairy farmers are even more cautious about their expectations than pig producers. Milk is often produced in less favorable locations that incur significant transport costs, so dairy farmers hardly benefit from domestic demand for their products.

Russia: Russia's farmers are also facing some business risks like a smaller grain harvest which resulted in expectations of smaller revenues, dampening the expectations of arable farmers' for developing their businesses. In contrast, Russian pig farmers are much more optimistic. Their market is currently protected from imports by sanctions and countermeasures. This means domestic sales are protected, which should allow these businesses to develop positively.

Brazil: In Brazil, meanwhile, the trade dispute between the US and China has boosted purchases by Chinese traders looking for alternative sources of protein. As a result, the country's soybean producers are confident about the course of their businesses during the next 12 months. Poultry farmers, however, have come under pressure because of export restrictions resulting from hygiene problems, and their outlook has deteriorated.

INSIGHTS INTO AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

DLG-Agrifuture Insights provides a greater understanding of the developments taking place in the world's most important agricultural regions at a time when the sector and its environment are changing rapidly, and technologies, markets and market relations, structures and processes are all in a state of transition.

The findings are reached by questioning a global panel made up of 2,000 future-oriented farmers, with surveys conducted every February/March in the southern hemisphere and every August/September in the northern hemisphere. The conclusions are supplemented by continuous background research and regular interviews with top decision-makers.

Detailed information is available online at: www.dlg.org/afi



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FIRST FOCUS ON FLEXIBLE FINANCE

Understanding the challenges of modern day farming is half the battle according to Pat O'Neill, Agri Sales Manager at First Citizen Agri Finance.



Derek Maher (Maher Tractor Sales in Dunshaughlin) and Pat O'Neill (First Citizen Agri Finance)

“We’re here to assist farmers and help them plan their cash flows throughout the year, providing flexible finance options when they need it most.

Our Asset Finance Agreements have a fixed Interest Rate to help farmers budget and manage their cashflows”. Pat joined First Citizen Agri Finance in 2016, having worked for many years in the Irish Agri Finance sector and is excited to be engaging again with farmers across all farming sectors in the Republic of Ireland, not least Dairy.

The Dairy sector carries its own unique challenges and it’s important that those employed in this area have the necessary supports available not just to survive but to excel. This, Pat added, is where First Citizen can help.

First Citizen Agri Finance offer flexible finance for Agri asset purchases to Farmers and Agri SMEs. If a farmer is looking to purchase equipment outright, then the Non Consumer Hire Purchase Agreement is the flexible and cost effective alternative solution to overdrafts or term loans. The asset becomes the property

- The VAT on the purchase price can be re-claimed immediately after the transaction, provided the entity is VAT registered
- Interest charges can be offset against taxable profits
- Flexible deposit payable (minimum 10%)
- Claim back capital allowance costs on the cost of Asset

However, let’s say the Farmer is looking to simply pay for the use of equipment over a set period. The asset is leased in this case at a fixed rental for a fixed term at a fixed rate. Put simply, First Citizen owns the asset and charge the farmer for the use of it until the final rental is paid. At the end of the rental period there is the option to purchase the equipment for a nominal fee or trade it in as a deposit against new equipment.

Some other benefits of leasing are:

- Initial Capital Outlay is minimised, thus preserving cashflow
- Leasing rentals may qualify for tax deductions
- Farmer gets to use the equipment just as if they owned it
- Flexible repayment terms
- The VAT element of the rental payment can be reclaimed provided the entity is VAT registered

Both Hire Purchase and Leasing Agreements are available to finance new and second hand Agri assets. Only assets purchased from a First Citizen Agri Finance approved Agri Dealer or Distributor are eligible for finance. Payment terms vary from two to seven years, depending on the type and age of the asset being financed. A variety of payments terms are available including ‘Seasonal’ whereby payments are from, for example, April to September each year.

“The key to our success is our focus and dedication to the Agri community. At First Citizen Agri Finance we know that our business depends on farming – a unique industry facing constantly changing circumstances. Therefore, we make it our business to understand the needs of farmers and Agri SMEs and we provide financial solutions where possible. We have a presence nationwide and invite farmers and Agri Dealers to get in touch with us.”

– Pat O'Neill, Agri Sales Manager at First Citizen Agri Finance.

“The key to our success is our focus and dedication to the Agri community”

of the purchaser when the final instalment and completion fee due under the Agreement is made.

Some key features of this product are:

- Fixed payments over a fixed term
- Payments which can be timed to suit income patterns of the farm enterprise or Agri business



Eibhlin Murphy (Major Equipment in Ballyhaunis) and Vivienne Shannon (First Citizen Agri Finance)



Celine Griffin (First Citizen Agri Finance), Laurence Kehoe (Kehoe Brothers Machinery in Camolin, Wexford), Gerry Hargadon (First Citizen Agri Finance) and Pat O'Neill (First Citizen Agri Finance)

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Michael O'Sullivan
Cork / South Munster
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Donal Galvin
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Owen O'Reilly
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THE ROLE OF SOLAR PV AND ENERGY STORAGE IN FARMING

As electricity prices trend upwards and Installation costs (incl. grants) become more affordable, it is time to look at Solar PV for some farmers, writes Pat Smith.

P Smith checking a 6kwp ground mounted solar PV system installed by Local Power Ltd on a farm in Co. Meath



INTRODUCTION

Solar photovoltaic (PV) is the process of converting energy from daylight and the sun into electricity. The technology is well proven and dependable and its costs have reduced by over 80% in the past 10 years through a combination of increased efficiency and lower manufacturing and raw material costs.

This fact combined with electricity prices trending upwards and various grant supports available makes a Solar PV install a viable option for farm families to help run their homes and/or farm. It is also Government policy to electrify heating and transport going forward and being able to generate your own electricity is going to be even more valuable.

The economics for solar PV work best when all of the electricity generated is used on the farm or home.

Solar PV electricity generation works very well under Irish conditions and our wet weather helps ensure that the panels are kept clean. The output from Solar PV is very predictable, varying from 850kwh and 1050kwh per year per KwP installed, depending on the part of Ireland and on whether the panels are facing south or east/west. It is not recommended to face panels north unless the roof space is almost flat. Solar panels also work well on flat roof spaces tilted south or east west.

Solar PV generation systems can be remotely monitored and house holders or farms will be able to see the energy generated hourly, daily, yearly etc. and also what they are buying from the grid so educating themselves on their energy usage which is a very positive thing.

Solar PV generates energy in a bell-shaped curve between February and November and is very much in line with the electricity demands on dairy farms for example. Not alone that but daily output will vary depending on the way the panels are facing. While historically everyone said to face the panels south the current advice for self-consumption projects is to set them east west if possible for a more even daily generation output.

Ideally solar PV systems should be sized so that the output generated at any time is less than the base load used on the farm. For example appendix 1 picture is a 100kwp system on a pig farm in the midlands that Local Power Ltd installed earlier this year. This will generate about 93,000kwh of daytime electricity per year and all of the energy will be used on the farm and the system will generate about 20% of the farm's annual requirements.

Appendix 2 on the other hand is a 5kwp solar PV system on a dwelling house. This system is expected to generate approximately 70% of the home's annual electricity requirements. To ensure that this is used in the house surplus electricity is firstly diverted to heat water, with the balance going to batteries during the day which then discharge at night to meet the homes electricity needs.

On most dairy farms there is a base load of electricity usage of between 2kwh and 6kwh every hour with significant peaks in the morning and evening at milking times. On pig, poultry and dairy farms where there are robots the base loads are higher. The key is to size the system so that all of the electricity is used on the home/farm and to this on dairy farms it may be necessary to divert surplus electricity towards heating water and/or to battery storage or electric vehicle.

TECHNOLOGY

Standard solar PV panels are 1.66mx1m, 280/320w per panel, are glass foil design (cells between a pane of glass and foil laminate underneath) and come with a 10 yr product warranty and a 25 yr performance warranty based on a maximum panel degradation of 0.7%/yr. (ie. Panels reduce their efficiency over time). Most mass produced panels are manufactured in Asia.

However there are alternative European manufactured panels.

Two examples are Solarwatt and Peimar. Solarwatt is the only panel on the market manufactured in Germany and comes with the cells sandwiched between two panes of glass and have a 30yr performance and 30yr product warranty based on a maximum annual degradation of 0.345%. These panels are very robust and should always be used on sites where ammonia gases or salt erosion might be an issue. On a value for money basis these panels also stack up as owners can expect a minimum of 35% extra production over the life of the system. Another is Italian manufactured panel Peimar which comes with a 20yr product and 30yr performance warranty.

In battery storage there are lots of brands and farmers/home owners need to ensure that they buy ones that have the highest safety and efficiency. Again the German manufactured Solarwatt brand scores highest in this regard but are more expensive than the standard battery systems available.

Batteries can also operate AC or DC. What that means is that the battery can be charged DC by surplus solar during the day and once discharged can be recharged on cheaper night rate electricity for discharge in the morning when electricity costs more. Batteries can also act as a power back up in case of outage assuming of course that the battery is charged when the outage occurs.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

For the average sized farm where the house and farm is run of the one meter they should consider either a 6kwp (single phase) or 11kwp (three phase) installation and work to ensure that all of the electricity generated is used. For homes the ideal system size is probably between 3kwp and 5kwp with the sweet spot at 4kwp plus 5kwh of battery storage where a maximum €3800 grant is available.

The reason for these limits is that there are currently restrictions on the size of system that can be installed without ESB approval and without having to put in G10 protection (stops electricity going to the grid in case of an emergency) which adds significant costs to an install. For pig, poultry and horticultural units the system should be sized so that as much of the base load as possible is provided when solar PV is operating at peak output.

Also currently the area of roof that solar PV can be put on without planning permission is ridiculously low at 12sqm. In the North it is 6000sqm so we would expect that the rules around planning will change shortly.

We believe that the planning and ESB limits will be reviewed upwards in the short to medium term.

A 6kwp system will take up less than 40sqm with 11kwp taking less than 70sqm and the inverter and battery will require less than 1sqm of wall space in total.

PV SOLAR SUPPORTS AND COSTS

The cost of installing solar PV can vary from €800 to €1600 per KwP installed depending on size of system and technology chosen and paybacks normally between 5 and 7 years depending on energy prices, grant secured and cost of system.

A 5kwp Solarwatt Solar PV system installed by Local Power Ltd on a dormer bungalow in Kerry





A 100kwp solar PV system generating over 90,000 kWh/ year installed by Local Power Ltd on a pig farm in the midlands

While everyone looks at payback period it is not in itself a fair way of assessing a solar PV install. For example if a person invests €7k net of grant in a solar PV system that saves them €1,000/yr in electricity costs the payback is 7 years the return on his money is almost 15% and he will get that saving increasing as electricity prices increase for the next 25/30 years. You won't get that in a bank or on the stock market either.

Battery storage can cost between €600 and €1200 per kwh installed depending on technology chosen and is only recommended if it's not possible to use all of the electricity generated during the day.

Farmers can access grants for PV Solar and battery storage in a number of ways

Most farms are homes as well as farms and the farm is run of a domestic supply and therefore will qualify for the NEW dwelling grant which gives a per KWp grant of €700 up to 4kwp of Solar PV and a €1000 towards battery storage. This should cover between 25% and 40% of the cost of the install and with energy costs rising payback should be in the region of 6/7 years once all of

ELECTRICITY EXPORT POTENTIAL FROM PV SOLAR ON FARM ROOFS ETC

There may be an option for putting solar PV on the roof spaces of farm buildings in the future depending on what supports if any the Government provides especially for community type projects which they say they are going to incentivise and support. We will know more on exactly what the Government are proposing in the next few months and we will be lobbying through the Micro Renewable Energy Federation, MREF, to secure a viable option for using farm roof tops for exporting to the grid.

So far a total of 6GW of farm solar PV (30,000 acres) is proposed to be developed across the country and mainly in the east and south of the country. How much of this that will eventually be built depends on many variables including access to grid, grid cost, planning permission, build cost, location scale and so on. For most farmers the risks are very high and solar farms tend to be promoted by specialist developers.

Large scale Solar PV like large scale wind etc will be supported through the new RESS, renewable energy support scheme. The full document in relation to RESS can be accessed on www.dccae.ie

“The key is to size the system so that all of the electricity is used on the home/farm”

the energy is used on site. Homeowners can check eligibility on the SEAI website in minutes. Houses built after 2011 don't qualify.

Pig, Poultry and Horticultural farms can get a TAMS grant of 40% against the cost of installing PV solar systems. We believe that dairy, tillage and beef farms should also get a TAMS grant for PV solar installations and that the carbon emission reductions accruing set directly against emissions for the sector.

Currently farmers can get a grant for various energy saving initiatives through the BEC, better energy community grants run by the SEAI and this normally amounts to 30% of the actual costs and applications are made once per year.

Renewable energy projects on farms also qualify for 100% accelerated capital allowances on the cost net of grant which can be very attractive and in some situations halve the payback period for sole traders on the top rate of tax.

In summary all projects with planning and grid connections will be able to bid in to provide energy through an auction process. The first auction, scheduled for 2019, is technology neutral and will be for 1000 GW/h which will be filled with 356MW on shore wind, 253MW off shore wind, 1000MW solar or 134MW of biomass. The second auction in 2020 is for 3000GW/hrs and in that auction there will be technology CAPS imposed so logically the likelihood is that solar farms will score better then. Another auction for 3000GW/hrs in 2021, 2023 and 2025. Significantly bid bonds will be required for those participating in the auction process which is aimed at stopping guys speculating. Any project hoping to secure support must have planning and grid connection.

For more information www.smartsolar.ie or call (01)8250263 or 086 2613374

Information compiled by Pat Smith Local Power Ltd

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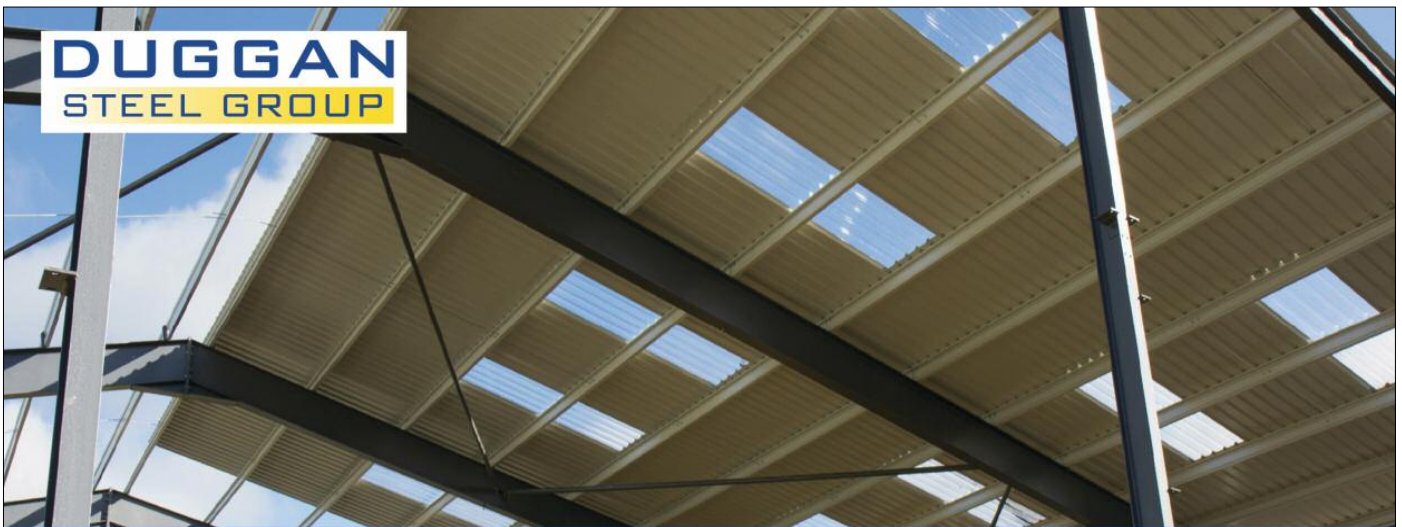
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SWEEPING PAYE CHANGES ON THE WAY

The biggest change to Ireland's PAYE system in almost 60 years comes into effect on 1 January 2019. Even if you only have one employee, you will need to get to grips with the new rules to avoid potential penalties, says Mary McDonagh, Head of Payroll Services at IFAC.

Sweeping changes to the way in which farmers collect and report payroll information will come into effect on 1 January 2019. Gone are the old familiar forms like P35s, P45s and P60s. In future, employers will have to submit information ahead of each pay day and Revenue will be able to see details of each employee's pay and tax deductions in real-time.

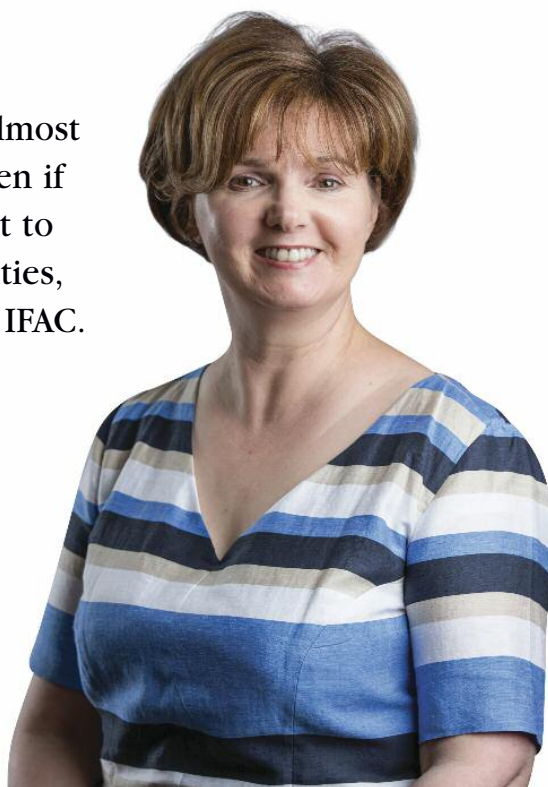
Farmers will need to provide accurate information for each pay period as there will no longer be an option to correct errors on the P35 at the end of the year.

WHAT IS CHANGING?

Under the new system, a Revenue Payroll Notification (RPN) will replace P2C. You will have to provide details of each employee's pay and tax deductions to Revenue on or before every pay date. Bonuses, shares, commission and benefits-in-kind need to be included.

From January, benefits-in-kind such as a company car will need to be spread over the year and taxed in each pay period. This will

affect how you collect and record each employee's mileage. At the end of each month, Revenue will provide a statement summarising the information that you have provided. You will be able to view this statement on the Revenue Online Service (ROS)





REAL TIME REPORTING ON OR BEFORE DAY OF PAYMENT!!

from the fifth day of the month and you will have until the fourteenth day of the month to check and correct your reports for the previous month.

Employees starting their first job will have to register on Revenue's 'MyAccount' service, a single access point for secure online access to individual tax payer services including PAYE, Local Property Tax, the Home Renovation Incentive and various other reliefs and incentives.

IMMEDIATE PRIORITY

An important deadline for farmers to be aware of is 31 October 2018 as you must submit a list of your employees to Revenue by this date. The immediate priority, therefore, is to clean up your employee records and prepare your list. The information you will need includes a current Tax Credit Certificate (P2C) for each employee and accurate PPSN numbers. You also need to ensure

that you have issued P45s for any former employees who no longer work for you.

If your business is structured as a company, you will need to include your company directors on the list of employees.

A PPSN checker utility is available on the Revenue Online Service and you can use ROS to check whether Revenue has issued a new P2C.

DIRECTORS

Directors will need to ensure that the company's tax systems and processes are up to date and that all personnel involved in the payroll process are aware of their responsibilities.

Real-time reporting is likely to reveal any weaknesses in your systems and processes, so it will be important to discover and address these before the new system becomes operational. Revenue is issuing guidance for proprietary directors. If you are a director and receive this document, it is important to read it and comply with the information provided.

MAKING PAYMENTS

There is no change to the way employers make payments to Revenue. So, if you currently pay on a monthly or quarterly basis this will continue under the new regime. However, while the payment due date will remain the same, quarterly and annual remitters will now have a monthly statement issued by Revenue which will become their monthly return. As previously mentioned, it will be very important to provide accurate information for each pay period as in future you will not be able to correct errors on the P35 at the end of the year.

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RETURN AND PAYMENT DUE DATES

Remitter Type	Return Filing Frequency	Return Due Date	Payment Frequency	Payment Due Date
Monthly	Monthly	14 days after the end of the month	Monthly	14 days after the end of the month (23 days for ROS users who file and pay online)
Quarterly	Monthly	14 days after the end of the month	Quarterly	14 days after the end of each quarter (23 days for ROS users who file and pay online)
Annual	Monthly	14 days after the end of the month	Annually	14 days after the end of the year (23 days for ROS users who pay and file online)

Table source: Revenue.ie

PENALTIES

It is worth noting that real time reporting will give Revenue greater oversight of your processes and discrepancies will show up very quickly. Now is the time to identify and address any weaknesses in your system and put the correct procedures and processes in place going forward. Failure to comply with the requirements of new PAYE regime is likely to result in Revenue intervention or Revenue Audit which could lead to fines or penalties.

Note that if you do not have a Register of Employees at your business address, you could be liable for a penalty of €4,000. A similar penalty could apply each time you fail to follow an RPN or if you do not inform Revenue when an employee leaves your

provider who will have technology in place that integrates with Revenue and reduces the chance of errors.

If you already use payroll software, check that your software provider is ready for the new PAYE regime and has run the Revenue Public Interface Test.

You should also ask whether there will be any additional charges due to the regime and what supports they will be providing for you when real-time reporting comes into operation on 1 January 2019.

CONCLUSION

The sweeping changes coming into effect in the New Year will see the abolition of familiar forms like P30s, P45s, P60s and end of year returns. In future, it will be more important than ever to maintain reliable information on all employee payments and

“The immediate priority is to submit a list of your employees to Revenue before 31 October”

employment. In addition, if you do not pay the correct tax due, you could be liable for interest on the underpayment at a rate of 10 percent per annum.

NEXT STEPS

For employers who are currently running manual payrolls, the new system will involve additional administration and there is likely to be increased scope for error. For this reason, now might be a good time to either look at getting payroll software or, alternatively to outsource your payroll to a payroll service

provider who will have technology in place that integrates with Revenue and reduces the chance of errors. Keep in mind that data submitted to Revenue will be fed into risk analysis systems which could potentially identify weaknesses in your procedures and lead to Revenue interventions, fines or penalties. At this time of the year farmers will be meeting their accountants to discuss their tax and plan for 2019.

This is an opportunity to seek advice on any PAYE changes that may be needed to get ready for the new regime.

Mary McDonagh is Head of Payroll Services at IFAC.



PAYE KEY DATES

31 October 2018

Deadline to submit your list of employees to Revenue.

1 January 2019

PAYE real-time reporting comes into operation. All employers must operate the new PAYE regime from this date.

5th of every month

Summary of your payroll reports for the previous month will be available on ROS.

14th of every month

Deadline to check and correct your reports for the prior month.



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The baling chamber is formed by 16 rollers, made from 4-mm-thick steel plate. The serrated profile of the rollers maintains optimum bale rotation even under moist conditions. Bearing and power transmission functions are performed via specially hardened 50-mm diameter lateral axle stubs on the input drive side. They are flange-mounted on the roller body, and can be individually replaced if necessary.

The tailgate closing rams are arranged horizontally at the sides, resulting in high baling pressures.

The new design also reduces the pressure exerted on the tailgate and ram bearing structures. For maximum bale density, forces of up to 180 bar can be applied to the rams. The ROLLANT 540 can be supplied with the MPS II system as an option. With MPS, a segment bearing three of the baling rollers pivots into the chamber for additional bale compression, early bale rotation, and a perfectly uniform bale shape.

OPTIMUM CHAIN LUBRICATION, EVEN DURING LONG WORKING DAYS

The baling rollers are driven solely from the left side of the machine. Each roller has direct drive, resulting in uniform force distribution to the rollers with a lower power requirement. The rotor and main drive have 1.25-inch drive chains, and the tailgate rollers are driven with a 1-inch chain. The chains have strengthened side sections according to the ASA standard, and new double-row roller bearings made of high-strength steel.

The chains are lubricated via an eccentric pump, with oil supply from a 6.3-l storage tank. Lubrication is applied precisely when and where required, at the rotation points of the chain links. All the lubricating nipples of the MPS and tailgate are combined on the right-hand side. A central lubrication option is also available. The lubrication interval can be set on the control terminal.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE PICK-UP ENSURES OPTIMUM CROP FLOW

A 2.10-m-wide controlled pick-up retrieves the crop reliably and efficiently, and a double flattening roller is available as optional equipment. This improves crop flow, especially for particularly large and small swaths, and promotes uniform bale formation. Two lateral feed augers provide a reliable supply to the rotor.

The optional chopping mechanism has 15 knives, with a theoretical cut length of 70 mm. The knives can be swung in from the cab, and have individual protection against damage from foreign objects.

When blockages occur, the cutting chamber can be lowered with a command from the control terminal. This provides an extremely user-friendly system for the driver, and minimises downtime.

There is also a lower power requirement for restarting the mechanism afterwards.

CHOICE OF NET OR FILM WRAPPING

In the ROLLANT 540, the user has a choice between net and film wrapping. Changing the wrapping mode is a tool-free operation, performed simply by adjusting the side screws of the guide roller. A ramp on the right side of the machine simplifies the task of loading the wrapping system. A replacement roll – either film or net – can also be carried. With the COMFORT system as optional equipment, wrapping system settings can be carried out directly from the cab.

For operating the baler, there is a choice between the CLAAS COMMUNICATOR, the OPERATOR terminal or the ISOBUS terminal.

For further information please contact Dean Cottey on Tel: 0044 +1284 763100 or Email: dean.cottey@claas.com



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CLAAS

TILLAGE CONTRACTS FOR LIVESTOCK FARMERS

The extreme weather of 2018 has forced farmers to plan future fodder requirements in a more structured way, writes Shay Phelan, Teagasc Crops Specialist.



The extremely dry weather of summer 2018 has had a significant effect on fodder supply for many livestock farmers around the country. While fodder shortages have happened before rarely has it been on such a scale. With estimates running at several million tonnes of a fodder deficit nationwide it has forced farmers to look at their plans for making hay and silage into the future. Is enough land being saved up to make winter fodder each year or is there too much stock being carried on farm? Whatever the answer is, many farmers are now looking at the possibility of accessing extra fodder; this may be by way of renting ever more expensive land or by buying in fodder from another farmer.

We have seen in the summer gone past many agreements between livestock farmers and tillage farmers for all sorts of crops from whole-crop wheat and barley to fodder catch crops all grown by the tillage farmer and sold directly to the livestock farmer. With reserve stocks on most farms having been eliminated the demand for these additional crops into the future may well be strong. What is crucial for the livestock farmers is to have a plan, work out your fodder budget and calculate your annual requirements, also it may

well be wise to restore the necessary reserves over a period of years, rather than trying to do it in one year, which could prove to be expensive. Once the plan is in place, now the livestock farmer needs to seek out suitable tillage farmers who may be willing to enter into a contract to supply the desired crops. Having some sort of signed contract in place gives security and certainty to both parties and no arrangement should be entered into unless there is one. Trust among the farmers is essential otherwise these agreements are likely to be less successful.

Obviously both parties must enter into any agreement or contract fully aware of both the risks and the benefits that may be associated with these types of arrangements.

FOR THE LIVESTOCK FARMERS THERE ARE MANY BENEFITS TO BE GAINED;

1. Labour-where labour is short to grow your own crops having somebody else to grow the crops can result in significant labour savings.
2. Expertise- many livestock farmers are only part-time tillage crop

growers and therefore can gain by using the expertise of the specialist tillage grower.

3. Security of supply – once the contract is signed it is up to the tillage farmer to supply the agreed amount of fodder.

4. Extra land – may allow extra grazing land for the livestock reducing overall fertiliser costs.

5. Planning – allows the livestock farmer plan for the future in some certainty that the fodder supply will be there.

FOR THE TILLAGE FARMER THERE ARE ALSO MANY BENEFITS;

1. Market access- there may be access to markets that the tillage farmer may not have had before. They are selling to an end user rather than an intermediary,

2. Contracts – many growers don't have any signed contracts for the crops they grow and don't know the selling price until after the crops is sold. This gives some degree of price guarantee,

3. Spread workload – many fodder crops are harvested at times that are slightly earlier or later than the normal crop harvest so they can take the pressure off a little bit at peak times.

4. Rotation – many crops can offer break crops from continuous cereal rotations and can help increase cereal yields in subsequent years.

LIVESTOCK FARMERS RISK:

However, like all contracts there are risks that are associated when growing crops, on the livestock side the main risks may be;

1. Supply- will the tillage farmer supply my needs in a bad year.

2. Quality – will the quality meet my requirements, if not will there be an extra cost of supplements.

3. Change of system- for many farmers there may well be a change of feeding system required from for example a silage and concentrates system to a total mixed ration system. This may also involve buying a diet wagon.

4. Contractor – there may be a need to use a specialist contractor.

5. Dispute – there can be dispute but an agreed dispute process including an intermediary can be agreed on at the start.

TILLAGE FARMER RISK:

1. Payment – there may be the risk of not receiving full payment on time, so a staged payment arrangement e.g. monthly/quarterly direct debit may be used.

2. Supply – what happens in a bad year where yields are down and the tillage farmer is not able to supply the contracted tonnage.

3. Change of system – new equipment may be needed for growing or handling a different crop.

4. Need for a contractor – may be a need to use a contractor which can increase machinery costs.

5. Dispute – again an agreed process needs to be in place to protect both parties.

All of these issues need to be thrashed out before any agreement is entered into otherwise disputes and rows could occur.



In 2018 most fodder crops were sold without contracts in place as the scarcity of fodder created a big demand so most livestock farmers bought crops at short notice. While some will no doubt have fared well with the crops that they bought others may not, therefore, if these arrangements are to become longer lasting then it is highly recommended that both parties agree and sign a contract. The contracts can be as simple or as complex as both parties want but they need to be developed in such a way as to protect both parties.

TEAGASC MAIZE GUIDE:

Teagasc in conjunction with a number of industry stakeholders have produced a guide to growing maize crops, the guide takes goes through the agronomy of the crop but it also shows an example of how a crop contract might be developed between two

In most cases the livestock farmer has little or no say in what crops are grown by the tillage farmer, however to ensure the best result for both farmers then a joint decision needs to be made to ensure both farmers get maximum benefit.

Factors such as the livestock requirements, land type, feed system, use of existing equipment, harvest date, storage, crop rotation all should form part of the discussion.

Crops such as wholecrop cereals are particularly suitable for the tillage farmer for many reasons as they are grown as a conventional crop.

They can then be harvested and stored in a similar manner to grass silage, however they may need a change of feeding system on the livestock farmers behalf.

Maize is a popular crop for many farmers to grow and use and can fit into a tillage system quite easily but it is a specialist crop in

“The contracts can be as simple or as complex as both parties want but they need to be developed in such a way as to protect both parties”

farmers. An agreed price for both dry matter and starch is agreed in principle at the start and the crop is sold based on the delivered tonnes afterwards and relating to the agreed specs. Table 1 below shows an example of such an agreement.

The purchaser agrees to purchase the crop at a base price based on certain specs. An average of 30 % starch and dry matter equals the base price in this example. There are then bonuses or penalties (€1.80 per unit of starch and dry matter) calculated on the actual quality of the crop delivered.

Table 1: Example of crop pricing structure

Value of Maize	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
Base price @ 30% DM & 30% Starch	€50 per tonne DM	€50 per tonne DM	€50 per tonne DM
<u>Dry Matter % + Starch %</u> 2	(29% DM + 31% Starch) ÷ 2 = 30	(34% DM + 36% Starch) ÷ 2 = 35	(27% DM + 25% Starch) ÷ 2 = 26
Multiply the difference from 30 by €1.80	0 x €1.80 = €0.00	5 x €1.80 = €9.00	-4 x €1.80 = - €7.20
Final price - based on quality above or below 30%, per tonne of DM	€50.00 per t DM	€59.00 per t DM	€42.80 per t DM

Once the pricing structure is finalised a deposit and payment schedule is then agreed, it is signed by both parties and witnessed by a third party.

The full details of the booklet including the example contract can be found on the Teagasc website at;
<https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/publications/2017/The-Maize-Guide.pdf>

Teagasc have also developed a specific contract crop agreement which can be used for any crop and can also be found on the website on following link;

<https://www.teagasc.ie/rural-economy/farm-management/collaborative-farming/contract-forage-cropping/>

terms of machinery so it involves the use of a contractor for the most part.

This may or may not appeal to the tillage farmer as this can increase the overall machinery costs on the farm.

Fodder beet also requires specialist machinery to grow and harvest with the added complication that specialist feeding equipment is also required.

Grass silage crops are not really popular with tillage farmers as the costs are high and there is also the risk of increasing grass weed problems on the tillage farms. However for low yielding

cereal land due to poor fertility, drainage, poor soil structure etc. it may well be an option for tillage farmers to re-habilitate the land over a period of years.

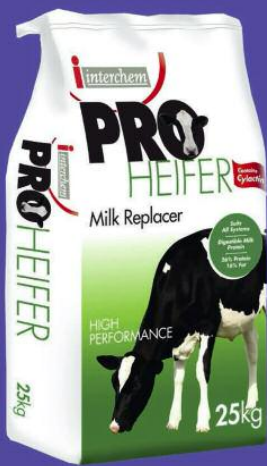
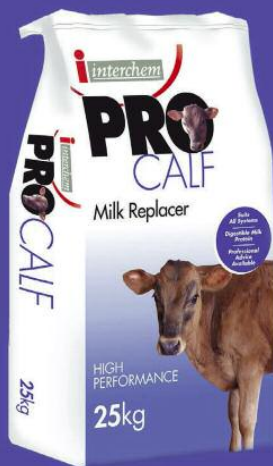
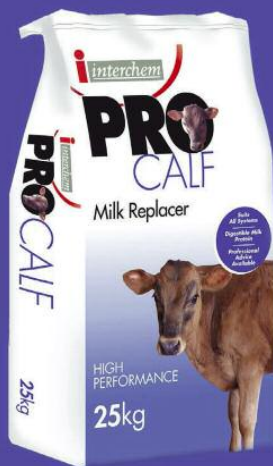
CATCH CROPS

Catch crops have become popular on many tillage farms due to their inclusion in the GLAS scheme, these can offer significant savings for both parties as the tillage farmer is paid to establish them and the livestock farmer can graze them after the 1st of December with livestock and so reduce their feeding costs. These crops require minimum investment from both parties however they need to be carefully planned in terms of site, crop, rotation etc. so as to maximise their benefits.

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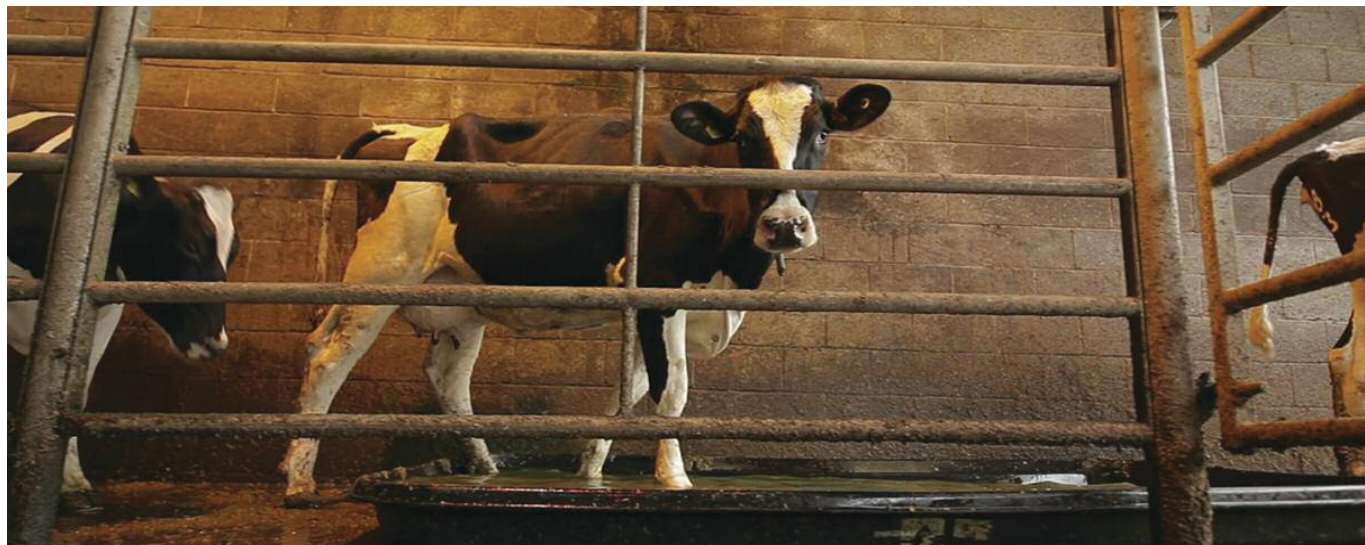


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LAMENESS AND FOOTBATHING

Recent research indicates that digital dermatitis is present in approx. 80% of herds and pre-housing is a good time to tackle it, writes Graham Grier, Hoof Specialist.



Now is the ideal time to tackle digital dermatitis head on. Tackling any cases of the disease before cows are housed for the winter will help to prevent it from spreading from cow to cow and, if you'll pardon the pun, from getting a foothold.

The most recent research estimated that around 80% of herds had digital dermatitis, but the real figure is probably higher. Each case costs producers between €75 and €80. This figure includes additional labour and treatment. Other hidden losses, arising from reduced milk yield and poor fertility, are more difficult to quantify. A cow with digital dermatitis can add an extra 20 days to her calving-to-first-service interval and other work has shown a 1.7% loss in milk yield.

STEP OUTSIDE

There are plenty of production and financial reasons to now turn your attention to feet, ready for the housing period. Feet are cleaner and drier when cows are outside and this makes the disease much easier to treat – the burden of infection is reduced. The foot care 'regime' should comprise regular foot bathing and keeping the feet as dry and slurry free as possible.

Lameness is an important issue for all livestock farmers, with dairy cattle and sheep the most commonly affected group that we see in the practice, says Westpoint Vet and clinical lead for mobility, James Dixon. Infectious lameness is an issue in both these sectors with cattle affected by digital dermatitis (DD), foul and heel horn erosion, and sheep by conditions such as scald, footrot and contagious ovine digital dermatitis (CODD). These diseases are caused by a variety of bacteria with DD in cattle and CODD in sheep now both thought to be due to the same species of treponeme.

WHEN TACKLING INFECTIOUS LAMENESS, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF POINTS TO CONSIDER

Which pathogen is to blame?

- An accurate diagnosis will help when deciding on which control measures to employ and is best reached with the help of the farm vet.

What proportion of the herd are affected?

- If only a few then treating and isolating affected individuals may be sufficient.
- Once cases reach more than a handful then herd/flock measures are required. Is the environment contributing to the problem?
- In housed stock look at hygiene, cleanliness and moisture levels.
- When stock are outside try to avoid poaching, especially around feed or water troughs and rotate pasture where possible to reduce contamination.

FOOTBATHING

One of the key methods of tackling infectious lameness is footbathing, which has the dual benefit of helping to treat clinically affected animals as well as reducing the infection pressure on the rest of the herd/flock – a key component when tackling any infectious disease. There are many different chemicals used for footbathing from specially designed, ready to use products to chemicals and additives, all of which need to be diluted and used correctly in order to be effective.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL FOOTBATHING

- Place bath in the normal animal flow to get them used to going through.
- The bottom of the bath should be flat – avoid baths with ridges in the bottom!
- Cows do not like stepping down into a bath.
- Make the bath easy to fill and easy to clean.
- Farmers should agree a written footbathing protocol with their vet (including chemicals concentrations and frequency) and ensure all staff are aware of it.
- Change the solution regularly – rule of thumb is 1 cow passage per litre (ie a 200L bath can be used twice for 100 cows or once for 200).
- Footbath all susceptible animals (i.e. include heifers and dry cows for dairy herds and ewe lambs in sheep flocks).
- Quarantine footbathing for purchased stock should be standard practice.



THE MAIN INFECTIOUS FOOT CONDITION AFFECTING CATTLE IS:

1 The main infectious hoof condition in cattle is:

- A Solar Ulcers,
- B Digital Dermatitis,
- C White line disease,
- D Scald.

2 The first step in controlling infectious lameness is:

- A Commence footbathing,
- B Inspect lame animals and reach a diagnosis,
- C Inject all lame animals with antibiotics.

One problem we often come across when implementing lameness control programs is inaccurate dosing of footbath solutions due to farmers not knowing the volume held by their footbath, and we designed a survey to investigate this further within our practice.

The survey was completed by vets and trimmers with the farmers quizzed on the volume of the bath, the amount of chemical used and what concentration was being targeted. The bath was then measured and the volume calculated to obtain the true value.

Of the 26 farms surveyed, the majority were underestimating the true volume of their footbath, leading to a high risk of under-dosing of any chemicals used to counteract digital dermatitis.

- Only 23% of farms surveyed were correctly estimating the volume of the footbath.
- Only 23% of farms were adding the right amount of chemical required to achieve their desired concentration.

	VOLUME	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	AVERAGE
		ERROR	CONCENTRATION	ERROR
% Correct (within 5%)	23%	-	23%	-
% Overestimated	23%	14%	42%	8%
% Underestimated	54%	53%	15%	35%
% Not made an estimate	-	-	19%	-

- Only three farms (12%) were correctly estimating both volume and concentration as some had achieved the correct concentration despite being incorrect about bath volume.

- Of the farms over-estimating the size of their bath, the average error was 14%, leading to an 8% overdose of chemical.

- Of the farms under-estimating the size of the bath, the average error was 53%, leading to a 35% underdosing of chemical.

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

Whether it's sporadic treatment of sheep flocks, or daily footbathing of housed dairy cows, this measure will only be successful if the volume and concentration of footbath are correct so that each animal receives the right amount of chemical and the bath does not become over-contaminated with organic matter.

This quick and simple survey highlights the fact that only a minority of farms are footbathing accurately and that nearly half of the farms surveyed are failing to achieve expected concentrations chemical in their footbath.

HEALTHY HOOVES®

Whilst there are many footbathing solutions available, we still have most success with chemicals such as Copper Sulphate and Formalin, but these do not come without their drawbacks. Formalin is unpleasant to use and is a known carcinogen so its use must be minimised wherever possible, especially where farmworkers will be working in close proximity to the footbath. Copper Sulphate is much safer but is also costly and excessive use will result in copper build-up in the environment. Healthy Hooves® is a copper delivery system which, when used in conjunction with Copper Sulphate, can reduce copper usage by up to 80%, whilst also improving the efficacy of the footbath. It works by acidifying the solution, increasing the solubility of the Copper Sulphate, allowing it to stay active for longer than a traditional solution. This product has been trialled alongside straight Copper Sulphate and been shown to perform just as well, but with lower Copper usage and more cow passes through the same footbath.

- Healthy Hooves® HH 101 is available for use with Copper Sulphate, which allows for 500 cow passes through a single 200 litre footbath.

- Healthy Hooves® HH 108 Eco is available for use with Zinc Sulphate, which allows for 800 ewe passes through a single 100 litre footbath.

For further information visit www.healthyhooves.eu

PRODUCT NEWS

BIOCEL LTD LEADS THE CHARGE IN THE REDUCTION OF CHLORINE / CHLORATE RESIDUES

Biocel Ltd the leading Irish supplier of Hygiene & Teat Care products for over 50 years, are continuing to lead the charge in the reduction of chlorine associated residues with a range of new and improved **Chlorine free** products. These new products, in combination with existing proven products, offer the industry an option to clean dairy equipment **Chlorine free**.

The production of residue free dairy products is key to growing international markets with Biocel Ltd working very closely with the industry both at farm and processing level since the challenge of TCMs & more recently Chlorates arose in the industry enabling the company to have a deep understanding of the challenge from “farm to fork”.

Circodine P & Multisan / Aquasan the Biocel Ltd trusted & proven chlorinated products are now available in chlorine free formulations under the brand names **Circodine CF & Multisan CF**. These new products, in conjunction with the Biocel unique Peracetic Acid



products **Serpent /Hydrox 5** combined with the new formulation **BLAST** offer a totally **Chlorine free** system for the cleaning and disinfection of milking plant & bulk tanks.

The products & cleaning programs have been tested and proven in a combination of **Moorepark** and **farm trials** ensuring they deliver quality results comparable to systems using chlorine based cleaners, while also eliminating and reducing **TCM & Chlorates** residues. The Biocel **Chlorine free** system also offers added saving in both **water heating** and **usage costs**.

The key to maintaining quality results when using a Chlorine free wash routine are:

1 Attain an adequate wash temperature in the hot wash with target dump temperature of 60degC.

2 Follow a rigid program of using **Serpent** as a disinfectant/ scale preventative or descale weekly as part of the program.

3 If the wash struggles to reach an adequate temperature or the plant is difficult to clean due to a large number of units combined with the presence of milk meters, a hot wash with **Circodine CF, Multisan CF, Blast, Serpent, Hydrox 5** should be carried out weekly as part of the routine or alternatively carry out a chlorinated wash with **Circodine P, Multisan** or **Aquasan** combined with an extra final rinse with **Serpent** added to remove any potential chlorine residues.

For more information on the Biocel Ltd, chlorine free products & wash programs visit www.biocel.ie or call 021 4353516 for a free consultation with our Dairy Hygiene Technical team.

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How Dipetane Works: Dipetane uniquely addresses and solves the fundamental problem existing in standard combustion, which is that some of the valuable carbon remains unburnt. Irish scientists are the first and only scientists worldwide who have discovered how to enable the existing fixed oxygen to gain proper access to burn the valuable carbon much more completely compared to standard combustion.

Injector Protection: Dipetane protects costly injectors and valve stems from the EC 90% cut in sulphur, the sulphur had been acting as a lubricant for Injectors and valve stems.

Dipetane's full burning of the carbon leaves no hard unburnt carbon grating in the system and combined with its built in lubricant greatly increases lubrication thereby protecting injectors and valve stems.

DPF's-Diesel Particle Filters: Minimising regeneration, minimising fuel usage and protecting DPF's is very efficient. As mentioned above protecting DPF's through the use of Dipetane is critical and very cost-effective. Dipetane treated fuel's unique ability to burn the carbon more completely, compared to all standard fuels means that much less un-burnt carbon enters the DPF and therefore the regeneration occurs less often. In some 6.8 Litre engines Dipetane's use has extended the regeneration from 70 hours out to over 200 hours. This is a substantial fuel saving and protects the DPF from the very high revs involved in the regeneration process.

Up to 10% fuel savings: Dipetane's independent Scientific Chassis Dynamometer and Boiler Tests under controlled conditions show up to 10% fuel savings. Mix rate for Dipetane is always 1:200. 1 Litre treats 200 Litre's Diesel, Petrol, Kerosene, Heavy Oil. It does not change the spec of the fuel. It is not an 'additive', being 100% hydro-carbon.

SAVE up to 10% on Fuel Bills

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- * Prevents waxing in Diesel up to -30°C (super pump)
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1 Litre treats 200 Litres of Diesel / Petrol on average



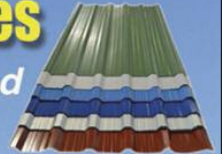
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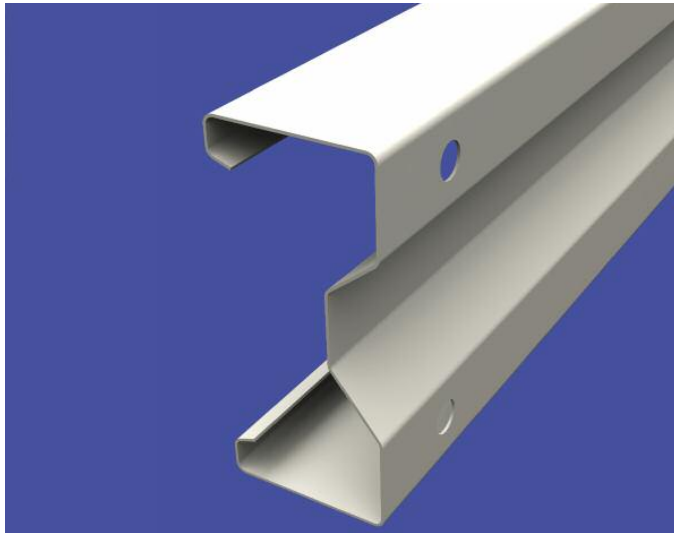
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PRODUCT NEWS

DUGGAN PROFILES ARE PROUD TO INTRODUCE THE LATEST ADDITION TO THEIR RANGE OF PURLINS AND RAILS

The new **AgriPurlin** is a 1.2mm painted purlin specifically designed for 4.8m bays in agricultural buildings. **AgriPurlin** was developed to provide a cost efficient alternative to



timber in agricultural buildings. This has been achieved using high grade steel for maximum strength and lightest gauge. The product has been designed to suit the standard bay width of 4.8m and is supplied punched and ready to install with no on-site delays.

There are no waste lengths and no DPC strip is required for steel sheeting. Cleats are available to suit. There is also a significant strength advantage as **AgriPurlin** is up to 30% stronger than 6" C16 grade timber.

Duggan Profiles emphasize that this product is corrosion protected by the same high performance paint coating approved for many years by the Department. Further reassurance is provided by a 15 year structural guarantee & TAMS approval.

This new product has been positively received in the market since its launch. Customer feedback reflects excellent satisfaction with the new **AgriPurlin** and you are invited to test the product and satisfy yourself of its advantages when the opportunity arises. Please ask your local contractor or stockist for **AgriPurlin**.

Find out more at www.steel.ie

FLOGAS SOLVES HOT WATER DILEMMA FOR TIPPERARY FARMER



Rolling hills surround Mark Tobin's dairy farm just south of Cahir in Co. Tipperary. Run by Mark and ably assisted by his father Willie, like many others, his farm was reliant on an electric water heating system for its day to day activities. He found that using hot water twice a day was becoming a push too far and, in the winter, the cold weather played havoc with the immersion.

Just over two years ago, Mark and his team were building a new milking parlour and decided to start afresh with a new system. Mark had been impressed with good reviews of a nearby dairy

farm that had converted to Flogas for its hot water needs, so he got in touch with Tommy Murray, the local Flogas sales representative, to arrange a free site visit and assessment.

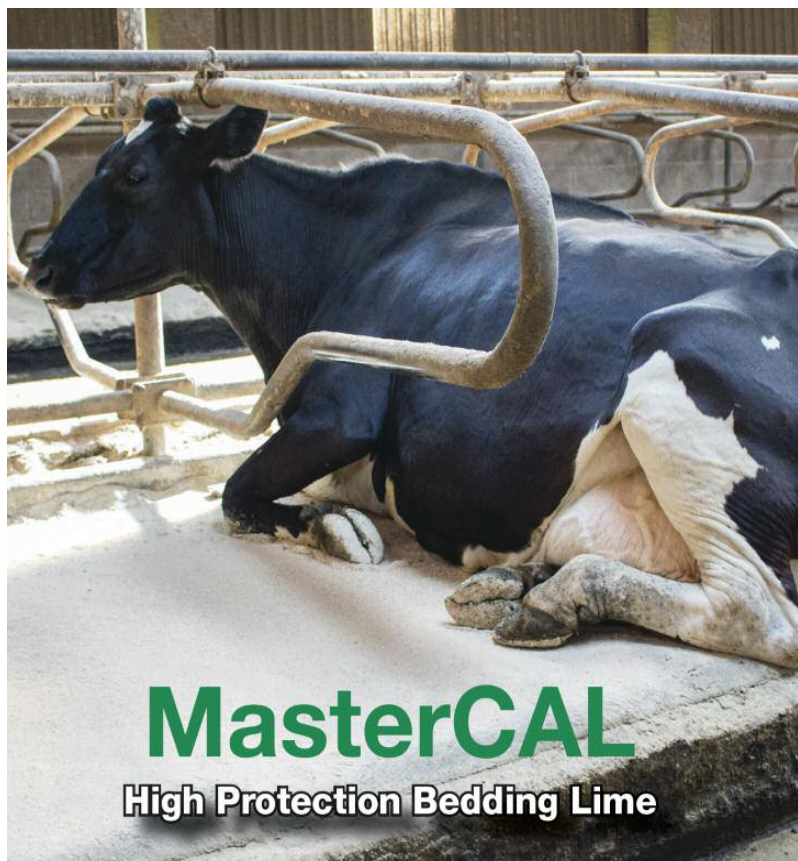
Depending on the size of the herd, the **Flogas LPG Dairy Hot Water System** comprises one or more high-powered water heaters, mounted on an external or internal wall, and piped to a Flogas LPG bulk tank. It then produces hot water from 37°C - 85°C instantly, eliminating hot water storage costs completely. An easy to use wall-mounted temperature controller allows you to decide the heat level you need at the touch of a button.

Tommy Murray brought along Brian Condon, the local RGI installer, to discuss the farm's needs with Mark and in his case, they recommended a single powerful water heater piped to a 0.5 tonne Flogas bulk tank. Once the go-ahead was given, the changeover was completed in one day, with minimal disruption to the farm's operations.

A recent innovation has been the installation of an LPG powered radiant heater in the milking parlour. The overhead heater, thought to be the first used on a farm using Flogas LPG, was Mark's idea, and was done by Brian Condon. The result is an easily controllable heater that sits above the milking parlour, providing an extra layer of comfort and warmth during the colder winter months.

Mark Tobin said, "We had a lot of problems, especially in the winter time with freezing issues. Add to that the constant need to heat hot water throughout the day so the Flogas system we now have in place is far more efficient which makes life a lot easier".

For more information visit www.flogas.ie/dairy



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PRODUCT NEWS

KINGSWOOD AND EID

Kingswood's new EID option on its best-selling Kingswood Mobile App has had a massive increase in functionality in recent months. As well as 'talking' to the main EID readers – Agrident, Trutest and Allflex – it can now multitask!

In addition to linking with the readers to pick up the National ID tag, it can at the same time extract animal weights from the Trutest electronic weighing scales. This makes for completely hands free recording while allowing the farmer to check animal weights and daily weight gains.

The advantages for drafting of animals as they're being weighed are obvious.

Kingswood's next step – which is well under way – is to link up with electronic drafting units. Kingswood is in discussions with a number of the major drafting equipment suppliers to establish these links and expect to have linked with at least one before the end of the year. This is only a continuation of Kingswood's long-standing vision to have its software established as a Farm IT Hub. Instead of having to deal with dozens of different apps that are currently being supplied with electronic farm equipment, the farmer deals with one –

Kingswood Mobile. Kingswood Mobile in turn can link with the various external suppliers of data – for example AIM, ICBF and local Veterinary Practices.

For farmers who like to fiddle with their phone cameras, Kingswood EID also allows for scanning of VPA and Batch numbers and Medicine names from veterinary packaging. Kingswood has established a central database of over a thousand commonly used medicines (extracted from the HPRa website), complete with VPA numbers and withdrawal periods.

In addition its long established VetLink facility now links with four of the main veterinary management packages – Kingswood's own VMS system, Vetscope, Telios and Comtag. VetLink eases the burden of Bord Bia compliance for time-pressed farmers, particularly with regard to recording of veterinary purchases.

After 30 years in business, Kingswood's slogan of **Farm Recording Made Easy** is as relevant as ever. It's been a long march but walking beats talking any day of the week.

Further information is available at www.kingswood.ie or ring 01-4596677



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PRODUCT NEWS

TACKLING LAMENESS WITH THE PROVITA HOOFSURE ENDURANCE (RANGE)

Lameness is now a major challenge in Irish dairy herds. Digital dermatitis (DD), more commonly known as Mortellaro, is an infectious condition and one of the major causes of lameness reducing milk yield, fertility, mobility and feed intake. A study conducted on ten dairy farms in Ireland by Somers and O'Grady in 2015, show that 89% of cows had lesions on their hind feet, 11.8% had lesions on their front feet and only in 6.9% of cows were no lesions found. This infectious condition spreads quickly through the herd and can reduce milk yield by at least one litre per cow per day. Overall cost is estimated to be €10,000 per 100 cows in a herd.

It is very important that controlling and treating lameness is a top priority. It is extremely critical that farmers are able to monitor Digital Dermatitis on their farm, and can use their footbaths correctly to help tackle the problem. However, a staggering 80% of footbaths are used incorrectly (AFBI). It's important to note that a specific farm orientated Digital Dermatitis control plan is imperative as it will allow the farmer to see the changes to the DD problem on their farm. Different levels of Digital Dermatitis should be tackled in various ways. Provita Animal Health can offer support in this instance. The Provita DD App is easy for farmers to use, and involves simply entering the size, colour and profile of the lesion. The app will convert your observations and categorise them into early, acute, healing, chronic or chronic and acute DD lesions. Once the data has been submitted a full report and specific recommendations for the farm will be made by Provita.

THE FULL HOOFSURE RANGE BY PROVITA INCLUDES THREE PRODUCTS.

HOOFSURE ENDURANCE is a footbath solution, scientifically proven proprietary blend of organic acids, essential oils and wetting agents. It is a safe, non-toxic, non-carcinogenic and biodegradable product, which can be easily disposed into a slurry pit or lagoon. This product should be used at a 1% dilution rate for maintenance and a 2%+ dilution rate in more difficult conditions. **HOOFSURE ENDURANCE** can be used as a 25% topical spray in conjunction with or as an alternative to footbathing.

This involves 4 simple steps:

1. Clean feet if necessary
2. Do not overfill the sprayer, leave at least 2 litres space at the top. If overfilled and/or over pumped the sprayer will be damaged.
3. Spray feet with Provita Hoofsure Endurance (1 part product to 3 parts water).
4. Apply three consecutive days in a row.

HOOFSURE KONQUEST is a scientifically proven proprietary concentrated gel, for topical application. It can be used with a hoof bandage. Use this on more difficult cases of DD.

HOOFSURE COMBAT is a unique film-forming hoof spray containing a proprietary blend of organic acids and essential oils, providing persistent longer lasting activity.

For further information please contact **Whelehan Animal Health** at (01) 4688900 or email: colm.menton@tpwhelehan.ie



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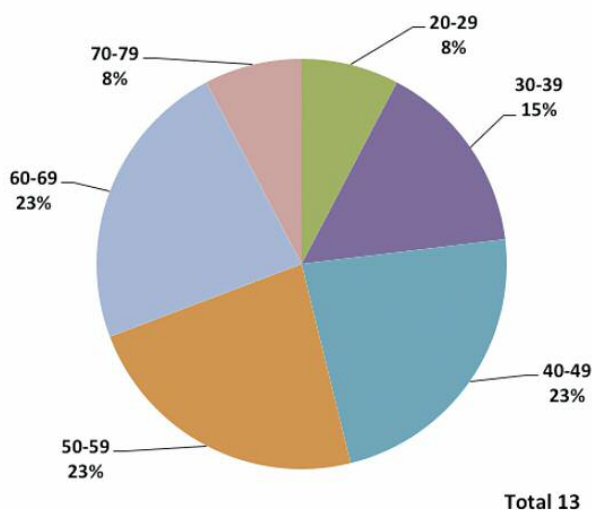
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WORKING WITH TIMBER

Weather is a large factor in the everyday life of farmers. Planning ahead by knowing the forecast for the upcoming days, weeks and months is essential.

Deaths 2008-2017 due to working with Timber by Age



After the Great Frost of 1740 retail prices for coal soared. Desperate people stripped bare hedges, ornamental trees, and nurseries for fuel. So between 1766 and 1806 the Royal Dublin Society initiated the planting of over 55 million trees in Ireland. Today, many old trees remain on farms and in hedgerows awaiting severe storms for their downfall.

Farmers can feel the need to clean up tree debris left behind by storm events. Historically, more people are injured by chainsaws than the storm that caused the tree damage. Operating a chainsaw on storm damaged trees is dangerous. Never operate a chainsaw alone and without certified training.

Now is the time to identify damaged and/or diseased trees. Allow time to save and plan for the costs of a trained professional

Crosscutting, Chainsaw Clearance of Windblow, Chainsaw Felling of Large Trees, Extraction by Forwarder, Mechanical Harvesting, Electricity at Work: Forestry. Be prepared to engage the services of a competent trained professional.

Before a storm prepare a plan for repairs. Ask yourself are you competent and have you the right equipment for safe repairs?

Work organisation is an important element of farm management.

Rushing, taking short-cuts, poor preparation and poor maintenance are the root causes of many accidents. Skilled labour is often scarce and expensive, and off-farm employment among farm family members is increasing making work planning and organisation more crucial than ever.

In advance of carrying out work at a height check do you have the right equipment to: Climb onto a roof to fix a leak, replace galvanise sheeting, clean a gutter or paint a shed roof? Avoid going onto a roof by adapting a method that allows the work to be carried out from underneath.

Where work cannot be carried out from underneath and you need to access the top of the roof consider the use of a mobile elevated work platform (MEWP) that allows people to work from within the basket without standing on the roof itself.

The MEWP will have controls in the basket to control all movement. Remember anyone in the basket must wear a safety harness. Often farmers will hire a MEWP twice a year and plan to carry out all repairs at a height during this time, sometimes over a weekend to ensure added benefit in hire costs.

Over the past 10 years (2008-2017) 37 people died on Irish farms from falls and collapses. This represented 18% of all farm deaths during this period.

“Be prepared to engage the services of a competent trained professional”

to carry out major tree debris removal and proper maintenance of remaining trees. Perhaps a tree survey would be useful. Have patience. Storm debris cleanup can take weeks or even months.

The Health and Safety Authority has recently launched new guidance on Safe working with Timber and Chainsaws including: Basic Chainsaw Felling, Chainsaw Snedding, Chainsaw

When a farmer commissions the carrying out of construction and maintenance of farm buildings, You (Farmer/client) must appoint in writing a project supervisor if:

- there is more than one contractor involved in the work, or
- there is a particular risk e.g. risk of fall due to restricted access, work near high voltage lines, deep excavations in poor soil conditions, work near river or pond, involving asbestos or
- the work is going to last more than 30 days or more than 500 person hours.

In the last 10 years (2008-2017) 21 people suffered fatal injury on Irish farms due to a fall from a height.

Lone working on farms is a risk many encounter. Farmers are advised to take steps to reduce these risks by telling someone where he/she is going before starting a job, carrying a charged mobile phone, recognising that some tasks are too dangerous to be implemented if unaccompanied. Make arrangements for assistance and backup. And remember YOU are not replaceable.



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