

Teagasc Notes for week ending Friday 11th February 2022

Monthly Monitor Farm Programme Farmer Profile: Shane is farming with his father John near Portlaw Co. Waterford. They are farming 92ha of which 30ha is leased. All the land is available to cows. The heifers are contract reared. They are currently milking 200 cows with an EBI of €159. The herd has grown from 120 cows in 2016 to just over 200 in 2021. This was achieved through sustainable growth of 20 cows a year. Now, Shane is focusing on consolidating the herd and allowing it to mature while increasing milk production through improved genetics and management using the same land base. Labour on the farm is Shane, his father John, his girlfriend Kate and in the spring time they have a student. When Shane returned home he focused on improving the grazing and roadway infrastructure. Once that was achieved and working well he moved on to upgrading the yard and facilities. In building a new slatted/cubicle shed and changing the collecting yard Shane concentrated on improving the yard from a farm labour and animal welfare perspective. Shane is part of the Teagasc Glanbia Signpost programme along with 10 other farmers. Along with this group he is also chair of the Agriculture Affairs with Macra na Feirme and he won Young Dairy Farmer of the Year 2019. Shane is passionate about dairy farming and he believes in giving back to his farming community by talking to young farmers and the wider community on how he and others farm sustainably on their farms and deliver a top quality product produced from grass fed cows every day.

Management Update:

Calving 2022: All calf houses/calving sheds have been washed & disinfected. Lots of straw is used to ensure a clean dry lie for all calves. Calving started on the 23rd January and due to the very good weather and ground conditions cows have been out to grass every day. Shane allocates grass on a daily basis and cows have access after morning milking. Cows are milked at 4pm and have access to grass again until about 7 to 8 pm. Silage allocation is adjusted in accordance to what grass has been allocated.

Labour: Spring workload is divided between Shane, his dad John, his girlfriend Kate and the student. Although it's a busy time on farm, Shane ensures that all jobs are explained well to the student as he is there to learn too.

Grass & Spring Fertiliser: The farm has opened with a grass cover of 759kgs DM/Ha, winter growth of 4kgs DM/Ha. Slurry has been spread by LESS on silage ground and some paddocks already. Protected Urea is on farm for first application of 23 units/acre on paddocks in February/March that have not received any slurry. These plots are recent reseeds & have excellent soil fertility status.

