

## Teagasc Notes for week ending Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020

### **New Regulations on Preventing Runoff of Soiled Water**

New regulations have been introduced by DAFM to prevent direct runoff of soiled water. These new requirements must be in place by the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 which is fast approaching.

The regulations state that farmers who have a grassland stocking rate over 170 kg N/ha must have:

- Livestock drinking points at least 20m from watercourses and animals cannot be given access to streams etc. for drinking. The 20m does not apply if there is a roadway between the trough and the watercourse.
- Fences must be at least 1.5m from edge of the bank. Many farmers may need to move fences. Existing fences alongside roadways that are situated within 1.5m of the watercourse do not have to be moved.
- Livestock will not be allowed cross (walk through) watercourses. This is not specifically mentioned in the legal documents but the DAFM have confirmed that it is covered. Livestock will be allowed to cross a watercourse to an 'isolated land parcel'.

Farmers who export slurry to bring the overall farm stocking rate under 170 kg/ha are still obliged to comply with these new measures.

The regulations also include measures to prevent direct runoff from farm roadways to waters which must be in place from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021. Waters are defined as all water bodies but also ditches that may be dry in the summer but convey water in the winter.

### Measures to prevent direct run-off from farm roadways to waters

1. In most situations it will be a matter of allowing or directing run off from the farm roadway at regular intervals onto a field. Care must be taken to avoid directing runoff into paddock entrances.
2. Creating a crossfall. Roadways near watercourses maybe level or indeed they may have a cross fall towards the watercourse. The cost of creating a cross fall will be approximately €13.50 per m run for a 4m wide road. Where roadways have a significant fall to the watercourse, it may make sense to evaluate an alternative solution such as options 3 or 4.
3. Creating an earthen bank or barrier alongside the stream can be a useful physical barrier to prevent the entry of road runoff. This runoff will need to be piped or channelled back onto land or if this is not feasible into a settlement pond.
4. Create a sediment trap or settlement pond. A settlement pond will only be needed where it is not feasible to direct road runoff onto a field.
5. The installation of buffer zones where animals enter a paddock adjacent to a stream. Effectively the gateway into the paddocks in this situation shall be moved at least 6m from the top of the bank of the stream or ditch.
6. Where a farm road slopes down towards a public road and where there are waters running parallel with the public road, provision shall be taken to ensure that runoff from the farm roadway does not enter the watercourse or ditch. Steps shall be taken to convey the soiled water to a suitable soakage area. This also applies to roadways that are traversing a watercourse.

7. Herd Management. For some holdings, livestock may have to cross a public road (where there is no underpass). In this situation cows shall be retained in the farmyard until milking is complete. The full herd can then be moved to the grazing area. This will reduce the time cows spend on the farm roadway and consequent soiling. The farm roadway and the public road shall be maintained as clean as possible.

### **Beef Sustainability Demo Farm in Kilkenny – Update from Brian Blackmore**

There has been a large increase in the number of TAM II applications for low emissions slurry spreading (LESS) equipment in Kilkenny and Waterford recently.

This is Brian Blackmore's first year using the trailing shoe method of slurry spreading. The key benefits for Brian are:

1. Low emission slurry spreading reduces ammonia loss and increase the fertiliser N value of slurry
2. Increased flexibility of slurry application on grazed pasture and less grass contamination
3. More precise application of slurry and less odour during and after application.

Brian spread 3000 gals of watery slurry on silage stubble on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June. You will see from the photos there are very narrow lines of slurry, the field has greened up well and there is little contamination of the grass. Speaking to Brian a week later, he is very happy with it, saying that if he had better grass growth he could let cattle in to graze it without any problem. This wouldn't be possible with the splash plate.

Next month we will discuss the use of protected urea on grazing ground and the role clover plays in reducing the demand for chemical fertiliser and improve sustainability.

