

## Teagasc Notes for the week ending Friday November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017

### Cattle

#### Silage testing and supplementation rates

Every year farmers all over the country make millions of tons of silage and we know from Profit Monitor data that this is one of the main costs on suckler farms. After spending time and money fertilising the crop and making the silage, you should know the quality of your feed. For €36 you can get your silage tested to tell you the feeding value. This will allow you to make an informed decision on concentrate feeding rates to all different categories of stock on your farm.

**Weanlings and stores** – You should be targeting daily gain of 0.5-0.6kg/day and concentrate feeding rates will be dictated by the quality of silage offered to cattle. With stores, where silage quality is good and capable of supporting liveweight gain of about 0.4-0.5kg per day, not feeding supplementary concentrates is justified, particularly if animals spend most of the following grazing season at pasture. However, where silage quality is poor, or where animals are destined for slaughter early in the following grazing season, then feeding up to 2-3kg/day supplementary concentrate is necessary (Table 1).

**Table 1: Recommendations for concentrate feeding of weanlings and stores depending on silage quality.**

	Very poor (55%DMD)	Poor (65%DMD)	Average (68%DMD)	High (72%DMD)
Weanlings/stores (gain 0.6 kg/day)	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.5
Continental steers/bulls	4.0	3.0	2.0	1.0
Continental heifers	3.5	2.5	1.75	1.0
Friesian steers/heifers	3.5	2.5	1.75	1.0

**Finishing cattle:** Table 2 shows concentrate supplementation rates for finishing steers to achieve 1.0 kg liveweight per day with grass silage of varying digestibility. Typically, the corresponding optimum daily supplementation rates for finishing heifers (lower growth potential) are reduced by about 1.5-2.0kg.

When concentrate prices are low, silage digestibility is poor (e.g., DMD 60%), and animal growth potential is high, feeding concentrates *ad libitum* (to appetite) should be considered for finishing cattle.

**Table 2: Supplementation rates for finishing steers at varying rates of silage digestibility.**

DMD	65	70	75
Concentrate (kg/day)	7.0-8.0	5.5-6.5	4.0-5.0

**Spring-calving cows:** research at Teagasc Grange has clearly shown that the body condition score of a spring-calving suckler cow at calving has a major influence when trying to get her back in calf. With this in mind, it is vital that cows are fed correctly over the winter prior to calving next spring.

Cows should be grouped into three categories:

1. Cows in good body condition that can lose some of it before calving.
2. Cows that need to maintain their current condition.
3. Thin cows that need to gain condition before calving.

Table 3 shows the feeding practices for spring-calving suckler cows with good body condition score.

**Table 3: Feeding practices for spring-calving suckler cows in good body condition..**

Silage DMD (%)	Feeding practice
70	Silage restricted to 85% of intake
65	Silage fed to appetite*
60	Silage fed to appetite + 0.5 kg concentrate/day*
55	Silage fed to appetite +1-1.5kg concentrate/day*

\*Thin cows offered additional 1.5kg concentrate daily

**Autumn calvers:** the two main priorities for an autumn-calving cow is to get her back in calf as soon as possible and to make sure that she has an adequate supply of milk to feed her calf. If cows don't get enough energy in their daily feed they start to milk off their back and this negative energy balance ultimately leads to a delay in rebreeding. Table 4 shows the amount of concentrate required when feeding silage of different quality for before and after breeding.

**Table 4: Meal feeding rates (kg) to autumn calvers.**

	Silage DMD %		
	72	66	60
<b>Cows in good condition</b>			
Pre-mating	1.8	2.5	3.0
Post-mating	0	1.5	2.0
<b>Cows in poor condition</b>			
Pre-mating	1.8	2.5	3.0
Post-mating	1.8	2.5	3.0

### Important Event

#### Hazardous Waste Collection in Kilkenny

For farmers in Kilkenny and surrounding counties, a hazardous waste collection point has been organised at Cillin Hill Mart, Kilkenny on Wednesday November 8<sup>th</sup> from 9.30am to 3.30pm. Hazardous Farm Waste is present on every farm. Not only is it an environmental risk, it poses a threat to you and your family's health. Now there is a chance to dispose of farm hazardous wastes safely and at a reduced price. Go for it and start tidying out all those sheds and use this opportunity as a Pre-winter clean up on your farm.

#### Cost

- Free of charge: waste engine and hydraulic oil, electrical equipment and batteries.
- €2/kg + vat: pesticides, veterinary medicines, mastitis tubes, syringes, paint, acids, oily wastes etc.
- Each waste type must be clearly identifiable and segregated.
- The following wastes WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED; farm plastics such as clean triple rinsed empty pesticide & dairy hygiene containers, silage wrap, fertiliser & feed bags, netting and twine.