

## Teagasc Notes for the week ending Friday September 15<sup>th</sup> 2017

### First grazing of reseeded

It takes about 11 months for a new sward to establish. Management of the new sward in this period is vital to its long-term performance. The key to this is to ensure that the reseed thickens up as quickly as possible after sowing. The grass seed will quickly grow a main tiller. Nip that tiller off and promote the development of a crown of 15-20 tillers as quickly as possible. Grass seedlings should be grazed as soon as the seedlings are strong enough to withstand grazing. This is the stage at which they do not easily uproot from the soil when grazed (usually four to six weeks after sowing). Target a pre-grazing cover of between 800 and 1,000kg DM/ha for the first grazing. The first grazing does not have to be with the main grazing herd; calves or young stock may be a better option, particularly in the autumn under poorer grazing conditions. The risk with autumn sowing is that if the weather deteriorates and heavy covers are carried over winter, the new lea can deteriorate through tiller loss, shading and leaf death.

Docks and chickweed are best controlled at the seedling stage and this is achieved by applying a herbicide before the first grazing. Spraying now when dock seedlings are the size of a €2 coin is the best opportunity to keep pasture clean of docks.

### Dairying

#### Preventing new mastitis cases

New mastitis infections occur when bacteria get into the mammary gland. There is only one point of entry, or opening into the gland, and that is the teat end. So essentially, the key to preventing new mastitis infections is:

1. Keep the numbers of bacteria as low as possible, and
2. Keep the teat end as healthy as possible.

While both of these principles are very important, sometimes teat health is forgotten about. Teats are well designed to act as the first line of defence, to keep bacteria out of the quarter. However, if teats are compromised and can't work as effectively as normal, bacteria can sneak in. So maybe it's time to give those teats a little extra TLC?

1. Check teat skin condition

If it is cracked, or chapped, maybe you need to consider what teat disinfectant product you are using. Does it have enough emollient in it, to keep teat skin moisturised and supple? Is the complete barrel of the teat being covered with disinfectant?

2. Never remove clusters under vacuum

Air entering at the cluster mouth because of rough cluster removal, causes vacuum fluctuations in the cluster. Milk droplets can be thrown back against the teat ends. These impacts carry bacteria into the teat canal. So when taking the cluster off a cow, break the vacuum first and wait. After 1-2 seconds, the cluster should drop off. Break the vacuum by kinking the long milk tube

3. Watch for teat end damage

Skin thickens in response to forces applied to it. Just as the skin on your hands will develop callouses with manual work, so too does the skin at the teat end in response to milking and environmental effects. Teat end damage is also called 'hypercallosity' i.e. calloused. Damaged teat ends are not as effective at keeping bacteria out. Over milking (i.e. low or no milk flow while clusters are on the cow), aged liners and/or high vacuum levels will all contribute to teat end damage.

#### Handling units on out farms

Many farmers do not have an animal handling facility on each land parcel that they farm. This adds to the workload and costs on these farms through:

- requiring additional help to move animals from out farms;
- losses in performance as routine preventative health treatments are delayed, e.g., dosing, treating lame animals;
- heifers being bred to stock bulls rather than to AI; and,

- safety issues with animals being moved/loaded on roads.

An effective facility at each land parcel would eliminate these issues. It does not have to be elaborate or expensive; a forcing pen, race and holding pen is all that is required. The recommended race width is 0.65-0.7m, with a height of 1.4m; a race length of 9m should hold five or six animals. The size of the pens would depend on the number and size of animals that can be stocked on the out farm. Now is a good time to assess your situation, and put a facility in place where needed.

## Tillage

### Provisional harvest report 2017

At the time of writing the winter barley and winter oilseed rape harvest has been completed while good progress has been made with winter wheat and spring barley. The Teagasc provisional cereal harvest estimate for 2017 is a production of approximately 2.1 million tonnes of cereals, a slight decrease from 2016. The decrease is mostly due to the reduction in area of 5.2% compared to 2016. The main trends to date are that winter barley yields have been variable whereas winter oilseed rape, winter wheat and earlier-sown spring barley are yielding well. Grain quality has been good to date in most crops with few problems reported. Prices remain depressed due to supply exceeding demand and high worldwide stocks of small grains and maize.

### Teagasc provisional cereal harvest estimates 2017

	Yield tonnes/ha	
	2017	2016
Winter wheat	10.02	9.5
Spring wheat	8.08	8.0
Winter barley	8.42	8.6
Spring Barley	7.36	7.3
Winter oats	8.6	8.3
Spring oats	6.97	7.3
Winter oil seed rape	4.5	3.6

## Important Event

### Improving Farmyard Layout and Cow Flow

A Teagasc dairy farm walk on Improving Farmyard Layout and Cow Flow will take place on the farm of Seamus Brennan, Ballynasunshin, Attanagh, Co. Laois (between Ballyraggett and Durrow) on Thursday September 14<sup>th</sup> at 11.00am. all are welcome.

