

**Animal Research Programme – Animal Health and Well-being**  
**RMIS No. 5894**

**Title:** Development of optimal mastitis control programmes and procedures sustainable within and applicable to the Irish dairy industry.

***Abstract***

One of the biggest challenges facing the Irish dairy industry is improvement of milk quality and effective control of mastitis. In Ireland, average bulk tank SCC have risen annually by 5,000/ml since the start of this decade. Farmers are losing financially by suffering penalties, significant production losses and mastitis-related costs. At present, farmers may seek help and advice in relation to milk quality and mastitis issues from several areas of the industry-Teagasc advisors, co-op milk quality advisors, veterinary surgeons, fellow discussion group members etc. However, communication between these groups with regards to farm issues is often limited.

As with any other infectious disease, knowing how to prevent mastitis is better than just relying on a cure. Thus more work is needed in the area of mastitis prevention relevant to Irish farming systems.

We also need to learn more about the factors that motivate farmers to change or adopt new concepts, and what sustains that motivation. It is also important to learn how farmers perceive advisory services, so that we can deliver to our audience with maximum success. This knowledge will contribute to the sustainability of all areas of progress and development.

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