

Slurry storage capacity and TAMS

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It is clear that many farms need extra slurry storage capacity to cope with wet spring weather and poor ground conditions as we experienced in late January and February this year.

In building new facilities we need, as far as possible to look beyond meeting the minimum storage requirements. As a rule of thumb, an additional 20% storage for dairy cows and 10% for other stock would give farmers some comfort in the spring time.

Tips

- Minimise the need to move slurry by having adequate storage for each shed or facility.
- Wider tanks to take 4.4m or 5m slats (14.5 feet and 16.5 feet slats respectively) are an economic way of getting extra storage.
- All tanks should be at least 2.4m (8 feet) and preferable 2.7m (9 feet deep).

Costs will vary depending on the size of the job, the local demand to get work done and the level of excavation and rock removal needed.

The cost of steel has increased due to a disruption in supply from the closing of furnaces during COVID-19. Steel just accounts for 20% of the cost of slatted tanks, excluding the slats. A double slatted tank will cost about 11% less than the equivalent single tank because a wall is shared.

Preparing for a TAMS application

Provided farmers meet the minimum slurry storage requirements, additional storage is eligible for a TAMS grant. The grant rate is 40% and 60% for young farmers who are eligible to apply under the Young Farmer Capital Investment Scheme (YFCIS).

All slurry storage facilities need



John Cheasty (right) with his current Teagasc advisor John Maguire.

John Cheasty milks 105 cows in Fenor, Co Waterford. They produce 500kg milk solids (4.3% fat and 3.67% protein). John has expanded his slurry storage over recent years. The tank on the right (22.3m x 9.2m x 2.4m deep) was built two years ago, costing €35,000, including the fencing of both tanks. The TAMS grant came to €13,000, bringing the net cost to €22,000.

In recent years, John has sent his yearling heifers to a contract rearer for the summer. He believes in attention to detail and is always trying to improve.

“Having plenty of slurry storage capacity gives you peace of mind,” says John.

“When he was our advisor, Tom Fallon paid huge attention to detail, designing a practical but also exceptionally safe facility.”

planning permission or a Section 5 Exemption from planning from the relevant Planning Authority.

Although we don't know how long TAMS will continue it would be sensible to start planning now for facilities you plan to construct in 2022. The layout and size of the facility that will be submitted for planning will ultimately form part of your TAMS contract so it is vital that you discuss your plans thoroughly with your adviser/consultant.

Indoor agitation points and having adequate space around outside agitation points present challenges for many farmers. Please refer to the Department of Agriculture, Food

and the Marine (DAFM) Specification S123 page 18.

Difficulties with covering outdoor slurry stores

The DAFM Ag Climatise Roadmap envisages that outdoor slurry stores will have to be covered to minimise ammonia losses.

• We share technology with our nearest neighbour, the UK. There is no requirement to cover open slurry stores in the UK. Therefore, there appears to be no imperative to develop the technology to cover these stores especially existing ones.

• How do you cover an existing lined lagoon? Answers to the author, please.

*The Teagasc public website has useful information, such as ‘Delivering a Farm Building Project Safely on Time’ https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/rural-economy/farm-management/Farm_Building_Project_Delivery.pdf.

Table 1: Indicative costs of slurry storage

	€/m ³ for net storage
Slatted tank	80-100
Overground steel tank	75
Open concrete tank	70
Lined lagoon	34