



BEEF

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Lice management

Edited by
Catherine Egan,
Beef Specialist

By now all categories of stock will have been housed due to persistent rain, while fluke and worm treatments will have been given. Lice treatment is usually carried out at housing but repeat treatment is necessary in many cases. Lice infestations left untreated have the potential to significantly reduce weight gain. There are two types of products used in the control of lice:

- pour-on synthetic pyrethroids; and,
- injectable or pour-on avermectins.

Injectable and pour-on products can be used to

manage mites and sucking lice, but only pour-on products are effective against biting lice. If using a pour-on to control lice, it is generally best to clip the backs of cattle. Lice spread very readily between cattle and the main route of transmission is by direct contact, so all contact animals should be treated at the same time. Cattle should be checked two to three weeks after the initial treatment to ensure they are not showing signs of infestation. The reason you may have to treat again after two to three weeks is to kill off any lice that have hatched from eggs since your last treatment.

Date for your diary

The Teagasc National Beef Conference will take place on December 13 in the Shearwater Hotel in Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. The conference will run from 6.00pm. This will be the first in-person beef conference since 2019. The conference will be

split in two sessions. The first session is titled 'Key enablers to improving sustainability on beef farms', while the second session is called 'Delivering sustainability at farm level'. Admission is free and you are all welcome.

Planning fertiliser requirements for 2023

Indications are that fertiliser prices will remain at all-time highs for 2023. Now is the time to plan fertiliser requirements for 2023 to reduce the impact of high costs. Get prepared now and complete the following steps in the coming weeks.

- 1. Soil analysis** – update your soil analysis of every field to establish current soil fertility levels. This provides very cost-effective (€1.25/ha) information for tailoring phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) applications across the farm in 2023. Fields at optimum P and K index 3 will utilise applied nitrogen (N) most efficiently at 65% compared to just 35% N efficiency for P and K index 1 and 2 fields. Target appropriate rates of N towards soils with optimum fertility levels in the early part of the season (first and second rounds) to maximise its efficiency to grow grass.
- 2. Soil pH and apply lime** – liming acidic soils to increase the soil pH to between 6.3 and 6.8 will increase soil N release by up to 70kg/ha/year. This will reduce the overall farm fertiliser N requirements and reduce fertiliser N costs. Correcting the soil pH will increase the availability of soil P and the utilisation of P applied as either cattle slurry or chemical P fertiliser.
- 3. Test cattle slurry** – as a valuable source of N, P and K, cattle slurry should be applied to fields with the largest nutrient demand, for example, fields planned for grass silage production. Have your slurry tested to determine its N, P and K values and adjust application rates to supply crop nutrient



Fertiliser prices are expected to remain high in 2023.

requirements. By targeting slurry appropriately, you can offset some of the requirement for expensive chemical fertiliser on your farm.

- 4. Complete farm fertiliser plan** – contact your local advisor now to update your farm fertiliser plan to put in place a strategy for lime, cattle slurry and fertiliser requirements for 2023. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) is in the process of developing a National Fertiliser Database, which will come into place from January 1, 2023. Farmers purchasing fertiliser will be required to register their herd number on the database and give their herd number to the merchant every time fertiliser is purchased. The merchant will then upload this data to the DAFM database allowing tracking of all purchases. Once the database is operational in January 2023, a farmer can login to upload opening stock figures for the year. Any purchases made during the year will be recorded at the point of sale and will feed into the fertiliser database. There will be a requirement to input closing stock after the closed period to account for the total fertiliser used during the calendar year, and this will be used as the opening stock figure for the following year.

12 STEPS TO REDUCING EMISSIONS



Over 12 months, the Teagasc advisory newsletters will outline one action per month farmers can take to reduce their emissions.

Step 2: Apply protected urea

How does protected urea reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Nitrogen (N) fertilisers release nitrous oxide (N_2O). N_2O is one of the main greenhouse gases we are concerned about. Protected urea has 70% less N_2O emissions than CAN. Of the tools assessed by Teagasc, using protected urea N fertiliser offers the single largest emissions reduction potential to Irish farmers. On a drystock farm, switching to protected urea has the potential to reduce total emissions by 2-3%.

Is there a gain for the farmer?

Protected urea is substantially cheaper than CAN. For every five tonnes of CAN purchased, you will need just three tonnes of protected urea (because of its higher N content), and you will save €1,000 at current fertiliser prices. For example, if you use 20 tonnes of CAN every year, a switch to protected urea will save you €4,000 annually. Protected urea will grow the same amount of grass as CAN and straight urea, and it can be spread at any time during the permitted spreading periods.

What action needs to be taken?

Order protected urea for 2023 instead of CAN and straight urea. Use low-nitrate compounds such as 18:6:12.

The Beef Edge podcast



Have you listened to *The Beef Edge* podcast?

Podcasts are free audio shows that anyone with an iPhone, Android phone or computer can listen to.

You can listen anywhere and anytime. Presented by Catherine Egan, the podcast covers the latest news, information and advice to improve your beef farm performance. *The Beef Edge* is celebrating its third anniversary

this month. Recent episodes of interest to you include:

- Natascha Meunier from Animal Health Ireland discussing the key parasites farmers should keep in mind this winter, what you should be treating for, when to dose and which product to use; and,
- Teagasc Beef Specialist Aidan Murray with some top tips on managing nutrition with high feed costs this winter.

Tune in at: www.teagasc.ie/thebeefedge, or scan the QR code with your phone.

RESEARCH UPDATE

Space requirements

BERNADETTE EARLEY, et al. from Teagasc Grange examined the space requirements of finishing beef cattle housed on concrete slatted floors.

A study was conducted to compare the performance and welfare of beef cattle housed on concrete slatted floors at three different space allowances. Continental crossbred steers (n=120; mean initial liveweight 590kg) were assigned to one of three space allowance treatments on concrete slatted floors for 105 days: i) 2.0m² per animal; ii) 2.5m² per animal; and, iii) 3.0m² per animal. Each treatment consisted of six pens, with each pen containing four steers. All pens were located in the same housing facility. Steers were offered grass silage and concentrates *ad libitum*. Dry matter intake was recorded weekly. Steers were weighed and dirt scored every 14 days. Behaviour was recorded using closed-circuit



Cattle were assigned to three different space allowances. infrared cameras. The number of steers lying at any one time and the number of steers observed grooming themselves was lower at 2.0m² than on any other treatment. Dirt scores, hoof lesion number and haematological measurements were not affected by treatment. It was concluded that 2.0m² per animal was an insufficient space allowance for finishing steers housed on concrete slatted floors. There was no difference in average daily gain or carcass weight between steers accommodated at 2.5 and 3.0m²/animal.



HEALTH & SAFETY

Keep safe over Christmas

Teagasc would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a happy Christmas and a productive 2023. It's important that safety is

kept to the fore in everyone's minds over the festive period to ensure we start 2023 in the best possible way.

