



TEAGASC

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## Delivering a Farm Building Project Safely on Time

### Preparation & Planning

The farmer needs to tease out his plans with an adviser, visit other units and decide exactly what he/she wants. Prepare an outline timeframe for the development. The proposed building must provide sufficient slurry storage, comfortable animal housing with adequate feed space. The chosen location should take consideration of all farm activities, improve efficiency and allow for future expansion.

Get an adviser to prepare outline drawings so the farmer can present these to a draughtsperson who will prepare a planning application. Draft drawings should be examined, before submission for planning permission so that they meet the Department of Agriculture Food & Marine Building (DAFM) Specifications.

The farmer working with his adviser, draughtsperson and contractors need to be aware how the proposed building will fit in with existing structures. An item that can often be missed until very late in the project design is floor levels and falls. Some milking parlours have steps going in or coming out, many of these could have been avoided with proper planning.

The financial capacity of the business to fund the development needs to be assessed. This is likely to involve assessment of repayment capacity and may involve the preparation of a business plan.

A **Project Supervisor Design Process (PSDP)** should formally be appointed in writing. A farmer planning to take on this role themselves will, at a minimum need to have completed a 'Safe Pass Course' and become familiar with the requirements re safety in the Terms & Conditions of the relevant TAMS scheme. They must also be able to recognise foreseeable risks and be able to write a plan to take appropriate preventative measures. These risks include: overhead power lines, obstacles for access and egress, risks associated with deep excavations and excavations near existing buildings/structures, entry of others including children to the site etc. Please see '**Build in Safety - An Advisory Booklet for Farmers**', <https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/publications/2018/FBD-Build-in-Safety.pdf>. Published by Teagasc, HAS & FBD Insurance

### **Planning Permission & TAMS**

Planning permission and TAMS approval will take at least 3 months each. If you are applying for a TAMS grant it is important to make sure all the Terms and

Conditions are adhered to. Construction work needs to be completed to conform to the DAFM specifications and this along with the payment claim need to be completed on time. Put the TAMS time schedule in a place where it will be viewed regularly!

The farmer will need to request drawings suitable for seeking quotations and for construction purposes from the draughtsperson. Typically quotations will be sought for site preparation, steel work and concrete work. Some contractors will do all the work but the cost of tank excavation will depend on material to be removed (subsoil, hard rock etc.) and where the excavated material will be deposited.

Get itemised quotations or at least know how much the project is going to cost and what work is and is not included in the quotation. The quotation signed by both parties, a good set of drawings that refer to the relevant DAFM Specifications and the time frame (start/ completion dates) can form the basis of a simple contract. This will provide clarity and protection for all parties to the contract. The contract will hold the agreed price and outline a stage payments schedule. The quotation should indicate work not being undertaken by the builder as well as what will be done.

Do not take on extra work during the project without an agreed price in advance. Get firm quotations from all the contractors and suppliers involved. Allow for costs that often are not included on quotations e.g. planning application, planning fees, development contributions; site preparation, excavation, purchase of fill and supply of equipment like automatic scrapers, cubicle mats, etc. Do not hand control of spending/ordering to someone else (unless you have a contract and the builder has agreed to supply all the materials, etc.). A typical example is handing control of ordering concrete to your builder while you are paying for it; this may lead to increased costs because price may not be agreed, use of higher priced part-loads may be excessive, use of conveyers at will – all of which increase the average price per cubic metre substantially above a price mentioned in conversation or over the phone. Verbal prices can be lower than the amount due on the bill.

#### Appoint a **Project Supervisor Construction Stage (PSCS)**

Many farmers will take on significant responsibility for the building project themselves. This may involve taking on the role of PSCS especially if there is more than one contractor and it could involve providing additional labour to the contractors. Farmers need to be realistic in terms of their capacity to take on extra work and not to underestimate the extra management time that will be needed. There is little point in saving money on the building project only to find that the farm suffers. There is also a direct relationship between safety and tiredness. Hiring extra help such as the Farm Relief Service to do at least the morning milking during the building process may make sense.