

## Farm Roadways – Advice and Recommendations

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Look at your farm roadways for defects that may be causing problems. These defects will include, potholes, a roadway that's too level, ruts from wheel tracks, a raised hump of soil under the fence at either side, and tracks made between the fence and the roadway or on the roadway.

Problems are caused by; pebbles and loose stones on the surface, bumpy surface with secure stones, lodged/trapped water on the surface, very dirty section near the farmyard, and a roadway level with or lower than the field. The reasons for these defects are many but quite often are due to flawed construction methods, unsuitable materials and lack of maintenance. The appearance of the roadway now bears little resemblance to what it looked like when it was initially constructed.

- Maintaining a good walking surface on the roadway is very important
- Only lay new farm roadways in good weather when ground conditions are dry
- Costs can range from €16 to €25 per metre run for a 4 to 4.3 metre wide roadway. Geotextile is about 50 to 80 cent per square metre
- Crossfall; 1:20 to 1: 30 to one side or to both sides depending on the slope of the land (a fall to one side is easier to do)
- Depth; least 9 to 12 inches of hardcore material and 2 inches of dust. If hardcore shatters (softish shale) it can make a wearing surface as well
- Width depends mainly on cow numbers, typically 4 to 6 metres; cow tracks 1.5 to 2 metres
- Surface layer; dusty material with biggest size pebble 5 to 6mm; use shale, red sandstone or greywacke dust. Preferably not limestone dust. Go to see the type of dust for yourself, because dust means different things to different people e.g. mill waste can contain a lot of big sharp angular pebbles
- Geotextile; relatively cheap. Reinforces roadway, controls/ helps prevent ruts and stops soil mixing with the hardcore material which weakens the ability of the roadway to support loads
- Repairs; repair the stretch near the farmyard, which is the most used part; raise levels, restore falls, remove hump of soil to allow drainage

- No bottlenecks; widen roadway at corners and at t-junctions, no water access on the roadway, repair poor surfaces, Wide gaps and two gaps per paddock (beside divisions) are good. No place for mud baths at gaps
- Steep roadways; use ramps or channels to divert water at intervals otherwise flowing water will create tracks and wash away the surface layer
- Put kerb (about 6 inches wide and 8 inches high) at the entrance to the collecting yard or other concrete section of the roadway. It forces cows to lift their legs and stops grit from being flicked forward by cows. The roadway should widen here to compensate for cows having to slow down
- Concrete stretch of roadway near farmyard is generally regarded as good, as long as there are no stones on its surface which can cause lameness and slows cows down
- Often the first 100 metres or so gets very mucky, worn, low and holds water and muck. This dirties cows coming in and going out, leading to increased SCC levels, need for washing udders and raised TBC and sediment levels
- Avoid holding cows on the roadway before letting them off , say to cross a public road; dung/dirt builds up on the roadway, dirty udders, cows legs and feet are dirty leading to difficulty in controlling SCC, dirty clusters, open teats after milking, etc.