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FARM NOTES

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 170

MAY 2017

Milk Planning Survey 2017

Thank you to all suppliers who have completed and returned your Lakeland Dairies Milk Planning Survey over the last number of weeks.

The information provided in this survey will be extremely important in assisting Lakeland Dairies to optimise the necessary processing facilities and schemes and services to meet the needs of current and future milk supplies and to support you in your farming business.

All suppliers who returned their survey before **Friday 21st April** were entered into a draw and the results are as follows:

1st Prize: 4 Tonne of Dairy Ration – **John & Darragh Rigney, Tullamore, Co. Offaly**

2nd Prize: 4 Tonne of Fertiliser – **Orchard Farms C/O Andrew Bennett, Naas, Co. Kildare**

3rd Prize: 5 litres of Dosing – **Gerard & Shane McHugh, Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim**

Congratulations to all winners and for anyone who has yet to return their survey please do so as soon as possible.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE COURSES

Young farmers and students considering a future in agriculture are reminded that ...

Friday May 26th is the closing date for application for Agricultural College full-time courses.

There are a range of courses in Agricultural Colleges to suit:

- those returning home to farm
- students considering farm management
- students interested in machinery
- students wishing to go on to degree level
- and many more.

If interested, don't miss the closing date.

HERD HEALTH CERTIFICATES — Please return, when completed.
No requirement for tag numbers in 2017. – Thank You

Bord Bia Sustainable Dairy Assurance Scheme (SDAS)

As you are aware the Bord Bia Dairy Assurance Scheme is now the required standard for the Irish Dairy Industry, it sets out the criteria to produce quality milk and supports the industry to market dairy products worldwide.

To date 98.5% of Lakeland Dairies suppliers are participating in the scheme and 90% of suppliers are fully certified.

Most suppliers are now progressing towards their second audit within the scheme.

Problem areas with re-audits are:

- Medicine Purchase and Usage records (Full 18 months dating back to last audit required).
- Farm Safety Risk Assessment updated and available for inspection
- Dairy hygiene issues (tight fitting doors, no gaps in walls/around pipes, etc., clean ceiling, walls and floor, etc.)
- Clean and well maintained milking equipment (clusters, jars, milk tubes, etc.)
- Health & Safety issues (PTO guards on machinery, Slurry lagoons securely fenced)

For advice on the Sustainable Dairy Assurance Scheme and assistance with your certification, please contact our Member Relations Division on **1890 47 47 20**.

The Annual General Meeting

of Members of Lakeland Dairies
Co-operative Society Ltd.

will be held
this Wednesday, 17th May 2017
at 1.00pm

in the
Hotel Kilmore, Dublin Road, Cavan

Car Parking at Rear of Hotel
*Only registered shareholders
will be admitted

LAKELAND GRASSWATCH



Farmer	Ltr/Cow	Fat %	Prot %	kgMS/Cow	SR ¹	Meal kg	Average farm cover	Cover/cow ²	Demand (kgDM/Ha) ³	Growth Rate (kgDM/Ha) ⁴
Cavan	28.5	3.63	3.40	2.06	3.66	4	650	177	62	63
Monaghan	28.2	3.79	3.47	2.10	3.70	3.5	806	218	66	68
Longford	27.5	3.79	3.40	2.03	4.27	1.8	764	179	72	94
Westmeath	26.4	3.49	3.39	1.87	3.85	4	529	137	50	44
Louth	26.6	4.13	3.48	2.09	3.90	2	739	189	59	60
Meath	24.9	4.25	3.54	2.00	4.95	3	779	157	68	58
Offaly	28	3.81	3.40	2.08	3.41	3	745	218	56	43

Definitions: ¹SR - Stacking Rate; cow numbers divided by area of land on the milking platform in Ha

²cover/cow - the amount of available grass per cow on the milking platform

³Demand (kg DM/Ha) – the daily allowance per cow in kg DM multiplied by the stocking rate

⁴Growth Rate (kg DM/Ha) – the amount of grass growing daily per Ha expressed in kg DM

For the week beginning the 8th of May growth rates are steady across all our grasswatch farms with growth ranging from 43-94kg DM/Ha which is closely matched to demand on the farms. With most areas not receiving any rainfall over the last couple of weeks, soil moisture deficit is starting to have an impact on the dryer farms in particular. Cover/cow for our grasswatch farms are in the range of 137 to 218 (target 150-190 per cow). Cows are reaching peak yields and all farms are producing around 2kgs of milk solids.

Management tips for May

Grass Surpluses.

With the recent good weather bringing about improved growth rates and with rain forecast, you should be walking your farm on a weekly basis to ensure covers are not getting too strong (cows should be grazing covers of 1200-1400kgsDM/Ha). If this is the case, surpluses should be taken out in the form of round bales or put in the pit at the same time as first cut silage. Bales may be the preferred option as it may allow for the field to come back into the rotation sooner.

Fertiliser

In order to optimise growth rates over the summer, it is vitally important to continue to apply N as per the recommendations outlined in Table 2 below. At this stage farms should be moving away from blanket spreading and ideally should be following the cows or spreading once weekly.

Table 2) Rate of nitrogen to be applied at various milking platform S/R's. *Adhere to the upper limits of the nitrates directive

Stocking Rate (cows/ha)	May	June
	Units/ac	
<3.4	14	0-14
3.4 – 3.7	21	14
3.7 – 3.9	28	21
3.9 – 4.1	35	28
4.1 – 4.5	40	35
>4.5	40	40

Silage – Balancing yield and quality targets

Difficult weather in the middle of March has resulted in a lot of silage ground being closed later this year. Nitrogen has also been applied later on a lot of farms. With this in mind, there is a need to strike a balance between silage quality and quantity. Delaying cutting date to ensure bulk and tonnes in the pit will have an impact on the quality of silage being produced. For anyone looking to make 72%DMD silage you will need to cut before the crop heads out. Although crops may be light at this stage, recovery will be quicker which will provide an opportunity to make up the deficit in subsequent cuts. A guideline for fertiliser nitrogen is that grass will use up 2 units per day on average. If there is a fear of high nitrate levels it is advisable to test the grass crop rather than delaying cutting date based on the 2 unit rule. Also, wilting is a very effective aid to preservation if nitrate readings are a little higher than recommended.

Concentrate Crude Protein (CP) levels:

With most herds now at grass full time, high energy / lower protein rations should be considered to avoid an oversupply of protein in the diet. However, when choosing a ration for use at this time of the year and throughout the breeding season, care should be taken to ensure a full complement of minerals is being supplied on a daily basis at the feed levels being applied on individual farms. To meet these requirements, Lakeland Agri's extensive Summer Ration range is now available. For advice on which ration best suits your situation, please talk to your Lakeland Agri Feed representative.

Breeding season:

The breeding season is well underway on most herds. The next 6 weeks is going to be critical to ensure a smaller percentage of late calving cows next year. Taking action now rather than later is going to be needed to prevent this. Any cows calved more than 35 days and not served by the end of May should be presented to the vet for examination. Also, any cow more than 2 weeks calved could also be presented to vet to ensure she is clean and cycling. Tail paint should also be continued to be applied. With a reduced number of cows bulling, the number of standing mounts will be reduced and cows won't be seen bulling by observation alone.

Reseeding:

Now can be a good time to get some reseeding done. Reseeding in May is better than in the autumn as:

- Weather is usually better
- They can be grazed several times during 2017 to thicken the pasture
- There will be little or no loss in yield from that field as it will be able to be grazed 42 days after sowing with better yield for the remainder of the year.

For more information on reseeding and full detail of the Lakeland Grass seed mixtures for 2017, please refer to the grass seed brochure enclosed with this month's farm notes.

Lakeland Grasswatch growth map



For any help with interpreting the grass monitoring data or advice on any of the issues in this month's Grasswatch notes please contact either Adrian on (087)4138584 or Enda on (087)6647022

GOOD MILKING PRACTICES



In this month's edition of the CellCheck newsletter, our monthly article provides a reminder about the importance of aspects of the milking routine when it comes to producing high quality milk. Cluster removal technique in particular, can have a significant impact not just on the cow's teat health but also on the milker's health, as a poor technique carried out repeatedly can cause strain and long term injury. To learn more about best practice in milking routines, consider signing up for the 'Best Practice in Milking' Course, delivered by Farm Relief Services and developed in partnership with AHI and Teagasc. This 2-day training course, followed by assessment, focuses on the skills and practices essential to develop an efficient milking routine and ensure cow and milker health when producing top quality milk. For more information contact info@frstraining.com or call 1809 201000.

The next phase of the CellCheck Farmer Workshops as part of the Dairy Knowledge Transfer programme has commenced, with group facilitators currently scheduling workshops for their discussion groups. For more details, see the Service Provider News section.



Tip of the Month – Do the twist

The twist.....it may not always be in fashion on the dance floor, but it should always be practised in the parlour. 'Break, wait, twist and drop'.....the key steps in taking clusters off cows. It's crucial that clusters are not pulled off under vacuum, as this creates air impacts. Air impacts contribute to teat-end damage, and can drive potentially bug-laden milk up the teat canal, leading to new cases of mastitis.

Be patient – don't yank off the clusters!

1. Break-Use the button on the claw bowl, or kink the long milk tube to break the vacuum
2. Wait! 1-2 secs
3. Twist-Gently twist the cluster 30-60° -this helps to make sure that all 4 liners release at the same time
4. Drop-Clusters should then drop freely off the teats

Clusters that are hard to remove, or are not releasing correctly, are a sign that the equipment is not working properly. If this is happening, make sure that buttons on the claws are working correctly. Check air admission holes regularly.

Cluster handling is given very little attention, considering the important role it has to play in milking efficiency, mastitis prevention and cow comfort. But don't just think about cow

health.....consider your own health too. Too many milkers suffer repetitive strain injuries (RSI) such as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, from years of putting on and taking off clusters incorrectly.

Have you ever stopped to think how many times in your milking career you will put clusters on cows? And how many times you'll take them off? If you're milking 90 cows, twice a day, with an average lactation length of 280 days, you'll put those clusters on over 50,000 times a year. Over a lifetime of milking that repetitive action adds up. After 40 years, you'll have put on over 2 million clusters.....and taken them off over 2 million times too!

When cupping cows, remember to:

- minimise air admission
- alternate hands for both sides of a herringbone to avoid RSI and muscle/tendon over-use
- hold the cluster in one hand and apply all the cups in a "round-the-circle" fashion. This is an efficient and milker-friendly way of cupping cows.

"Round-the-circle" cluster attachment

Use the right hand to put the cups on the right hand side row of cows (facing the exit) because it is easier to reach through the back legs.

1. Holding the clawbowl in your left hand,
2. reach over the left arm with your right hand, to put on the left back cup,
3. then left front,
4. then right front,
5. and finally right back.

For more information on recommended milking techniques, see Guideline 5 in the Lactation section of the CellCheck Farm Guidelines for Mastitis Control

CHLORINE FREE AND NON-CHLORINE PRODUCTS

Improvements are continuing in the levels of Chlorine residue being detected in milk. There is obviously a big effort on farm to eliminate the use of chlorine products, this effort is recognised. When ordering non-chlorine products, be sure not to over order as product may go out of date and cause other problems. Store product in a dark area. Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions, in particular where the instruction indicates the use of a supporting product to get best cleaning and sterilisation results. Never mix different products. Contact Member Relations Division if you have any queries in relation to the use of new products **1890 47 47 20**.

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SMITHS PLASTIC RECYCLING

MONAGHAN: Clones Mart 20th May • McNally's Quarry Glaslough 22nd May • Scotch Corner Landfill 8-4pm 23rd May • Brookfield Agri Castleblaney 25th May • Old Stoneware Plant Magheracloone 27th May.

CAVAN: Virginia Lisgrey Co Co Yard 31st May • Bailieborough Auction Yard Kells Road 1st June • Kingscourt Mart 3rd June • Mullagh Co-op 6th June • Cavan Mart 8th June • Ballyjamesduff Mart 10th June • Belturbet Co Co Yard 13th June • Ballyconnell Huggins Pit 14th June • Dowra Mart 15th June • Glengevlin Co Co Yard 9-3pm 16th June • Cootehill Mart 17th June.

Contact **RONAN 086 2506129**

Plastic must be clean, no net mixed with plastic, inserts of meal bags removed. Drums must be triple rinsed.

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FOR SALE: 4 unit de laval parlour with recording jars, electronic pulsation and electric pump, 8 Cashman feeders, auger and stainless steel troughs. Also ice-bank chiller unit and 2,100 litre Japy tank, compressor attached. All in perfect working condition, installed in 2000. All to clear – owner retiring from dairying. **Contact: 086 8818539.**

FOR SALE: 5 Friesian Heifer Calves weaned AI Bred EBI 160 TO 180 — **Roy McCormack Longford 086 8146136.**

FOR SALE: Friesian heifer calves, Crossdoney, Ballinagh area. **Contact: 086 2434311**

MILK COOLING, TANK MAINTENANCE

We are now at peak milk production, all milking and milk storage equipment should be performing to its optimum. Bulk milk tanks working properly will ensure low TBC's assuming low TBC, filtered milk is being pumped into it.

Is your tank working efficiently?

How long after milking is your milk cooled?
Ideally less than an hour to 4 degrees.

Is your agitator working properly?

Is it cutting in every 15 minutes?

To ensure correct agitation and sampling does your milk carter turn on your agitator before attaching any pipes?

Does he know where the relevant switch is?

Is your tank washing properly?

Have you looked into it recently with a torch, is the outlet valve washing?

Is your tank taking in the recommended amount of non-chlorine detergent, steriliser / descaler, if you changed these recently, did you re-calibrate your pumps?

How well is your compressor working, are the radiator fins clean and un-damaged?

Is there any obstacle preventing air flow through your compressor radiator?

Have you a tank service contract?

Milk will not be collected from non-cooling milk tanks, it is part of the regulation that milk from every second day collection is to be cooled to less than 6 degrees.

There are **grants available** under TAMS II for new tanks, plate coolers and ice builders, there is no ceiling on equipment price. Check with your supplier for best advice on new tank and cooling system. Check on the **Department of Agriculture** website for details and grant application form — www.agriculture.gov.ie