

Looking after the environment on your dairy farm

As farmers you are being asked to do more to look after the environment on your farm. This worksheet sets out to identify areas of your farming system where action could be taken to improve sustainability and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Steps to action

Step 1: Complete the checklist below to help you identify actions that you might take on your farm to reduce GHG emissions



Actions to reduce GHG emissions

| | Yes/no |
|--|--------|
| I am using protected urea | |
| I am applying lime to low pH soils | |
| I am building and maintaining soil fertility (P&K) | |
| I am maximising the use of my slurry and using low emissions slurry spreading equipment (LESS) | |
| I am reducing chemical nitrogen (N) by 20kg/ha | |
| I am incorporating clover into my grassland swards | |
| I am using grass measuring to optimise use of grazed grass | |
| I am improving the beef genetics of the beef calves produced in my herd by using the Dairy Beef Index (DBI) | |
| I am increasing milk solids/cow by milk recording, culling poor performing cows and milking cows for a 305 day lactation | |
| I am using high EBI bulls to increase herd EBI by greater than €10/year and I use sexed semen to accelerate genetic gain | |
| I am calving heifers at 22-26 months and aiming for a 20% replacement rate | |
| I have a herd health plan | |

DID YOU KNOW?

Many of the technologies that reduce GHG emissions will also reduce costs and improve the profitability of your dairy enterprise.





Actions to improve biodiversity



Retain a thorn sapling (or bunch of thorns) in all topped hedges

Do not top escaped hedges

Don't sow – let it grow. Cherish what is growing wild.

Actions to improve water quality



Use pollution impact potential (PIP) maps to identify if your farm is at risk from diffuse phosphorus (P)/sediment or N losses to waters

For P and sediment losses, 'break the pathway' with a riparian margin, earthen mound or settlement pond

For nitrate losses, improve N-use efficiency by applying N at the right time, right rate, and right locations, and using the right product

Step 2: Identify three actions that you can take in the next 12 months:



Action 1

Action 3

Action 2



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