

Get 20-30 units of N out as soon as ground conditions allow.

BEEF

March 2016

BDGP courses begin

One of the compulsory measures for those of you participating in the Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP) is to attend a four-hour training course before October 31 next. The good news is that those of you that attend will receive €166 for doing so.

Each participant will be invited by letter to attend a training course in a designated centre in their county and will have four days to respond by phone as to whether they will attend or not. The fact that all courses are by invitation and will be pre booked means that you cannot just walk in on the day.

Where possible, you should try and attend the first BDGP course that you are offered as there is no guarantee that any subsequent courses offered will be as close to you and they may involve more travelling.

The object of the training is to:

- outline how you can comply with the requirements of the BDGP;
- explain how Eurostar ratings are derived and how you can use them for your herd;
- outline the benefits that genomics will bring to beef breeding; and,
- help you assess your own herd's ratings and what options you should consider when breeding and sourcing replacements.

If you complete the training after the deadline, but within six months of the deadline date, the penalty will amount to 20% of your annual payment for both years one and two. So, typically, if your annual payment is €2,000, then you stand to lose €800. If the training is not completed within six months of the deadline, the participant is removed from the programme.

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Targeted Advisory Service for Animal Health

As part of the Rural Development Plan 2014-2020, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), in conjunction with the EU, is funding a Targeted Advisory Service on Animal Health (TASAH) for farmers, delivered by veterinary practitioners.

The contract for the delivery of the Service has been awarded to Animal Health Ireland (AHI) by the DAFM. It will initially run for three years and will focus on the following diseases of cattle:

- **bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD);**
- **Johne's disease (JD);**
- **infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR);**
and,
- **somatic cell counts (SCC).**

In addition, provision is also made for advice on animal and public health issues in the pig

and poultry sectors, particularly salmonellosis and campylobacteriosis.

For 2015/16 the focus will be on BVD, followed by Johne's disease.

Under this programme farmers will be able to avail of an on-farm investigation by a trained veterinary practitioner if a persistently infected (PI) animal is identified in their herd during 2016. The on-farm investigation is free to the farmer.

So if you identify a PI animal in your herd in 2016 and would like to have it investigated you can request an investigation by:

1. **going online at:**
<http://www.animalhealthireland.ie/page.php?id=251>; or
2. **by contacting Animal Health Ireland directly on 071 967 1928.**

Get 20-30 units of N out

Nitrogen (N) fertiliser prices are back by €30 to €40/tonne, while phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) are back in the region of €15 to €20/tonne compared to 2015. The market indicates a lot of price variability at present depending on available stock and location.

Given such volatility, it may be a good time to just purchase what you are going to use.

In many places ground is still very wet but the mild winter has seen soil temperatures hold up well and ground that has been rested since early October has in excess of 1,000kg DM/ha (8-10cm).

In March the target should be to get out 20-30 units of N as soon as ground conditions allow. You can use straight urea or CAN if

your P and K levels are adequate, but you would be better to use a compound NPK fertiliser if indexes are low.

Try breaking the farm up into:

- **heavier covers (8-10cm), which can be grazed with light stock as soon as ground conditions allow without receiving fertiliser. Once grazed out you can apply 1,500-2,000 gallons of slurry/acre followed by 20 units of N;**
- **intermediate covers (6-8cm) that will not be grazed for three to four weeks are ideal for 20-25 units of N; and,**
- **light covers (4-6cm), which would benefit from up 2,000 gallons slurry/acre**

followed by 20 units of N, 10 days to a fortnight later.

Keep an eye on soil temperatures and the weather forecast before applying fertiliser.

For those of you lucky enough to be able to get stock out in February/March and using the spring rotation planner, try to stick to the guidelines below:

Dry farm	Heavy farm
Turnout early February	Turnout early March
40% grazed by March 17	40% grazed by March 31
100% grazed by April 10	100% grazed by April 20

+ HEALTH & SAFETY

Beware of cow attacks

Farm deaths caused by cow attacks now exceed those caused by bull attacks, so extra precautions are needed in spring when most calving takes place.

Design of calving pens to give safety and protection to farmers should be considered as an alternative to having to enter a pen with no protection.

One way to achieve this is to have the head gate to the front of the pen with a front gate affording a means of operator protection.

Protection is also required when putting calves on to suckle cows. As maternal aggressiveness is a heritable trait, consideration should be given to culling cows that are known to be aggressive.

Be careful in the calving pens.





RESEARCH UPDATE

Aiming for 100% grazed by April 7

A report from the Derrypatrack Herd.

Calving started on Sunday, February 14, and there are 11 cows calved so far (February 18). This is the final year the cows will calve to early maturing and late maturing sires, as we move to a new project comparing maternal sires vs terminal sires.

We completed our first cover on February 11 and our average farm cover was 980kg DM/ha. Our covers range from 275kg DM/ha (5cm) to 1,450kg DM/ha (10cm). The plan is to graze 40% of the farm by March 17, with 100% of the farm grazed

by April 7. We aim to close our silage fields in the last week of March.

As soon as soil temperatures rise and ground conditions allow, we will spread 23 units/acre of urea/46% nitrogen (N) across one-third of the farm. Soil temperature has been between four and five degrees for the first two weeks of February.

The slaughter performance and returns of all 2014-born cattle from the Derrypatrack Herd is detailed below.*

Table 1. Derrypatrack Herd: slaughter performance and returns of all 2014-born cattle.

	Average	Average	Average	Avg.	Avg.	Average	Average	Avg.	Average	
	No. animals	kill date	age (days)	weight (kg)	conf.	fat	carcass (kg)	kill out (%)	€/kg	value (€)
AA steers	13	09/10/2015	585.08	648.77	R-	3+	360.63	55.59	4.15	1,495.32
CH-LM steers	11	19/12/2015	663.00	667.64	R=	3=	383.13	57.43	4.05	1,552.73
AA heifers	22	25/09/2015	570.41	573.86	R-	4-	311.28	54.22	4.19	1,302.08
CH-LM heifers	25	23/11/2015	627.04	595.60	R=	3=	338.88	56.95	4.24	1,438.04
AA U16 bulls	13	07/06/2015	465.00	664.62	R+	3=	379.99	57.16	4.35	1,655.01
CH-LM U16 bulls	10	05/06/2015	469.80	664.20	U-	3-	394.84	59.49	4.41	1,740.77

*Summarised table contains raw data, which has not been statistically analysed.