

BEEF

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BEEP Suckler 2020

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Knowledge Transfer

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) announced an enhanced Beef Environmental Efficiency Programme (BEEP) scheme for suckler farmers (BEEP – S) last month.

Applications

Applications are open until midnight on May 15 and can be submitted online through your DAFM Agfood account or by your advisor if they are given the authority to do so by you via a DAFM text service.

Calves born in the herd of the applicant between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020 will be eligible for payment in the Programme if the various actions are completed by you.

Actions to be completed

Compulsory action

1. Weighing (cows and calves)

This is essentially the same action as was in last

year's Programme where participants must weigh each unweaned calf and its dam, and submit weights to the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF) within seven days. All calves being submitted for weighing must have been born between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020. The unweaned live calf and dam must be weighed on the applicant's holding on the same day. Only scales registered can be used and they can be rented, owned or borrowed from a third party. Weights must be submitted between January 1, 2020 and November 1, 2020

Optional actions

2. Meal feeding pre and post weaning or vaccination

These are optional actions that you can select, but only select them at the time of application if you are going to carry them out – otherwise penalties will apply.

Meal feeding – this will mean feeding concentrate to eligible calves in the four weeks prior to, and for two weeks after weaning. Proof of meal purchase, weaning dates, etc., will have to be recorded.

Vaccination – refers to the use of vaccines to prevent respiratory disease (pneumonia) pre weaning. Again, you will need to select particular vaccines that target the causal organisms. Proof of vaccination purchase and dates of administration to calves will need to be recorded.

3. Faecal egg testing for liver and rumen fluke in cows

This again is an optional action that you can select in addition to actions above, where you collect 10 dung samples from cows. They will be sent to a DAFM-approved lab where they will be pooled and checked for evidence of liver and rumen fluke. You then use the results to decide on your dosing strategy.

Teagasc covid-19 arrangements

In these uncertain times, farmers like everyone else need to take care of their own personal health. Although social distancing is difficult, it is really important to protect your physical health. It is also extremely important to protect your mental health and to talk. We in Teagasc are available at the other end of the phone; please feel free to call your local Teagasc advisor. If your issue cannot be solved over the phone, you can make an office appointment on a limited basis. Each Teagasc location has set up one bio-secure office for essential one-to-one consultations. This involves a double desk with a clear Perspex divider and a

Rates of payment

The additional options greatly improve the rate of payment if you opt to do them.

Action 1 (mandatory) – weighing	€50 for first 10 cow/calf pairs weighed – €40 thereafter to a maximum of 100 pairs.
Action 2 (optional) – can select one of the following:	Meal feeding at €30 per calf weighed to a maximum of 100 calves. or Vaccination at €30 per calf weighed to a maximum of 100 calves.
Action 3 (optional) – can be selected in addition to Action 1 and/or Action 2.	Faecal egg testing at €10 per cow to a maximum of 100 cows.

computer with two screens. Clients are asked to wait in their cars to prevent contact in waiting areas, and where essential, clients may also have to sign forms in the office parking area. All Teagasc Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) appointments are now being processed over the phone, rather than in an office consultation. On-farm Teagasc discussion group meetings are being replaced with one-hour group phone meetings between farmers and their advisor. Farm visits by Teagasc advisors are taking place at the client's request and only for urgent issues. Social distancing and hygiene protocols will be adhered to. We in Teagasc are doing our best to meet the requirements of our clients, please stay in contact with us.

Turnout animals to grass

Every day animals remain inside in the shed is costing €2/LU. The turnout to grass has been delayed due to poor grazing conditions in February and March. However, every effort must now be made to try to get animals out grazing. The younger/lighter animals should be targeted first for turnout. These animals will do less damage to the land if grazing conditions are still difficult. As grass supply on many farms is now well above normal, there is plenty of grass available for grazing and thereby, scope to reduce feeding costs.



second rotation should start when the grass is right for grazing, i.e., 1,400-1,500kg DM/ha (10cm high). It is important to walk your farm and keep your eye on the few paddocks that were grazed first this spring. Watching what is happening in terms of growth on these paddocks will determine whether you will speed up or slow down grazing of the paddocks at the end of the first round in April. It is not uncommon for grass to get too strong ahead of the animals in late April/early May due to later turnout, as farmers try to catch up on grazing.

Fertiliser: an application of P and K?

Remember that many farms are deficient in phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) (and sulphur (S)) so applying a compound fertiliser, e.g., 18:6:12 plus S needs to be considered. Applications of P and K fertiliser will also help damaged pasture recover. P in particular is very important for growth of grass in spring.

When to finish the first round of grazing?

A decision will have to be made as to when you should start the second round of grazing. The

HEALTH & SAFETY

Slurry and machinery safety

We have had an extremely long winter and a particularly wet spring. Slurry and fertiliser spreading are high-risk jobs in April. Always pick a windy day, open all doors and outlets and keep all persons away when agitating and handling slurry. Take care when working around slurry tank openings and close when not in use. Make sure that the power drives of spreaders and agitators are fully covered. Always stay well clear of moving parts. Pay particular attention to the safety of



Protect slurry openings.

persons in farmyards and roadways, as tractor and machine movements can kill as a result of knockdowns.

RESEARCH UPDATE

Assessing protected fat



AIDAN MOLONEY, MARK McGEE and EDWARD O'RIORDAN of AGRIC, Grange, Dunsany, Co. Meath report on the performance of finishing bulls offered *ad libitum* concentrate rations.

Achieving the required carcass fat score in young bulls can be a challenge. Increasing the ration energy concentration, by including an ingredient rich in fat, may be a way of enhancing carcass fatness. This study evaluated the inclusion of a proprietary rumen-inert fat (Megalac) in the diet of bulls on: growth; EUROP carcass fat classification; and, tissue fatty acid composition. A total of 60 dairy-origin bulls (508 days of age) were offered *ad libitum*, a barley-based concentrate ration that contained 0%, 2.6%, or 8.1% Megalac. This equated to 2.5%, 4.9% and 11.6% 'fat' in the concentrate dry matter (DM), respectively. Additionally, all animals were offered 1kg grass silage DM/head daily. Intake, liveweight and ultrasonic back-fat thickness were measured during a 130-day finishing period. Post slaughter, carcass characteristics were recorded and a sample of *longissimus* muscle (striploin) was collected for fatty acid analysis. Compared to bulls fed the 0% Megalac ration, those fed the 2.6% Megalac ration had a greater ultrasonic back-fat depth, whereas bulls fed the 8.1% Megalac ration had less. Carcass gain tended to be lower for the 8.1% Megalac ration compared to the 0% or 2.6% Megalac rations. This reflected the lower consumption of concentrate DM and metabolisable energy



Megalac inclusion did not enhance carcass fat classification or the nutritional value of beef.

(ME) by the bulls fed the 8.1% Megalac ration. However, feed efficiency did not differ significantly between rations. There was no difference between the 0% and 2.6% Megalac rations for any post-slaughter measurement of fatness, but carcasses from bulls fed the 8.1% Megalac ration were lighter and had a numerically lower carcass fat score. There were only minor effects of ration composition on the fatty acid profile of muscle. It is concluded that for the type of animal and feeding system used in this study, Megalac inclusion was not an effective strategy to enhance carcass fat classification or the nutritional value of beef.