



25
YEARS
ANNIVERSARY



MONITOR FARM PROGRAMME 1994 - 2019



The **Kerry Agribusiness/Teagasc Joint Programme** commenced in 1994 and was an innovative concept of peer-led learning and knowledge transfer.

This was the first such programme in Ireland and formed the foundation of sustainable dairy production within the Kerry Agribusiness milk supplier base.



MISSION STATEMENT

We will empower our client farmers with:

- The most up-to-date **technical advice**.
- The **financial expertise** to set and achieve financial goals.

The Joint Programme will:

- Promote **profitable, safe** and **environmentally sustainable** dairy farming.
- Enhance the **quality of life** of all participants.



1994 – 2000

OBJECTIVE

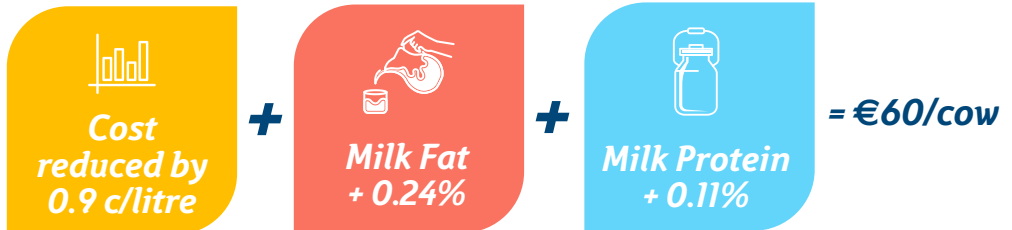


ACTIVITY FOCUS

- 35 Monitor Farms
- Intensive technical advisory programme
- Local on-farm demonstration
- Milk Recording
- Grassland reseeding

OUTCOME

- Improved Protein % - *The Protein Project*
- Discussion groups and farm walks
- Enhanced “peer to peer” learning
- Reporting on key performance indicators
- Blueprint for grassland reseeding
- Improved silage quality





2001 – 2006

OBJECTIVE



“ Farmers needed a simple system of financial management and evaluation. This basic information is critical when making informed decisions relating to the profitability and longer term planning on the farm. ”

ACTIVITY FOCUS

- 18 Monitor Farms
- Cost Control Planner
- € Profit Monitor
- Economic Breeding Index (EBI)

OUTCOME

- Improved financial management skills
- Benchmarked production costs and output
- Knowledge & understanding of cost variation
- Understanding and adoption of EBI

Cash receipts retained
+ 6.4%

Average Herd EBI
€24

Milk Protein
+ 0.09%



2007 – 2011

OBJECTIVE



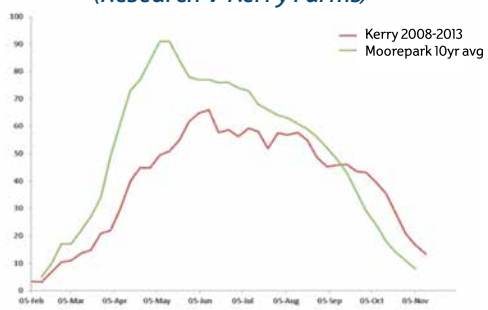
ACTIVITY FOCUS

- 14 Monitor Farms
- Regular grass measurement for group members
- Specialist grass groups
- Grass measurement software
- Substantial investment in on-farm facilities

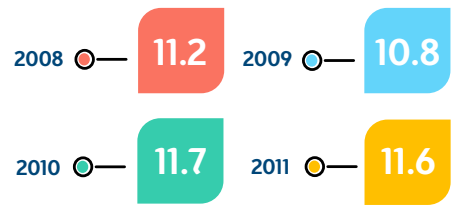
OUTCOME

- Improved days at grass and earlier turnout
- Improved understanding of pre-grazing target yield & quality
- Local grass growth data
- Improved environmental management through investment in housing, effluent and slurry storage.

GRASS GROWTH COMPARISON (Research V Kerry Farms)



220 - 280 DAYS AT GRASS Grass DMt/ha



2012-2015

OBJECTIVE



ACTIVITY FOCUS

- 19 Monitor Farms
- Increased milk supplier engagement
- Milk quality programme
- 5 year business planner

OUTCOME

- Cost effective expansion
- SCC reduction
- Increased volume and milk solids
- Management of climatic challenges
- Heavy Soils Project
- + 90,000 cows Milk Recorded (2015 v 1994)

Difficult climatic conditions in 2012 led to the depletion of winter feed reserves. Grass growth in 2012 was recorded at 9.5 tonnes/ha which was 2 tonnes/ha lower than the previous 4 year average. This was followed by extremely poor spring growth in 2013.



2015 Milk Protein 3.63%



2015 Average Total Costs 20.7c/l
(excluding own labour)



Milk Solids 2011 - 2015 + 32%

2016 – 2019

OBJECTIVE ENHANCE ON-FARM SUSTAINABILITY

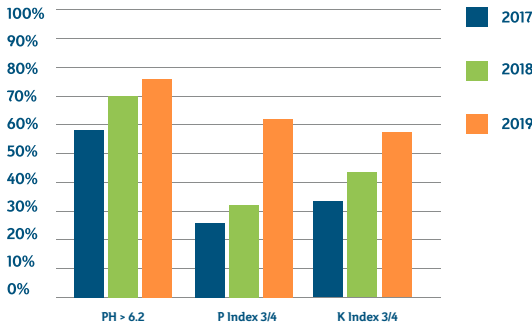


ACTIVITY FOCUS

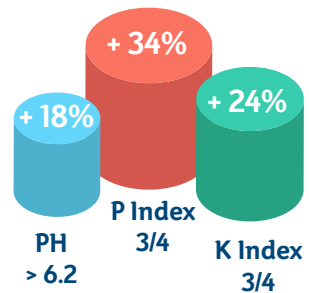
- 15 Monitor Farms
- Soil fertility campaign
- Labour management programme
- New grass groups
- New communication tools/pathways
- Dairy Herd Performance Report

OUTCOME

- Improved soil fertility and use of Nutrient Management Plans
- Reduced carbon footprint - increased EBI and days at grass
- Improved grassland management decision making
- Farm infrastructure focus
- Water quality initiative



SOIL FERTILITY 2017 - 2019



Monitor Farmer Experience



Conor Creedon

I learned from the experience of other monitor farmers and benefited from the one-to-one advice



Padraig McCarthy

Equipped me with the tools for sustainable expansion and I enjoy sharing knowledge and experiences



Jerry Ring

Such an interest was created in applying new technology that all the family chose careers in agriculture



Paudie O'Brien

As a new entrant it transformed my approach to genetics, soil fertility and local group participation



John Leahy

Benefited from constructive criticism of monitor farmers and focused on KPI's in my herd



Andrew Killeen

Highlighted the importance of getting the basics right and setting goals



Joseph O'Connor

Provided key focus on financial management and genetics for grass based systems



Liam Irwin

Emphasised the importance of grass quality and use of the cost control planner to increase farm profit

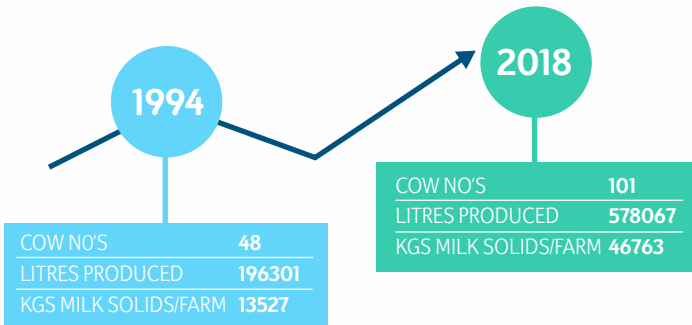


Tim Dennehy

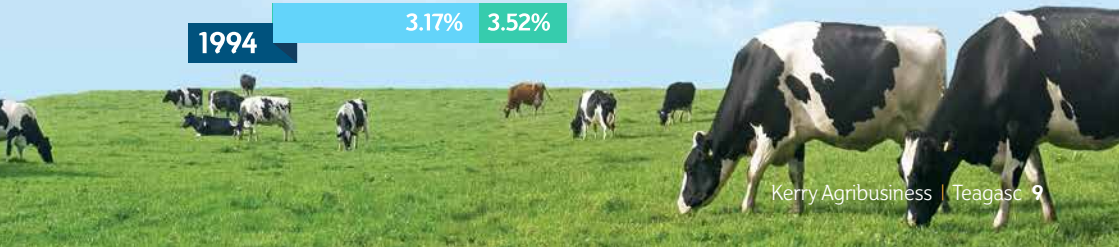
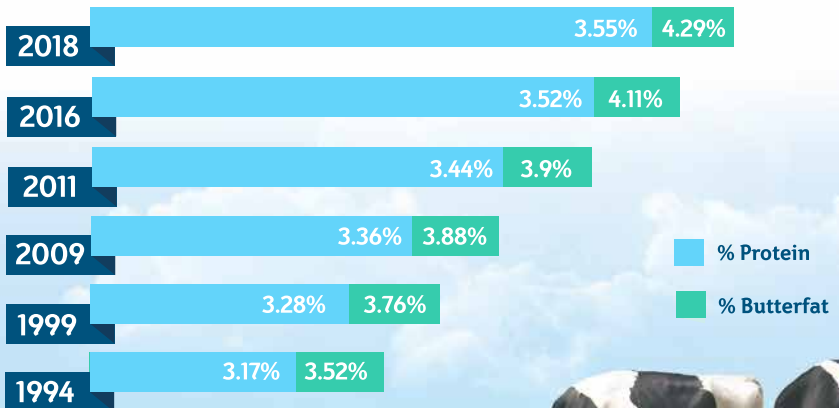
Focus on grass reseeding and increasing milk solids

Monitor Farm Key Performance Metrics 1994 - 2018

Monitor Farms	1994	1998	2018
Days at grass	227	251	260
Date Cows to grass	26-Mar	22-Feb	10-Feb
Start of Breeding	4-Apr	23-Apr	1-May
Mean Calving Date	3-Mar	27-Feb	20-Feb
% Cows Calved Feb/March	61	76	92
Lactation length (Days)	260	260	287
DMD Silage (%)	64.5	68.7	70.1
Average EBI (€) (Incl base adjustment of -€72)		24 (2001)	131



Milk Composition Progress





Heavy Soils Programme

OBJECTIVE




INPUT

- 5 Monitor Farms
- Design, installation and demonstration of different drainage systems
- Detailed soil fertility information and nutrient management planning

OUTCOME

- Drained sites increased grass production by 4 - 7 tDM/ha/year (5yr payback)
- Revised grassland management targets, winter feed planning and grass variety selection
- Grazing infrastructure audit developed

2013 - 2019



**% Paddocks
Optimum Soil
Fertility + 28%**



**Milk solids
output/ha
+ 65%**

Over the last 25 years, the **Kerry Agribusiness/Teagasc Joint Programme**, has supported family farms in the Kerry Agribusiness catchment and enabled the dissemination and adoption of locally refined technologies and financial management skills. Enhanced “peer to peer” learning has been a key focus and success of the Joint Programme.

Benefiting from our grass-based production system, the Joint Programme, has ensured the sustainable production of high value milk at low cost, through the adoption and implementation of best practice with regard to financial management, breeding, soil fertility and grassland management.

Over the next decade, Kerry Agribusiness are committed to further refinement of existing technologies and development and adoption of new technologies that will lead to reductions in GHG's and ammonia and improvement in water quality at farm level.

Kerry Agribusiness & Teagasc wish to thank all programme participants for their cooperation, commitment and willingness to share their knowledge and experiences with all milk suppliers in the Kerry Agribusiness catchment over the past 25 years.

Annual Monitor Farm Reports available to download at the following link:
<https://www.teagasc.ie/animals/dairy/joint-programmes/kerry-agribusiness/annual-review/>

