

Improving Water Quality on the McCarthy farm



Michael, Mary Ita and Alex McCarthy are farming in Feenagh, Co. Limerick in the headwaters of the river Deel catchment, which has been identified by the EPA as a priority area for action for improving water quality.

Through engaging with ASSAP advisors, a reduction in phosphorus to the headwaters of the river has already been achieved through actions taken on this farm and neighboring farms. Such measures include tree planting, moving fences back from water courses and creating silt and sediment ponds.

The McCarthys were winners of the National Dairy Council and Kerrygold Quality Milk Awards in 2021 and are currently participating in the Kerry Agribusiness/Teagasc Joint Programme. Environmental sustainability is a key focus on the farm as they work to lower carbon footprint and avoid nutrient loss to water.



Michael and Alex pictured during work on the new sediment pond.

In conjunction with the ASSAP programme and the Deel EIP, a pond was recently created on the farm. This pond was designed to break the pathway of sediment and Phosphorus loss to water. Trees and wildflowers have also been planted along one side of the pond to help filter out nutrients from the land. Other benefits include improvements to biodiversity, water quality, flood mitigation potential downstream and provision of silt traps.

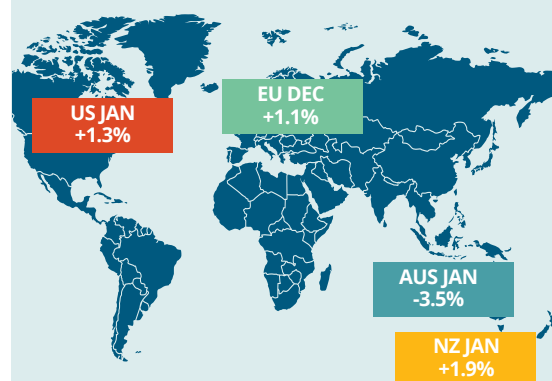
Contact one of our ASSAP advisors (Terry: 087 9662093 or Caoilfhionn 087 8539301) to discuss the new Water Quality measure included in our Evolve 2023 Dairy Sustainability Programme.

MILK MARKETS OVERVIEW

Increased milk supply and lower demand have contributed to weaker dairy commodity prices in Q1 2023, with dairy market prices remaining uncertain across regions and dairy products. High input costs remain a clear impediment worldwide.

Global Supply

Milk production from the Big 7 export regions is anticipated to grow by 0.7% year-on-year in 2023 (Rabobank), slower growth is anticipated in the US due to increased culling and weather-related challenges are set to impact milk production in New Zealand, Argentina and Brazil. It is thought that lower milk prices may impact H2 milk production in Europe..



Global Demand

Geopolitical unrest continues to overshadow global demand projections. While the US dollar remains relatively strong, it has weakened in recent months leading to increased purchasing power in emerging markets. Anecdotal evidence suggests that destocking has commenced in China which could lead to increased purchasing, at the earliest, in H2 2023.

Kerry Social Farming (KSF) was established in 2013, to innovatively target both an increasingly marginalised farming community in the county and to offer opportunity and choice to people with disabilities. It is a locally led, community-based, shared service that provides practical farming and social inclusion opportunities to people with physical and intellectual disabilities, acquired brain injuries and those engaging with mental health services, all within their local communities.

At Kerry we have a proud tradition of community support, and we are delighted to provide dedicated funding through our Evolve Dairy Sustainability Programme to this voluntary model of Social Farming.

Host Dairy Farm Focus

Kerry Agribusiness milk suppliers Seamus, Nora and James Howard, Currow, Co. Kerry have been engaged with Kerry Social Farming since 2021 and support Roger McCarthy in gaining experience of working on a dairy farm. Roger helps with a variety of tasks; filling the stalls with nuts for the cows; opening the gates to let out the cows after milking and bringing the cows to/from the fields in summertime. Roger also enjoys gathering eggs from the hens, bringing in the turf for the fire over the winter, cleaning out the sheds and yards. Roger is very much part of the farming team and both Roger and the Howard family look forward to their Thursday mornings together on the farm.



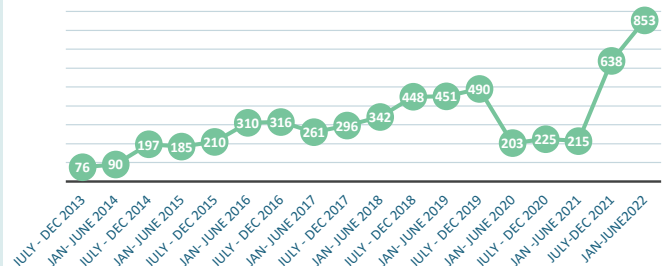
Roger pictured in the milk parlour.



Roger and Seamus pictured herding cows to the field after milking.

The success and growth of Kerry Social Farming over the last 10 years is commendable. While the impact of Covid-19 is obvious, Social Farming did continue for many participants as a safe outdoor activity during those challenging times. Between July 2013 and July 2022 Kerry Social Farming host farmers and all staff provided 5,806 Social Farming days in the county.

Growth of Kerry Social Farming Days July 2013 to July 2022



For further information or to become a host farmer contact:

Joseph McCrohan, South Kerry Development Partnership, West Main Street, Cahersiveen, Co Kerry.
email: jmccrohan@skdp.net | Mobile 087 2849165 | www.kerrysocialfarming.ie

Weigh Maiden Heifers Now

At this stage of their lifecycle maiden heifers should weigh 50-55% of their mature bodyweight (approx. 300kgs for a Friesian or 280kgs for a Jersey). It is critical that heifers reach their target weight at breeding as weight determines when puberty begins.

Not getting to grass soon enough can have a detrimental impact on heifers leading up to the breeding season. The sooner they are out on grass - the sooner they can adjust to the new diet and start putting on weight. Heifers that are currently behind target weight should be fed concentrates.

Iodine and copper are key minerals when it comes to promoting strong heats in heifers and good conception rates. Grass can tend to be low in these minerals making supplementation necessary on many farms.

Assess heifer weight and consider options for heifers that have not achieved their target weight at this point (<240kgs):

- Heifers need to be 60% of mature bodyweight at breeding.
- Good quality grass should achieve growth rates of 0.8-1.0 kg/hd/day of live weight gain.
- Good quality grass plus 1-2 kgs concentrates should achieve growth rates of 1.2 kg/hd/day of live weight gain.

At Kerry Agribusiness we offer a range of high quality concentrates that facilitate heifers in achieving their full potential. Included in these diets is high levels of bypass protein to promote muscle and frame growth and our TR Heifer pack to boost fertility and immune status.

Please contact your local Sales/Branch Manager for more information.

If you have any questions/comments on the Newsletter please CONTACT US VIA EMAIL AT enquiries@kerryagribusiness.ie