



Milk Markets Overview

Dairy markets are still experiencing substantial price fluctuations. Our latest fixed milk price offer at 43 cents per litre effectively captured the futures market most recent high. There has been a downturn in prices across various regions since then. Butter, in particular, has shown remarkable volatility, with spot prices falling below €6,000 per ton in the EU and the US, while New Zealand's butter continues to achieve higher prices.

Global Supply

In the US, the effect of reduced milk volumes driven by reduced cow numbers has been buffered by higher milk

solids content. This pattern is also seen in the EU and New Zealand. In New Zealand, favourable weather has led to an increase in milk production, and early reports suggest a positive rise in Germany's milk output, enhancing the overall supply situation. While production growth is not dramatic, it is sufficient to meet current demand.

Global Demand

The demand for dairy products remains a complex issue, with buyers exercising caution in their purchasing decisions. This cautious approach was evident at the recent GulFood event in Dubai, one of the food and beverage industry's largest conferences, where there were few significant discussions about purchasing. Chinese demand for dairy briefly increased during the Chinese New Year but has since slowed down, partly due to government policies that favour domestic products over imports.

Calf Nutrition

Calves at Coolinarne Farm are healthier, have less issues with scour and have improved LWG with the Bloom Elite Calf Pellet.

We recently spoke to Thomas and John McCarthy around the topic of calf feed in preparation for the calving season ahead. Thomas and John are a father and son operation milking 200 cows based in Coolinarne near Ballydaly in Co. Cork. They also carry over approx. 120 beef bred calves along with 30 replacement heifers each year. They have been using Bloom Calf Starter Pellet for a few years now and are very satisfied with how it has worked for them on farm.

Tom stresses how important using a quality calf nut is to their own success on farm. "We have been using Bloom Elite Calf Starter for 3 years now and we are incredibly satisfied with the results, we initially changed onto the concentrate because of the fact it contained Actigen to help prevent issues with scour and after changing onto it we noticed a number of benefits".

Actigen is a unique gut health product by Alltech for calves, it binds any bad bacteria in the gut of the calf and helps to prevent scours and rumen upsets.

"At approximately two weeks of age, the calves transition to Bloom Elite Calf Pellet after an initial introduction to Bloom Calf Crunch. Gradually, their intake is escalated to ad lib until turnout. Larger calves may consume up to 3 or 4 kilograms of feed. Subsequently, the concentration of feed is tapered

as they are turned out. Additionally, we ensure the maintenance of calf nutrition by supplementing their diet with a bale of hay to incorporate fiber and mitigate potential issues associated with scouring".

John also noted that calves exhibit robust health and demonstrate significant vitality when fed Bloom Elite Calf Starter Pellet. He observed that their coats, previously tinged with brown, have markedly improved since transitioning to the calf starter pellet. Furthermore, the necessity for vitamin injections has been eliminated, as the calves now exhibit liveliness, good physique, and overall thriving well-being.

Bloom Elite Calf Starter Pellet includes our bespoke Total Replacement (TR) Calf pack which includes fully protected trace elements such as Copper, Manganese, Zinc and Selenium, Kerry Agribusiness is the only mill in the ROI to use this technology.



Denis O'Keeffe Sales Liaison Manager pictured with Thomas and John McCarthy.

Feeding a good quality calf concentrate in critical to success and preventing issues on farm this spring. For more information on how the Bloom Feeds calf range can maximise calf performance this spring please contact your local Branch/Sales Manager.

Bloom Feeds

Managing Herd SCC in Early Lactation

Conducting a timely milk recording within the first two months post-calving is essential for evaluating the efficacy of dry cow treatment and detecting potential issues such as cows with a somatic cell count exceeding 200,000 cells/ml. One of the pivotal reports generated from milk recording, namely the Cellcheck Farm Summary (extract below), plays a crucial role in pinpointing the new infection rate during the dry period (aiming for below 10%) and the cure rate (aiming for above 85%). It is imperative not to delay

the initial milk recording beyond 60 days post-calving, as doing so makes it challenging to discern cows that may have contracted infections during the dry period or lactation.

By conducting an early milk recording and analysing the Cellcheck Farm Summary, proactive measures can be taken to address problematic cows at the onset of lactation, preventing potential transmission to the rest of the herd and mitigating any adverse impact on the herd's average somatic cell count (SCC). Prior to the breeding season, completing two milk recordings is recommended as it furnishes valuable insights for sire selection, dam selection for replacements and breeding to beef.

Mastitis Control: Dry Period/Caving ★★★★★

Note: Cows with first recording >60 days after calving are not included.

	First Test since calving	All calvings in current lactation
New infection rate over the dry period Cows No. of cows calved that had a SCC <=200 in recording prior to calving (0) and >200 in the current recording (0). Heifers No. of heifers that had a SCC >200 in the current recording (0) as a percentage of all heifers calved (1).	N/A Target: Less than 10%	13% 10/75 Target: Less than 10%
Cure rate over the dry period No. of cows calved that had a SCC >200 in recording prior to calving (0) and <=200 in current recording (0)	N/A Target: Greater than 85%	73% 8/11 Target: Greater than 85%

Protected Urea

Transitioning to 100% Protected Urea presents an opportunity for dairy farms to potentially reduce emissions by 7-8% when applied within a spreading rate of 200 to 250 kg N/ha. From a cost perspective per kilogram of nitrogen, Protected Urea proves to be more economical than CAN, and although its initial cost may seem marginally higher than standard Urea, it provides equivalent "effective N" for plant utilisation at a 12% lower spreading rate.

Trials conducted at Johnstown Castle indicate that grass grown with Protected Urea surpassed that grown with standard Urea in 6 out of 7 years, with 2018 being the exception, attributed to drought conditions where water, not nitrogen, was the limiting factor. On average, grass growth with Protected Urea exceeded standard Urea by 13%, a yield enhancement comparable to the increased effective N delivery to the plant by Protected Urea over standard Urea. Given the impending restrictions on nitrogen usage, it is imperative for farms to adopt the most nitrogen-efficient products.

Evolve

Evolve actions require that suppliers must procure Protected Urea to access all other incentives within the 'Soil Health' category, with receipts necessary to validate purchases made outside of Kerry Agribusiness. The 'Soil Health' category offers a potential value of €1,466 for an 85-cow herd.

Furthermore, there are financial incentives for Protected Urea purchased through Kerry Agribusiness, with a maximum reimbursement of 80kg N/cow (≥40% N = €40/tonne; 30 to 40% N = €20/tonne; <30% N = €10/tonne).

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