



Limerick Ladies Discussion Group

Recently, we had the opportunity to speak with two members of the Limerick Ladies Discussion Group, namely Bryana McNamara and Fiona Neenan.

Bryana hosted a discussion group meeting where a range of farm management topics were covered. The dry nature of the farm and the commitment to daily grass intake for the cows resulted in the successful attainment of grazing targets this spring. Matters such as second round grass, fertiliser application in spring, and preparation for quality summer grass were discussed. Breeding management was also a topic of discussion, including the selection processes for fixed time AI, sexed semen, and pre-breeding protocols.

Bryana expressed her delight at being a part of this group, stating that it offers an excellent opportunity for social interaction and a platform to discuss any farm-related issues or concerns. She highlighted that her participation in the group has provided her with a better understanding of diverse farming systems and has highlighted the impact which minor changes can have on overall farm performance. Bryana also appreciated the open and honest atmosphere of the group, which enables members to make the most of the meetings.

Fiona Neenan, who farms with her father on a dairy and beef farm since 2019, reported that breeding began on April 24th. Heifers were fixed time AI'd to sexed semen, with an aim to use 30% sexed semen straws on the cows this year. Fiona stated that they usually perform AI for six weeks before introducing a beef stock bull (Hereford) to the cows. Fiona highlighted the group as an excellent platform to meet other like-minded female farmers



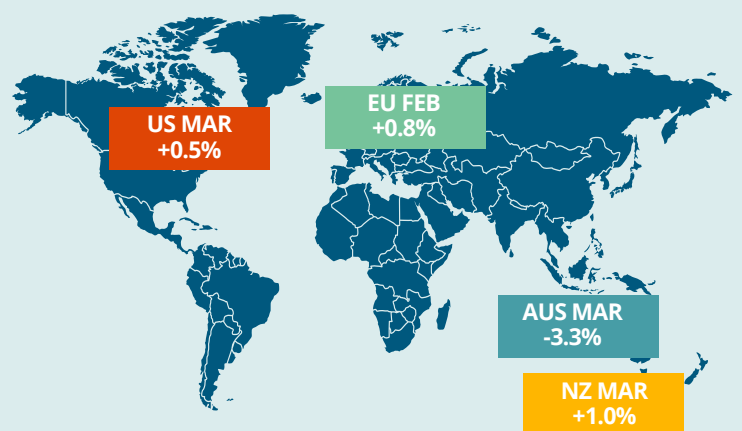
who are passionate about improving their knowledge of farming practices. She emphasised the supportive environment created by their advisor, Meadhbh Johnston, who fosters an atmosphere where group members can freely seek advice and opinions from each other during meetings or via the group's WhatsApp conversations. Fiona added that the group has broadened her social circle and allowed her to take a break from farm work, and she strongly encouraged other female farmers to join a group.

If you or any family member is interested in joining the Limerick or Kerry Ladies' Discussion Groups, please do not hesitate to contact your local Sales/Quality Manager.

MILK MARKETS UPDATE

Over the last month, commodity prices in Europe have shown a stable trend, with some minor fluctuations. The GDT auction has produced positive outcomes for two consecutive auctions following a year of declining prices. Middle Eastern buyers were responsible for the first increase following the end of Ramadan, while North Asian buyers demonstrated greater activity in the second auction. However, North Asian buyers were still 10% less active than they were the previous year.

With respect to global supply, milk production has exceeded expectations during the first few months of 2023. New Zealand's end-of-season performance has been aided by favourable weather conditions, while the significant number of cows in the US is expected to maintain high milk production levels for the remainder of the year. Despite this, farmgate milk prices are falling at a faster rate than projected worldwide. This may potentially impact future supply.



Meanwhile, the global demand for milk remains uncertain. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts low growth rates, and Chinese imports are recovering at a slower pace than anticipated. This is primarily due to weaker demand and increased milk production within China. Additionally, imports from the rest of the world are also declining.

BORD BIA EU CO-FUNDED CAMPAIGN DRIVING AWARENESS OF IRISH DAIRY IN ASIA

In 2021, the Irish Dairy Industry, in collaboration with Bord Bia, secured its first co-funded EU campaign, valued at €3.2 million. To meet the campaign application criteria, Bord Bia was required to demonstrate the sustainability credentials of the dairy sector. Irish dairy farmers' commitment to the Sustainable Dairy Assurance Scheme (SDAS) enabled them to meet this requirement.

The campaign was launched in April 2022 and targeted five key Asian markets: Japan, Malaysia,

Vietnam, Thailand, and the Philippines. These markets have become increasingly important for Irish dairy exports, growing in value by almost 100% since 2017, with a current value of €290 million in 2022.

Throughout 2022, Bord Bia, in conjunction with Irish dairy processors, including Kerry, undertook various activities such as inward buyer visits, technical seminars, and trade shows to raise awareness of Irish dairy in these markets. In Japan, Vietnam, and Thailand, the campaign engaged with over 200 buyers via three technical seminars and a trade show. In July, Bord Bia hosted the most extensive delegation of dairy buyers to Ireland on an inward buyer visit. The itinerary for the week-long visit included meetings with Irish dairy processors, a visit to an SDAS approved dairy farm, the Dairy Processing Technology Centre, and Teagasc Moorepark.

So far in 2023, the campaign has conducted three technical seminars in Japan, Malaysia, and the Philippines, engaging with over 120 potential customers for Irish dairy ingredients.

Over 20 buyers from Japan and Southeast Asia visited Ireland last July on a week long study trip which included a meeting with the Kerry commercial team, a visit to an SDAS approved dairy farm, the Dairy Processing Technology Centre and Moorepark.



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5 Steps to Produce Consistently Better Grass Silage

- 1 Cutting:** To optimise yield and quality of silage, it is recommended to cut the grass just before heading. Delaying the cutting beyond this point leads to a decrease in Dry Matter Digestibility of 2-3% per week.
- 2 Wilting:** Rapid wilting to achieve a target dry matter (DM) of 25-32% is important to prevent loss of sugars. In some cases, a 24-hour wilt may be too long, and a rapid wilt achieved within the same afternoon can be preferable.
- 3 Check for Nitrates and Sugars:** Grass with nitrate levels over 1000ppm can lead to fermentation issues if not ensiled at a higher DM or with the help of a silage inoculant.
- 4 Clamping:** Adequate consolidation during ensiling is also critical to minimise the risk of poor fermentation and reduce aerobic instability problems during feed out (i.e. heating).
- 5 Consider an Additive:** Using a silage inoculant may increase the value of good quality silage, but it is important to note that it cannot transform poor silage into good silage. Careful consideration is needed when selecting an additive to combat high nitrates in grass as not all additives are designed for this purpose.

Monitor Programme Update: Gerry & Niall Moloney, Crecora, Co. Limerick

Currently, the farm has a grass cover of 636 kgDM/ha or 166 kgDM/cow. At this crucial time of the year, Niall conducts a grass walk every five days to ensure that grass quality and supply meet expectations.

In early May, the grass growth rate was 54 kgDM/ha/day, while the cows received 3 kgs of concentrate daily. Following a successful reseed last year, the Moloney family performed more reseeding in May and utilised a grass seed mixture

with a high tetraploid content that included 2 kgs of red and white clover each. Additionally, they have 16 acres of red clover silage, which will be cut three times to provide high-quality silage feed for the milking



cows. Three tonnes of lime per acre was applied to the reseeded ground, while a tonne per acre was used to top up any paddocks requiring additional lime.

On May 2nd, breeding began with nearly 100% sexed semen dairy AI straws used to generate replacements, as well as high DBI Angus and Hereford AI sires. Heifers are out on a block and are bred to an Angus bull.



SAFE USE OF CHEMICALS ON-FARM



The use of chemicals on-farm can pose significant risks to both human health and the environment. Chemicals commonly used in agriculture include fuels, disinfectants, detergents, herbicides, fertilisers, and veterinary chemicals. Farmers must exercise caution when handling, storing, transporting, and disposing of these chemicals to ensure the safety of themselves, their neighbours, and the surrounding environment.

In compliance with legal requirements, all hazardous materials must be accompanied by a safety data sheet containing critical information on how to handle the chemical safely. Additionally, new legislation mandates that all farmers must receive training and be registered as professional users of pesticides with the Department of Agriculture. Farmers can obtain such training from the following sources: Teagasc and Farm Relief Services.

DANGER		Life threatening even in small amounts and brief exposure.	Handle with care.
		Causes very serious long-term health effects.	Never swallow or inhale.
		Causes skin and eye burns.	Avoid contact with skin.
WARNING		Destruction of metals.	Handle with care.
		Skin and eye irritation. Adverse health effects.	Don't swallow, touch or inhale.
		Damage to ozone layer.	Avoid release.

DO'S

- ✓ Read the label and the safety data sheet
- ✓ Read and follow the instruction before use
- ✓ Use protective clothing recommended eg. gloves, facemask, safety glasses
- ✓ Keep chemicals locked away and out of reach of children

DON'TS

- ✗ Transfer chemicals into unmarked containers
- ✗ Use flammable chemicals near source of heat
- ✗ Mix chemical unless you are sure they don't react

More information available from:

Your local supplier or manufacturer | The Health & Safety Authority (www.hsa.ie/chemicals) 1890289389
National Poisons Information Centre (www.poisons.ie)