



Growing the next generation

Rearing replacement heifers is a vital job for any dairy farm. The sole goal of rearing a replacement heifer is that she is at a target weight of 340-360kg liveweight at the start of the breeding season.

It is important to do the sums for your herd to determine the level of supplementation required. Assuming a cow mature liveweight of 550kg, weanling heifers of 220kg at this point will require a growth rate of 0.65kg/day to meet their target at breeding while a mature cow weight of 600kg necessitates a liveweight gain of 0.82kg/day.

Growing the heifers comes down to having adequate amounts of protein and energy in the diet. Aim to have 15-16% crude protein in the overall heifer's diet. It is best to get silage tested to see what the overall dry matter, DMD and protein content is of your silage.

For heifers to achieve target weight gain, they would require supplementation with a concentrate containing 18-19% protein and ULF of 0.94-1, given a standard silage composition of 68% DMD and 12% protein.

Typical feeding rates of concentrates for heifers will be 1.5-2kg/head daily.

In order to meet dry matter intake requirements heifers will eat 2.2% of its bodyweight daily. For a 300kg heifer this works out at 6.6kg DM daily of silage and concentrates. Ensure heifers are dosed following Animal Health Ireland guidelines in conjunction with advice from your vet to maximise growth rates during the winter months.

Bloom Feeds supply a wide range of Heifer Rearer diets suited to all systems, formulated specifically to maximise weight gains over the winter period. For more information, please contact your local Branch/Sales Manager.

Future Proofing Your Farm

Visit the Devon Inn Hotel (Co. Limerick, V94 H489) between 2 pm and 8 pm on Tuesday 21st November and discover how you can safeguard the future of your farm with guidance from leading industry experts.

Securing a Stress Free Spring | 3 pm

Panel discussion with Don Crowley & Marion Beecher (Teagasc) and Martin Kavanagh (Munster Bovine).

How to 'Future Proof Your Farm' in the face of Changing Regulations | 7 pm

Panel discussion with Ted Massey (DAFM) and Kerry Agribusiness Milk Suppliers



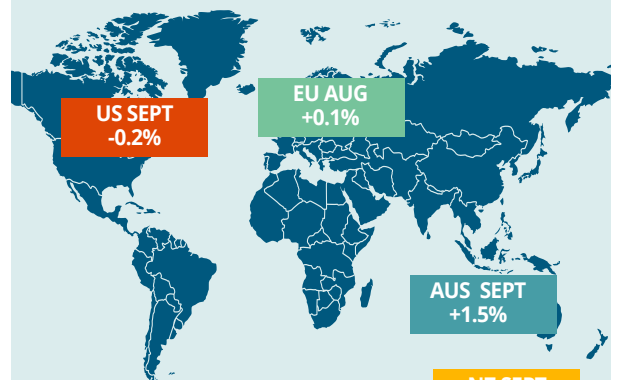
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MILK MARKETS

Dairy markets are extremely volatile at the moment. Butter prices have been moving up and down by as much as €300 in a single day. Demand from end users is reportedly weak and nothing has really improved in the fundamental data. Despite this, some commodity prices have improved in the past two months. Skim milk powder was first to move, then butter and more recently cheese. While GDT Auctions have posted price increases for four auctions in a row, the market is still not convinced in its bullishness.

Global Supply

Headline supply growth continues to slow down in Europe but fat and protein levels are up year on year. Despite falling farmgate prices, profit margins seem to be good enough for the supply to keep growing. New Zealand milk production in October was better than expected but El Nino should affect pasture growth going forward. Headline U.S. milk production was weaker than expected in September, down 0.2% year-on-year. Cow numbers are down but yield per cow improved.



Global Demand

As any weakness in milk production had already been built into commodity prices, we would expect that an increase in demand has been driving the recent price rally. This hasn't shown up in any fundamental data yet but there is a two to three month lag. Exports are down and there is also no evidence that the end users are buying aggressively. Cover is very short with everyone reluctant to buy forward.

National Dairy Council (NDC) & Kerrygold Quality Milk Awards Winners

Congratulations to John & Olivia Macnamara in Hospital, Co. Limerick with their four children, Caoimhe, Conor, Ailbhe and Padraic, who have been crowned overall winners in the National Dairy Council (NDC) Quality Milk Awards. A total of fourteen farming families from seven counties representing fourteen dairy co-ops were nominated.

Each finalist is nominated by their co-ops and undergo a thorough judging process examining a range of criteria including environmental management, animal health & welfare, soil & grassland management, farm infrastructure & hygiene, and technical performance, among other core indicators. This year's judging panel for the NDC awards included: Professor of Dairy Production in University College Dublin (UCD) School of Agriculture and Food Science, Karina Pierce; Professor of Public Health at UCD, Dr. Patrick Wall; and Dr. David Gleeson of Teagasc.

The Macnamara's were recognised among their peers and judges for demonstrating high standards of excellence across the board but particularly in the areas of farm infrastructure, grassland management and sustainability. John believes that working together fosters a strong family connection and ensures the Macnamara family values are ingrained in their family farm. The farm's legacy traces back

to John's father Pat, who entrusted John with its care after he completed the Green Cert at Teagasc, Kilmallock.

John's passion for farming was instilled from an early age and he is enthusiastic about educating children on all things agriculture. He regularly hosts children and young people, from playschool right up as far as students from agricultural colleges on the farm.

John takes immense pride in producing a product that is of the highest quality and understands that the milk leaving his yard will shortly be on the consumers' table. This is demonstrated in the farm's performance figures. From 245 cows John supplied 1,351,344 litres with an average of 4.56% butterfat, 3.78% protein, 170 ('000) SCC and 7 ('000) TBC. The Macnamaras are a prime example of maximizing on-farm efficiency while also improving their on-farm sustainability.



Using silage results to make feeding decisions.

As the old saying goes you can't manage what you don't measure and getting your silage analysed is a great example of this.

Silage quality is very variable this year. Some 1st cut silages that were not harvested in early May were pushed out into June, and has impacted quality by increasing NDF levels as well as lowering energy and protein.

This was followed by an extremely wet July which has also severely impacted the quality of 2nd cut silages.

Kerry Agribusiness provides a free silage quality analysis service at its feed mill in Farranfore.

Interpreting your silage analysis results

- **DMD** – Dry matter digestibility is a good indicator of silage quality, but should be used in consideration with other parameters.
- **DM** – Dry matter of good silage should be between 25 – 30 %. Wet silage can reduce dry matter intakes (DMI) due to the cow physically having to eat more as it is low in DM. It can also have higher amounts of acid, inhibiting intakes and causing issues with acidosis. Dry silages on the other hand can be difficult to ensile correctly which can also result in poor fermentation and the presence of mould.
- **Protein** – Leafy grass harvested earlier in the season will have a high crude protein %, typical silage ranges between 13 - 17%. Young stock and milking cows will need silage with a higher protein %.
- **Energy** – Energy is generally shown on a silage analysis as ME and UFL. Energy has a very important role to play in both milk (especially milk protein) and body condition. Energy levels are higher in young leafy grass harvested pre-heading. You should aim for greater than 11 ME and 0.85 UFL.
- **Ash** – Ash gives an indication of how much soil/clay is in a silage sample. Soil contamination can lead to issues with antagonists and subsequently metabolic issues post calving. Ash should ideally be less than 8%.
- **NDF** – Neutral detergent fibre should be between 45 - 55%. High NDF is a sign of grass that was overgrown before harvesting. Too much fibre slows down fermentation in the rumen while too little can allow fermentation to occur rapidly leading to acidosis.
- **pH** – A pH of 3.8 – 4.2 indicates well preserved silage. A pH lower than this may result in intake issues and affect rumen function while a high pH indicates poor or secondary fermentation. It is important to note that dry silages can have a high pH and still be well preserved.

For more information, please contact your Sales/Branch Manager.

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