

Teagasc Moorepark 2021 Open Day

The Teagasc Moorepark 2021 Open Day planned for July this year was cancelled due to COVID-19. Following the sequence of open days in 'uneven years' and thanks to progress in combatting COVID-19, we plan to hold an open day in mid-September while abiding strictly by Government COVID-19 guidelines. The open day will be held over three days – Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday the 14, 15 and 16 September – to facilitate as many people as possible to attend.

At the time of going to press, we cannot be certain what these restrictions will be in mid-September, but we are optimistic that we will be able to bring visitors to Teagasc Moorepark as well as holding online virtual events.

The aim is to display the answers that Teagasc is generating to challenges in relation to environmental and economics issues facing dairy and drystock farmers.

Visitors to the event will experience a familiar 'journey' including initial presentations at four main boards, addressing sustainability, economics, grassland and genetics.

In addition, there will be themed areas covering Grass10, SignPost Farms Programme, One Health Approach,



Pat Dillon.

Health and Safety, Creating Great Farm Workplace and DairyBeef500.

Numbers will be limited each day and pre-registration will be required. Registration will open on 6 September. Watch out for Teagasc communications confirming this.

There will also be three virtual events each day, accessed via a link from the Teagasc website:

• **14 September at 7pm:** Technical messages from the open day.

Research answers to industry challenges.

• **15 September at 7pm:** Industry forum covering challenges and opportunities facing the dairy industry, which will include a panel of high-profile speakers.

• **16 September at 7pm:** 2021 NDC and Kerrygold Quality Milk Awards. Access to these virtual events will be via a link from the Teagasc website.

– Pat Dillon

Have your say on trees

In recent years, there has been increased emphasis on the multiple values of trees on farms. MSc Walsh Scholar Rachel Irwin is conducting an online survey of dairy and drystock farmers' perceptions of, and attitudes towards, trees on farms.

The results of this study will be collated and analysed to aid policy and help create guidelines for policy makers.

To anonymously complete the survey, please either scan the QR code with your smartphone or go to <https://tinyurl.com/fkj3n85z>.



Application of slurry in September



One of the main tasks on all farms for September is to empty all slurry and soiled water tanks (taking due care of health and safety). Getting these valuable sources of fertiliser applied as early as possible will maximise the response to nutrients applied, reduce chemical fertiliser requirements and help build autumn grass covers. Weather conditions and correct buffer zones must be right to make best use of these home produced organic fertiliser and ensure no losses to waters.

Don't forget – the last date for spreading slurry is midnight on 14 October and that the normal buffer zone from water courses is 5m, but this extends to 10m from 1 October to 14 October. If weather conditions are right, get all the tanks emptied as we will get rain at some stage.

The last date for spreading chemical N and P fertiliser is midnight on 14 September – why wait until then to get it out, as the days are getting cooler and shorter. An application of cattle slurry in September will grow double the grass compared to an October application timing.

We hope to run our highly successful course in business strategy again later this year. We run this popular course in collaboration with the Smurfit Business School and Skillsnet. If you would like to express your interest in participating, please email Mark.moore@teagasc.ie and put 'Business Strategy Course' in the subject line.



Early planning for spring 2022

Maeve Regan,
Head of Ruminant Nutrition, Agritech

The success of spring 2022 will centre on the decisions and planning that will take place over the next number of weeks and months.

At this point in the year, plans should be well underway to set the farm up for a successful spring. Already, a bank of grass should be building on farm to allow for an extended grazing season, as well as closing the farm with sufficient grass available for an early turnout.

Replacement heifers should also be weighed at this point to assess if target weights are being achieved (30% of mature body weight at 6 months).

Supplementation may be introduced at grass where a cohort of heifers are below target. Beyond this, now is also the time to assess the main herd nutritionally and make timely decisions to reduce the chances of metabolic diseases during calving 2022.

Late lactation nutrition

Late lactation is the optimum time to manipulate body condition. If cows have a body condition score (BCS) < 3.0, energy intake needs to increase. The ideal scenario is to dry cows off in the same condition as when they calve down. This would result in only providing a maintenance diet over the dry period. Cows with a low BCS (<2.75) should be dried off early to assist in achieving target BCS at calving.

Forage analysis

The importance of knowing the quality of your forage is often underestimated, as it allows us to make informed decisions. Winter supplementation levels for youngstock will be dictated by forage quality. Dry cow diets will also depend on the quality of silage in the yard, whereby dilution with straw may be required to avoid over-conditioned cows at the point of calving.

A forage mineral analysis will also highlight possible risk factors associated with metabolic issues. E.g., High potassium (k) levels in silage reduces magnesium availability which is often associated with milk fever. Tailored dry cow mineral provision advice is required in such cases.

More information

For further information and advice on planning for spring 2022, contact your local Agritech Sales Advisor or visit www.agritech.ie.



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