

Teagasc Notes for week ending Friday 1st May 2020

Beef Environment Efficiency Programme (BEEP)

The closing date deadline for suckler farmers to apply for the BEEP scheme is the 15th of May 2020. You may have applied for the BEEP Scheme last year but that is a different scheme and you need to apply separately for the current scheme. This scheme is worth €80-€90 per cow in 2020 and all suckler farmers in the region are strongly advised to apply for this much needed payment.

What animals are eligible?

All suckler calves (beef sire x beef dam) born from 1st July 2019 – 30th June 2020 and their dams.

What the key Actions to be carried out?

Action 1 - Weighing (Compulsory)

Weighing scales must be registered in order to be used for weighing animals. All beef calves weighed must be born between 1st July 2019 and 30th June 2020. Un-weaned live calves and their dams must be weighed on the same day. Weights must be submitted to ICBF within 7 days of weighing and weights must have been taken between 1st January 2020 and 1st November 2020.

Action 2 - Meal Feeding or Vaccination (Optional)

Meal Feeding of calves for 4 weeks pre weaning and for 2 weeks post weaning must be done if this option is chosen. Recording of weaning dates and the retention of meal receipts will be required.

OR

Vaccination of calves pre weaning against PI3, RSV, Mannheimia Haemolytica and IBR.

Action 3 - Faecal Egg Testing Suckler Cows (Optional)

Fresh dung samples from suckler cows must be collected & sent to a DAFM approved lab to check for Liverfluke and Rumen Fluke. Samples must be sent to lab before 1st November 2020. Results will then be used to determine dosing strategy.

What scales can I use?

You have two options available for weighing.

- i. You can rent a set of scales from an approved field service agent ie participating mart/ co-op.
- ii. Use owned/ borrowed scales. All owned/ borrowed scales must be pre-registered before weighing. ICBF will make a Tab available on their website to allow participants register their scales. Manufacturing details, indicator model and serial number of scales will be required. Once registered each scales will be issued with a unique BEEP scales registration number. If you borrow a scales, you must complete Form 1A. (Page 21 in the terms & conditions document). Scales already registered in 2019 will not need to be registered again.

Payment rates

Action 1 (Compulsory) – Weighing	€50 for first 10 cow/calf pairs weighed - €40 thereafter to a maximum of 100 cow/calf pairs in total
Action 2 (Optional) – Can select one of the following:	Meal Feeding at €30 per calf weighed to a maximum of 100 calves OR Vaccination at €30 per calf weighed to a maximum of 100 calves
Action 3 (Optional) – Can be selected in addition to Action 1 and/or Action 2	Faecal Egg Testing at €10 per cow a maximum of 100

Fire Risk on the Hills

Due to the recent dry spell of weather, a Condition Orange warning was issued for fire risk. A Condition Orange means that a high fire risk is deemed to exist in all areas where hazardous fuels such as dead grasses and shrub fuels such as heather and gorse exist. Recent fire incidents show that most ignition risks appear to be associated with illegal burning of upland vegetation.

Members of the public intending to visit forests and other recreational sites are reminded of the requirement to remain within 2km of their homes and to adhere to regulations introduced to limit the spread of Covid-19. Fire behaviour and initial spread rates are likely to be influenced by lower afternoon humidity levels and light to moderate wind speeds during the lifespan of this warning, and wind speeds may exceed 30km/h in some areas.

It is worth reminding ourselves that:

- It is an offence to cut, grub, burn or otherwise destroy any vegetation growing on any land not then cultivated between 1st March and 31st August in any year, under the Wildlife Act 1976 & the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. It is therefore illegal to burn at this time.
- Uncontrolled fires directly threaten the homes and safety of communities who live in fire prone areas, and can potentially rob our communities of vital emergency service response capabilities.
- illegal burning may result in some farmers endangering their own BPS payments.

Beef Sustainability Demo Farm in Kilkenny – Brian Blackmore

Brian Blackmore, beef farmer, Callan Rd., Kilkenny has been identified as a Beef Sustainability Demo Farm in Kilkenny. Brian will work closely with his local Teagasc adviser Terry Carroll to implement the various technologies that will improve his environmental sustainability including using protected urea, use of low emissions slurry spreading, improved weight gain per ha, efficient nutrient use on the farm, fencing of waterways maintenance of hedgerows.... The list goes on.

Over the next few months, we will keep a diary in this paper on the actions that Brian is taking. It may prompt you to consider adopting some of these technologies to improve your environmental sustainability, while at the same time improving output and consequently profitability on your farm.

In early March, Brian, his adviser Terry Carroll and post graduate student Nicholas McKenna, agreed a plan for the Spring fertiliser programme. Brian agreed to spread protected urea on one half of some of the grazing fields and used 40 units of CAN on the other half. This fertiliser was spread on the 1st of April and there has been no rain since the 5th of April. Walking the fields on the 22nd April, Brian can see no difference between the two sides of the field. Obviously, we would love to have the yield measured and Terry will do this as soon as the lockdown is lifted. It is about fit for grazing by light cattle now. But Brian may top up this field with compound fertiliser and make silage from it in a month or so. We will continue to compare protected urea and CAN on the farm over the coming weeks.