

Teagasc Notes for week ending Friday 24th April 2020

HEALTH & SAFETY

The primary focus on health and safety presently is to flatten the Covid 19 curve and keep farm families safe and well. However, this presents other pressures on farms. For the foreseeable future schools will be closed. This will see an increase in the amount of time children will be spending on farms. Children account for 11% of all farm fatalities in the past decade, that's two or three children killed each year on farm.

With the increase in the amount of time that children will be spending on farms, thought must be given to farm safety. Given that farming continues and all other attractions are closed, time spent on farms by children will be high.

Advance planning is the best way to counteract dangers and risk. It is a good idea for parents to set aside some time to think and talk about dangers and risks around the farm and how best to minimise them for the children. Parents know the farm, the farmyard, and their kids, best of all.

Parents need to set ground rules. Children should never be allowed into the farmyard unless supervised. Parents should try to make a safe play area. Install a fence to keep children in an area where they are safe. It should be made in view of the house to allow supervision.

Teach children about how to be safe. Small things like setting ground rules.

- Stay off tractors
- Never go near working machinery.
- Livestock must never be approached, especially cows after calving
- Never go near slurry pits or dungsteeds.
- No climbing on bales.

Parents must take control of their own actions

- Remove keys from tractors and other vehicles when not in use.
- Put on the handbrake.
- Ensure that Front loaders are lowered to the ground.

On the farm

It is impossible to operate machinery safely and to look after children at the same time so please do not take any chances and leave jobs involving stock and machinery until there is someone else available to look after the children.

Children under seven years of age are not allowed in tractors at all. Don't leave heavy items standing against walls, for example gates or pallets if a child goes to climb these they will most likely result in crush injuries or death

A very good website for kids in relation to farm safety is www.agrikids.ie

Care of elderly

Our Taoiseach has spoken of cocooning our elders. Again people are doing their best in relation to social distancing. Again people need to be careful, not to let children near their elders for the foreseeable future whilst also being mindful of the need to care for the older generation in our country

43% of all farm fatalities are over 65 years of age

- Older farmers should be aware that ageing affects mobility, eyesight and balance
- Examine work practices where older farmers are involved.
- Older farmers need to be reminded of the dangers (particularly tractors, machinery, livestock and accessing heights)
- Make sure that the older farmer is physically fit to carry out the work at hand
- They should seek help when it is needed to complete the necessary work on the farm
- Particular care is needed when older farmers are present when work is in progress

TIPS FOR WINTER CEREALS

1. For winter barley crops that are due to receive a third split of nitrogen they should receive this nitrogen as soon as possible. The latest timing for nitrogen is GS 32 after this nitrogen will have little or no effect on final yield.
2. Winter wheat crops are now approaching GS 31 which is the ideal stage for a plant growth regulator, options here include CCC 2.0 L/ha or Trinexapac (Moddus etc.) 0.2 L/ha + CCC 1.0 L/ha.
3. As always growers should watch out for large swings in day time temperature as this will stress the crop especially when mixing with other pesticides.
4. Some wheat crops also have some weeds that still need to be controlled e.g. groundsel, speedwells, cleavers etc. the choice of products will depend on the weeds present.
5. In winter oats many crops are also approaching or are at GS 31, most will already have received the first application of PGR and the second application will be due in the next week to 10 days. The trinexapac + CCC mix works well on oats at GS 32 which is when we tend to get the maximum shortening effect.

Disease control

1. Winter barley crops should have their first fungicide at this stage, there were reports of rynchosporium in Cassia and Pixel, with net blotch evident in KWS tower.
2. Septoria is developing in wheat crops at the moment despite the later sowing, although the pressure is lower than normal.