

Derogation requirements for 2020

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With over 6,000 dairy farmers participating in derogation, now is a timely reminder of the practices that you need to adopt or continue to comply with under the scheme. Two key practices that must commence in 2020 are:

- liming – a programme of lime application should commence if soil sampling indicates that it is necessary; and,
- to improve farm biodiversity, at least one mature whitethorn or blackthorn tree should be left per 300m of hedgerow, or maintain hedgerows on a three-year cutting cycle to encourage flowering and fruiting.

Other practices that participants must engage in include:

- low-emission slurry spreading (LESS) – from now on LESS is mandatory on derogation farms;
- concentrate protein level – when cows are on

full-time grazing, protein content of the concentrate must be a maximum of 16% and 15% in 2020 and from 2021 onwards, respectively;

- environmental training course attendance – all derogation farmers must attend a course by the end of 2021;
- grassland management – attend a grassland management course by the end of 2021 or complete 20 grass measurements on PastureBase; and,
- include clover seed in the mix when reseeding.

From January 1, 2020, lands declared as commonage or rough grazing on the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) application are allocated a maximum of 170kg organic nitrogen (N) per hectare, with a resultant reduced allowance of chemical fertiliser. More detailed information is available from your Teagasc advisor.

Grassland Farmer of the Year 2020



Pictured at the 2019 Grassland Farmer of the Year Competition event (from left): Tadhg Buckley, AIB; Liam Woulfe, Grassland Agro; former Minister for Agriculture, Michael Creed TD; Pdraig Walshe, FBD Insurance; Bryan Daniels (winner); Aidan Brennan, Irish Farmers Journal; Gail and Eli Daniels (winners); Liam Herlihy, Chairman, Teagasc; and, Gerry Boyle, Teagasc Director.

The Grassland Farmer of the Year competition will recognise those farmers who are achieving high levels of grass utilisation in a sustainable manner. Irish agriculture faces serious challenges in trying to meet greenhouse gas and ammonia emission targets. Improved nutrient management and the use of clover are now more important than ever. The sustainability of our livestock production must improve. Some farmers have to operate with difficult land and the competition will also recognise this. Awards will also be made to those farmers who demonstrate excellence in specific areas of grassland on their farm.

The competition has an overall prize fund of €30,000. Seven category winners will be selected. Enterprise awards include:

- dairy;
- sheep; and,
- beef – suckling and non-suckling categories.

Other categories include:

- disadvantaged land winner;

- sustainable farming winner; and,
- young farmer (under 30 years).¹

Each category winner will receive €3,500.

The overall winner will be selected from the seven category winners and will receive an additional €2,500. There will be additional grassland merit award winners.

Application form

Complete the online application form or download the form from the following link: www.teagasc.ie/media/website/crops/grassland/grass10/print_2020-A4-DL-FOTY-application-form.pdf

Completed application forms should be returned to:

Grassland Farmer of the Year Competition,
c/o Niamh Allen, Teagasc, Moorepark,
Fermoy, Co. Cork.

1. The young farmer category can include entrants that are farm managers or farming in a collaborative arrangement.

Post-milking teat disinfection

Prevention and control of mastitis are based on multiple principles that have been known for a long time. There is no silver bullet in mastitis control, as it is a complex, multifactorial disease. Pathogens, cows, and farmers all play a role in mastitis control. Routine post-milking teat disinfection is an integral part of every mastitis control programme, and its importance is often overlooked. It has been shown that effective post-milking teat disinfection lowers new infection rates by 50% or more, but it only works if it is done thoroughly and throughout the entire lactation. Milk from infected quarters contains bacteria that may contaminate the skin of many other teats during milking. Certain bacteria (*Staph. aureus* and *Strep. agalactiae*) in milk from an infected cow may be found on the liners and transferred to the teat skin of the next five to six cows that are milked with that unit. Once on the teat skin, they multiply (especially at sites of teat lesions) and so increase the risk of infection of the quarter via the teat canal. If the whole teat is disinfected after milking it reduces the bacterial load, and thus the risk of infection. Post-milking teat disinfection also helps keep teat skin healthy and heal teat lesions, and these actions have an important contribution to mastitis control. When choosing a disinfectant beware of unregistered products. Using unregistered products risks applying ineffective treatments, having chemical residues in milk or meat, and causing harm to the environment, human health, or animal health. If the product is registered, it will have either a PCS or a Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) (previously the Irish Medicines Board (IMB)) number on the drum label.



FIGURE 1: A solid pattern means the teats have been well covered.

Teat disinfectants making a medicinal claim (e.g., aid in the prevention of mastitis) are subject to registration and regulation by the HPRA: <http://www.hpra.ie/homepage/medicines/medicines-information/find-a-medicine>. If no medicinal claim is made, teat disinfectants are classed as biocides, and these are subject to registration and regulation by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM): <https://www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/register/biocidalproductregisters/>. A list of teat disinfectant products on the market can also be viewed on the Teagasc website: www.teagasc.ie/media/website/animals/dairy/research-farms/Teat-disinfectant-products-sold-in-Ireland201905.pdf. Effective application of teat disinfectants is essential as the benefits are lost if the teat disinfectant does not cover all the teat skin. Spraying is preferred as it is considered quicker and easier; however, it is important that shortcuts are not taken for it to be as effective as teat dipping.



FIGURE 2: A patchy picture indicates poor coverage of the teat.

It is essential that the entire teat (everywhere the liner has touched) is disinfected and not just the teat end. Ready-to-use (RTU) products are

recommended as best practice, particularly for farms experiencing difficulties sourcing water of adequate quality or mixing solutions consistently. To cover the teats correctly, at least 15ml of teat disinfectant per cow per milking is needed. Knowing this allows you to do a quick calculation for your herd to see if enough product is being used. However, adequate volume alone does not ensure teats are being covered correctly. To assess if all sides of the teat are being covered, wrap a piece of paper towel around the barrel of the teat, then carefully remove and examine the wet or stained area (Figures 1 and 2). If using a teat dip cup, keep the cup clean and do not allow organic material to accumulate in it. Clean out immediately if dirt or manure drops into the cup and wash out the dip cup at least once a day.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Get winter ready

From mid September onwards is the ideal time to focus on getting winter ready. In recent years, storms, flooding, and snow and ice have become more frequent in winter. Now is the time to do winter-ready maintenance around the farm. For example, check for buildings or trees that could collapse. Check your supplies, e.g., anti-slip grit, protective clothing and equipment, torch batteries and first-aid boxes. Make sure to have your emergency contacts up to date and accessible and that your Eircode is displayed in a prominent place. Further information on



getting winter ready is available on the health and safety section of the Teagasc website.



Be winter ready.