

## The Dairy Farm Grant: strengthening Irish dairy farms

Energy efficiency can strengthen dairy farms by helping to **lower costs, increase resilience to volatile milk prices** and **free up resources** that can be invested in more productive activities. Last year, SEAI piloted a scheme for dairy farmers that offered grant support for the retrofitting of vacuum and milk pumps. Farmers who participated in 2017 reported the following benefits:

- Reduced running costs of vacuum pump/milk pump system
- Reduced noise
- Improved vacuum

In collaboration with Teagasc, SEAI have launched an updated scheme for 2018. 50% grants<sup>1</sup> are offered for new vacuum pumps, new milk pumps, or variable speed drives retrofitted to existing vacuum pump system.

The objective of the scheme is to:

- Encourage farmers to invest in energy saving technology with this incentive
- Help farmers reduce costs and increase profitability
- Promote the “Green” capability of Irish agricultural activities
- **Who should apply?**

The scheme is open to all dairy farmers supplying all major cooperatives. All herd sizes are covered, and both single and three phase electricity is eligible.

**To be considered, applicants must:**

- Have a supplier number and be currently engaged in milk production, **and**
- Be registered with the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine under the Bovine Tuberculosis Eradication Scheme as a herd owner or herd keeper, or be a holder of another Department identifier.

**Interested?**

- Contact Teagasc or your Dairy Farm Advisor who can assist with information and completing the application. documentation
- Contact SEAI at [info@seai.ie](mailto:info@seai.ie) or call 01 808 2100
- information and to download an application form.

## Milk Price

The milk price for May is 31 cent per litre (incl. Vat.) for milk of 3.60% Butterfat and 3.30% Protein.

+ 1 c/l Supplementary Payment.

## Change Liners

The liner is the only part of the milking machine that comes in direct contact with the cow. Do you worry that the recommendation to change your milking machine liners has been developed just to sell more liners? Do you think that liners which are a bit worn won't make much of a difference? Well rest assured that changing your liners will increase your milk yield and udder health. As liners operate over time they lose tension, absorb fat and hold bacteria. This deterioration is sufficient to reduce the speed and completeness of milking, resulting in a loss in milk yield. This also increases teat end damage and increases the spread of mastitis bacteria. To reduce the impact of aged liners on milk yield and udder health, the industry recommendation is to change liners after 2,000 milkings or six months, whichever comes first. To see when exactly you should change your liners, use the following simple calculation:

Number

of days =  $\frac{2,000 \times \text{number of milking units}}{\text{Herd size} \times \text{number of milkings per day}}$

Example: A herd of 100 cows milking twice per day [number of milkings per day] in a 10 unit swing-over parlour [number of milking units] would take approx 100 days to reach 2,000 cow milkings.

Number of days =  $\frac{2,000 \times 10}{100 \times 2} = 100$  days

If a full herd was being milked by March 1, with new liners put in on that date, by August 1 they will have been milked for at least 150 days. But the liners should have been changed after 100 days, i.e., around June 9.

Many herds have increased in size, while parlour size may have stayed the same. Hence each cluster is milking more cows now than it might have a few years ago. So don't wait any longer, calculate exactly how often you should have new liners, and change them now if that's what the figures tell you! .

## GRASSLAND WEED CONTROL

Weeds can seriously reduce your available grass and grass silage yield and quality. For every 1% ground cover by weeds, you can assume that your pastures are losing 1% yield.

While various weeds can cause problems in grassland, the three most common are docks, thistles and nettles. These weeds if left uncontrolled can quickly start dominating grasslands. Seeds from these weed plants are very resilient, can remain dormant in the soil for years and then germinate anywhere the soil surface is exposed and conditions are favourable.



Use Doxstar pro on Pasture with no clover

Control Strategies Good grazing management practices help to minimise grassland weed problems i.e.:

- Drainage, Maintaining soil fertility, Avoiding poaching

Where weeds manage to establish, weed control is highly dependent on herbicides. However, it is important to remember that as good as any specific herbicide is, only about 50% of the resultant control is down to the product used. Successful weed control is 50% about choosing the correct product and 50% using it correctly. Spraying best practises & equipment checklist (50% of weed control) Ideally sprayers should be checked and calibrated once a year, check:

For cracks in the tank and hoses, Pressure gauges, The boom suspension operation Nozzle output (if varies +/- 5% over standard replace nozzle)

Sprayer setup is very important, check:  
Boom height (target 50cm above grass/weeds) Forward speed General sprayer condition Follow specific instructions for product selected on dose rates, water volumes, timing of spray etc.

Weather conditions on the day (dry, calm) PLUS weather for the 3-4 days before spraying (good growing conditions to ensure the weed absorbs the chemical) Product Selection In established pastures the key to successful control is the correct use of a chemical that targets the specific weeds present.



Use Grazon pro for thistles in pasture

## Weed control in new leys Grassland

reseeding is an ideal opportunity to control problem weeds in a field as there is an opportunity to 'burn off' weeds with glyphosate prior to sowing and then hit seedling weed plants a few weeks after sowing, when they are weak. When using glyphosate products, it is very important to use the correct rate i.e. 5L/ha (3.5 pts/ac) minimum and 6L/ha (4.25 pts/ac) where established perennial weeds like docks are present for 360g/L products. To complete the job and ensure a weed free start for new pastures, a post emergence herbicide should be used before the weeds reach 10cm (4 inches) in height. Spraying at this stage ensures that weeds don't get the opportunity to build up root reserves which makes them much harder to eliminate. Where there is no clover sown products like Hurler represent the best value for money.

Where clover is included in grass seed mixtures, it is important to wait until the clover has reached the characteristic trifoliolate leaf stage and specialist herbicides e.g. Legumex DB are used to protect the clover. Add Triad for clover safe control of chickweed

## Weekly Deliveries

Day	Area
Monday	001 Kanturk
Tuesday	002 Glensouth
Wednesday	003 Castlecor 004 Banagh
Thursday	005 Ballyhoulihan
Friday	006 Cullen

Please order 24 hrs in advance instore or on 02950003

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