

Newsletter November 2019



BILLION TO ONE CALVES: The Story continues....

Remember the famous quads born on the Clair farm in Maghera, Lahinch, Co Clare in 2017?

A nine year old Hereford cross cow called Bawny gave birth to four calves. These quadruplet calves were born unaided on the morning of Sunday Feb 19th 2017 much to the shock and delight of the Clair family. Although Tom had not scanned the cow he believed she was carrying twins.

The chances of quads being born alive are said to be one in 180 million, The chance of all four calves being identical heifers are said to be more than one billion to one.

So, these 4 ladies are truly miraculous and as Tom Clair said at the time, "We are determined that all four of them will have long and happy lives here in Maghera, and hopefully they will be lucky enough to be mothers themselves someday."

This has now happened and the quads known as Jenny, Rosie, Mia and Fluffy have given birth to their own calves.

Over the past six weeks the famous quads have given birth to six of their own calves including two sets of twins and two singles. The quads went in calf naturally to Tom Clair's shorthorn stock bull. To have six calves produced from four heifers in itself is an amazing achievement.

In other good news Bawny the mother of the quads gave birth to twins again this year.



Digest-it, The Slurry Treatment to Grow More Grass

by Joe Naughton

Grass is the cheapest food source on farm and utilisation is the key for farm profitability. Increasing Grass DM yields by 1 tonne/ha raises net profitability by €173/ha (Teagasc 2017). The average Irish dairy farm is producing about 7.5 tonnes DM/ha, while the top producers achieve over 12 tonnes DM/ha. This difference equates to an additional net profit of €779/ha. The key to growing more grass is to improve soil health along-side a structured

re-seeding programme. Soil compaction can reduce yields by up to 40%.

High Ammonia levels in slurry will destroy soil structure over time and increase the risk of compaction. **Digest-it** is a biological additive in liquid form that composts slurry and reduces ammonia levels by converting volatile nitrogen into a more stable organic form. Odour is reduced and consistency improved meaning

Over the past 3 years grass trials have been conducted on a Co. Meath dairy farm in which **Digest-it** treated slurry has been compared with untreated slurry from the same shed applied at 2000 galls/acre. **Digest-it** treated slurry increased 1st cut grass DM yield by an average of 1 tonne/ha or 18% over the period 2016-2018, which is worth an extra €178/ha. The cost-effective Ratio was 12:1, which means for every €1 spent on **Digest-it** the pay back was €12.00 in terms of extra grass value.

easier to agitate. Through its composting action, **Digest-it** increases the proportion of aerobic (good) bacteria, which are important for soil health, at the expense of anaerobic (bad) bacteria.

Digest-it should be added to tanks at the start of winter housing - NOW! - at a rate of 1 litre per 5000 galls slurry (1 x 20 litre can per 100,000galls). Alternatively, **Digest-it** can be poured directly into tanks (dilute with water to get good coverage across the tank) at a rate of half a can per 100 cows per month. **Digest-it** treated slurry is proven to grow more grass in a cost-effective way and represents an important action to increase farm profitability.



“What the farmers say”



“ I fed Immuno Pre-Calver nuts at a feeding rate of 2.5kgs/head/day from drying off through to calving down. Cows calved down on target and in good condition. Calves were lively and vigorous at birth with no cases of scour or suppressed appetites. There were very little health problems in the herd after calving and cows milked well from the start.

Cell count reduced in early lactation and cows showed strong signs of heat 3 weeks after calving. I continued to use the Aromabiotic product in early lactation by feeding the Immuno Mega Milk 16.

I will definitely use the Immuno Pre-Calver nuts during the upcoming dry period. The Aromabiotic mineral turned my herd inside out, it was invaluable ”

Brian & Graeme Haslam
Dairy farmers - Rathcabbin, Co Tipperary

November Dairy Management Tips

by Seán Holian (Dairy Specialist)

November is a big planning month for both the dry period and the next lactation. Any cows that have a high SCC, are within 56 days of calving, thin cows and/or any first calvers that are in milk for over 270 days should be dried off immediately. Most herds are now housed by night with full housing coming closer each day. Close paddocks once targets have been reached. It's more profitable to have grass to graze in early spring than in late autumn.

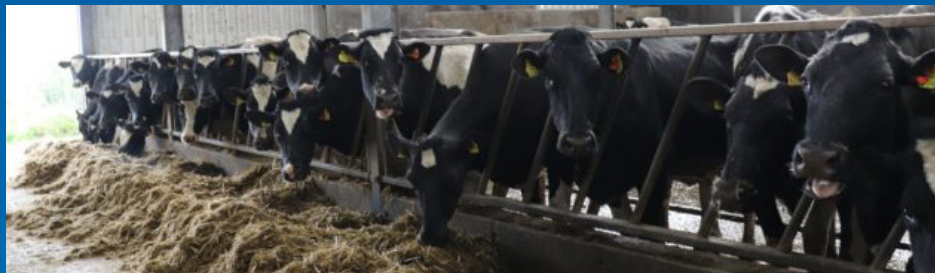
The challenge that faces dairy farmers at present is to have a calving season free from metabolic issues such as ketosis, retained placentas, milk fever and sick calves. Prevention of these problems begins during the dry cow season. Calcium, magnesium, potassium, sodium and phosphorus will drive metabolic issues through their interactions and their deficiencies or over supply.

In our dry cow mineral range, we have an

optional Aromabiotic product. This is a natural product from medium chain fatty acids. This product supports the dairy cow by improving rumen fermentation, increasing rumen pH and improving the immune status with higher quality neutrophils (white blood cells). Strong white blood cells are very important around calving as every cow suffers from an immunosuppression or lowered immune response at this time. Reducing the severity of this will aid the cow in her struggle against infections in early lactation.

The Aromabiotic product has proven to boost yields in early lactation, reduce SCC and greatly reduce metabolic issues. Our unique Aromabiotic product is available as a mineral pack, an Immuno Pre-Calver nut and Immuno Mega Milk 16.

Chat to our technical team about our dry cow options to suit your herd.



Grain Trading Information Meeting

J Grennan & Sons will be hosting an information meeting on the 27th November at 4:00pm in Drumcullen GAA Clubhouse, Rath, Birr, Co Offaly.

Rory Deverell, who works as a Risk Management Consultant for FC Stone will be making a short presentation to growers explaining the process and benefits of hedging grain/forward selling. Come along on the evening to find out more.

Managing Silage fields

by Hilda Dooley (Environmental/Crop Specialist)

Potassium (K) is essential for photosynthesis (amongst other important roles) and it is considered only second to Nitrogen in importance for plant growth and development. Building K is essential on Index 1 and 2 soils. Soils with a similar soil index but different soil type may vary in their capacity to supply K to a crop, so it is useful to know your Soil type as well as Soil Index.

Symptoms of K deficiency in crops (including grass) include

- Stunted growth – reducing silage yield
- Crop lodging due to weak stems – reducing silage quality/DMD
- Leaf scorching, yellowing at leaf edges, and poor resistance to drought – stressed plants lead to poorer yield and quality

- A slowdown in the growth of productive species such as perennial ryegrasses, leaving room for unproductive species to take hold in a pasture.

Where excess K is applied, grass will take it up but will not use it (luxurious uptake). This excess K stays in the silage and inhibits the absorption of Magnesium, leading to metabolic issues. In order to avoid luxurious uptake of K, no more than 90kg/ha of K should be applied at closing, and where more than 90kg/ha K is recommended, the balance should be applied in the Autumn beforehand – i.e. NOW.

RECAP - Test your soil and...
Apply Potassium Now!

Accounts Correspondence

We now have the facility to send all your correspondence via email.... giving you anytime access to your account

The following are the Benefits:

- Convenient - can be viewed day or night
- Flexible
- Instant – no waiting on post
- Can forward to accountant instantly
- Environmentally friendly

Another option available in our On-Line Account System – You can access your account information from anywhere, check balances, print or view statements, invoices, weighbridge tickets and delivery dockets at any time.

<https://grennans.ie/accounts/>