

“Our thoughts and prayers are with all the brave people of Ukraine at this horrific time”

# Newsletter MARCH 2022

**GRENNAN**  
& SONS



## ROI of the Month - Grass Is Still The Cheapest Feed

By Brian Delaney – (B.Agr.Sc) – Ph: 086 0449529

Grass is an Irish farmer's greatest asset, and it is a false economy to reduce fertiliser applications, which will result in a reduction in the volume of grass you grow.

**Grazing ground:** Considering the return from a kilo of Nitrogen is 25kg DM of grass, a 50kg bag of Pasture sward will grow 336kg of DM. Every 10kg of DM will support 1kg of liveweight gain, so therefore 1 bag will support 34kg of liveweight gain, valued at €85. This shows that reducing your normal application by a bag per acre will save €40 but will sacrifice €85 in lost production.

**Silage ground:** In a typical 12t/ac fresh weight silage, reducing silage fertiliser by 1 bag of Cut sward per acre will reduce silage yield by approx. 10%, meaning 1.2t/ac less silage. The reduction in fertiliser would save €40 but you lose €50 worth of silage. If this results in a shortage of silage next winter it would cost a minimum of €80 to replace it with concentrates. It is also worth noting that any fixed costs such as land rent/harvesting etc. will be higher per tonne if yield is lower!

Regardless of what you choose to do with fertiliser, improving grass management is vital to maximise return. Practices to consider include:

- Paddock fencing to increase utilization (no wasteful topping)
- Match fertiliser applications to stocking rate
- Spread fertiliser in peak growth months and remove surplus as silage. April applications will have better response than applications in March
- Match fertiliser to your soils needs
  - Use soil sample results to address limiting nutrients, e.g., at a soil pH of 6, only 89% of N and 52% of P you apply is available
  - Extra Nitrogen cannot compensate for low P or K
  - Sulphur and Terra Fertilisers will also increase nitrogen efficiencies

## Immuno Pre-Calver - effect on Colostrum Quality - Preliminary Observations

By Aisling Claffey – (B.Agr.Sc., Ph.D.) – Ph: 086 0317483

Grennans Immuno Elite Pre-calver mineral, which is a combination of our Elite Pre-calver mineral and a unique blend of medium chained fatty acids, has been growing steadily in popularity. The Immuno additive strengthens white blood cell activity and improves their responsiveness to fighting infections leading to improved animal health. On farm, we see this translating into

- lower infection rates
- reduced somatic cell count
- better body condition
- improved productivity (*less energy diverted away from the animals' requirement to support the immune system to fight infections*).

Anecdotally, we are seeing that Immuno also delivers health benefits to the calf, with reports of fewer health issues and calves having a greater shine and vitality. Is this down to the colostrum? That theory would complement research carried

out on pig farms that showed improved colostrum quality and reduced piglet mortality associated with Immuno.

On-farm data from Teagasc reported that approx. 20% of colostrum samples do not achieve sufficient IgG levels on farm.

Recently, one of our customers went to the effort of collating data from their own 180 cow herd. 120 cows were fed Grennans Immuno Pre-calver mineral and a 'Control' group of 60 cows were fed a good quality standard pre-calver mineral. Subsequently, less than 5% of those on the Immuno pre-calver mineral fell below the target threshold, while a considerable proportion of the control treatment did not reach a minimum Brix refractometer reading of 22%!

Is €6 extra/cow too much to consider for the improved health status of both your cow and calf, as part of your routine pre-calving dietary program?

# SPRING CROPPING 2022

## What will I sow and will it be worth it?

By Paul Mooney – (B.Agr.Sc) – Ph: 086 3532342

Many growers are wondering what to sow, and whether cereal growing will pay off given the increased costs. It's fair to say that the prospect for grain price next harvest looks reasonably promising at the moment.

It looks like spring barley will still be the most profitable of the spring crops. We should be aiming to get a yield of at least 3t/ac. If ground is not capable of 3t of spring barley, is there a break crop like beans required in the rotation? Barley straw is now a valuable commodity, and the straw chopping scheme has proved very worthwhile for dealing with unwanted oaten and wheaten straw, while getting the benefits to soil health.

Field beans look very attractive because they don't require any chemical nitrogen and there is a protein subsidy available of approx. €100/acre. Sowing time is NOW.

Fertiliser has more than doubled in price, so soil reserves will have to be more closely examined to see where savings can be made. Nitrogen costs have really rocketed, and this means

that the last 20-30 units applied to cereals may not make sense as the yield benefit of 0.2-0.3t per hectare may not be enough to justify the cost.

Optimum pH is vital in order to get full utilization of N, P, and K, see table.

	pH 5.5	pH 6	pH 7
Nitrogen	77%	89%	100%
Phosphorus	48%	52%	100%
Pottassium	77%	100%	100%

This year will see an increased investment needed to grow crops, so we would urge everyone to try and cover some of that increased risk. Options include hedging or forward selling some of your grain at a price you are happy with. Please talk to us if you want to discuss your options.

## Terra Range (PSI-362) Scientifically Validated

By Hilda Dooley - (B.Sc. M.Sc. Ph.D.) Ph: 086 6074729

Over the past 2 years, Greennans customers have been using, and coming back to, Terra fertilisers to reduce N applications on farm. Anecdotally, our Terra blends are as good as, or better than, their non-treated equivalents. However, recently Dr Aisling Claffey from J Greennans & Sons worked with Brandon Biosciences to carry out scientific-based field research which looked at the effect of our Terra range of fertilisers on grass growth and quality. The findings were very positive, and will allow Irish farmers to reduce their reliance on CAN based Nitrogen whilst maintaining yield and farm productivity.

### The main findings of the work were

- CAN treated with PSI362 (Terra CAN) increases DM yield by 25%, DMD by 23% and crude protein by 31%, compared to non-treated CAN.

- CAN treated with PSI362 significantly increases Nitrogen use efficiency compared to non-treated CAN.
- In a comparison between a typical cut-sward blend (100% N) and a similar Terra blend which had 80% CAN and was coated with PSI362 (80% + PSI362), there was no difference between the 2 treatments for DM yield, crude protein and DMD.
  - o This allows us to be confident that when you use our Terra fertilisers, you will get the same DM yield and quality grass while reducing your N use by 20%.
- Soil type or texture doesn't influence the efficacy of the treatments.

Talk to your Greennans Branch or Rep to find out how you can benefit from Terra fertilisers.

## Terra Fertiliser Testimonial

We got involved in the Terra fertiliser trial with Greennans last year. We spread half a silage field with a standard Cut Sward, and the other half with Terra Cut, which contains 20% less N. We were very happy when we got the same yield all over the field.

We went with Terra again for our 2nd cut and are using it again this year. Definitely recommend using it!

James and Richard Casey



# Maximising Performance while Making Best Use of Grass

By Aisling Claffey - (B.Agr.Sc., Ph.D.) – Ph: 086 0317483

Late February brought wintery conditions, but some people have taken opportunities to implement on-off grazing to get grass in the diet, particularly where considerable levels of grass are available after strong over winter growth. To do:

- Get 20-25 units/ac N out on heavy covers as early as possible to maintain grass quality.
- Aim to graze 15% of available area/week where February grazing targets haven't been met - this ensures a consistent grass allocation can be achieved until there is 1200-1400 back on the first 25% grazed to begin the 2nd rotation!

Where there has been reduced or no opportunity to graze in recent weeks, milk protein may have suffered. Additionally, silage quality in general is lower than in other years which will affect overall energy intake in early lactation. This in turn leads to a greater risk of negative energy balance and poor milk yields and reduced solids!

Milk solids figures can reveal a lot of important info and should be studied carefully.

- Milk protein declines rapidly in the weeks after calving. It will gradually start to increase as the cow passes her peak milk yield (6-8 weeks after calving). Protein % is typically 0.3-0.4% below the lactation average at this point.

- Energy availability, grass quality and protein supply will all impact the protein content throughout the lactation.
- Little indicators like the ratio between milk fat and milk protein can also help you to identify dietary imbalances, with a target of approx. 1.3:1.
- Higher levels of milk fat can indicate that the cow is mobilising excessive levels of body fat to support production resulting in higher levels of fatty acids available for milk fat synthesis.
- Milk fat levels running closer to milk protein can be indicative of acidosis where high levels of starch are fed or where there are insufficient levels of physically effective fibre in the diet.
- It is important to understand that herd genetics also plays a key role in maximising milk solids. Information (such as in the table below) is available on your ICBF report and must be interpreted correctly and considered carefully when assessing your herds performance.

For example, the following herd delivered milk at 3.62% protein in 2021 on their co-op report, which exceeds the predicted herd average of 3.6% (See table below).

If you want help interpreting your ICBF figures, and/or your current milk solids performance, do not hesitate to make contact!

	Prot % PTA	EBI Base Cow Prot %	Predicted Protein %	Fat % PTA	EBI Base Cow Fat %	Predicted Fat %
Herd avg.	0.06	3.39 %	3.6 %	0.09	3.90 %	4.22
5th lact +	0.02	3.39 %	3.46 %	0.01	3.90 %	3.94
2021 calves	0.11	3.39 %	3.78 %	0.16	3.90 %	4.46

Base cow value (%) +/- (EBI PTA % x 3.5) = Genetic potential given the right environment to achieve this!

## Guarantee Feed Availability Next Winter!

For every tonne of grain that you grow and commit for delivery to us next harvest, we will guarantee you the supply of one tonne of compound feed, at an agreed swap price/differential. It is too early to say exactly what this differential will be, but we see several advantages to this proposal for you

1. We will guarantee to supply you the tonnage of compound feed equivalent to the tonnage of grain you have agreed to swap.
2. The price you pay for that feed will track the value of the grain you supply, so it is an excellent way of locking in some of your feed costs for next winter.

The sowing season is upon us, and cereal seed is being booked up - Talk to us ASAP if interested

“Our thoughts and prayers are with all the brave people of Ukraine at this horrific time”

# CryptoShield

By Shane Gonoude- (BSc, MAgrSc)

Ph: 087 6466707

Scours are responsible for over 40% of all calf deaths and cryptosporidiosis is a leading cause. Crypto scours are usually seen in young calves of less than six weeks old, but generally occurs in the second week of life. It decimates calf thrive and performance. Symptoms include diarrhoea, dehydration, loss of appetite, inflammation, fever, and abdominal pains. These scours are very hard to treat because antibiotics do not kill crypto, and you can't vaccinate against it.

Crypto oocytes (eggs) live in pastures, soil, drinking water and faecal matter in animal housing. They are very infectious and after 4 days of infection calves will start shedding vast quantities of eggs in the scour, so crypto can spread rapidly.

## Crypto Prevention Programme

1. Give lots of **good quality colostrum**.
2. Ensure strict **hygiene**.
3. Disinfect with products that are effective against the oocytes from protozoan parasites such as **Cyalex** or **Kilcox Extra** (available in all Grennans Stores).
4. Keep **bedding dry** and clean.
5. Maintain high levels of **biosecurity** on the farm, i.e., don't allow visitors in the shed and don't bring home infected calves.
6. Use **CryptoShield** to strengthen the gut and help prevent crypto scours.

CryptoShield is a **non-antibiotic** blend of plant extracts which prevents crypto from completing its life cycle, thereby reducing the number of eggs excreted, and reducing infection load and spread.

- CryptoShield is packed full of natural polyphenols, antioxidants and organic acids.
- CryptoShield strengthens and protects the villous lining of the calf's gut.
- CryptoShield provides anti-inflammatory properties in the gut to reduce fluid loss and pain.



Reduces mortality, scours and antibiotic usage.

## The New Way To Control Cryptosporidium Scours In Calves

- ✓ Repairs and optimises gut health
- ✓ Ensures maximum thrive
- ✓ Ideal for all farms susceptible to Crypto scour



Contact J Grennan & Sons or any Nugget stockist

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