Milk Information

Milk Supply

Mar 2020 Milk Supply: 11.68 million litres.
Mar 2019 Milk Supply: 11.42 million litres
This represents a 2% increase on 2019.
Milk supply for April to date is up about 4%.

Milk Price

There is no change in price for March milk except for the seasonal reduction in the SCC bonus from 0.88 to 0.5 cent per litre. This price comes in at 33.01 cent per litre including SCC bonus and VAT.

The base price has reduced by 1.5 cent per litre to reflect the current market difficulties but this reduction has been offset by a similar increase in withdrawal from the Stability Fund.
The average prices paid for the month, based on the average constituents of 4.18% butterfat and 3.27% protein, are as follows –

Variable =	**35.16**
Fixed Milk 4 =	**34.47**
Fixed Milk 5 =	**34.49**
Fixed Milk 6 =	**33.87**
Average Price =	**35.10**

Dairy Markets

Markets are in turmoil with the continuing effect of the Coronovirus worldwide.

Butter and skim milk powder have taken the biggest hit with cheese being affected to a lesser extent.

The growth in retail demand for butter has not been enough to make up for the collapse in Food Service. With stocks already high this has seen a drop in butter prices of up to 25% over the past number of weeks. A combination of a closed Chinese market, low oil prices and poor demand generally has seen skim powder prices down by up to 35%.

Cheddar cheese has been the most resilient so far as stocks have been tight up until now. While retail demand has been good it will not be enough to offset the drop off in food service. It is expected that milk will also be diverted away from butter and skim into cheese which will put further pressure on price moving into the summer.

Coronavirus COVID-19

Coronavirus COVID-19 Public Health Advice

Update

There has been some concern expressed with regard to the effect the virus might have on Lisavaird and Carbery's ability to collect and process milk during the peak. To date I am glad to say we have not had any major disruption. Should this continue to be the case we would expect operations to continue as normal. Every precaution is being taken both in the Coop and in Carbery to ensure that this is the case.

I would ask you to please take note of the precautions outlined in the recent letter we have sent to suppliers and with everybody's help we can all avoid any serious disruptions over the coming months.

Try Not to Let Mastitis Control Slip

Monitoring Mastitis

The breeding season has started or is about to start for many of you, so again we are heading into another busy period on the farm. It is still important not to forget about the jobs that are not seasonal and need constant monitoring, like controlling somatic cell counts!

Knowing how your herd is performing is the first step in getting mastitis under control. To do this you need records - a minimum of SCC records and clinical case/treatment records. Monthly milk recording provides the most accurate measures of performance. CellCheck and ICBF have developed a farm summary report that shows recent trends in the herd and the long-term herd average. It provides information on the number of infected cows and the spread of mastitis in your herd. If cows are milk recorded within the first month of calving, the report can also provide information on the effectiveness of your mastitis control over the dry period. It will identify cure rates from previous lactations and show how effective you have been in preventing new infections during the dry cow period.

Cows with an individual SCC >200,000 cells/ml are likely to have an infected quarter. These cows are not only contributing to the bulk tank SCC, but they are also a potential source of infection for other cows in the herd. Very often these cows do not show clinical signs, yet they pose a massive threat to the herd. These animals need to be addressed to reduce the spread of infection in the longer term. To identify infected quarters, use your California Mastitis Test (CMT). The CMT is a simple indicator of SCC in milk and a useful technique for detecting subclinical mastitis on farm, providing an immediate result and can be used by any member of farm staff. The test is subjective, but any positive reaction indicates a high SCC in that quarter; practise on cows with a known high SCC to improve accuracy. A video showing the CMT procedure is available to watch on the AHI website. https://youtu.be/cVeFTWN_mFw

The current restrictions as a result of COV-ID 19 means that milk recording services using a technician have been suspended. For those of you that normally milk record this way, it is important to get started again as soon as is possible, to get back on track for this season and to identify any problem cows that may be in the herd. In the meantime, make good use of your CMT!

Once an infected quarter has been identified, a sterile sample can be collected from this quarter and sent to the laboratory. Sterile collection is very important for successful culturing of milk samples. A good technique involves planning and some patience! The laboratory will then process the milk sample to identify any bacteria present. They will also check if the bacteria are susceptible to a predetermined list of antibiotics. This is known as antibiotic susceptibility testing. However, these results only act as a guide as conditions on a laboratory plate are not always exactly the same as in a cow's udder. Remember, if Mycoplasma bovis is suspected as a cause of mastitis in your herd, a special request needs to be made to the laboratory to look for this as it does not grow under routine culture methods-discuss this with your veterinary practitioner.

Mastitis cure rates vary from 20-80% depending on various factors, for example, duration of infection, type of bacteria involved and age of cow. Sometimes the only option is to remove the cow as a potential source from the herd or at a minimum dry off the infected quarter. However, it is difficult to predict the likelihood of that quarter still being infected at next lactation.