

**March 2020**

## MILK INFORMATION

### MILK SUPPLY

Feb 2020 Milk Supply: 5.63 million litres.  
 Feb 2019 Milk Supply: 4.55 million litres  
 This represents a 24% increase on 2019.  
 Milk supply for March is up about 3% to date.

It should be noted that a number of suppliers who had previously supplied Clona during the Winter were supplying the Coop in February. This year February also had 29 days.

### MILK PRICE

There is no change in price for February milk. It remains at 33.41 cent per litre including SCC bonus and VAT.

The average prices paid for the month, based on the average constituents of 4.23% butterfat and 3.37% protein, are as follows –

<b>Variable =</b>	<b>36.44</b>
<b>Fixed Milk 4 =</b>	<b>35.74</b>
<b>Fixed Milk 5 =</b>	<b>35.76</b>
<b>Fixed Milk 6 =</b>	<b>35.12</b>
<b>Average Price =</b>	<b>36.39</b>

### DAIRY MARKETS

“Uncertain” is the one word to describe dairy markets in the present environment.

Long term market fundamentals have not changed dramatically but the effect of the Coronavirus outbreak on Chinese demand as well as some increase in supply from Europe and the US creates a risk of oversupply in the short term. This has seen price falls for Skim milk powder in particular and butter to a lesser extent over the past month. The effect of Coronavirus on the world economy and how long it will last are the big unknowns.

## Coronavirus COVID-19



You are all probably thoroughly tired of the barrage of news, as well as texts from the Co-op, on the issue at this stage. However information is key and we will continue to send you texts as the situation evolves.

There are a few key priority areas and actions that are critical to the continued well being of farmers, coop workers and the Co-op itself.

- **Milk Collection:** the health of our drivers and farmers depends on zero contact while milk is being collected and good hygiene around the dairy including good hand-washing facilities. Inform the Coop immediately if a case is suspected and we will put alternative arrangements in place.
- **Feed, Fertilizer and other deliveries:** minimal contact is again crucial.
- **Retail outlets:** in the branches and Central please observe the social distancing guideline of 2 meters and use the hand sanitizers available.

Within the Co-op we are doing everything we can to mitigate the risk to our staff and hence the business itself. This inevitably involves some disruption to both customers and staff which we are trying to minimise.

Measures include exclusion of the public and non-essential staff from certain areas, some staff working remotely from home, segregation of shifts, segregation of transport and production staff and of course strict hygiene and disinfection procedures in all areas.

Everybody's cooperation is needed to work through this period together and with it we can come out the other side healthy and return to normal living.

## MASTITIS CONTROL

### Try not to let your mastitis control slip!

**A**t this time of year, a lot of you will be tired from a busy calving season and the last thing you will want to read is another list of jobs that you must do or grief for not doing certain jobs properly! So this article is a gentle reminder of some important facts to help reduce the risk of mastitis around calving.

The period around calving is the highest risk period for mastitis to occur. And is a critical time in determining the level of herd infection for the rest of lactation. Therefore, the milk quality for the whole season depends on success of mastitis control around calving. Cows are more susceptible to infections at this time as their natural defence mechanisms are low. This allows new infections to occur or sub clinical infections which have persisted through the dry period to flare up into clinical cases. A build-up in the number of bacteria in the environment as the calving season progresses puts further pressure on the cow's immune system.

Some important tips to help minimise these risks:

1. Calve in a clean environment- keep calving pens clean, fresh and dry. Avoid calving on slats or in cubicles. Outdoor pads must have minimal manure contamination, be sheltered and well drained.
2. Identify clinical cases as soon as possible as early identification reduces the risk of severe cases developing and the risk of spread between other cows and it also reduces the risk of developing chronic infection. Differences between milk and mastitis can be difficult to detect in freshly calved cows, due to the nature of colostrum and transitional milk, so each quarter needs to be carefully checked.
3. Take your time moving and milking freshly calved heifers and cows. Remember at this time, teats are more tender and therefore more susceptible to injury and infection. Ensure all quarters are milked out completely and that sometimes stressed or agitated cows may need a let-down hormone (Oxytocin) prescribed by your veterinary practitioner. Don't use incomplete milking as a method of control of milk fever. Avoid over and under milking.
4. Consider collecting milk samples for culture to identify bacteria before treatment starts. These samples can be frozen for up to 4 months and may be submitted for culture later if the number of clinical cases increases.
5. It might sound obvious, but clearly marking treated cows is so important to avoid mistakes, that can easily happen especially when people are tired and busy. Set up a system that works for you and ensure that all regular and relief milking staff are familiar with it. Have a written procedure in a visible location for all staff to see. If antibiotic milk does get into bulk tank, notify your Co-op immediately to avoid being fined.
6. Where possible, milk clinical cases last but if this is not possible sanitise the cluster after milking an infected cow by firstly running water through the cluster for 30 seconds and then dipping in a peracetic acid solution.
7. Record all clinical cases to track mastitis control in your herd. If >5% of your cows get mastitis within the first month of calving, it should be investigated. Consult your veterinary practitioner for advice on appropriate treatment and always complete the course of antibiotics prescribed.
8. After all year-round teat disinfection, milk recording is the next most important tool in dealing with high SCC and mastitis. Milk recording within the first month after calving is very important to monitor how the dry cow season went and to identify cows with high SCC as early as possible in the lactation.



*Cmhpháirtocht Forbairtá Lárthaí Chorcaí*  
West Cork Development Partnership



While farming is a business and a way of life, it is not without its pressures. Stress and pressure can be caused by a number of factors, from working around the weather and the prolonged rainfall periods, all contribute to farmers coming under increased pressures and especially work life balance during the busy spring calving period. Financial pressures may be an issue on some farms due to *cash flow* being restricted at this time of the year and the financial commitments are still there to be met, such as

family living costs, educational costs, and general farm running costs. It may be worthwhile for people to checkout if they may be eligible for Farm Assist, a scheme operated by Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

There is help available

For further information, and a  
**free and confidential service contact**

**Joe Cronin, West Cork Development Partnership**  
on (086) 171 7592. Or email [joe@wcdp.ie](mailto:joe@wcdp.ie)

## NITRATES DEROGATION - DEADLINE

Applications are open for the Nitrates Derogation 2020. The deadline for submission of an application and of 2019 fertiliser records is the **8<sup>th</sup> of April 2020**.

2020  
April  
8

If you have any questions on spreading nutrients and protecting water quality, you can contact your ASSAP advisor through the co-op.

### COVID 19

If you have not already submitted your application, make sure you contact your agricultural advisor asap and have all the correct information up to date as per the checklist:

Checklist for the application:

- Have all receipts for 2019 fertiliser & 2018 feed
- Up to date farm yard sketch
- Up to date measurements of slurry tanks & straw bedded areas
- Up to date soil samples & soil map

Once you have submitted your application, make sure you have your soil lime requirements, a copy of your nutrient management plan and that you fully understand the new conditions within the nitrate's derogation.

### Farming for water quality

The weather this month has been slightly better reducing but there has been above average rainfall especially in the last week. Soil temperatures are between 6.3°C and 7°C for the majority of the West Cork Area. Growing conditions have been better due to rising temperatures however temperatures are to drop around 1 or 2°C below average over the week ahead. Soil moisture deficits are above 0 in well drained soils so it is a good time to spread Urea & Slurry as long as soil temperatures remain above 5°C. Check your daily forecast and make sure to target fields that have a higher requirement for N and good growing conditions. Adhere to all buffer zones on your farm. Typically, this is 5m for surface waters. However, if you have a field with a slope >10% you must adhere to a buffer of 10m. Make sure to check your daily forecast when considering spreading nutrients on the land at [www.met.ie/forecasts/farming](http://www.met.ie/forecasts/farming)



With these uncertain times it is important to keep up to date with the latest developments to protect you, your family and those who may be making deliveries/collections on your farm.

For the most accurate and up to date information, follow the Health Service Executive (HSE) or the World Health Organisation (WHO).

If you have symptoms please contact the HSE on 1850 241 850. If you or a family member are in isolation due to COVID 19 it is important to inform you Co-op so the appropriate measures can be taken in order to ensure milk collection continues.

Please ensure that biosecurity is at its highest standards by ensuring foot baths are full, gloves and disinfectant are available and that anti-bacterial gel or soap and warm water is available for hand washing. Continuously wipe down all shared equipment with disinfectant such as bulk tanks, door handle, outlets or any surface that more than one person may need to touch. Ensure that paper towels for drying hands/surfaces and a closed bin is available for disposal.

Drivers have strict hygiene guidelines to follow and are taking the utmost care in order to ensure protection for both the farmer and themselves.

Procedures and protocols have been put in place in branches to limit the number of customers in stores.

Please check with your local branch before travelling to the shop and where possible have deliveries made.

The utmost care and strictest procedures are being adhered to in factories to protect all personnel and to ensure that the processing of your milk continues in order to keep the supply chain moving.

During this testing time, we would like to thank all of our farmer suppliers for their continued efforts to provide the best quality milk to produce the finest, nutrient rich dairy products for the Irish and international markets. Your continued dedication and adherence to advice is appreciated by all.



## What is Sire Advice?

Sire Advice is an breeding support application available to all Dairy HerdPlus users. This application allows the user to maximise their herd EBI and improve and reduce variation between milk and fertility. This in turn will result in breeding a more balanced dairy female.

## Why use Sire Advice?

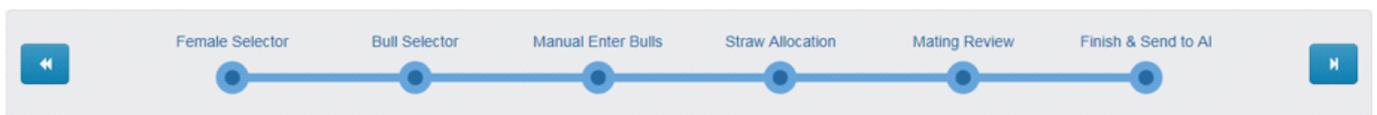
Sire Advice is a great tool for maximizing genetic gain in the herd by enabling the user to make more informed breeding decisions. Inbreeding is automatically avoided when using Sire Advice. Once the user is happy with their suggested matings, these sire selections are transferred to AI technician handhelds and printed on Breeding Charts for DIY AI farmers.

Herd Size (Incl. Heifers)	Recommended minimum number of Bulls
0-50	7
50-100	7
100-150	8
150-200	10
200-250	11
250-300	12
300-350	13
350-400	14

**Please note:** It is recommended to use a team of bulls relevant to the herd size (including heifers). This increases the reliability of the team of bulls and reduces risk.

### Six Steps to Sire Advice

1. Choose Sire Advice or Sire Advice PLUS
2. Select your breeding females
3. Pick your bulls
4. Allocate bulls and straws
5. Generate results
6. Save and send to AI Handheld/Breeding Chart



For more information on how to run Sire Advice please log-in to your HerdPlus account and go to “Applications” and “Sire Advice”. Here you will find a Sire Advice Help Document. Alternatively, you can call the HerdPlus office on 023 8820452 and a HerdPlus representative will talk you through the entire process.

