



Milk Markets Update

- **Cheddar Cheese:** Prices in Europe have stabilised at a slightly lower level.
- **Mozzarella:** Prices have strengthened slightly after a decline in Q4.
- **Butter:** Prices are fluctuating within a narrow range. Buyers are anticipating a significant increase in supply, which has yet to materialise.
- **Skimmed Milk Powder (SMP):** Prices are gradually declining, reflecting a bearish market sentiment.

Milk Supply Outlook:

Despite some recent challenges, the overall outlook for milk supply remains positive.

- **European Union:** Milk production is robust, with good profitability at farm level.
- **United States:** California's milk supply has been impacted by bird flu, but improvements are expected in 2025. Significant investments are being made in dairy herds, particularly in regions with new cheese plants coming online this year. The US is also seeing substantial investment in cheese and whey processing facilities, with nearly 400,000 tonnes of annual cheese production capacity expected to come online in 2025. For context, Ireland produces approximately 280,000 tonnes of cheese annually.
- **New Zealand:** Pasture growth is declining, but high forecasted milk prices and margins should mitigate any significant impact on milk production.

Global Demand:

- Demand remains subdued. China is reportedly well-stocked despite lower milk production.

Bloom Feeds

Early Lactation Nutrition

Start this year's lactation on the right foot by prioritising your herd's nutrition. In early lactation, the primary objective should be minimising negative energy balance, which will lead to higher milk solids and reduced body condition score loss in cows.

The cornerstone of dairy cow nutrition is dry matter intake. Ensure cows are offered a minimum of 3.5% of their body weight in dry matter. For instance, a 550 kg cow can consume 19 kg of dry matter daily. The diet must be energy-dense to provide sufficient energy for both milk production and maintenance.

Feed your best silage to your herd during early lactation. Aim for grass silage with a digestibility (DMD) greater than 70% and a dry matter content between 25-30%.

This spring, consider feeding Bloom Autolac to support your herd. Autolac contains high-quality cereals such as maize and barley, along with premium protein sources to meet the cows' nutritional needs. Available in crude protein levels ranging from 13-19%, Autolac is an ideal complement to any grass silage. It includes Yea Sacc, a live yeast that helps maintain stable rumen pH as cows transition to concentrates. Additionally, Megalac is included to boost the energy content of the feed. Bloom Feeds' unique TR mineral dairy package is also incorporated to help your herd resume cycling post-calving. The recommended feeding rate for Autolac is 4.5-8 kg per head daily.

Please contact your local Sales/ Branch Manager for further information.

The Best Fertiliser in Spring is Grazing

Spring grazing is the catalyst that kickstarts grass plants out of dormancy, but the plants also need to be nourished. Nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) are the key nutrients required in spring. In recent years, both weather conditions and fertiliser prices have impacted early nitrogen application. Data from Teagasc Moorepark has shown a direct correlation between early nitrogen application and spring grass supply. Ensuring sufficient high-quality grass in spring is crucial for both sward and animal productivity throughout the year.

With the reduction in nitrogen allowances, it is essential to ensure a good response to every unit applied. Slurry is a valuable resource often used for early nitrogen application; however, 85% of its fertiliser value lies in its phosphorus and potassium components, so it should be applied to fields with low P and K levels. To maximise the value of your spring nitrogen application, consider the following tips:

- Order fertiliser in advance to have it ready to go.
- Calibrate your fertiliser spreader.
- Ensure soil temperature is at least 6 degrees Celsius and rising.

- Target more productive fields with high perennial ryegrass content first.
- Apply 25 kg N/ha (20 units per acre) in February.
- Use protected urea as the most efficient form of nitrogen.
- Apply chemical nitrogen to fields with high P and K levels and slurry to fields with suboptimal P and K levels.

By following these guidelines, you can optimise your spring nitrogen application and support robust grass growth for the year ahead. Please contact your local Sales/Branch Manager for further advise on fertiliser purchasing.

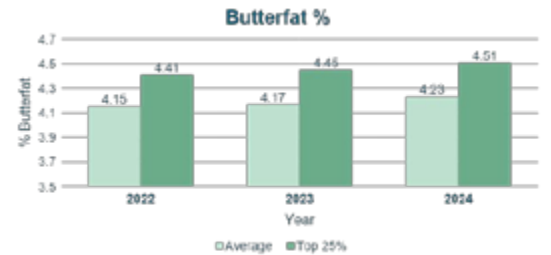
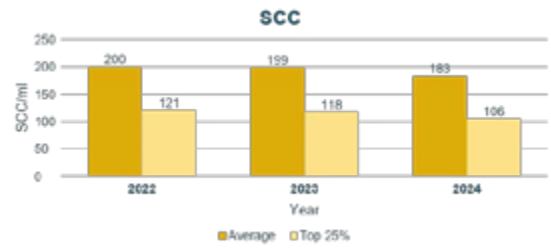
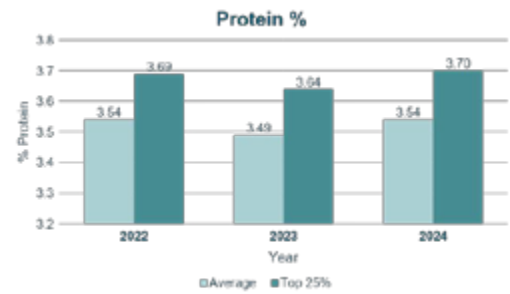


2024 Milk Supply and Performance Review

In 2024, adverse weather conditions significantly impacted animal performance during the spring, leading to a reduction in peak milk supply. This was compounded by a challenging summer grazing season, where managing both grass supply and quality proved difficult. However, by the end of the year, milk volumes supplied to Kerry Dairy Ireland matched those of 2023, thanks to favourable weather, grass growth, and grazing conditions in the autumn.

The charts illustrate the average Protein, Butterfat, and Somatic Cell Count (SCC) for the past three years, along with the corresponding figures for suppliers in the top 25% for each parameter. Despite the initial challenges, the data shows that the average protein levels in 2024 were on par with 2022, while Butterfat and SCC improved year on year. This improvement can be attributed to advancements in animal genetics and herd management practices in 2024, which allowed milk suppliers to capitalize on the favourable autumn conditions.

The performance of the top 25% of suppliers underscores the potential for further gains within our catchment area. By continuing to focus on animal performance through milk recording, grazing and feed management, and herd genetics, we can achieve even greater results in the future.



Slurry Application

As the slurry spreading season commences across the catchment, it is crucial to maximise the value of these essential nutrients. Slurry should be managed similarly to chemical fertilisers, ensuring optimal growing conditions before application.

Key Recommendations:

- **Consult Your Nutrient Management Plan:** Focus on drier paddocks that are not at optimal levels for phosphorus (P) and potassium (K).
- **Nutrient Value:** Cattle slurry is valued at €29 per 1,000 gallons, with a typical N.P.K composition of 9.5.32. These values can vary significantly based on silage quality, feed concentrates, and whether tanks are covered. Conducting a slurry analysis after tank agitation can provide precise

nutrient levels, aiding in the planning of your 2025 fertiliser programme (refer to the EVOLVE 2024 action support guide).

Regulatory Compliance:

- **Nitrates Regulations:** Slurry should not be applied to frozen or waterlogged soils, or when heavy rain is forecast within the next 48 hours, to protect water quality in rivers and streams. Buffer zones are extended to 10 meters along drains and streams for the first two weeks of the spreading season.
- **Organic Nutrient Exports:** From January 1, 2025, all exports of organic nutrients must be reported to the Department of Agriculture within four days of the movement.

By adhering to these guidelines, you can ensure effective and environmentally responsible slurry management.

DAIRY HYGIENE PROMOTION

RUNNING FROM THURSDAY 2ND JAN UNTIL SATURDAY 1ST FEB

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www.farmandhomestore.ie

farmandhomestore_ie

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