



Milk Markets Overview:

The latest GDT event was bullish, with the index rising by 3.7%. Cheddar prices in Europe have increased from their pre-Christmas lows, aligning with New Zealand prices but remaining higher than those in the US. EU butter prices remain at a high level with EU Skim Milk Powder currently priced competitively on global markets.

Global Supply

- Farm-level profitability remains strong in major exporting countries.
- Blue tongue disease is affecting output in Europe, with German milk production down nearly 2% in early 2025, following a weak 2024.

- Bird flu is impacting the US, particularly California, which saw a 6% decline in December.

Global Demand

- Demand remains subdued.
- China re-entered the market in December, but with low consumer sentiment and increased domestic milk production, a significant rise in imports is not anticipated.
- Trade policies are an ongoing concern following recent political changes in the US.

Introducing Our New Commercial Ruminant Nutritionist

We are delighted to announce that Bernard Stack has taken up the newly established role of Commercial Ruminant Nutritionist. Bernard brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to our team, having graduated from University College Dublin (UCD) with a degree in Agricultural Science and recently completing postgraduate studies in Advanced Animal Nutrition at UCD.

Bernard's extensive background includes key nutritionist roles at Alltech and KEENAN, where he honed his skills in diet formulation and feed advice. His hands-on experience with on-farm nutrition challenges has equipped him with a deep understanding of the day-to-day issues faced by our suppliers.

Since joining Kerry Agribusiness in October 2023 as a Sales Liaison Manager, Bernard has demonstrated his commitment to supporting our suppliers. In his new role, he will work directly with our suppliers on-farm, providing expert advice on minerals, calf milk replacers, feed formulation, diet formulation, and best practices in grassland management. This role is designed to help our suppliers achieve their goals in milk solids production sustainably.

Tim Leahy from Listowel, Co. Kerry, who milks 147 cows, has worked closely with Bernard for several years. Tim has seen significant improvements in milk production and overall herd health since collaborating with Bernard on nutrition strategies.

"Milk solids for the last three years have consistently exceeded 500 kg per cow. By focusing on cow nutrition and fine-tuning the transition period, we've seen notable improvements in cow health. The combination of optimal grass management and the correct buffer feeding has made our system more efficient," says Tim.

This spring, Bernard has been actively visiting Tim's herd to assess body condition score and update the herd's diet for the calving season. We are confident that Bernard's expertise will continue to drive positive outcomes for our suppliers.

We look forward to the innovation that Bernard will bring to Kerry Agribusiness in his new role. Please contact your local Sales Liaison Manager to arrange a consultation.



Tim Leahy pictured on farm with Bernard Stack, Commercial Ruminant Nutritionist.

Seasonal Insights: Calving and Grazing at Kavanagh Farm

Monitor Farmers Dermot and Michael Kavanagh, Lispole, Co. Kerry have had a busy start to the year with almost 50% of calving complete by early February. The following are the key focus areas and activity on farm at present:

Calf Care:

- Heifer calves are fed milk replacer; remaining calves receive whole milk.
- Milk is transported from the parlour to the calves using a milk cart, reducing manual lifting.

Somatic Cell Count (SCC) Reduction:

The main focus on farm for 2025 is a further reduction in SCC by:

- Pre-spraying cows before milking.
- Applying post-milking barrier dip if cows in cubicles.
- Treating cubicles with disinfectant lime.

Grass Cover and Grazing:

- Micheal conducted a grass cover assessment: with average farm cover at 700 kgDM/ha.
- Some paddocks lost grass cover over winter due to challenging weather.
- Improved ground conditions have allowed grazing of light covers to stimulate regrowth.
- Cows' diet: 6kg ration, 6kg silage, and the balance in grass during the day.
- Plan to follow cows with 1800 gallons of slurry per acre.
- Protected urea purchased and ready for use.

Weanling Weights:

- Weanlings weighed: group average 327 kg (range: 294 to 371 kg).
- Heifers well-developed, targeting 295 kg at 12 months of age.
- Synchronisation at mating planned, making target weight crucial.



Optimising Calf Nutrition: A Foundation for Future Success

Ensuring optimal nutrition for youngstock is crucial, as they represent the highest genetic potential within your herd. Here are the key points to consider:

Colostrum Intake:

- Calves require up to 4 liters of colostrum within the first six hours of life.
- Colostrum is the most critical feed for a calf, providing essential nutrients and antibodies.

Milk Replacers:

- Choose milk replacers with dairy-based proteins for easier digestion. Ideal composition:
 - Protein content: 20-25%
 - Fat content: 18-20%

Rumen Development:

- Provide quality roughage, such as straw or hay, to promote saliva production, which acts as a natural buffer for the rumen.
- Use concentrate feed to aid rumen development through the generation of volatile fatty acids during digestion.

Bloom Elite Starter Pellet:

- Contains 18% crude protein, including wholegrain cereal, to boost intake and promote rumen development.
- Maintains a healthy rumen pH.
- Features unique technologies such as ACTIGEN and Yea Sacc, which reduce scour and support gut development.
- Recommended feeding rate: 1-2 kg per head daily.

By focusing on these fundamental aspects of calf nutrition, you can ensure your youngstock achieve their full genetic potential and contribute to the long-term success of your herd. For further information please contact your local Kerry Agribusiness Sales Liaison Manager.

Managing Somatic Cell Count (SCC) in Early Lactation

Building on the progress made in reducing SCC in 2024, it is crucial to maintain momentum and proactively manage SCC in early lactation. Here are some key strategies:

Early Milk Recording:

- Conduct an early milk recording within the first 60 days of calving to proactively manage SCC.
- Identify and manage problem cows with SCC greater than 200,000 cells/ml before they can infect the rest of the herd.
- Assess the cure rate and effectiveness of dry cow therapy through early milk recording reports.
- The costs associated with milk recording are far outweighed by the economic benefits, making it a vital investment for your farm.

Utilise Cellcheck Farm Summary Report:

- Identify infection rates (target less than 10%) and cure rates over the dry period (target greater than 85%).
- Ensure the first milk recording is completed within 60 days of calving to accurately assess infections during the dry period or early lactation.

California Milk Test (CMT):

- Post-calving and before adding cow's milk to the tank, use the CMT to check individual quarters for high somatic cells.
- Best practice includes cluster dipping after all cows with a peracetic acid solution to prevent the spread of infection.

Culture and Sensitivity Analysis:

- Perform culture and sensitivity analysis on high SCC cows to identify the source of infection, whether environmental or contagious bacteria.

By implementing these best practices, you can effectively manage SCC in early lactation, ensuring the health and productivity of your herd. For further information or queries on managing SCC, please contact your local Kerry Agribusiness Milk Quality and Sustainability Advisor.

Simplifying Spring Workload on the Farm

Spring is a busy season, accounting for one-third of the total annual hours required to run a farm. With milking and calf care comprising approximately 50% of the spring workload, here are some key areas to focus on to help reduce that burden:

Calf Care

- Pump fresh milk directly or transport it mechanically to the calf house.
- Ensure calf pens are bedded regularly and keep bedding materials easily accessible.
- Move calves from individual to group pens as soon as possible and match calf numbers with pen space (ideally 1.7m²/calf).

Outsourcing Work

- Evaluate all tasks to determine if a contractor or off-farm operator could handle them, allowing you to focus on other priorities.
- Maintain good communication on the farm using tools like farm maps, whiteboards, and cow leg bands.
- Offer flexible working hours to staff with a target finishing time and pay a fair wage.
- Use written or video procedures to simplify communication with team members and maintain standards.

Cow Husbandry

- Implement once-a-day milking for the first two to three weeks of the calving season.
- Provide a group pen for calving with easy access to an individual pen for handling.
- Use a farm management app to register calves.

Grassland Management

- Keep a farm map with clearly identified fields and acreage.
- Clean water troughs before cows enter paddocks.
- Conduct an opening grass cover walk and plan grazing order and slurry spreading locations.
- Set up paddocks for grazing so there is no delay in getting cows to grass when conditions are right.
- Use an automatic batt-latch to let cows return to the yard themselves.

Personal Health & Wellbeing

- Always ensure a robust gate is in place between you and a freshly calved cow, especially when handling, treating, or removing the calf. This precaution is crucial for your safety.
- Fatigue can significantly impair judgment and adherence to standard operating procedures. Prioritise a balanced diet and stay well-hydrated to maintain alertness and overall well-being.
- Proper lighting in sheds and walkways is essential for safety and improved visibility. This measure helps prevent accidents and facilitates easier navigation.

SPRING CALVING PROMOTION

ONLINE AND INSTORE UNTIL MARCH 29TH

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CANCER
IRELAND



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NOW
€26.95

WAS
€25.95
NOW
€22.95



WAS
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NOW
€79.95

WAS
~~€549.00~~
NOW
€499.00

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20%
OFF

