



## Market Analysis and Global Dairy Trends

### European Market Dynamics

Prices in Europe are experiencing downward pressure as the market seeks to understand the implications of the tariff war. Consumer sentiment remains poor, leading to reluctance among customers to engage in forward contracts. Despite this, there is an ample supply of milk available as Europe approaches its peak production season.

### Global Supply Overview

Milk production has declined in Germany, France and the Netherlands, with the lingering effects of Blue Tongue disease still impacting output. However, increased output from Poland and Ireland is currently balancing the situation. New Zealand production is weaker than anticipated due to dry conditions in the North Island. In the US, California is recovering from bird flu, but overall milk production is robust, with strong constituent quality.

### Global Demand Trends

- **China Demand:** Since November, Chinese demand for dairy products has been on the rise, offsetting weaker demand from other regions.
- **Export Challenges:** High fat prices in Europe are making it challenging to compete in the export market, particularly against the United States.
- **Tariff War:** The tariff war remains a significant concern, with its full effects yet to be fully understood.
- **Economic Outlook:** Despite the global need for dairy products, the market is facing downward pressure as indicators suggest we are heading into a global recession.



Joint Program farmers pictured at a recent meeting on the farm of Dermot and Michael Kavanagh, Lispole.

## McCarthy Family Hosts Local School Children at Lixnaw Farm



The McCarthy family pictured planting trees on-farm during the recent school visit. Pictured left to right (back): Eddie Joe, Maura, Kathryn and Padraig with Cillian, Cathal and Saoirse.

Padraig McCarthy and his family recently welcomed children from the local National School to their farm in Lixnaw, County Kerry. This visit is part of an initiative led by Kerry Dairy Ireland to increase primary school children's visits to local dairy farms. The McCarthy family is one of 43 host farmers participating in this program, which aims to facilitate over 1,800 children visiting farms across our catchment by the end of June 2025.

The primary objective of this initiative is to educate children about farm operations and the origins of their food, addressing the gap in their awareness about dairy farming.

Padraig emphasised the importance of these visits, stating, "It's crucial to welcome local school children to the farm to give them an insight into daily activities like milking cows and feeding calves. This helps them appreciate the care we give our animals. This initiative not only strengthens community ties but also helps children understand the vital role farmers play in their daily lives. It may even inspire some to consider careers in farming".

A huge thank you to all the host farms and participating National Schools, without whom this initiative would not be possible. **Please scan the QR Code to view a short video from the recent visit to the McCarthy farm.**



# Getting the Basics Right for Breeding

As many farms prepare to begin breeding herds in the coming weeks, it is crucial to focus on getting cows ready for the breeding season. Here are some key points to consider:

## Nutritional Plane:

- Cows need to be on a rising plane of nutrition as they approach the breeding season.
- Cows should not lose more than 0.5 of a body condition score (BCS) ahead of the breeding season.
- During the breeding season, cows should maintain a BCS of 2.75-3.0.

## Energy Management:

- Prevent BCS loss as cows approach peak milk yield by bridging the energy gap in their diet.
- Do not restrict cows dry matter intake during this period as cows need to meet their energy demands during this time.
- High-quality grass, with over 1.0 UFL, should be utilised effectively, ensuring grass utilisation is above 85% and cows are offered palatable covers of 1300-1400kg DM/Ha.

## Mineral Supplementation:

- Minerals are essential for a successful breeding season.
- Use dairy feed that incorporates organic-based minerals such as Bioplex Copper, Zinc, Manganese and Selenium, which play a key role in ovulation and cyclicity.



Bernard Stack, Commercial Ruminant Nutritionist, is pictured testing a grass sample for nutrients, including dry matter, protein, and energy values. This analysis assists farmers in selecting the most suitable dairy feed for their herd

# Breeding Success on the Donlon Farm, Co. Clare

Tom Donlon, along with his family, farms in East Clare, milking 93 cows this spring. Four years ago, Tom switched to Bloom Propak Fertility Nut to achieve a more consistent delivery of minerals in the cows' diet during the breeding season. Previously, he had tried other methods of mineral supplementation without the same level of success. Here are some highlights from his experience:

## Breeding Success:

- This year-to-date, Tom has 80% of the herd calved within six weeks.
- Only 3 out of 93 cows put forward for breeding last spring were not in calf.

## Bloom Propak Fertility:

- Is a 14% crude protein concentrate with a high UFL of 0.99.
- It is rich in high-starch cereals such as maize and barley.
- The product has a flexible feeding rate of 2.5-4kg per head daily.
- It uses Bloom Feeds unique Total Replacement (TR) mineral pack, where all inorganic trace elements are replaced with organic Bioplex trace elements.
- Organic minerals are absorbed more efficiently into the cows' system, reducing waste and environmental impact.

**For more information on using Bloom Propak Fertility this breeding season, speak to your local Kerry Agribusiness Sales Liaison Manager.**



Bernard Stack pictured with Tom Donlon



# Preparing for Breeding 2025

## Dennis Howard, Technical Manager, Munster Bovine

As the breeding season is about to kick off on most farms, attention will turn to maximising submission and conception rates to drive a high 6 week calving rate in 2026.

### Heat detection

The goal is to ensure that any cow in heat is submitted and that the majority of cows submitted are actually in heat. Tail paint works well when 2 or more cows are in heat together, therefore it works well for the first 3 weeks in a 50 cow herd and the first 6 weeks in a 100 cow herd and so on. It is worth clipping the rumps before applying paint and apply a narrow neat strip – we want it to be rubbed off.

Scratch cards work better in heifers and when activity is dropping off in cows. They require less activity and weight than tail paint. Do not clip rumps as the hair is required. Tail paint or even better a crayon can be applied behind the scratch card for a belt and braces approach.

### Sexed semen

The use of sexed semen continues to increase. The benefits when good results are achieved are obvious – more selective breeding, replacements heifers born compactly, fewer dairy bulls and increased high quality dairy beef calves to sell.

Recent analysis from ICBF/Teagasc has demonstrated that relative conception rate of sexed semen relative to conventional semen is 87% in dairy cows and 93% in dairy heifers, which is a significant increase from previous trials.

**More information on fertility and breeding management can be found at [www.munsterbovine.ie](http://www.munsterbovine.ie).**

## Dairy Farmer taking a step back in Charleville

Eamon McCarthy, after 40 years of milking on his family farm near Charleville, decided to step back and explore options with The Land Mobility Service. Eamon emphasised the importance of focusing on family and life beyond farming, stating, "You have only one shot in life."

The exploration covered tax implications, farm operations, income security, and more. Various scenarios and templates were discussed, and suitable collaborators were identified. A trial year leading to a long-term lease proved successful for both Eamon and his collaborator, Ben.



### Key Messages from Eamon:

- **Explore Options:** Start with a no-obligation conversation with The Land Mobility Service.
- **Consider Multiple Scenarios:** Identify the right person and ensure space for both parties to progress. A transition year was crucial for Eamon's successful step back.
- **Let Young Farmers Farm:** Landowners must step aside. Young farmers bring exceptional skills and enthusiasm.

- **Expert Facilitation:** The Land Mobility Service excels in identifying collaborators, facilitating arrangements and drafting agreements, providing comfort by liaising with accountants and solicitors.
- **Tailored Agreements:** Every farm is unique and agreements should reflect this, ensuring fair terms for both parties.
- **Communication and Respect:** Vital for success. Eamon lives on the farm and maintains open, respectful communication with the new farmer.

From the young farmer's perspective, Ben, the lease has been very positive since engaging with Eamon through The Land Mobility Service.

**For further information please refer to the enclosed information leaflet.**



Eamon McCarthy

Evolve Regendairy, Kerry Dairy Ireland's sustainable dairy programme, has reopened for 2025. Below are the details of four programme actions that you can avail of over the coming weeks:

1. Bord Bia Sustainability Survey - Go to [farm.boardbia.ie](http://farm.boardbia.ie) and complete the 2024 Sustainability Survey by Wednesday, 30th April.
2. Fertiliser & Grass Records - Record 6 grass measurements between 1st May and 31st July, plus record any fertiliser applications during that same period to unlock payment.
3. Development Events - Look out for upcoming incentivised farm walks.
4. Biodiversity - Planning to reseed? Purchase 2 bags of Top Sward grass seed per 100,000 litres of milk to unlock payment.

Do you have questions about Evolve? Please email [evolve@kerry.com](mailto:evolve@kerry.com)

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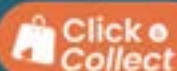
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