



## Milk Markets Update

As we enter the summer holiday season, August typically marks a quieter period in dairy markets. Current indicators point to a softening trend, with limited support from supply and demand data for any near-term price increases. Notably, European butter prices remain under pressure, although recent patterns suggest that when prices dip below €7,000 per tonne, they tend to find support and rebound modestly.

### Global Supply Outlook

Milk production continues to show solid year-on-year growth across major exporting regions, contributing

to a well-supplied global market. While comparisons will become more challenging in the second half of the year, buyers currently show little concern about potential shortages, reinforcing the overall stability in supply.

### Global Demand Challenges

Despite strong supply, the market is in need of a demand boost. Import activity across key regions remains subdued, with China's slowdown contributing to the lack of momentum. At present, no alternative market has emerged to offset this decline, leaving global demand relatively flat.

## Honouring Our Milk Suppliers for Advancing Agri-Education and Sustainable Farming

Kerry Dairy Ireland recently celebrated a group of exceptional milk suppliers who have played a vital role in promoting agri-education across our catchment area. These dedicated farmers have welcomed nearly 2,000 primary school students from over 50 schools onto their farms, offering hands-on learning experiences that connect children with the origins of

their food. To mark their contribution, host farmers were invited to our Cheestings production facility in Charleville for a guided tour, followed by a celebratory barbecue at Chawkes in Adare. Each farmer received a bespoke plaque, a token of appreciation for their commitment to education and sustainability. Through these primary school farm visits, our farmers are helping to cultivate curiosity, understanding and respect for the food system.

These experiences not only educate but inspire the next generation to value sustainability, animal welfare and environmental stewardship. We extend our sincere thanks to all participating milk suppliers for their dedication to shaping the future of food, from the ground up.





# Casey Family Wins Kerry Dairy Ireland Milk Quality and Sustainability Award

The Casey family from Causeway, Co. Kerry, has been named the winner of the 2025 Kerry Dairy Ireland Milk Quality and Sustainability Awards, becoming the fifth family to receive this prestigious honour. John Casey farms alongside his father Michael and wife Orla on a scenic 44-hectare milking platform along the Wild Atlantic Way, where they milk 137 cows.

John's approach is striving to maximise the intake of high-quality grass by the herd daily. In 2024, the farm grew over 12 tonnes of dry matter per hectare, with the herd delivering 517kg of milk solids per cow. Milk composition was outstanding, with 4.88% fat, 3.88% protein and a somatic cell count of 108,000. The farm's carbon intensity stood at 0.83kg CO<sub>2</sub>eq/kg FPCM or almost 20% better than average. Recent investments have focused on increasing slurry storage capacity to improve nutrient utilisation and expanding feeding space to support animal performance. John is also committed to fostering a positive work environment and maintaining a healthy work-life balance for everyone involved in the farm.

At the awards ceremony, James O'Connell, Director of Agribusiness & Sustainability, commended the Casey family for their dedication to producing high-quality milk with a low environmental footprint. He also recognised their active engagement with the Evolve programme's sustainability measures.

The runner-up in this year's competition was the Bermingham family from Doonbeg, Co. Clare. Other finalists included the O'Connor family from Currans, Co. Kerry; the Hickey family from Caherconlish, Co. Limerick; and the O'Kelly family from Dromcollogher, Co. Limerick.

Pat Murphy, CEO of Kerry Dairy Ireland, congratulated all participants and highlighted the exceptional work being carried out across the supplier base. He emphasised the importance of protecting water quality and maintaining the highest standards of animal welfare and environmental sustainability, which enable Kerry Dairy Ireland to deliver premium dairy products to customers.

On the evening, milk suppliers participating in the Kerry Social Farming programme were recognised for their commitment to fostering social inclusion by offering meaningful farming experiences to individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities within their local communities. The opportunity to engage in agricultural activities, and to connect with animals and nature in a safe and welcoming environment, provides invaluable benefits to participants.



Brendan O'Neill, Ailish Moriarty, Sean McCarthy, Collette Casey, Pat Browne, Orla Casey, Pat Murphy, John and Michael Casey, Aidan Brennan, James O'Connell, James Tangney and Mike Behan



Daniel Bermingham pictured with James O'Connell



Kerry Social Farming:  
John Lynch, Mary Dennehy, James Tangney (KDI), Joe McCrohan, Sean & Geraldine McNamara, James O'Connell (KDI), Jim & Lucy Barry, Loretto and Terry O'Sullivan, Catherine & John Fleming, William Dennehy.

# Financial Insight: Joint Program Group Reviews Performance and Prepares for 2026

The Joint Program Group, supported by IFAC's FarmPro service, recently met to review financial performance and set priorities for the remainder of 2025 and into 2026.

## 2024 in Review

After a tough start to 2024, improved milk prices and favourable autumn weather helped farms recover strongly. Many reported solid profits, allowing them to reduce debt and rebuild cash reserves, key steps after the financial strain of 2023.

## 2025 Forecasts

Milk output is up across the group, helping reduce cost per litre. However, cost per cow is expected to rise slightly (by around €30), keeping overall running costs in line with 2024. Importantly, profit growth is being driven by better milk prices and increased animal sales, not by reduced operating costs. This distinction is crucial when deciding how to invest surplus cash.

## Surplus Strategy

While profit forecasts are strong, members had varied plans for surplus allocation. Common priorities included:

- Tax Planning: Prepare for rising liabilities in 2024 and 2025
- Cash Reserves: Aim for €400 per cow heading into 2026
- Capital Investment: Borrow where feasible to avoid draining surplus cash
- Pensions: Invest in private pensions to support succession
- Farm Infrastructure: Focus on grazing, housing, and slurry storage

The group reflected on lessons from 2022, when high profits were followed by poor cash planning, leading to pressure in 2023. This year, the emphasis is on building resilience.

## Planning Ahead

With tax bills rising, farmers were reminded to plan for both the 2024 tax bill (due this November) and preliminary tax for 2025 (due in 2026). Maintaining a reserve of €400 per cow e.g., €40,000 for a 100-cow farm, will help ease spring cashflow pressure, especially when milk cheques don't arrive until April.

On capital investment, the group advised borrowing where possible. In 2022, many farms funded projects entirely from profits, which led to cashflow issues the following year.

## Key Takeaway

A strong financial foundation empowers farmers to stay ahead of challenges, whether it's policy changes, disease outbreaks, or new regulations. Strategic planning today ensures stability tomorrow.

# Planning Ahead: Silage Assessment and Feed Budgeting for Winter

As summer draws to a close, now is an ideal time for farmers to assess silage stocks and prepare a comprehensive feed budget. Completing this process before the end of August allows for informed decision-making and timely action to ensure adequate forage availability for the winter months.

Thanks to favourable early summer conditions, many farms have successfully completed two cuts of silage, with a third cut presenting a valuable opportunity where feasible. Transitioning to a multi-cut silage system not only improves forage quality but also supports the nutritional demands outlined in the feed budget.

To complete a feed budget effectively, consider the following five key steps:

1. Identify livestock groups that will be on-farm during the winter, as each group will have distinct feeding requirements.
2. Calculate the number of animals in each group.
3. Estimate the duration for which silage will be required in the diet.
4. Measure silage pits to determine available tonnage. Use the formula:  
$$\text{Length} \times \text{Width} \times \text{Height (in feet)} \div 50 = \text{fresh tonnes}$$
  
(For drier silage with 30% DM or higher, divide by 45 instead)
5. Count available bales, estimating each at approximately 750kg.

Once the feed budget is completed, farmers can determine whether they are facing a surplus or a deficit. In the case of a deficit, it is advisable to consult with a Kerry Dairy Ireland Commercial Ruminant Nutritionist to develop a tailored plan that meets the farm's specific needs.



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