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Many farmers now using low emission slurry equipment



Pauline O'Driscoll



THE slurry spreading season is now open and weather conditions have been excellent since January 12th for getting this valuable fertiliser out on grazing and silage ground.

It is great to see so many farmers and contractors using low emission slurry spreading (LESS) equipment. Using this equipment has huge benefits in terms of a reduction in odours, soiling of grass and above all a reduction in the losses of valuable nutrients for grass growth.

Fertiliser prices have increased threefold on last year and the use of slurry as a valuable fertiliser is critical to reduce overall fertiliser costs on farm during 2022.

Apart from the cost element, using slurry as the number one source of nitrogen, phosphorus and potash and only topping up with urea or compounds to meet crop requirements is vital going forward. This is to continue the progress on improving on water quality as shown by the ASSAP programme in the region and also help us meet our Carbon emissions targets as an industry.

It goes without saying that phosphorus and potash should only be applied on the basis of a valid soil sample and nutrient management plan.

The nutrient value of slurry varies depending on the dry matter (how watery it is) of it.

The more dilute the slurry is, the lower the level of nutrients in it. Knowing the value of your slurry will help you make the right choices in terms of application rates and top-ups with chemical fertiliser. The easiest way to know the value of your slurry is to use a slurry hydrometer which illustrates the typical amounts of available N, P and K in the slurry. The slurry hydrometer is a relatively quick, cheap and easy on farm tool to use but it is a very delicate piece of equipment. Laboratory analysis of slurry can also be used but in practice is rarely done due to the time and cost of such analysis.

Very watery slurry at 2% DM has approximately four units of N, two units of P and 13 units of K per 1,000 gallons. At 4% the slurry is quite watery but contains six units of



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(Photo: Shutterstock)

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So the old adage that 1,000 gallons of cattle slurry is equal to a bag of 0-7-30 is not far off the mark. Keep in mind that with LESS systems the slurry will need to be liquid enough to go through the trailing shoe or band spreader applicator.

When spreading slurry, always be mindful of Health and Safety with extremely toxic slurry gases and large machinery posing a risk to farmers, contractors and livestock. Also observe the required margins for land drains and streams of a minimum of 5m to prevent nutrient escape to waterbodies.

• Pauline O'Driscoll is a business and technology dairy advisor based in Skibbereen.

Fiona battles it out for top leader title this week

ALL at Carbery Macra wish to extend best wishes to Fiona O'Leary of Bantry Macra as she battles it out for Leader of the Year title this Thursday night.

Fiona, along with five other finalists from all over the country must present an eight-minute presentation on how they think Macra should revitalise existing events and/or develop a new suite of events for potential new members.

Fiona has been a truly valuable member of Carbery



Carbery Macra na Feirme
Gillian Moore



since joining in 2009. She has served numerous officer roles at club, county, regional and national level and is currently

the national council representative for Carbery, along with being the chairperson for national competitions.

As part of the Rural Youth #challengeyourself theme for January, the RY committee is encouraging members to attend a virtual introductory information session to Lámh this Thursday night at 8pm.

Lámh is a key word signing system used by children and adults with intellectual disabilities and communication support needs in Ireland.

The session will include a demonstration of five-10 key Lámh signs that are functional for session attendees.

For more information, see the Carbery social media pages.

The Carbery round of impromptu public speaking is set for Friday February 11th. Interested members are to submit entries to the competitions committee by Sunday January 30th.

Also, the Carbery round of basketball is due to take place on Sunday February 13th.

Club teams to be submitted to the sports committee by Wednesday February 9th.

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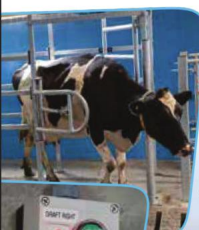


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