Teagasc Dairy Beef Research Programme
Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford

Update: November 2019

Animal Performance:

20 month old heifers & steers

- The remaining heifers were weighed on the 8th November and body condition scored. They averaged 506 kg. They continue to be fed 5 kg concentrates alongside *ad lib* grass silage.
- 78 heifers were killed in November between ABP Waterford and Slaney Meats factories;
    - 26 heifers were killed on the 11th November in in ABP Waterford; 11 LM, 10 AA, 5 HE.
    - 20 heifers were killed on the 18th November in Slaney; 14 HE, 5 LM, 1 AA.
    - 25 heifers were killed on the 19th November in ABP Waterford; 14 LM, 4 HE, 7 AA.
    - 7 heifers were killed in Slaney on the 25th November; 4 HE, 2 AA, 1 LM (mostly spares).

- The heifers have killed well in terms of carcass weight and fat scores, averaging a 3+ overall. There were two under-fat animals (both LMX, score of 2=) out of the 95 2018 born heifers killed to date.
- There was a delay in getting the heifers killed due to the backlog in factories due to the beef protests. Over 50 heifers came fit at grass early October, however only 17 got killed before housing. Hence some heifers (19 heifers, 20% of total) were over-fat and graded 4= and 4+ when they finally got killed this month.
- The confirmation scores have been poorer than expected. Overall, the heifers have just averaged an O=, with the AAX and LMX heifers performing far poorer than previous years. This was very surprising considering this year's heifers were far stronger as calves and suffered no setbacks unlike other years. The HEX scored similarly as last year (although still 0.2 of a conformation score lower, Table 2 and 3); however they were 0.7 of a conformation score poorer than the heifers two years previously (Table 4.) 42% of the heifers did not meet the QAS bonus specification.

Table 1. Summary of 2018 born heifers killed to date.

Date	Live weight (kg)	Carcass weight (kg)	Conformation score (1-15)	Fat score (1-15)
11/11/2019	555	270	4.9 (O-/O=)	9.5 (3+/4-)
18/11/2019	539	260	5.5 (O=/O+)	8.8 (3=/3+)
19/11/2019	516	249	4.8 (O-/O=)	7.6 (3-/3=)
25/11/2019	510	251	4.9 (O-/O=)	9.6 (3+/4-)

Table 2. Summary of all <u>2018 born heifers killed to date</u>. Average slaughter age 20.6 months.

Breed	No. heifers	Live weight (kg)	Carcass weight (kg)	Conformation score (1-15)	Fat score (1-15)
AAX	28	567	269	4.5 (O-/O=)	9.5 (3+/4-)
HEX	36	536	257	5.0 (O=)	9.6 (3+/4-)
LMX	31	521	259	5.8 (O=/O+)	7.7 (3-/3=)

Table 3. Summary of <u>all 2017 born heifers</u>, average date of kill 26th November 2018, age 21 months.

Breed	No. heifers	Live weight (kg)	Carcass weight (kg)	Conformation score (1-15)	Fat score (1-15)
AAX	35	518	251	5.2 (O=)	8.7 (3=/3+)
HEX	33	523	254	5.2 (O=)	9.4 (3+/4-)
LMX	38	514	254	6.4 (O+/R-)	8.1 (3=)

Table 4. Summary of <u>all 2016 born heifers</u>, average date of kill 16th January 2018, age 22.5 months.

Breed	No. heifers	Live weight (kg)	Carcass weight (kg)	Conformation score (1-15)	Fat score (1-15)
AAX	35	568	285	5.8 (O=/O+)	10.3 (4-)
HEX	35	560	281	5.7 (O=/O+)	11.O (4=)
LMX	34	544	281	6.6 (O+/R-)	8.5 (3=/3+)

- The steers are currently being fed *ad lib* silage only. They were weighed on the 15th November and are averaging 550 kg approximately. They lost some weight after housing due to change in diet. In addition, the bales were very variable which may have also contributed to the initial weight loss in some of the cattle. Both calves and steers were switched to the first cut pit mid November.
- Some bales and the two silage pits were sampled and the results came back last week – the quality is only moderate (69.4 DMD) for the first cut, and the second cut is as low as 63 DMD. The bales, as thought, were very variable in quality. Therefore, when the second pit is opened the steers will need to be supplemented with meal in order to gain 0.5 kg/day.
- The steers will receive their Tribovax vaccination when they are weighed next week. They have been clipped and their backs shaved.
- The steers have been grouped into pens of seven (one pen of AA, one of HE and one of LM per stocking rate treatment) in order to facilitate winter intakes.

Table 5. Weight of steers, November 2019.

	Steers @ housing 18/10/2019	4 Day reweigh 21/10/2019	15/11/2019
High	554 kg	557 kg	546 kg
Medium	541 kg	559 kg	555 kg
Low	529 kg	541 kg	555 kg

Spring born calves

- The calves were reweighed on the 1st November and averaged 232 kg.
- The calves are now being fed 2.5 kg concentrate/head/day following silage analysis.
- The group of 23 weaker calves remain in Kildavin on a straw bed. The rest of the calves were weighed on the 12th November and put into groups in order to facilitate winter intakes. There are three groups (one pen of AA, one of HE and one of LM) per stocking rate treatment.
- All the calves received Growvit, Bovipast booster vaccine and Tribovax vaccination this month. They have also been clipped to keep them clean.
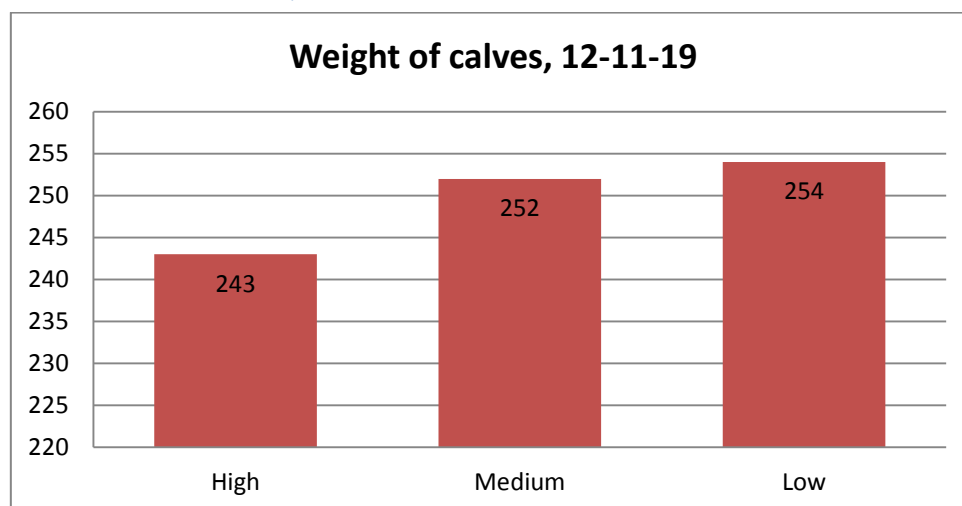
Weight of calves, 12-11-19

Figure 1. Weight of calves on the 21st November 2019 by treatment (excluding 23 weaker calves).

Left: Pen of Hereford calves grouped for winter intake work. Calves are penned by treatment and breed (14 calves per pen), with each pen then balanced for sex. The groups are also balance for weight as much as possible, with any particularly heavy or

Right: Robust but flexible dividers have been put in place to ensure that the feed doesn't get mixed between the groups, while also allowing for ease of use. The calves are fed a TMR of silage plus concentrates. This is weighed out and recorded each day for three days. Whatever is left is then gathered and weighed on the morning of the fourth day to calculate how much each pen consumed.