

Weanling Bulls

**Sell Them Now or Finish Them
Next Summer?**



Pearse Kelly, Teagasc Cattle Specialist

Spring Born Suckler Bulls

MARTWATCH



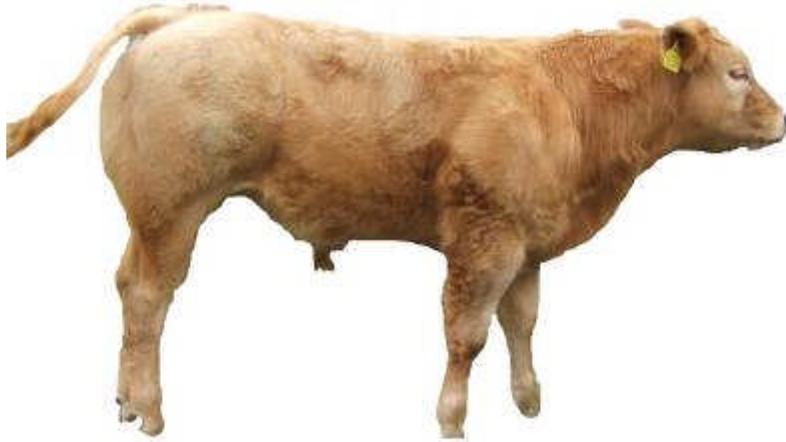
Weanling Bulls: Prices reported in cent/kg, between 15th & 21st Sept. 2010

	200-300kg (669 lots)			300-400kg (2044 lots)		
	Top 1/3	Average	Bot 1/3	Top 1/3	Average	Bot 1/3
All Marts	241	201	155	216	178	134

Average \approx €1.90 /kg



Bull Weanling Value



- Born Feb./March 2010
- 7 Months Old
- Weight 300 – 350 kg
- Average Value @ \approx €1.90 /kg

€620

Is there more to be made from him?

Sell next May/June – Live?

Sell next Aug./Sept.– Dead?

Considerations

- How will **Cash-flow** be affected?
- Have you the **shed space**?
- How **highly stocked** will you be next spring?
- Will you be able to turn them out **early**?
- Are you a **good grassland** manager?

The Plan – Selling as Bulls in 2011

Housing Early Nov.	340 kg	
Turn-out Feb/March	400 kg	GRASS
Early - Mid May	500 kg	
Option – Sell Live @ \approx €2/kg		€1,000
Housing Early June	540 kg	
Finished Aug/Sept	730 kg	MEAL
Carcass Weight	425 kg	
Carcass Value @ \approx €3.15/kg		€1,340

What is the likely Margin?

Sell Today	€620		€620
Selling 2011 At:	€1,000 500 kg LW @ €2/kg		€1,340 425 kg CW @ €3.15/kg
Output	<hr/>	€380	<hr/>
Less 1- 2% Mortality	€10		€10
100 Day Winter	€140		€140
Fertiliser	€30		€40
Vet + Interest	€30		€40
		<hr/>	
Meal & Straw		€210	€270
			<hr/>
Gross Margin		€170	€500
			<hr/>
			€220

Key Areas to get Right

- Start with the correct weight weanling
- Performance indoors over winter
- Grassland management next spring
- Fast finishing indoors next summer

Correct Weight Weanling

- **Autumn '09 born weanlings are likely to be too heavy**
e.g. 400 kg LW – either sell or finish out of the shed
- **Late spring born weanlings will not reach the targets**
e.g. April born bulls – 240 - 260 kg LW
- **Aiming for Jan – March 2010 born weanlings**
e.g. 300 – 350 kg LW

Performance Over Winter

- Keep winter short – no more than 100 days
e.g. 20th Nov. to 20th February
- Keep bulls growing – aim for 0.6 – 0.7 kg ADG / day
= + 60 – 70 kg LW
- Feed a 15% CP diet for growth
- Most grass silages will require 2 kg Meal min. per day
- Reduce to 1 kg for last month pre-turnout
- Treat for lice, stomach worms, fluke, consider vaccinating
- e.g. IBR, PI3, RSV, Pasteurella

Grassland Management Spring 2011

- Turnout as early as possible
- On to fields closed in early October 2010
- **Aiming for:**
 - **High Leaf content in diet**
 - **Moved regularly**
 - **Strip wire with a back fence?**
 - **Grazing tightly – 3.5 cm**
- **Stocked at a high rate from mid-March onwards**
 - 2500+ kg LW / ha.
 - e.g. 30 bull weanlings would need 5.5 ha. grass (14 ac.)









Finishing Indoors Summer 2011

- **Keep finishing period short - < 100 days**
 - ADG can very high over short feeding periods
 - Need to be sold before cattle finished off grass surge
- **Finish indoors to control their environment**
 - Ideally on straw
 - Give plenty of space
- **Keep the diet simple – ad-lib meal, straw, water**
e.g. 3 way mix:- Rolled Barley, Citrus, Distillers, M+V (1%)
- **Build up slowly: 2 - 3 weeks**



