

BEEF

November 2024

Teagasc National Beef Conference

EDITED BY
NIALL KERINS,
CATTLE SPECIALIST



The Teagasc National Beef Conference takes place in Leitrim this year.

The Teagasc National Beef Conference will take place on Tuesday, November 19 in The Landmark Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, N41 N9W4. This is an annual event and the theme for this year is 'Sustainable Beef Farming: Pathways to a greener future'. There is no charge for attending and it is an opportunity for all beef farmers to not only hear a number of very interesting beef talks, but also to meet with researchers, advisors and key industry personnel.

Schedule

The first session starts at 5.00pm and will have presentations on the impact of white/red clover systems on animal



**GROWING
CATTLE REQUIRE
CONCENTRATES
WITH**

16-17%
crude protein.

performance for suckler calf-to-beef production systems, nutrient management solutions for beef farms that can be implemented on farm, and controlling pneumonia in suckler-bred weanlings. The second session starts at 7.15pm. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) will give a presentation on the challenges of bluetongue for Irish cattle farms. This will be followed by a presentation on the innovations on the

Future Beef suckler farms across the country.

The concluding presentation will discuss staying resilient on farms through stressful times of the year. There will be a live forum and attendees will be given the opportunity to partake in discussion with each of the presenters. For more information on this important Conference, check out our website at: www.teagasc.ie/beefcon24.



**NATIONAL
BEEF
CONFERENCE
2024**

**19
November
5pm**

**Landmark Hotel
Carrick-on-Shannon
Co. Leitrim**

www.teagasc.ie/beefcon24

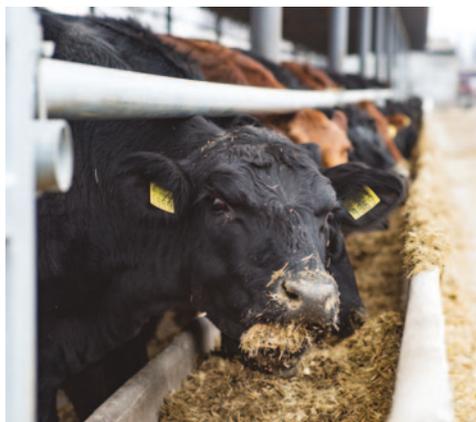


Feeding concentrates

Winter diets can be tailored for growing, finishing or maintaining the liveweight of cattle. The vast majority of farms supplement silage with concentrates to ensure daily liveweight targets are met. Silage should be tested to determine its nutrient value and to select a concentrate feedstuff based on the silage results. Some diets consist of grass silage and concentrates, while other diets are made up of various feed sources.

Importance of energy

Energy is the most important nutrient required in an animal's diet. For suckler cows and growing animals, the UFL value is used to measure energy in the diet and for finishing animals, the UFV value is used. A concentrate feed needs to have a UFV/UFL content of >0.94/kg fed, and this reflects a high energy mix with good cereal content. Inquire from your feed merchant regarding the UFL/UFV value of



Testing silage informs what concentrate you need.

the ration prior to purchase. Growing cattle require concentrates with 16%-17% crude protein, while finishing cattle require an 11%-12% crude protein mix. Farmers that choose to feed animals a total mixed ration (TMR) should consult with a nutritionist to ensure the animals' dietary requirements are met daily. Some feed sources require additional minerals/nutrients to be fed to balance the diet. Caution should be exercised when feeding TMR diets.

Be winter ready

It is very important to think about how severe weather might impact your work and take action to mitigate this. The Irish Government's Be Winter Ready campaign focuses on helpful ways to minimise disruption to farming activities during severe weather events.

During severe weather, tasks like milking, provision of feed and water to

livestock, delivery of feed to the farm or products

from the farm can become very difficult. Planning and preparation will help to minimise disruption. For more information visit:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9e1358-preparing-your-business-for-severe-weather-stay-winter-ready/>.

**HEALTH AND
SAFETY**

A good score

SARAH BURKE, EDWARD O’RIORDAN, PAUL CROSSON AND MARK MCGEE of the Teagasc Animal & Grassland Research and Innovation Centre, Grange, Co. Meath report on exploiting genetic divergence for carcass fat score.

RESEARCH UPDATE



Recent research at Teagasc Grange evaluated the effect of genetic divergence in carcass fat score.

Irish suckler cattle are mostly from breeds that take longer to mature. It’s harder for these cattle to reach the right level of fat (a score of 2+ or higher) at a young age when they’re raised mainly on grass. This is especially true compared to breeds that mature faster. Recent research at Teagasc Grange looked at how genetics affected carcass fat score, growth, and conformation (shape) of Charolais crossbred steers finished from grass-based systems at 19, 23, and 26 months of age.

Lean vs fat

The study compared cattle bred to be leaner versus those bred to gain more fat. They found that cattle bred to gain

fat had higher carcass fat scores at all ages. The fat scores were higher by 1.7, 2.4, and 2.0 points (15-point scale) at 19, 23, and 26 months, compared to the leaner cattle. However, these fatter cattle had slightly lower carcass conformation scores (~1.0 point) and their carcasses weighed a bit less – about 9kg less on average at 19 and 23 months, but there was no weight difference at 26 months.

The takeaway is that late-maturing cattle that are bred to gain more fat can still reach the right fat level at a younger age. The slight drop in shape and weight isn’t as much of a concern as it would be with breeds that mature earlier.