

DAIRY

June 2025

Top five tips for June

EDITED BY
JOE PATTON,
HEAD OF DAIRY
KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER



Correct any pasture quality issues by baling out heavy or poor-quality swards.

1. Maintaining pasture digestibility is the most important factor in achieving optimal milk solids output and ensuring milk protein concentration does not drop over the coming weeks. Midseason stocking rate should be set to allow allocations of 18kg DM/cow at normal grass growth rates. Correct any pasture quality issues by baling out heavy or poor-quality swards if farm cover allows.
2. While the headline milk price/meal cost ratio looks favourable at present, it is the actual milk response to supplements that determines financial returns. Milk response declines with higher meal feeding rates, better



**SILAGE
QUALITY**
for milking
cows and
young stock
needs to be a
minimum of
72 DMD,
while dry cow silage
targets are a
minimum 68 DMD.

quality grass and higher grass intakes. This is because extra meal displaces grass from the diet and impairs total diet digestibility. Milk responses of <0.75kg milk per kg of meal are break-even at best, and we are seeing lower than this on farms chasing high yields. Do your sums, and do not end up 'buying milk' in 2025 despite the good price.

3. Assess the breeding season as you approach the six-week mark to ensure all eligible cows are submitted for breeding. Use suitable high Dairy Beef Index (DBI) bulls with good carcass traits to improve the quality of offspring, without compromising on calving difficulty and gestation length.

4. Complete a winter feed budget if silage stocks are marginal to low and source additional area for second-cut silage if required. Be mindful that silage quality for milking cows and young stock needs to be a minimum of 72 DMD, while dry cow silage targets are a minimum 68 DMD, which is required for approximately 10 weeks of the housed period.
5. With a lot of the heavy lifting in the spring calving calendar now complete, ensure you prioritise time off farm and/or avail of local help to complete a few milkings each week. Try to achieve a better work/life balance over the summer months and avoid burnout. Next winter will be long enough.

Current grassland management priorities

Grass growth was slower than target in late May for many areas due to dry conditions, and at the time of writing some farms were beginning to see sward quality issues. However, regardless of soil type and level of rainfall, the key objective over the coming weeks will be to maintain an adequate supply of high-quality grass ahead of the herd.

The midseason grazing targets are:

- ✓ target rotation length: 18-20 days;
- ✓ pre-grazing yield: 1,400kg DM/ha;
- ✓ average farm cover: 650-700kg DM/ha;
- ✓ farm cover per cow: 160-180kg DM/cow; and,
- ✓ post-grazing height: 4cm.



Maintain pasture quality by keeping pre- and post-grazing heights on target.

It is very important to keep a focus on grass quality now. Grass quality in June can be poor due to increased stem content, which will decrease digestibility. Grass stem is also difficult for cows to graze. Therefore, the energy intake of the

cow will decrease and performance will reduce. With the right approach to grazing management, and using the above midseason grazing targets, high-quality leafy grass can be maintained throughout the season provided rainfall amounts are adequate.

Clover

In the summer, where sward clover content is greater than 20%, nitrogen (N) fertiliser application can be reduced. If you have paddocks with high levels of clover, consider reducing N input by applying soiled water to these paddocks.

Mid-year financial review

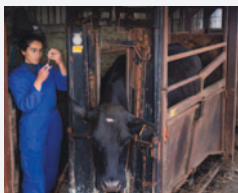
Take the opportunity to review and refocus on your farm's financial situation. While 2024 showed an improvement in profitability, which has continued into 2025, we should not forget the lessons of 2023 where a drop in milk price created strain on most farms. It is more important to maintain disciplined cost control in a good year. This helps maximise the potential cash reserve that will be in place for the next downturn. Good forward planning of tax and debt commitments is required, so speak to your accountant and Teagasc advisor on the best options available. One of the main trends coming from profit monitor data from 2023 and 2024 is that

farms that maximise the amount of home-grown grazed grass and silage fed to their cows consistently deliver higher profits. We term this net pasture consumed per cow. If the average dairy farmer last year increased their net pasture per cow by 1kg DM/day over the grazing season, they could have improved revenue by €210/cow for little to no cost increase. Farmers alternatively can reduce meal feeding in line with cows consuming additional high-quality grass. Remember, it is essential we maximise profits in 2025 – do not let the high milk price distract from maintaining cost structure.

Expanded wear and tear scheme

The expanded Acceleration of Wear and Tear Allowances for Farm Safety Equipment Scheme was launched recently. Farmers can avail of capital allowances of 50% per annum to be

claimed over an accelerated two-year period for listed investments. The expanded list of eligible items now also includes fixed sheep/cattle handling units, cow calving gates, floodlights for farmyards, livestock monitors, and sliding or roller doors. These complement the 60% grant aid, which is available under the Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme 3 (TAMS 3) for safety-related investments. Talk to your advisor to discuss in more detail.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

Eligible items now include fixed cattle handling units.

60% nutrient storage grant aid

Adequate slurry storage is essential to ensure efficient use of nutrients and to achieve compliance with environmental regulations. The Targeted Agriculture Modernisation Scheme 3 (TAMS 3) offers grant aid to support farmers in developing or upgrading nutrient storage facilities. Under TAMS 3, all farmers can now avail of a new 60% grant aid for specific nutrient storage investments.

Eligible structures include manure pits, mass concrete tanks (including precast tanks), circular slurry stores, and geo-membrane lined stores.

These investments are supported by a ring-fenced investment ceiling of €90,000 per holding, separate from other schemes within TAMS 3. To qualify, farms must currently meet the minimum slurry storage requirements in line with national regulations.

To plan and benefit from this scheme, farmers should follow these key steps:

1. **Assess storage needs:** evaluate your current storage capacity and determine what is required. Preliminary results from the Teagasc National Slurry Storage Monitoring Programme have indicated that higher slurry storage will be required on dairy farms – potentially increasing by 20-25% from the current 0.33m³ of slurry storage per cow per week requirement – and should be factored into future requirements.



Adequate slurry storage is vital to managing slurry resources on farm.

2. **Consult professional help:** engage your local agricultural advisor early in the process to assess eligibility, and also to get advice on the correct siting and design for the proposed investments to ensure they fit your farm's needs, both current and future.
3. **Meet building specifications:** work with engineers and planners to ensure facilities meet TAMS 3 specifications.
4. **Planning permission:** investments under the Nutrient Storage Investment Scheme require planning permission. This takes at least three months to obtain, so start early to avoid delays.
5. **Submit application:** after planning permission has been received you can complete and submit your application through the TAMS 3 portal. Ensure all required documents and specifications are included. Fixed investments must not proceed without full approval, which may take up to five months from the closing of the tranche.