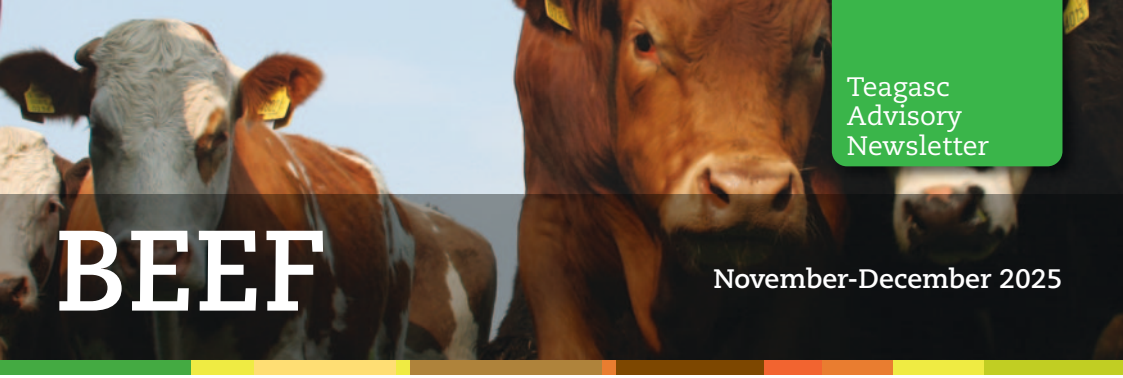

Teagasc Advisory Newsletter

BEEF

November-December 2025

Teagasc National Beef Conference

EDITED BY
NIALL KERINS,
CATTLE SPECIALIST

This year's conference will be held in Athenry.

The Teagasc National Beef Conference will take place on Tuesday, November 18 in the Raheen Woods Hotel, Athenry, under the theme 'Beef Farming 2025: Value, Profit and Renewal'. This year's conference will focus on practical and forward-looking topics for every beef farmer – from breeding and feeding high-value weanlings to

CONCENTRATES SHOULD HAVE A UFV OR UFL VALUE OF

0.93-0.94/kg

FED.

Teagasc
Agriculture and Food Development Authority

preparing for the next phase of beef farming in Ireland. Speakers include Prof. David Kenny (Teagasc Grange), Dr Katie Quigley, Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF), Rupert Claxton (Gira), and Trevor Boland (ifac), along with leading farmers and industry experts. Panel discussions will explore how to produce the weanlings the market wants, manage profitability, and support generational renewal on Irish beef farms. Attendance is free and all beef farmers are welcome, with the first session starting at 5.00pm. Complimentary refreshments will be served.
Find full details at www.teagasc.ie.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Stay safe when working at height

Over the last 10 years, there have been 37 fatalities as a result of falling from height. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) lists common hazards as falls from ladders, unprotected roof edges, falling from or with stacked bales, and falling through fragile roof materials. Take time to assess the task properly, and use competent contractors, safe equipment and safe systems of work.

Be winter ready

Severe weather events can make normal farming tasks difficult and dangerous. Planning and preparation will help to minimise disruption and improve safety. The Irish Government's 'Be Winter Ready' campaign offers a dedicated website (www.winterready.ie) with information and safety advice.

Organic beef finishing diets

RESEARCH UPDATE

MARIE MCFADDEN, MARK MCGEE and PAUL CROSSON from Teagasc Grange, Co. Meath report on the results of experimental finishing diets for suckler steers.

A study at Teagasc Grange examined four different finishing diets over 98 days.

The intake, growth, feed efficiency, and carcass traits of late-maturing suckler steers, each offered one of four experimental diets over a 98-day finishing period were examined.

The four diets were:

1. perennial ryegrass silage *ad libitum* plus 3.0kg barley-based concentrate dry matter (DM) per animal daily ('control');
2. baled red clover silage *ad libitum* plus 3.0kg bi-crop (barley plus pea) grain DM per animal daily;
3. baled red clover silage only *ad libitum*; and,
4. bi-crop (barley plus pea) silage *ad libitum*.

Animals were accommodated in pens in a straw-bedded (over a porous membrane) slatted floor shed at a stocking density of 8m^2 per animal. Daily live weight gain and carcass weight were greatest for red clover plus organic concentrate and lowest for red clover only, with perennial ryegrass silage plus concentrate and bi-crop being intermediate. Feed efficiency was best for perennial ryegrass silage plus concentrate and red clover plus organic concentrate, and worst for red clover only and bi-crop. Financial margins were highest for red clover plus organic concentrate and lowest for bi-crop.

Balancing the winter diet

It is essential to test silage for nutrient content.

During winter feeding, it's important to tailor your cattle's diet depending on whether they're growing, finishing, or maintaining bodyweight. Grass silage is often supplemented with concentrates to ensure cattle meet their daily weight targets. Testing your silage for nutrient content is essential. This helps you choose the right concentrate feed to complement the silage according to animals' nutritional needs (**Table 1**).

Some farms rely on a combination of grass silage and concentrates, while others use a variety of feed sources. The key nutrient in any diet is energy, which drives growth and performance.

For suckler cows and growing stock, energy is measured in *unité fourragère lait* (UFL), while for finishing cattle energy of feed is measured in *unité fourragère viande* (UFV). Concentrates should have a UFV or UFL value of 0.93-0.94/kg fed to ensure a high-energy mix, with a good cereal content. Before purchasing, check with your feed supplier about the UFL or UFV energy values in their rations.

If you're feeding a total mixed ration (TMR), it's advisable to work with a nutritionist to guarantee your cattle's daily requirements are met. Some feed ingredients may need additional minerals or nutrients to balance the diet properly.

Table 1: Crude protein (%/kg fresh weight) required in concentrate for grass silage diets.

Animal type	10% crude protein silage	14% crude protein silage
Weanlings (1.0-1.5kg/day feeding rate)	20%	14-16%
Weanlings (2.5kg/day feeding rate)	16%	*
Finishing steers and heifers	14%	11-12%
Finishing bulls	11-12%	11-12%

**Silage with a crude protein value of 14% or greater tends to have a high dry matter digestibility (DMD) value. 2.5kg/head/day concentrate feeding rates are not recommended.*

Teagasc Agriculture and Food Development Authority

For further information or to access other enterprise newsletters, please contact your local Teagasc advisor or see www.teagasc.ie.

Printed using vegetable-based inks and FSC-certified paper.

Design by Think Media