2026 National Beef Welfare Scheme Meal Feeding

APPLICATIONS CLOSE 5 PM WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2026

Mandatory action Up to €35 per eligible calf Maximum 45 calves

IMPORTANT IF SELLING WEANLINGS
Work back at least 43 days from the planned sale date. Feed for 28 days before weaning and 14 full days after weaning; earliest sale is day 15 after weaning. Have sufficient meal available and keep all receipts.

What you must do

- Feed calves for four weeks before weaning and two weeks after weaning.
- Recommended feeding rate: 1 kg per calf per day before weaning and 2 kg per calf per day after weaning.
- Total estimated meal required: 56 kg per calf over the six weeks.

Per calf	10 calves	20 calves	40 calves	45 calves
56 kg	560 kg	1.12 t	2.24 t	2.52 t

Ration specification

- Use compound feed containing appropriate minerals and vitamins. If feeding straights, supplement them with a suitable complementary mineral and consult your adviser or nutritionist.
- Feed minerals according to the label. Keep receipts, invoices, feed labels, delivery dockets, weaning dates and action records.
- If mixing two or more straights on farm, you must register with DAFM as a home mixer, including where feed is mixed using a mixer wagon or loading shovel.

Meal feeding and sale date reckoner

Choose the planned weaning date. Start meal feeding 28 days beforehand and continue for 14 full days afterwards. To demonstrate that the two post-weaning weeks are complete, the reckoner shows the first sale date as day 15 after weaning.

Weaning date	Start feeding 28 days before	Finish feeding 14 days after	Earliest sale day 15 after
25 August	28 July	8 September	9 September
1 September	4 August	15 September	16 September
8 September	11 August	22 September	23 September
15 September	18 August	29 September	30 September
22 September	25 August	6 October	7 October
29 September	1 September	13 October	14 October
6 October	8 September	20 October	21 October
13 October	15 September	27 October	28 October
20 October	22 September	3 November	4 November

PURCHASE DEADLINE 13 OCTOBER 2026
Sufficient meal for all selected calves must be purchased between 14 October 2025 and 13 October 2026.

Apply for the scheme by 5 pm on 23 September 2026. This is a short farmer guide; read the full 2026 scheme terms and conditions.

2026 Scheme Optional Actions

You may select either or both optional actions when applying

Optional Action 1 Vaccination Up to €15 per animal Maximum 45 animals

- Select vaccination separately at application stage. It is an additional action to the mandatory meal-feeding action.
- Implement a programme against clostridial disease and or calf pneumonia and or bluetongue.
- Vaccinate at least the number of animals selected for this action. You may vaccinate calves or cows, depending on what suits the herd.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions. If the product requires more than one dose, purchase sufficient vaccine to complete the full programme.
- Record the vaccination date, number of animals vaccinated and product used. Keep vaccine purchase receipts.

VACCINE PURCHASE WINDOW
14 October 2025 to 13 October 2026

Optional Action 2 Faecal OR Forage Testing Up to €25 per calf Maximum 45 calves

Choose ONE of the following testing options at application stage

FAECAL TESTING	OR	FORAGE TESTING
Carry out 2 faecal tests Minimum 4 weeks apart	**OR**	**Take and submit 3 forage samples**
Submit fresh samples to a suitable laboratory or testing facility of your choosing.	**OR**	Submit the samples for analysis to a suitable laboratory or testing facility of your choosing.

DAFM clarification: test receipts from veterinary practices or agricultural merchants will be accepted.

Records for the testing action

- Testing kits must be purchased between 14 October 2025 and 13 October 2026.
- Keep the sampling-kit purchase receipts and complete the scheme action record sheet.
- For faecal testing, record the date of each test, number of samples collected and date submitted to the laboratory or testing facility.
- For forage testing, record the date of testing, number of samples collected and date submitted to the laboratory or testing facility.

Scheme action	What to select	Maximum payment
Mandatory	Meal feeding	Up to €35 × max 45
Optional Action 1	**Vaccination**	**Up to €15 × max 45**
Optional Action 2	**Faecal OR forage testing**	**Up to €25 × max 45**

DAFM ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS
DAFM will select 5% of applicants for an administrative check. Selected farmers must submit meal-feeding receipts and receipts for any vaccination, faecal-testing or forage-testing action selected.