



Connacht Gold DIY & Garden Centre Ballina

Connacht Gold launched its latest DIY & Garden Centre in Ballina on Saturday 29th March 2008.

The new store will ensure Connacht Gold and gardening will be considered synonymous with each other, as the completely covered garden centre links the state-of-the-art retail store to create a one-stop-shop. The centre includes an impressive 5000 sq. ft. garden centre and an 8,000 sq. ft shop floor. The centre will stock a wide range of garden products from furniture, lighting and paving to an extensive range of pet and bird products, building products, DIY and agri. products.



Francis Gallagher is manager of the Ballina Connacht Gold Store and has an extensive knowledge of the agri-business. Anita McNicholas is the new Garden Centre Manager. Anita is a graduate of An Grianan Horticultural College and Design.

The new Ballina centre is open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5.15 p.m. Monday to Friday; 9 a.m. to 3.45 p.m. on Saturday and 1 p.m. to 4.45 p.m. on Sundays and Bank Holidays.



Connacht Gold Summer Rations

The 100 Days (April, May and June) are the hub of a successful year for grass based milk production. In this period we want to turn out all cows, maintain body weight, achieve good milk protein percentage, good butter fats and maximise fertility so as to have compact calving next Spring. All this is necessary to achieve profit from milk. We view the investment in feed that a farmer makes in this period as of the utmost importance.

The main feeds available from Connacht Gold at this time are:

- **Grass match**
- **VHE Dairy 18%**
- **HE Dairy 18%**
- **Fertility Booster**
- **Super Graze 18%**
- **Super Graze 16%**
- **Super Graze 14%**

Two of the more *specialised* rations are Grass Match and VHE Dairy 18%. They are formulated based on a correct balance of cereal starch

(Maize and Barley), fibre, fat (Megalac) and chelated minerals plus Selplex to optimise energy intake. These feeds are also buffered to maintain healthy rumens (stomachs) in cows at fresh grass which can help avoid Acidosis. They are to be fed at 3 Kgs and 5 Kgs / head / day,

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MILK QUOTA

The Co-op was fortunate this year to finish slightly under quota. Currently it looks like there will be a Super Levy nationally.

CONNACHT GOLD / TEAGASC JOINT PROGRAMME

By Seamus Nolan - Teagasc

Failing to plan / planning to fail - Breeding 2008

The Breeding Plan

April is one of the most critical months of the year on the dairy farm. Few very critical decisions will be made which will impact on the profitability of your farm for the next three to five years. Included here is a simple breeding plan for a 50 cow herd. There are a number of very important points.

Your planned start of calving in 2009 will determine when your breeding season in 2008 will start. If planning to calve on 4th February 2009 breeding should commence on April 28th with heifers one week earlier. Pre breeding heat detection should have started 3 weeks earlier.

At the end of the first 3 weeks of the breeding season (18th May) aim to have 90% of cows inseminated. It needs dedication and attention to detail to detect cows in heat.

The following programme works well and will achieve the desired outcome.

Start the pre-breeding heat detection programme 3 weeks before the actual mating start date. The objective here is to identify those cows that are not cycling. Cows calved 42 days and not cycling should be examined by the vet. High submission rates are critical during the first 3 weeks of the breeding season, as missed heat will result in cows not contributing to the tank next Spring.

Since 70% of cows show heat last thing at night and first thing in the morning, assistance with heat detection is necessary. Tail paint, vasectomised bulls (not in the first three weeks), kamaras, estrus alert, paint sticks are all there to help you maximise the number of cows

submitted to AI. Every missed heat costs €230 per cow.

Breeding heifers should also be bred a week before the start of the cows. Synchronisation programmes work well with heifers.

Day 1 to 6: observe and AI heifers that show heat.

Day 7: use 2cc of Prostaglandin on those heifers not showing heat. Approximately 70% of these heifers will cycle 56 to 72 hours later. AI on detected heat.

Day 11: use 2 cc of Prostaglandin on those not showing heat.

How many straws do I need?

Needless to say I am assuming that all dairy farmers are using high EBI dairy AI for at least some portion of the breeding season. Stock bulls have no place in the future of a profitable dairy herd. The number of straws required will depend on the number of replacements required in 2011. The target is 5.5 straws per heifer required. 15 heifers on the ground require 83 dairy AI straws to be used.

Only change to a beef AI / stock bull when all straws have been used. Why not continue to use dairy AI for the entire breeding season. Surplus heifers will allow you selectively cull from the herd, allow expansion or can be sold.

End of season

Planning an end to the season is as important as planning a start to avoid calving getting scattered. A 13 week season is the target - starting on February 4th this would end on 28th July.

Bull Selection

Fertility is the biggest single problem on Irish dairy farms. If you currently have between 15 to 20% of cows

empty each year and if you want to stay using only black and white sires, then you should use a panel of bulls (4) that, on average, have €70 in their fertility subindex. This single fact alone will eliminate the majority of bulls on the Active Bull List, but the bulls are there. So, find them and if you need help, ask your Teagasc Adviser.

Cross breeding using Jersey or Norwegian sires, has a role to play in the Irish Dairy Industry. It is a quick fix solution to infertility. Crossbred animals are healthier, and will stay in herds longer. Good Jersey semen is scarce at this stage, but Norwegian Red semen is available.

Easy Calving Sires

Due to the shortage of replacement heifers, all breeding heifers should be bred to easy-calving dairy sires. Calving Difficulty % gives an indication of the calving ease of the sire. Any sire, with a Calving Difficulty % of less than 2 is suitable for breeding heifers. The scale is 0 to +6 with bulls at +6 at the extreme end of the scale for calving difficulty.

If there are any queries we are here to help.

Please contact our dedicated dairy advisory team if you need any assistance ...

- Peter Comer, Mayo South
094 9251157
- Patrick Gowing, Sligo/Leitrim
071 9142286
- Seamus Nolan, Roscommon
/ Longford 094 9620160
- Veronica Ryan, Galway
091 845800
- Pdraig Walsh, Mayo North
094 22335



Advisory

For better farming

BREEDING PLAN

YEAR 2008

	Target	Actual	Targets
Number of cows for breeding	50 (must fill)		
Number of heifers for breeding	12 (must fill)		
Start of calving season			
Planned start of calving 2009	4-Feb (must fill)		
Replacements required in 2011	15 (must fill)		
Start pre-breeding heat detection (date)	7-Apr		start 21 days before breeding
Start of breeding season			
Cows (date)	28-Apr		
Heifers (date)	21-Apr		start 7 days before cows
Target no. cows inseminated by 3 weeks			
		Week ending	
Cows served in week 1	15	4-May	30%
Cows served in week 2	15	11-May	30%
Cows served in week 3	15	18-May	30%
Target number bred in the first 6 weeks (100%)	62		100%
Target number of dairy inseminations	83		5.5 straws heifer required
Change to beef AI/beef stock bull			
Cows (date)	9-Jun		minimum of 6 weeks or when all replacement straws used
Heifers (date)	12-May		
Scan cows after 8 weeks of breeding	23-Jun		scan allow 35 days before end
End of breeding season (13 weeks)	28-Jul		
Bulls selected for 2008		(must fill)	
		(must fill)	
		(must fill)	
		(must fill)	

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depending on weather and grass availability.

Grass Match and VHE 18% Dairy have included Megalac Protected Fat as an energy source that may maintain body condition, thus helping stronger heats.

Megalac contains essential fatty acids which can be beneficial to egg development and quality and therefore give better ovulations.

Megalac may increase blood progesterone levels, a hormone which plays a very important role in fertility, particularly in the maintenance of pregnancy.

Trials in Langhill Farm, University of Edinburgh 2005 showed that cows that got Megalac in their diets had an improvement of 23.6% in the 100 Day in-calf rate, and by 200 Days 15% of Megalac fed cows were not in calf compared to 45% of the control non Megalac fed group of cows. In this trial conception to 1st service improved by 18% with Megalac. This work has similar results to that done by McNamara in Moorepark in 2003 when they also examined the effects of Megalac (Protected Fat) on fertility parameters.

To maximise profit from your cows consult your local Connacht Gold Nutritional Advisor on which nut best compliments the grass for your cows.

Connacht Gold Provender Mill
Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon
Tel: 094 9860234

CONNACHT GOLD MILK LEAGUE (March 2008)

	PRICE C/L	PRICE C/GAL	PROTEIN %	BUTTERFAT %
TOP PRICE	47.09	214.07	3.56	4.65
AVERAGE OF TOP 50	42.66	193.93	3.37	4.10
AVERAGE PRICE	39.50	179.58	3.17	3.91

PRICE INCLUDES PROTEIN, SCC, TBC BONUS & EARLY CALVING BONUSES.

Each 0.05% above Co-op average on protein is worth 0.22 c/l extra.

NOTICE

Due to upgrading of IT systems in the Milk Laboratory in Ballaghaderreen there may be some disruption to the Test cards over the next number of weeks. Anybody wishing to get test results can sign up for the text message services or get results by ringing the Laboratory on 094 9860143.

LIVESTOCK & EQUIPMENT

For Sale: 6 unit Fullwood milking parlour, 6 Orby Feeders, 6 Mangers and a 350 milk tank Kilkenny.

Tel: 071 9851932. Owner out of milk production.

For Sale: Plate Cooler.
Tel: 087 0642765.

For Sale: 4 Unit Alfa Laval milking parlour. Plate Cooler and Water Heater. 1000 gl Packo Bulk Milk Tank, Double wash up sink, Submersible pit pump. 8 Mangers and all pit surround as new. Tel: 087 2239398.

For Sale: 2100 lt Mueller static milk tank with auto washer. Very good condition. Owner ceased milk production. Tel: 087 2767494.

For Sale: 600 gl Packo Ice Bank milk tank, Fr. Heifer due end of April and cattle trailer. Tel: 087 2654993.

For Sale: 15mth old Jersey Bull Dam is Ireland's highest classified Jersey. Tel: 087 2440032

For Sale: Plate cooler in tank (Lister), 4 unit Parlour - can be used for Pipeline in perfect condition.
Tel: 097 81810.

For Sale: 800 Lt Bulk tank in perfect

condition. Tel: 085 1142214 or 086 8981773.

For Sale: Friesian Heifer - 3 yr old - due mid April A.I. Angus.
Tel: 086 3661847.

For Sale: Pedigree Friesian Heifers and Cows. Tel: 087 2352633.

For Sale: 4 Springing Cows and a 2300 Lt Etscheid DX milk tank. Contact Sean Clarke, Killala on 087 2340197.

For Sale: Jersey-cross Friesian Heifer Calves. Increase you milk price and herd fertility. Contact: Brian Costello on 086 2329460.