

The impact the environment can have on mastitis control

Michelle McGrath, Assistant CellCheck Programme Manager

This is a relatively quiet time of year on most spring calving dairy farms and probably even autumn calving herds where calving is just beginning. Now is the time to make sure that any environment your cows will be in direct contact with for the winter is fit for purpose. Good hygiene standards need to be maintained all year round whether this is in the milking parlour or in the shed.

Do an assessment of your sheds and make a list of what repairs need to be done: roof, cubicles, mats, concrete yards. Think back to last spring when you may have noticed rain getting in, wetting the cubicles or a broken mat making it difficult to clean it. While these problems individually may appear minor, when they are all added together they dramatically increase the risk of a cow getting mastitis.

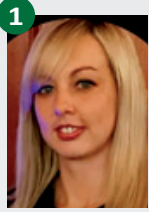
Checklist to help get the sheds winter ready.

- Powerwash and disinfect cubicles, calving and feeding areas.
- Have you enough cubicles (at least one per cow)? Can suitable alternative housing arrangements be made? If not, perhaps there is a vacant yard nearby that could be used?
- Service automatic scrapers and check if there are areas that may benefit from a new scraper being fitted?
- Fix leaking water troughs, broken cubicles, damaged mats, broken gutters.
- Are all drains working? Are new or additional drains needed in areas where water or muck gathers and not freely getting away.
- Check all lights are working both inside and outside sheds to make it easier and safer to move and monitor cows.
- Maintenance – do you need to replace gates or repair feeding barriers or other areas of the shed? Currently there is a delay in getting building materials, so you may need to plan well ahead.
- Make a list of items that need to be ordered- lime, pre calving minerals, teat sealer, vaccines, again there may be delays for various reasons so avoid leaving until the last minute.

For more information, see **Management Note L** in Farm Guidelines, now available online - [click here](#).

CELLCHECK REGIONAL COORDINATORS

A Resource and Point of Contact for *CellCheck* Activities in your Area



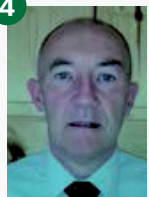
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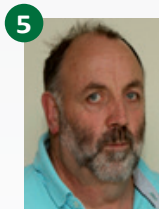
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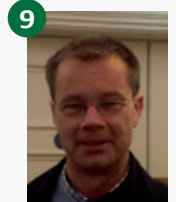
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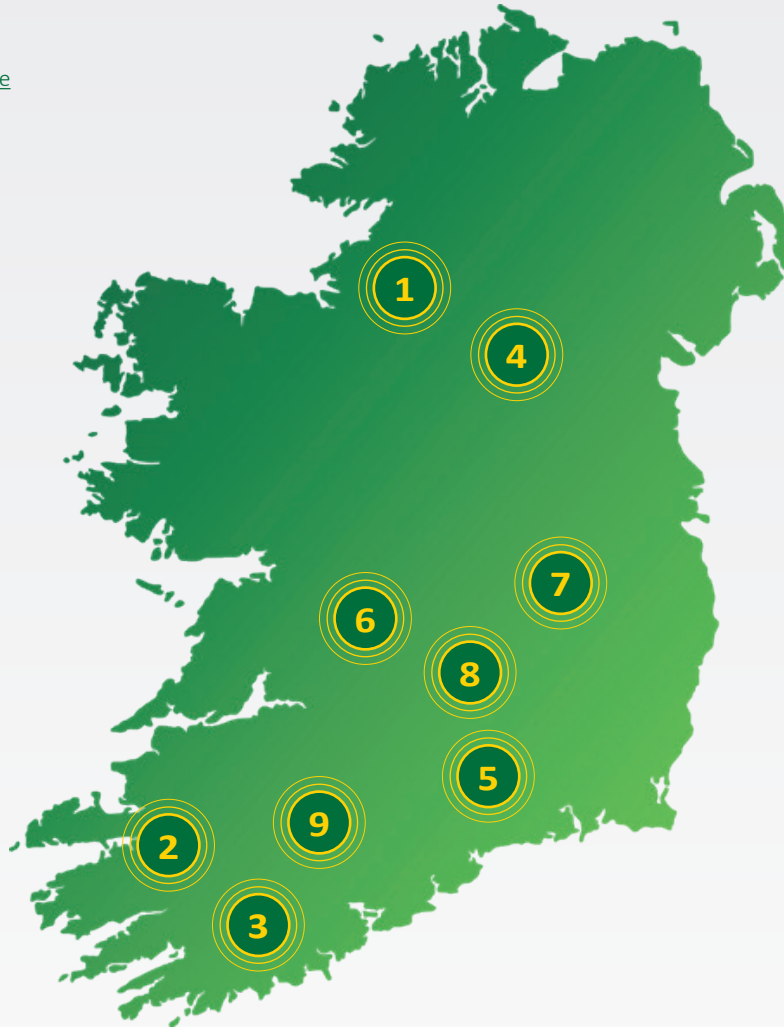
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