

Getting ready for the 2021 dry period

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On many farms this is the time of year, in advance of drying off, when culling lists are created. There are multiple reasons why cows are added to this list including infertility, lameness and old age. Having a persistently high SCC or being chronically infected with mastitis are also important reasons why cows should be culled. If a cow has had three or more clinical cases of mastitis during the current lactation, she should be added to the culling list as she is likely to be a source of bacteria and infection for other healthy cows. I know sometimes this is not an easy decision to make as one or more might be your favourite cow that has worked hard for you, but by culling these cows you are protecting the healthy young cows which are the future of your herd.

It is worth remembering that dry cow antibiotic treatment does not cure all existing infections and many studies have shown that for older cows with chronic infection, the cure rates are even lower. Some particular bacteria can be very difficult to treat successfully in any age group. Sometimes, culling cows is the only way to eliminate these infections. A small number of high cell count cows can have a significant effect on bulk tank SCC level and milk quality payments.

Milk recording is the most accurate way of identifying these chronically infected cows and any time of the year is a good time to start milk recording. In fact, there is a lot to be said for starting now when you are not under pressure with fresh calvers or training new heifers, as can be the case in the spring. If you need some extra motivation, recent studies have shown that along with many other benefits, herds that milk record have:

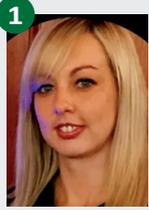
- 11.3% higher gross margins,
- 13.5% higher milk yields and
- 26.3% lower average bulk tank SCCs, than herds that didn't milk record.

So what are you waiting for?

For more information, contact your local Milk Recording service provider - Munster Bovine 022 43228, Progressive Genetics 046 9540606 or Tipperary Co-op 062 33111.

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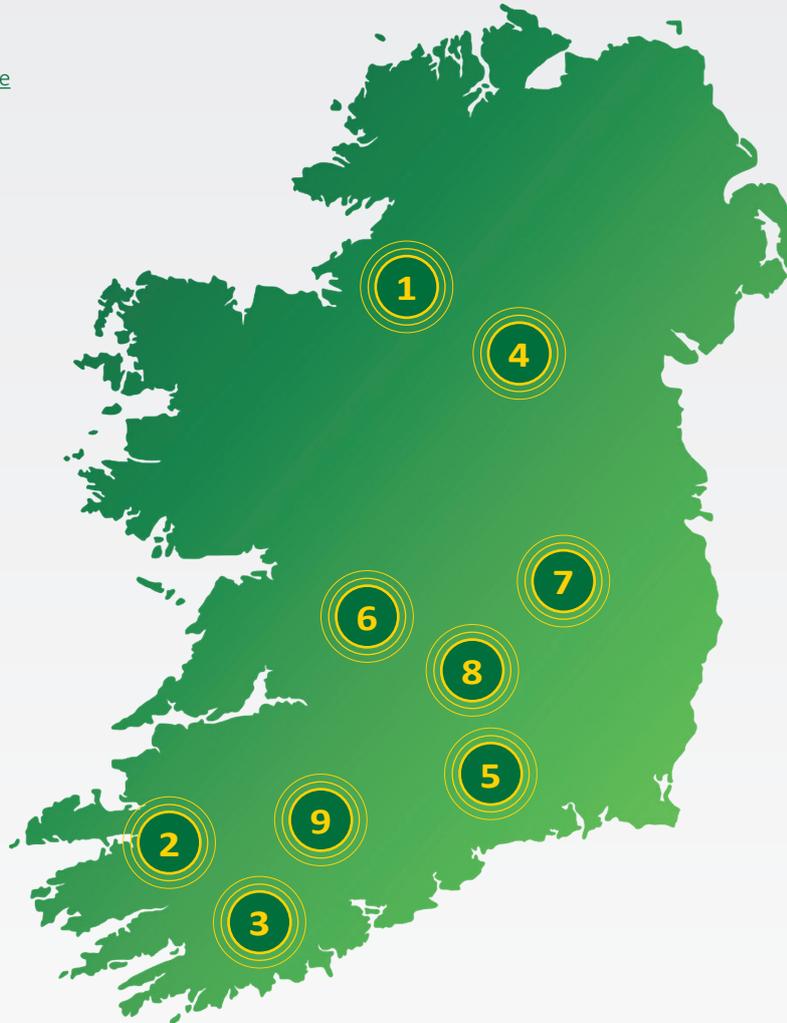
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