




Proposed Changes to Nitrates Derogation

An open consultation process at Government level on the proposed changes to the Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) which governs the Irish Nitrates Derogation is ongoing. Some suggested changes such as further restrictions to the spreading dates for slurry, possible bands for dairy cow nitrogen excretion based on milk yields and cultivation of stubble land straight after harvesting are concerning and certainly require further examination. Brett's support the objective of the NAP to continue the improvement of farm sustainability by improving water and air quality and farm biodiversity while acknowledging that farm systems must provide a sustainable income for the family farm and for future generations. The technical team in Brett's compiled a submission on the proposals in the Draft NAP and commented specifically under the following headings:

- Green cover on tillage areas
- Changes to slurry storage requirements
- Nitrogen excretion rates
- Proposed bands for dairy cows based on milk yield
- Consideration of timing of the implementation of any changes for 2022

At this stage of the consultation process farmers do not know the final changes, however it is a time for all tillage and livestock farms to brief themselves with possible changes and how it may influence their own enterprise going forward.



A Time for Reflection and Improved Efficiencies

Last month we highlighted the escalating costs of animal feed and fertiliser. As every farmer will identify with there are inflationary costs to every single item from the regular grocery shop to filling a tank of diesel. Energy costs are rising daily, and this is contributing to increased freight rates for all raw materials used across our industries.

'**Smart**' and '**Efficient**' are terms that are often spoken about but now is certainly the time to consider what you can do within your own farm gate to mitigate the effect of rising costs. During this autumn period we suggest you focus on the following:

- **Soil Fertility** – carry out soil tests to establish the nutrient requirements for tillage and grassland, this will allow you to make corrections to pH and make efficient use of purchased fertiliser.
- **Slurry** - optimise the use and get the full value of slurry.
- **Feed Plan** – all livestock farmers should test their silage, carry out a fodder budget and devise a feed plan based on the stock being wintered.
- **Water Usage** – it may sound basic but check for water leaks.
- **Electricity Usage** – energy costs on livestock farms increases when stock is housed.
- **Calibration** - Calibrate sprayers, fertiliser spreaders, diet feeders, milk feeding stations and parlour feeders to ensure judicious use of all inputs.
- **Silage Pits** – reduce losses at the pit face by using a shear grab to reduce the risk of secondary heating and spoilage.
- **Maize Silage** - when ensiling maize silage use adequate covers and an additive.
- **Milk Recording** – with ongoing focus on stocking rates under the Nitrates Derogation we recommend that dairy farmers milk record and use the records to target inefficient and problem cows for culling.



Reduce the Risk of Respiratory Infections in Housed Weanlings with EXTRA Protection

All livestock farmers are coming under increased pressure to reduce the usage of antibiotics on farms. Inappropriate use of antibiotics can lead to resistance, and everyone is conscious about using antibiotics more responsibly. Improving overall health and immunity of livestock by using feed additives reduces the risk of bacterial infections and in turn the requirement for antibiotics. Housed weanlings are always high risk for developing respiratory infections. This year we are including a natural product of essential oils and immunity boosters in our feed that can be fed to weanlings prior to housing and for approximately 3 weeks after housing.

What does this additive do?

- Increases mucus secretion to help clear the airways
- Provides antibacterial activity against pathogens and harmful bacteria that cause respiratory infections
- Improves immunity



Autumn Control of Ragwort

October is an ideal time to take control of noxious weeds such as Ragwort. For large infestations, controlling ragwort in the autumn allows for a second opportunity to spray in early spring, if required. Ragwort is a biennial weed forming a rosette of crumpled leaves with purple stems in year one and pushing up a long stem with yellow flowers in year two, producing flowers from June to October. Ragwort contains alkaloid poison which can cause liver damage in cattle and horses. This is a plant, which if not controlled can lead to a large infestation in fields in a short period.

Controlling Ragwort can take time, normally over a two-year period and it needs to be controlled at the rosette stage in year one. Plants that are at an advanced stage in yellow flower (year two) will need to be physically pulled (after heavy rain) and removed from the field and disposed of. If you find ragwort evident on your land, contact Brett's Agronomy Team for further advice.



Pay your account online and you could win an iPad worth €500!

Until December 2021, there are 3 more iPads worth €500 to be won! We will enter your name in a monthly draw if you pay your account online or over the phone by debit card. Credit card payments are not accepted. For further information, please call 056 7755300.

NEW PRODUCT

Our Weanling Rearer Cubes with EXTRA Protection are now available to order. Ask your Technical Sales Representative for more information.

Brett Brothers Ltd.,
Callan, Co. Kilkenny
Tel: 056 7755300

Brett Brothers Ltd.,
Windgap, Co. Kilkenny
Tel: 051 648204

Brett Brothers Ltd.,
Ardfinnan, Co. Tipperary
Tel: 052 7466208

Brett Brothers Ltd.,
Portlaw, Co. Waterford
Tel: 051 387396

