ArraTipp
Together we grow

FEBRUARY 2026 - Issue 2

NEWSLETTER

Launch of the Suir Catchment Improvement Programme

The Suir Catchment Better Farming for Water Action Plan was officially launched on Thursday 29 January, in the Anner Hotel Thurles, Dublin Rd Thurles, County Tipperary. The aim of the Suir Better Farming for Water Action Plan is to accelerate the adoption of the 8-Actions for Change on all farms to improve water quality in water bodies where agriculture is a significant pressure to Good or High Ecological Status.

The River Suir is one of eight priority catchments, alongside the Slaney, Barrow, Boyne, Nore, Blackwater, Lee, and Bandon-Ilen, identified by the EPA as a 'catchments of concern'. These catchments will have tailored action plans with clear targets and timelines to deliver measurable water quality improvements. Collectively, these campaigns are central to improving both local and national water quality.

The Suir Catchment Implementation Group is chaired by Edward Carr, a dairy farmer in the catchment, with ArraTipp and ABP Ireland as joint industry leads. The initiative brings together key stakeholders including farmers, Teagasc, agri-food industries, ACA, LAWPRO, local authorities, and the wider community, supported by a dedicated Teagasc Catchment Coordinator, Claire Mooney. Central to the programme is the implementation of the 8 Actions for Change.

The objective of the 'Better Farming for Water' campaign will be to support all farmers to reduce the loads of nitrogen, phosphate, sediment and pesticides entering our river network through either diffuse or point source pathways from agricultural sources. This will be achieved through the on-farm adoption of 8-Actions for Change, which involve better nutrient, farmyard and land management. These 8-Actions for Change provide a structured, relatable approach for farmers to effectively engage with improving water quality. They will help to advance the understanding of the need for actions, and instill confidence that the actions undertaken are worthwhile and will result in sustained, positive improvements in water quality.

L-R: Pat Dilon (Teagasc), Stephen Connolly (ABP), Edward Carr (ArraTipp), Noel Meehan (Teagasc), Claire Mooney (Teagasc), Eamonn O'Sullivan (ArraTipp)

L-R: Paddy Purcell (ArraTipp), Edward Carr (ArraTipp), Eamonn O'Sullivan (ArraTipp)

The 8-Actions for Change of the campaign aim to:

1. Reduce purchased nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) surplus per hectare.
2. Ensure soil fertility is optimal for lime, phosphorus and potassium.
3. Ensure application of fertiliser and organic manure at appropriate times and conditions.
4. Have sufficient slurry and soiled water storage capacity.
5. Manage and minimise nutrient loss from farmyards and roadways.
6. Fence off watercourses to prevent bovine access.
7. Promote targeted use of mitigation actions such as riparian margins, buffer strips and sediment traps to mitigate nutrient and sediment loss to water.
8. Maintain over-winter green cover to reduce nutrient leaching from tillage soils

Delivery of the Campaign

The **'Better Farming for Water'** campaign will be delivered by way of six key pillars:

1. Stakeholder engagement through a Multi-Actor Approach.
2. Building Awareness by acquisition and utilisation of water quality data.
3. Upskilling farmers, students, advisors, teachers and industry professionals.
4. An impactful Knowledge Transfer programme.
5. A supporting Research Programme to identify and develop effective mitigation actions.
6. A strong Communications Plan with the target audiences

Minimum trading threshold for Representative Committee

In accordance with the ArraTipp rule book, the board of directors have set a minimum trading threshold of 8 c/lt for representative committee members in 2026. As communicated at recent regional meetings, this means that anybody interested in applying for a seat on the new representative committee structure in 2027 must first meet the minimum trading threshold of 8 c/lt up to 31st December 2026. If you have any queries on your trading levels, please contact your local sales representative.

NEWS

Protecting Water Quality at Keith Mooney's Farm in Glasclon, Roscrea

Keith Mooney, ArraTipp Co-op milk supplier is farming at Glascloon, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary, with his wife Hilda and children Emma, Alex and Evan. Keith currently milks 120 friesian cows having converted to dairy farming in 2022 from suckler and sheep farming.
In early 2024 while constructing more slurry storage on his farm Keith contacted the Co-op looking for advice on how he could further improve and protect water quality on his farm. Michael O'Dwyer, Farm Sustainability Advisor at ArraTipp Co-op visited the farm and together with Keith drew up a Rainwater Management Plan and submitted an application for funding under the Farming for Water EIP.

Settlement Tank under Construction

Funding was applied for a number of measures including Rainwater Management Plan, Farmer Training course, Nitrogen Surplus, Slurry Testing and as rainwater runoff from cleaned concreted yards and the farm roadway were deemed to be potential sources of nutrient and sediment loss to the nearest watercourse it was decided to construct a Farmyard Settlement Tank and a 50 meter Willow Filter Bed with fencing, as well as purchasing a Farmyard Bucket and Brush. The Bucket and Brush removes most of the solid material from the concreated yards and farm roadway while the Settlement Tank further removes sediment from the rainwater runoff. Liquid from the Settlement Tank then flows through the Willow Filter Bed where the densely planted Willow Trees remove dissolved nutrients from the water before it enters a water course.
A rainwater management plan must be provided with all applications. It is a detailed evaluation of the farm, mapping water flow. It identifies at risk areas where nutrient or sediment could enter waterways. It plays significant role in helping where to implement measures. Applicants receive a once off payment of €250 on submission of the plan
The farmer training course involves attendance at a 3 hour on farm course organised by the Co-op. It provides farmers with information on water quality, how water pollution occurs, and actions to mitigate pressures on water. Payment of €156 is received on completion of the course.
The Nitrogen Surplus measure follows a nutrient accounting approach on the farm. Farm gate inputs of nitrogen are calculated minus farmgate outputs of nitrogen to give a nitrogen balance per hectare figure and Nitrogen Surplus for the participating farm. Applicants will receive €250 on submission of Nitrogen Surplus figure.
Slurry testing informs the farmer of the nutrient content of the slurry enabling more targeted nutrient application. Payment is made for the testing of up to 4 samples of slurry at a rate of €70 per sample.
Completed Settlement Tank with two agitation and emptying points

Completed Settlement Tank with two agitation and emptying points

Keith Mooney (left) viewing the Willow Filter Bed January 2026 with Fionn Ryan Mulqueen (right)

The Farmyard Bucket and Brush is funded at 50% of the cost up to a max of €2000 (ex.VAT) while the Farmyard Settlement Tank is 100% funded for the cost up to a maximum of €6500 (ex. VAT).
The funding for the Willow Filter Bed which must be at least 4 meters wide is at a rate of €34 per meter in length up to a maximum of 200 meters. Additional funding of €6.75 per meter for fencing the Willow Filter Bed is available as well as an extra contribution of €200 towards the use of an excavator in the construc-

Willow trees sown in April 2025

The Willow Trees and fencing in June 2025

FEBRUARY
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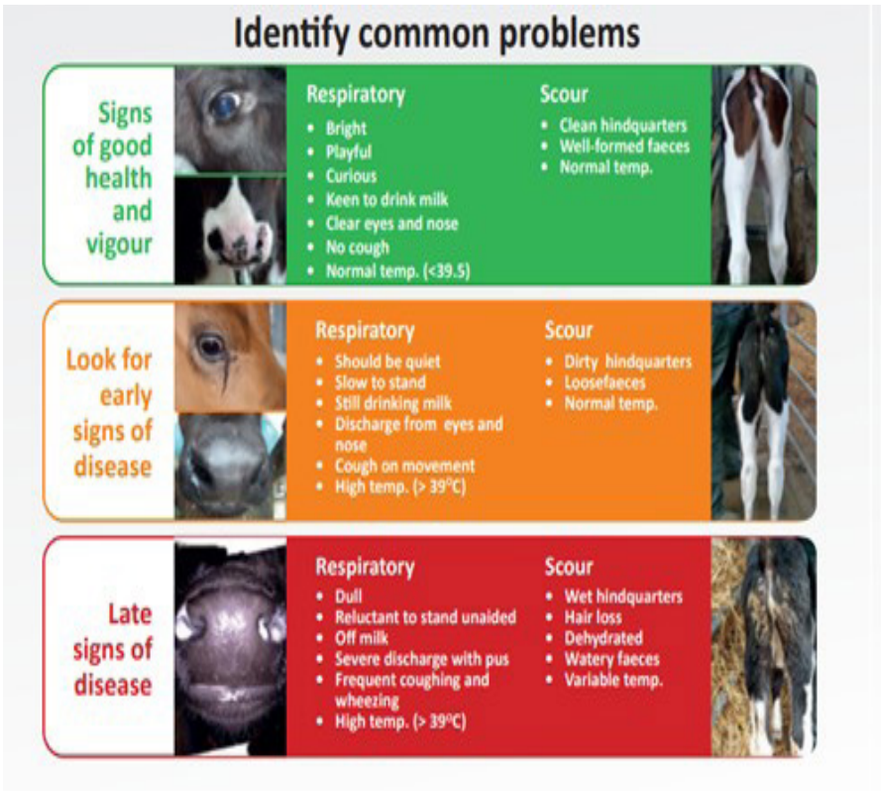
tion.
The application for funding was approved in late 2024 so Keith proceeded with the construction of the Farmyard Settlement Tank and purchase of the Farmyard Bucket and Brush. In April 2025 the Willow Filter Bed was constructed, Willow trees were planted and the whole area was securely fenced. All works carried out by Keith were 100% funded except for the Farmyard Bucket and Brush which was 50% funded.
ArraTipp Co-op wishes to compliment Keith Mooney for his initiative in implementing the extra measures to protect water quality on his farm. We also thank Keith for recently hosting a Farming for Water Training Course on his farm and allowing us to showcase his project as an example of a successful Farming for Water EIP funded project at farm level. For any more information regarding the Farming for Water EIP, contact your ArraTipp Co-op Farm Sustainability Advisor Michael at 0872667153 or David at 086201411.



NEWS

How to Resolve High Chlorate / TCM in Milk

Chlorates can arise when drums of caustic chlorine-based detergents are stored on a farm for long periods of time. The chlorine breaks down in the drum and Chlorates are formed. The presence of Chlorates in milk powder is of concern for infant formula manufacturers as they affect the iodine metabolism in infants and are therefore a concern to the industry.

We are well below the specifications required when it comes to residues, but it is about marketing and remaining competitive alongside other countries and staying slightly ahead of them.

The allowable limit for Chlorates in milk is 0.007 mg/kg. ArraTipp will be testing all suppliers for Chlorates in 2026. Any supplier with a Chlorate level greater than the allowable limit will receive a farm visit from their Farm Relations Advisor to review farm wash routines and will be required to implement a chlorine-free wash programme. Suppliers should only use detergents and teat disinfectants from the Teagasc recommended lists.

TCM residues in dairy products are of significance in butter. From a marketing perspective, these levels are of increasing concern among ArraTipp key international customers.

The allowable limit for TCM in milk is 0.00124mg/kg and this is influenced by cleaning and disinfection routines which use detergents containing chlorine.

How to maintain low Chlorate and TCM levels:

- Ensure that corrects cleaning procedures are in place and adhered to
- Use 14L (3 gallons) per milking unit to rinse the plant after the main wash cycle.
- Use approved detergent products at the recommended rates and avoid using products with any chlorine content.
- Buy in smaller quantities of detergent use products as close as possible to the manufacturing date and avoid stockpiling where possible.
- Store products in a cool dark place away from sunlight.

Managing SCC during the calving period

Tips for SCC management during the calving season.

- The periods for highest risk of new mastitis infections occurring are 2-3 weeks pre-calving and the first month post calving
- Particular attention to housing is needed at this time to reduce the risk of new mastitis infections. Clean and lime cubicles twice daily and regular cleaning and disinfection of calving pens is advised.
- The milking parlour is also an area that can contribute to new mastitis infections particularly in early lactation. Ensure liners and rubber ware have been changed where needed and vacuum pump and pulsators are all working correctly.
- When managing freshly calved cows the following steps are advised
  - Have freshly calved cows clearly identified. Have a system to identify when cows are calved long enough to be added to the tank, using different colour sprays, legs bands or having a white board in the parlor/pit to keep an eye on calving dates. In larger herds it may be possible to milk freshly calved cows in a separate group from the main herd.
  - Thoroughly wash and disinfect gloves before and after handling freshly calved cows – this prevents spreading any potential mastitis infection between cows

  Pre-spray with an approved teat disinfectant
  - Check each quarter for clots before putting on the cluster. Be aware, some teat sealers may be seen in the first of milk for a number of days after calving.
  - Spray teats well after milking using 15ml of teat dip or spray per cow each milking and ensure each teat is fully covered. Teat spraying is one of the key factors when controlling SCC and mastitis. Effective teat spray helps to close the teat end after milking which prevents bacteria from entering the teat canal and causing an infection. Teat spray kills any bacteria that may be present on the skin which reduces the risk of infection. Also, some teat dips have emollients included (which act as a mosituriser) and help keep the teat skin and teat ends in good condition and prevent cracks in the skin.
  - California Milk Test (CMT)/ Paddle test freshly calved cows before adding them to the bulk tank. This helps identify potential problem cows early.
  - It is said that first lactation cows have higher SCC due to the stress of calving/mixing with the main herd/change in surrounds. However, it is important to note that first lactation cows account for the highest proportion of mastitis infections in Irish herds. Animals that are stressed will have a slightly higher SCC in all four quarters, as the whole body is stressed. Animals that have SCC in only one or two quarters most likely have a subclinical mastitis infection.
- Problem cows
  - Have mastitis cows clearly identified. Thoroughly disinfect gloves after handling infected cows. Disinfect clusters, using a peracetic acid solution, after milking to prevent infection spreading to the next cow. In some cases, it may be easier to have mastitis cows separated from the main herd and milk at the end.
  - Keep a record of mastitis cows – cows with recurring infections throughout the lactation should be considered for culling as they are a source of infection for healthy cows.
- Withdrawal dates on dry cow tubes
  - Check withdrawal periods on dry cow tubes used. Early calving cows may have a shorter dry period than the withdrawal dry period length of the dry cow tube, particularly where cows were milked on late last December.

Important to note the withdrawal periods on dry cow tubes if milking once a day after calving - the withdrawal period of some dry cow tubes is based on the number of milkings after calving not the hours after calving

NEWS

Benefits of MILK RECORDING in 2026

To get the best use from your milk recording aim to complete the first milk recording within 60 days after calving, this will give the best indication of how well the dry period went. The CellCheck Farm Summary report on ICBF Herd Plus gives a breakdown of mastitis control over the dry period and at calving

The new infection rate and cure rate over the dry period are the best metrics to gauge the success of the dry period.

The new infection rate is the percentage of cows in the herd that had a SCC less 200,000 prior to calving and are greater than 200,000 in the current recording. The target new infection rate is less than 10% in cows and less than 15% in heifers.

Similarly, the cure rates is the percentage of cows in the herd that had a SCC greater than 200,000 prior to calving and are less than 200,000 in the current recording. The target cure rate is greater than 85%

A new infection rate higher than the target indicates cows are picking up new infections either during the dry period or around the calving. Review dry period housing and calving pens as these may be the main problem areas.

A cure rate lower than the target indicates dry cow treatments were not effective. Bacteriological culture of problem cows may help identify the cause of infections and ensure the appropriate antibiotic treatment is being used. However it is important to note that persistently high cows (ie. Cows with 2 or more consecutive recordings with SCC greater than 200,000) are considered chronically infected cows and typically have very poor cure rates. Chronically infected cows should be removed from the herd as they act as a reservoir of infection for the rest of the herd. If there are chronically infected cows in the herd, disinfecting the cluster and milkers hands after milking these cows is essential to help prevent the spread of infections to the rest of the herd.

Things to note in the first milk recording after calving:

Cows can have slightly elevated SCC after calving. However, SCC should have returned to normal levels approximately 2 weeks after calving. SCC over 200,000 after this time is an indication of a subclinical mastitis infection. A CMT test or paddle test is a useful tool to help identify problem quarters.

In general, a herd target of less than 15% of cows in the herd with an SCC greater than 200,000.

Enviroflex to support cashflow in 2026

How Bank of Ireland's Enviroflex loan can support cashflow in times of low milk prices

Pat Byrnes, Bank of Ireland's Agricultural Development Manager based in Munster, explains how an Enviroflex loan can help farmers with cashflow concerns in 2026.

Recognising the significant reduction in milk prices over the past number of months, Bank of Ireland stands ready to support farmers who may be experiencing cashflow concerns during 2026.

A key product to support farmers is Enviroflex, which is available to all dairy farmers who are part of ArraTipp co-op sustainability scheme. It rewards farmers who implement sustainable actions on their farms through discounted interest rates.

When farmers adopt measures on their farms that reduce their environmental footprint (i.e. reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving biodiversity, water quality and animal welfare), they avail of the lower rate loan. Recognising financial sustainability, a key feature of Enviroflex is that it can be used to provide cashflow support during periods of low milk prices.

How Enviroflex can support farm cashflow

Over the past couple of years, thanks to solid profitability and strong cashflows, many dairy farmers have been investing on their farms using their own funds to purchase machinery, build sheds or add additional slurry storage or new silage pits. Bank of Ireland recognises that these investments have a lifespan beyond one year and are suited to financing over longer terms.

Where farmers are expecting cashflow tightness during 2026 as a result of investing own funds on the farm over the past 3 years (since January 2023), they can apply to Bank of Ireland for an Enviroflex loan. Once farmers are part of ArraTipp sustainability scheme and repayment capacity is evident, Bank of Ireland will examine suitability to "retro finance" these investments already in place.

Examples:

- Patrick invested €80,000 own funds to extend a calf shed in 2023. He can apply for a €80,000 Enviroflex loan to retrospectively fund the calf shed over a 7 year period.
- Mary invested €50,000 own funds to build additional slurry storage. She can apply for a €50,000 Enviroflex loan to retrospectively fund the slurry storage.
- John invested €30,000 own funds upgrading water / roadways. He can apply for a €30,000 Enviroflex loan to retrospectively fund this work over a 2-3 year period.

The current* rate is 4.49% (variable), with a minimum loan amount of €10,000. The loan term is up to 7 years if loan is unsecured. Bank of Ireland offers unsecured loans up to €120,000. For loans over €120,000 or where security is required, a term of up to 15 years is available. Standard BOI lending terms and conditions apply.

For further information contact your Co-op Representative or Bank of Ireland:

- Eamon Ryan ,BOI, Nenagh 087 1954266
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*= Rate correct as of 05/02/2026