



Feeding Options for Autumn/Winter 2026

With the rain finally arriving, there is renewed potential for grass growth through September and into early October, provided conditions remain favourable. While the current situation is challenging, making the most of any late-season growth will be important. Continuing to use feeds such as forage extenders can help reduce demand on your grass and winter forage and may even create an opportunity to take a late third cut where conditions allow.

Cows are highly adaptable and can perform well on a wide range of feed sources when diets are properly balanced. If the summer has resulted in a shortfall in your winter forage reserves, it is important to look at the alternatives available now rather than waiting until supplies become tight.

Speak to your Area Sales Manager or Milk Advisor to assess your forage position and put a plan in place for the months ahead. Options such as straw, forage replacer feeds, native cereals and soya hulls can all be used as part of a balanced winter-feeding strategy, helping to make up any shortfall while maintaining cow performance.

There are a few important pieces of information needed before decisions are made on feeding dry cows and weanlings this winter.

What groups of animals will be fed?

Cows milking on over the winter, dry cows and in calf heifers from 1st of December until calving on average 80 days later, cows milking until 1st December, In calf heifers until 1st of December, weanlings until housing and from housing to turnout.

Once you have a basic feed budget done for forage stocks, it is advisable to do a more detailed budget for the different groups of animals to make sure you can source and buy the concentrate you need. Realistically, the cow and weanling need half of their daily intake in forage to be safe. Cull cows are another group that potentially could be sold out of the parlour to reduce demand on fodder and increase cashflow.

What body condition are the cows in?

Do they need to gain weight or be maintained. It makes sense to gain condition on cows when they are milking; feed enough concentrate when they are milking to add condition and also consider once a day milking if cell count

Table 1: Dry cow in good condition and good silage. Feed per day

Dry cow BCS 3, 70 days dry	Enough silage	Save 30%	Save 50%	Use Straw
Kgs Silage DMD 68-70, Dry Matter 24%	50	30	25	20
Kgs Dry matter	12	7.2	6	4.8
Kgs DOC Dry Cow Ration 16%	0	2	3	5
Kgs Soya Hulls		3	3.5	
Kgs Straw				2
Kgs Coop Source Dry cow mineral	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15

Table 2: Weanling in good condition and gaining weight on good silage. Feed per day.

Weanling 250-300 kgs	Enough silage	Save 30%	Save 50%	use straw
Kgs Silage DMD 68-70, Dry Matter 24% - Fresh Weight	25	15	12.5	10
Kgs Dry matter	6	3.6	3	2.4
Kgs DOC heifer rearer	1	3	2.5	3.75
Kgs Soya Hulls		0	1	0
Kgs Straw				1

Table 3: Total feed required for 50 dry cows in good condition and good silage for one day.

Feed for 50 cows for one day	Enough silage	Save 30%	Save 50%	use straw
Silage 68-70 DMD, 24% Dry matter Kgs - Fresh Weight	2500	1500	1250	1000
Silage (Number of Bales 600 kg)	4.2	2.5	2.1	1.7
DOC Dry cow ration 16% kgs	0	100	150	250
Soya Hulls Kgs	0	150	175	0
Straw (Number of BALES 150 kg)	0	0	0	0.7
Kgs Coop Source Dry cow mineral	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5

Tables 4 and 5 propose diets for cows in lower body condition (BCS 2.75) and weanlings on target in three different scenarios on poorer silage; DMD 65-68% , Dry matter 22%. For these diets it is not advised to try and cut out too much forage as the concentrate levels are getting excessively high.

is <200. Cows that are in low condition (BCS 2.5-2.75) heading into this winter will need higher levels of concentrate particularly where silage quality is poor.

How good is the silage?

The silage needs to be tested so a diet can be balanced for energy, protein and dry matter intake. This is particularly important if there is a risk of cows heading into the winter with low body condition.

The quality of the silage will also determine what level of feeding the weanlings need.

Have you enough cubicles and feed space?

Feed space will be the biggest determinant of the success or failure to restrict feed cows and weanlings this winter.

The levels of feeding will be based on the animals' requirements and the amount of silage available.

Table 1 and 2 propose diets for dry cow and weanlings for four different scenarios: having enough silage, saving a third, saving half and using straw. Tables 1 and 2 assume the animals are in good order; cows in BCS 3 and weanlings at target weight 250 kgs on the 1st of December. The silage quality is good. Table 3 shows how much feed you need for one day for 50 dry cows.

Table 4: Cows in poorer BCS and wetter silage – Cows Dry For 70 days

Dry cow BCS 2.75, 70 days dry	Enough silage	Save 30%	Use Straw
Kgs Silage 65-68DMD, 22% Dry Matter - Fresh Weight	45	30	25
Kgs Dry matter	9.9	6.6	5.5
Kgs Tipp Coop Dry cow ration 16%	2.5	2.75	4
Kgs Soya Hulls		3	2
Kgs Straw			1.5
Kgs Coop Source Dry cow mineral	0.15	0.15	0.15

Table 5: Weanlings on target fed poorer silage

Weanling 250-300 kgs	Enough Silage	Save 30%	Use Straw
Kgs Silage DMD 65-68, Dry Matter 22%	20	15	10
Kgs Silage Dry matter	4.4	3.3	2.2
Kgs DOC Heifer Rearer	2.5	3	3.5
Kgs Soya Hulls		1	1
Kgs Straw			1

Table 6: Feed for 50 cows in poorer condition on poorer silage for one day; cows dry for 70 days

Feed for 50 cows for one day	Enough silage	Save 30%	Use Straw
Kgs Silage 65-68 DMD 22% Dry matter	2250	1500	1250
Silage (Number of BALES 600 kg)	3.8	2.5	2.1
DOC Dry cow ration 16% kgs	125	137.5	200
Soya Hulls Kgs	0	150	100
Straw (Number of BALES 150 kg)	0	0	0.5
Coop Source Dry cow mineral kg	7.5	7.5	7.5

Recommendations:

- It takes time for weight loss and gains to become apparent on dry cows, in calf heifers, and weanlings. It is very useful to have an objective person view your animals every month during the winter season. Ask your advisers, discussion group members, or vet to help. A half hour every month spent making sure the cows are on the right track, can avoid a disaster at calving. Remember that the cows are the best judge of the feed and often silage that reads well doesn't feed well or feeds too well. Be flexible and adjust to the conditions.
- The diets are limited to conserve feed. As the forage levels being fed in some of the scenarios are quite low, it is important that feed space is not restricted. Ideally, there needs to be a feed space for every cow and in calf heifer. So, 7 cows to a 15'9" bay. Bullying at the feed fence will result in variable intakes across the group and there is a risk of cows getting thin.
- Buy some round feeders and feed weaker and thin cows in a separate area.
- Limit feeding silage and straw, be consistent and feed at the same time each day to avoid stressing out the cows. Keep the lights off and leave the cows settle.
- Also, if feed barrier space is limited, invest in feed troughs to feed meal in a separate area. If cows or weanlings are inclined to rush for feed, spread a little sand at turning areas and around the troughs to prevent animals falling and breaking legs and hips. If the weather is icy, use salt on the yard with the sand.
- Feeding straw with silage is difficult unless it is fed with a diet wagon. It is better to feed the straw separately to appetite on alternate days or every third day.
- Feed the dry cow mineral with the meal to ensure they get it.
- If feeding high rates of concentrate increase the volumes gradually (start at 3 kg and increase by 1 kg every 3 days).
- Hulls and pulps are 'safe' feeds as they are high fibre feeds and the energy they provide comes largely from the fibre source and not starch. This means that it is relatively safe to feed these at high levels; 5-6 kgs. The issue is often palatability particularly with unmolassed beet pulp. The proposed diets use the hulls and pulps to replace silage and concentrate to provide the protein and better-quality energy requirements for the cow.
- Fodder budgets and Nutritional advice for diets are available to all. Please contact your Area Sales Manager or Farm Relation Advisors

Changes to the SCC / Sustainability Payment Calculation and Winter Bonus.

Change to SCC and Sustainability Payment Calculation:

Going forward, both the SCC Bonus and Sustainability Bonus will move from a flat rate per litre of milk to a € per kg of milk solids basis. August 2026 milk supplies will be the first month in which these changes will be reflected in supplier payments.

The new calculation will therefore better recognise and reward suppliers producing milk with higher levels of milk solids.

Change to Winter Bonus:

The Board of ArraTipp has revised the Winter Bonus. The revised payment will provide an increased incentive for milk supplied during January and February, while maintaining the existing December

payment for the 2026/2027 season only.

The Winter Bonus for 2026/2027 will be:

- December: 2 Cpl
- January: 7 Cpl
- February: 5 Cpl
- From the 2027/2028 milk supply season, the Winter Bonus will only apply to January and February, at a rate of 7cpl in January and 5cpl in February.
- Bonuses are paid on all milk supplied, once the required manufacturing milk quality standards are met. If you have any queries regarding these changes or require further information, please contact a member of the ArraTipp Farm Relations Team.

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Cull Cow Decisions: Improving Herd Health and Profitability

Compiled by Elaine Dennehy, Veterinarian Consultant, Munster Bovine

Grass management has been particularly challenging this year. In many areas turnout was delayed, allowing grass to grow too strong before it could be grazed. Then, heatwave conditions during the summer slowed grass growth significantly, leaving many farmers facing grass shortages and difficult grazing decisions.

With cull cow prices remaining strong, now is an ideal time to take stock of your herd and identify cows that are no longer contributing to profitability. By off-loading some of these 'passengers' now, it reduces demands on autumn grass availability and winter silage stocks.

Once the breeding season has finished, the first priority is to identify empty cows. This can be done by either pregnancy scanning the herd or by PAG (pregnancy-associated glycoprotein) testing using milk samples collected during a routine milk recording. PAG testing is a very convenient and accurate way of diagnosing pregnancy in individual animals. Both pregnancy scanning and PAG testing can accurately diagnose pregnancy from approximately 1 month post breeding.

Cows identified as empty are top of the culling list.

The next cows that need to be considered are problem cows – cows with high SCC, repeated cases of mastitis, lame cows or any cows with chronic health conditions.

Using Milk Recording to Identify Problem Cows:

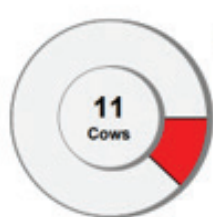
Cows with persistently high SCC readings are typically chronically infected cows and are likely to spread infection in the parlour. These cows pose a serious risk to your healthy cows and are unlikely to cure regardless of treatment. Regular milk recording is essential to identify these chronically infected cows. Persistently infected cows are listed in a table in the Milk Recording Lifetime Report, see below:

Another very useful report to identify these repeat offenders is the new Coloured SCC Report, which is sent by email following every milk recording. It shows the previous six SCC results for the herd in question and is colour-

Persistently Infected Cows



Somatic Cell Count - SCC



Persistently Infected

These cows have two consecutive tests over 200,000 SCC in the current lactation or if this is their first test after calving they did not cure over the dry period. % of Cows with Persistent Infections in your herd was 12%; target is less than 8%.

- Avoid spread from these cows to the non-infected cows in the herd.
- Implement parlour controls; pre and post spraying and/or cluster flush or dipping.
- Consider culling if more than one quarter is infected and they remain persistently high, or drying off the quarter if a single quarter is infected.

Cow ID	Calving Date	Lact	Current SCC 16/06/2025	% Tank SCC	SCC 16/06/2025	SCC 11/04/2025	SCC 23/11/2024	SCC Last test previous lact	SCC Average previous lact
1640	25/02/2025	6	1796	10.6	4822	738	179	179	136
1762	21/05/2025	5	707	6.0	290		124	124	49
1535	06/06/2025	7	667	5.4	9999		229	229	222
1747	15/03/2025	5	583	4.3	510	378	1349	1349	719
1930	26/03/2025	3	419	4.0	981	823	49	49	52
1494	29/04/2025	8	505	3.0	253		243	243	128
2012	16/02/2025	2	241	2.0	814	245	189	189	602
2014	10/02/2025	2	327	1.8	233	179	419	419	247
2054	27/03/2025	1	229	1.7	234	270			
1532	12/02/2025	7	219	1.5	334	134	76	76	200
2147	14/05/2025	1	243	1.4	479				



Tel: 022 43228
web: munsterbovine.ie

Herd Details	
Herd Owner:	SEAMUS CRONIN
Herd Number:	H1770049
Report Date:	27/11/2025
No. of Milk Recording tests completed:	7
No. of Cows in report:	68

Summary									
Cow ID	Jumbo	Lact	Days in Milk	SCC Lact Status	25/11/2025 MILK RECORDING	21/09/2025 MILK RECORDING	23/09/2025 MILK RECORDING	20/08/2025 MILK RECORDING	24/06/2025 MILK RECORDING
372224294271148	1148	6	284		3969	186	231	343	158
372224294221259	1259	4	282		1281	116	94	125	23
IE191482460923	923	9	277		1382	900	864	247	160
372224294281132	1132	6	228		779	1051	386	415	1144
372224294231375	1375	3	231		345	154	79	32	28
372224294251278	1278	3	277		322	203	208	287	72
372224294221341	1341	3	218		220	274	73	60	124
372224294261213	1213	5	250		302	251	108	41	22
IE191482460907	907	9	287		213	87	49	53	23
372224294251055	1055	6	217		111	71	42	74	22

coded, making trends easy to identify.

Another tool which will be available to herdowners very soon is Munster Bovine's new Probability of Future Cure Report. This report is a decision support tool devised by the Munster Bovine Herd Health team in conjunction with FarmOps. This report will be available after every milk recording and gives every cow with a high SCC a probability of cure which indicates the likelihood of the cow having a low SCC in future tests. This probability is calculated based on the cow's SCC history, her age and the time of year.

Voluntary vs Involuntary Culls:

Once cows that need to be removed are earmarked for culling (involuntary culls), then attention can turn to voluntary culls or those cows which can be removed for poor performance. Factors to consider for these cows are calving date, production, profitability, genetics and parity.

Most herds aim for a replacement rate of around 20%. While it is not always possible to be in a position to remove cows for economic performance alone, removing these cows will ultimately lift the average

High SCC Cows - Probability of Future Cure

Herd: C1150578

Latest SCC Recording Date: 11-06-2026

What's in this report?

This report includes cows recorded having a SCC of 200,000 or greater at their most recent test. Based on age, SCC history and time of year, each cow is given a probability of cure, which indicates the likelihood of this cow having a low SCC in future tests.

Jumbo	Lactation Number	Days In Milk	SCC	Number of tests >200,000 SCC in previous lactation / Number of tests	Number of tests >200,000 SCC in current lactation / Number of tests	Probability of cure*
1235	7	104	507	4 / 4	2 / 2	10%
1176	8	74	1514	2 / 4	2 / 2	10%
1017	10	102	382	2 / 4	2 / 2	10%
1375	5	120	743	1 / 4	2 / 2	30%
1309	5	56	210	2 / 4	1 / 1	30%
1236	7	95	398	2 / 4	1 / 2	40%
1019	10	106	297	0 / 4	1 / 2	70%

*Probability prediction calculations are based on the analysis of approx. 5 million high cell count records across 500,000 cows

How to use this information

Cows with a low probability of cure are likely to be chronically infected cows that are spreading infection in the parlour. These cows are very unlikely to respond to antibiotic treatment either during lactation or over the dry period. While these cows remain in the herd, they should be managed carefully to prevent the spread of infection. This includes using effective post-milking teat disinfection, cluster dipping, or milking infected cows last.

production of the herd.

Again, milk recording is crucial to aid decision making here. The milk recording and lifetime summary report brings all a cow's milk recording results into one € figure and ranks cows according to this figure. Cows have a margin per day for both the current lactation and for their lifetime. The bottom 20% of performers are highlighted in red for both categories. The first cows to be considered for culling due to performance are cows that are red both in the current lactation and over their lifetime. See highlighted cows below:

The decisions you make in the next couple of months will have a major impact on the overall performance of your herd, not just into the next lactation but for years to come.

Tips for keeping control of SCC coming into late lactation

- Cows with a high somatic cell count near the end of lactation should be segregated from healthy cows and milked last, or clusters should be dipped post milking. High cell count cows that have gained a new infection in the current lactation can benefit from a longer dry period. Using milk recording can be beneficial in identifying these cows.
- Keeping all environments clean reduces the risks of gaining new infections. This includes the parlour and concrete collecting yards.
- Clusters should only be put on clean dry teats. As the weather begins to deteriorate teats might need to be

cleaned more regularly. Post milking teat spray is also effective in reducing new infections.

- If cows are being housed hygiene standards are important to reduce the risks of infection. Cubicles should be cleaned twice daily where possible. Allocated cubicles should be more than one per cow.
- Two weeks before drying off can be high risk for new infections. Methods in reducing milk yield should be implemented such as cutting out concentrate feeding. Milking cows with a high scc once a day should be avoided as it increases infection. Before drying off, cows should be yielding no more than 15kg per day.

NEWS

Preparing for a Local Authority Farm Inspection

Local authorities across the country carry out farm inspections under the National Agricultural Inspection Programme (NAIP) and is a core part of Ireland's approach to protecting water quality from agricultural pressures by inspecting farms for compliance with the Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) regulations.

Inspections occur in priority areas where water quality is not meeting good status.

The recently published NAIP report for 2025 highlighted that 67% of the 4,315 inspections were found to comply with the GAP regulations. The remaining 43% were found to be non-compliant and required follow up actions by the farmers to resolve the issues identified.

Uncontrolled runoff from farmyard manure (FYM) was by far the largest issue, significantly higher than any other category.

Other frequently identified problems included inadequate gutters and downpipes and failure to keep clean and dirty water properly segregated, silage storage, slurry storage, and slurry management, while issues relating to organic fertiliser spreading were also identified.

Overall, the findings indicate that controlling runoff, managing dirty water, and maintaining adequate manure, silage and slurry storage infrastructure remain the key priorities for reducing agricultural impacts on water quality.

Farmers can take actions to reduce the likelihood of non-compliances on their farms by making improvements on areas like repairing damaged gutters and downpipes, improved clean water diversions, improved collection and storage facilities for organic manures, observing the closed period and required buffer margins when spreading slurry and supplementary feeding.

Farmers looking for assistance pre or post a NAIP inspection are advised to contact their local Co-op sustainability advisor, Michael - 0872667153, David - 0862014144



IRISH DAIRY

A TRUE IRISH LEGEND



The National Dairy Council has launched 'A True Irish Legend', a new advertising campaign celebrating Irish dairy, Ireland's pasture-based farming system and the people behind it. Inspired by Ireland's rich tradition of myths and legends, the campaign takes a playful look at what makes Irish dairy unique. Bringing together Cú Chulainn, one of Ireland's most iconic legendary warriors, and Seánie, a young farming boy.

Through humour and storytelling, 'A True Irish Legend' aims to challenge the common myths and misconceptions around dairy, helping consumers understand where Irish dairy comes from, how it is produced and the role Ireland's temperate climate plays in creating a distinctive pasture-based farming system.

The campaign also encourages consumers to look for the **National Dairy Council Guarantee**, a simple way to identify milk and cream produced and packaged in the Republic of Ireland.

'A True Irish Legend' launches nationwide today across television, streaming, radio, digital, social media and outdoor advertising, bringing the story of Ireland's dairy farmers and their grass-fed cows to audiences across the country.

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