Quinns
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TECHNICAL NEWSLETTER November 2026

Dry Cow Management This Winter



The dry cow period is a vital opportunity to prepare cows for a successful calving and lactation. Good transition cow management helps maintain immunity, improve fertility and maximise milk production, while reducing the risk of metabolic disorders.

Silage Quality is Key

Dry cow silage should not simply be the lowest DMD silage on the farm. High potassium (K) levels, often associated with slurry or fertiliser applications, can increase the risk of milk fever and related health problems. Ideally, dry cow silage should come from swards that have received little or no potassium fertiliser. **Mineral analysis is essential** to identify potential risks.

Key Steps for Successful Dry Cow Management

1. **Analyse silage:** Check potassium levels to ensure silage is suitable for dry cows.
2. **Monitor body condition**: Aim for a BCS of approximately 3.0–3.25 at calving. Thin cows may require earlier drying off and additional feeding, while overconditioned cows face increased risks of ketosis and fatty liver.
3. **Feed quality precalver minerals**: **Quinns Precalver Elite** and **Supreme** provide essential minerals and trace elements to support cow health.
4. **Manage milk fever risk:** Magnesium chloride flakes may help counteract high-potassium diets when included in a properly balanced precalving feeding programme.
5. **Prepare for lactation:** Introducing **Irish Rolled Oats** and **Soyabean** Meal during the final 2–3 weeks before calving can help cows adjust to increased nutritional demands.
6. **Support high-risk cows**: Older cows and those with previous milk fever issues may benefit from targeted calcium supplementation around calving, following veterinary advice.

Quinns Dry Cow Pellet offers a convenient feeding solution, combining precalving minerals with balanced energy and 18% crude protein to support cows approaching calving.

Post-calving products such as REVIVA can also help support hydration and recovery.

For expert advice on dry cow nutrition and feeding programmes this winter, contact your local Quinns branch or speak to our nutritional team.

Why dose before housing?

Housing cattle in the autumn requires planning weeks before the event. One of the most important elements is to break the parasite transmission. Essentially a pre housing treatment in advance will give animals the opportunity to recover before being housed. As little as 14 days before hand can allow the lungs to clear out and have a healthier respiratory tract when entering the shed. This will help improve animal welfare, daily liveweight gains therefore increasing profitability.

What to use?

Using a product with persistency will allow the animal to remain at grass while still being protected from any new worms. **Ivermectin (Bimectin)** has a 21 day persistency while **Doramectin (Dectomax)** has a 35 day persistency. **Moxidectin (Cydectin)** carries the longest persistency with 42 days for lung worms and 5 weeks for gut worms.

Levamisole (Levacide) paralyses intestinal worms and allows the animal to naturally expel it. It is an easier lungworm clear out for animals allowing them to cough up the dead worms and therefore causing fewer issues with respiratory problems. It is available as an oral dose or available again as injection form. However this is not suitable as a housing drench because it is not effective against inhibited (hibernating) larvae.

White wormers such as **Albendazole (Endospec)** are a strategic way to clean out the lungs. This wormer does not have persistency but are effective against lungworms, gut worms and inhibited larvae.

Always follow manufactures guidelines, calculate the correct dose and adhere to withdrawal periods.



Visit us at the Irish Farmers Journal Tillage Day in The Keadeen Hotel, Newbridge on Thursday 5th November

Winter forage sampling

It's important to know the quality of your farm feeds so as to balance the diet correctly and as economically as possible. Please contact your sales rep or local branch about organising to have your winter forage including grass, silage, maize silage, wholecrop and hay analysed in our lab in Baltinglass.

Beef Cattle - Weight gain

Silage Quality				
DMD %	75	70	65	60
Harvest date	20 May	2 June	15 June	28 June
Silage tDM per ha	4.6	6.0	7.0	7.7
Intake (kg/day)	9.0	8.3	7.6	7.0
Liveweight gain (kg/day)	0.83	0.66	0.49	0.31

Dairy Cattle - Milk yield

Concentrates (kg/cow/day)				
Silage DMD	0	4	8	12
79	23.6	29.1	32.8	32.0
75		27.1	29.3	28.8
69		24.7	27.3	30.1

Faecal egg testing

The presence of fluke in faecal egg counts of livestock that are preforming well and show no clinical signs of fluke should be monitored. Treating of fluke may not be required but it would be advisable to consult your vet if they should any clinical signs (rapid weight loss or diarrhoea) or if there is a history of fluke problems on your farm.



Handling Equipment – The Importance of Safety



Safe and effective cattle handling starts with having the right equipment in place. Calving gates, handling units, crushes, drafting gates and well-designed pens can make routine jobs safer, easier and less stressful for both farmers and livestock.

Livestock continues to be a significant cause of deaths on farm . The HSA reported that 13 of the 72 farm fatalities recorded over the five years to the end of 2024 involved the handling of livestock.

Cattle can be unpredictable, particularly when frightened, separated from the herd or when a cow is protecting a calf. Good handling facilities play a major role in preventing injury, while a properly designed crush and calving gate can help keep the farmers separated from their animals.

A handling unit should allow cattle to move calmly while giving the operator safe access and, importantly, a clear escape route. Gates, barriers and crushes should be strong, secure and regularly maintained.

The message is simple: good handling equipment does not remove risk, but it can greatly reduce it. Use suitable facilities, maintain them properly, understand cattle behaviour and always have a safe escape route when working with livestock.





Autumn Weed Control in Winter Cereals – October 2026



With winter cereal sowing progressing across the country, attention is now turning to autumn weed control. Where weather and ground conditions have allowed, growers have made good progress, giving crops a strong start ahead of winter.

Effective weed control is essential for achieving high-yielding winter cereal crops. Autumn herbicide applications help eliminate weeds early, reducing competition for nutrients, moisture and light during crop establishment.

Pre-emergence application remains the preferred timing for many residual autumn herbicides, particularly where grassweeds are a concern. However, where this has not been possible, early post-emergence applications can still provide effective control, provided ground conditions allow.

Many residual herbicides remain effective at the early post-emergence stage. Growers should also assess the risk of Barley Yellow Dwarf Virus (BYDV) and consider aphid control where necessary.

Grassweed control is particularly important in winter barley, especially where annual meadow grass or sterile brome are present. Autumn treatment is essential, as spring control options in winter barley are extremely limited. Winter wheat offers greater flexibility, but early weed control remains the best approach.

Taking advantage of suitable autumn spraying conditions will help establish clean, healthy crops and maximise yield potential for harvest 2027.

With a very mild October, all crops of wheat and barley will benefit from an aphicide even if a tolerant variety is sown. **Stealth** and **Karate** will give good knockdown but the use of **Carnadine** at 0.15ltr/ha and Floniki at 0.14kg/ha will give much longer control.

Winter Oilseed Rape

Winter oilseed rape crops are going into the winter in good condition due to early sowing and a mild October. Weed control where done has worked very well with crops clean and nearly complete ground cover. If you have volunteer cereals you should spray with a graminicide early to avoid competition. With advanced crops a spray of **Crayx** and **Boron** will help with disease control and give some growth regulation too.

Senus soil sampling

Senus is an Irish technology company providing advanced soil sampling and environmental monitoring solutions for agriculture and land-based businesses. Operating across approximately 1.7 million hectares and 16,000 sites, Senus helps farmers improve soil health, reduce costs and make informed decisions.

About the programme

Senus Soil offers GPS-tracked, georeferenced soil sampling using ISO-accredited sampling technology. Farmers receive clear, colour-coded soil health results for individual fields, helping them make more accurate fertiliser and lime applications, reduce costs and improve nutrient management.

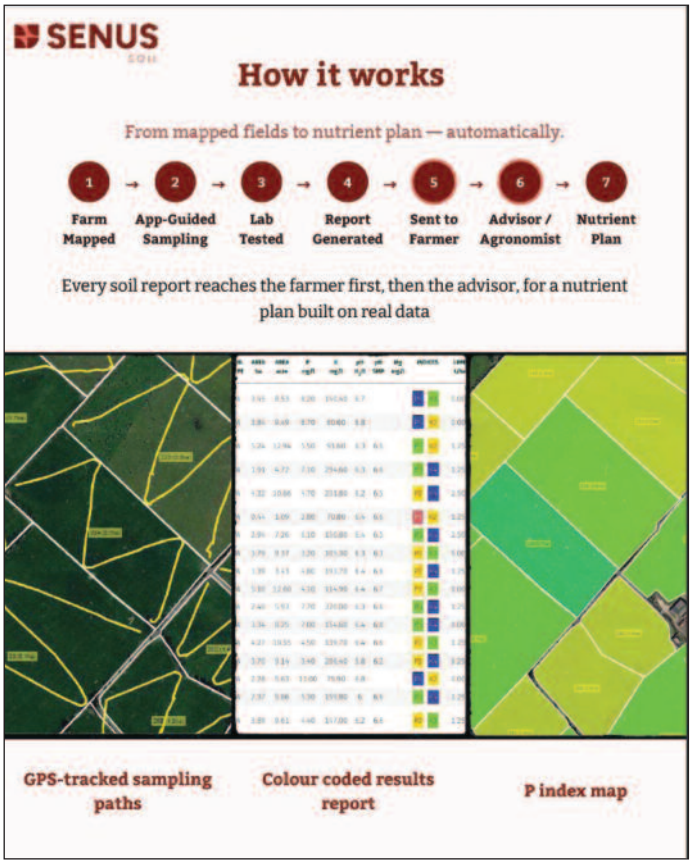
Since 15th September 2025, soil analysis reports must include georeferences or LPIS parcel details under updated Nitrates Regulations. Without this information, soil results default to Phosphorus Index 4.

Senus Soil simplifies compliance by managing the entire sampling process, from field collection to laboratory submission and reporting. Experienced samplers use GPS technology and barcoding to ensure accuracy and full traceability.

Key benefits include:

- Accurate, GPS-referenced soil sampling.
- Reduced fertiliser and lime costs.
- Improved nutrient management planning.
- Compliance with soil testing regulations.
- Time savings through managed sampling and laboratory submissions.
- Secure data storage and full traceability.
- Clear, easy-to-understand results through an online platform.

Senus Soil makes soil testing simpler, more efficient and more valuable for farmers.



Celebrating 90 years with staff and customers





















