

CHECKLIST

Steps to future-proof your business

Business planning and recording

- You know your cost of production
- Key Performance Indicators are recorded and reviewed
- Your farm is benchmarked against itself and similar systems
- You are part of a discussion group
- Money is put away for a rainy day or borrowings are paid down during periods of good milk price
- Sensitivity analysis is carried out before making any investment
- Budgets are based on a five-year average of input and output prices

Feed management

- You know your feed conversion efficiency
- A feed conversion efficiency of 1.4-1.5 is being achieved
- Protocols are in place to ensure consistency in feed management
- The farm team is trained on the basics of feed and forage management
- Technologies are used which can aid feed conversion efficiency (such as TMR trackers and feed pushers)
- Rations are balanced effectively

Milk from forage

- You know your milk from forage figure
- You are in the top 10% of producers for milk from forage
- A multi-cut silage system is adopted to boost silage quality
- Technologies such as refractometers are being used to analyse fresh grass pre-cutting to ensure maximum quality
- An appropriate silage inoculant is used to prevent aerobic spoilage
- Best practice clamp management is adopted to avoid wastage
- Ground is regularly soil tested and nutrients applied accordingly
- A reseeding policy is in place
- The best grass and clover varieties are selected using the Recommended Grass and Clover Lists

Grazing

- Grazed grass is monitored and grazing strategy is planned
- A flexible approach is taken to early season grazing
- Infrastructure is in place to allow cows to graze at the shoulders of the year
- Management strategies avoid poaching land

Animal health

- Antibiotic use is regularly reviewed with the farm vet
- An active farm health plan is in place and is continuously reviewed and revisited
- Unnecessary, preventative use of antibiotics are avoided
- Buildings are designed to promote natural cow behaviour
- Technologies like genomics are used to raise herd genetic potential
- You are breeding a cow which best suits your system
- An appropriate vaccination policy is in place
- All vaccines are given at the correct time, adhering to the label instructions

Youngstock

- Replacements calve in at the most economic age of 24 months
- Colostrum is tested and only the best is fed
- The 4Qs of colostrum management are adhered to: Quality, Quantity, Quickly, Quietly

Consumer communication and environment

- Twitter and social media are being used to communicate positive messages around farming
- You are working with your local community to promote dairy farming
- Steps are in place to reduce farm environmental impact
- The farm is being carbon foot-printed

Dairy Farm of 2027

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