

Key Changes to TB Programme

Wildlife

The re-establishment of the National Deer Management Group has been a positive development of the TB Forum process. This group must commence work immediately to manage the deer population to numbers that are no longer disease and motoring threats on our farms and roads.

The additional resources committed to the Wildlife Control Programme and enhancements to the delivery of the programme on the ground are vital to reduce the levels and ultimately eradicate TB.

DAFM have committed an additional €3.3M in funding for the Wildlife Control Programme, bringing total committed funding to over €9m a year. This includes a commitment to hire 26 additional FRS operatives and ongoing resurveying for new setts. 3,000 additional setts have already been identified and the Badger Sett notification app is up and running.

DAFM have also agreed to the proactive implementation of the Wildlife Programme in advance of major infrastructural works taking place.

The Live Valuation Scheme includes the removal of the penalty points system from the valuers' code which allows valuers accurately and independently assess the true value of the animals been removed.

Increasing the ceilings in the scheme to €5,000 for in-calf pedigree females and cows and allowing up to three stock bulls be eligible for payment up to the €5,000 ceiling are important changes.

Some of the other changes in the scheme include the facility to remove cull dairy cows from the notional yield calculation for non-milk recording herds; the inclusion of a yield level over 9,500kgs; an additional age-related acknowledgement to the not in calf price awarded for maiden heifers of up to €200; and increased monthly allowances for calves between two and five months of age all help in ensuring farmers receive the correct market price for the animals taken from farms

The changes to the **Income Supplement Scheme** include, increased scheme rates for dairy cows to €100/month for the first five months after calving and to €65 a month for the next five months with the remaining two dry months not receiving an income loss payment with these animals reverting back up to the €100 month payment from the next expected calving date.

The rates for suckler cows have been increased to €52 a month for the first seven months after calving with the remaining five months paid at €40 a month.

All other animals have been increased to a monthly rate of €30.

These new rates are payable to all herds in receipt of the scheme payments from 1st February and are payable now on partial months restricted.

The other significant change to the scheme is that farmers will now become eligible for these payments on the date the reactors are identified on the farm as opposed to the date of removal from the farm recognising the immediate income loss experienced.

Qualifying criteria remains at the loss of 10% of the herd for the scheme except in the case of dairy herds where 10% of the milking herd are removed.

Depopulation grant scheme rates have been increased and aligned with income supplement rates.

The key changes agreed to the **Hardship Grant scheme** include the removal of the off-farm income impediment to eligibility, the removal of the 60-day restriction requirement and an increase in the maximum payment to €300 a month for the four months of the scheme.

In addition to the changes to the schemes a fundamental change has been agreed that allows farmers **purchase in animals when restricted** while still retaining live valuation entitlement for the purchased in animals and income supplement entitlement for the herd, removing the financial risk from purchasing in and allowing farmers maintain their on-farm production levels. Permission to purchase in will be required in agreement with the local RVO in these cases.

Contract rearing movements continue to be facilitated with full Live Valuation and Income Supplement entitlement retained in these cases.

One of the most contentious issues dealt with in the group was the **EU Animal Health Law 30-day TB Pre/Post Movement Testing Requirement**.

The requirement in the EU Animal Health Law is for a pre/post movement test on all animals moving from all herds that are over six months tested.

Agreement was reached to only apply the criteria to all cows and males over 36 months significantly reducing its impact on the normal sales of animals.

The Department of Agriculture have agreed to pay farmers where this test is carried out either pre or post movement a maximum of €70 in a once off test for all cows and males over 36 months moving to herds for further breeding, which is broadly comparable to a call out fee and up to 4 animals when we assess the rates DAFM pay vets for TB testing.

The test will not be required on cull cows sold to Controlled Finishing Units or on cull cows moved to feeding farms where they are slaughtered within 90 days of movement from these farms. Farmers can apply for this payment on Agfood.ie when the scheme is open and payments will be available for tests completed since 1st February.

Farmers for the next two years will also be allowed to move their annual herd test by up to three months each year to align their test to within six months of normal sale times and remove any testing requirements for the farm.

Agreement on all of these measures required agreement on **a funding model for the next two years**. This agreement has Department of Agriculture and farmer funding commitments.

The Department of Agriculture funding commitment includes an additional €3.3M for Wildlife Programme bringing total committed funding to over €9m a year, the €70 payment for 30-day pre/post movement test requirement and the increased costs of the Live Valuation Scheme

Farmers financial commitment relates only to any additional monies paid directly to farmers in the enhanced Income Supplement, Depopulation Grant and Hardship Grant Schemes above the 2022 total costs of these schemes.

Payment will be retrospective in the following year through the Disease Levy mechanism. Any additional costs on farmers will only be in the event extra monies have been paid directly to farmers in the previous year under the IS, Depop and Hardship Schemes and relates only to the cost above the 2022 total level of payments.