

Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme [TAMS II]: Helping young farmers address Farm Safety

Agri- schemes under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2022 provide farmers with opportunities to improve farm safety, animal health and safeguard the environment. It is welcome news that RDP schemes were extended for the duration of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) transition period. The transition period is a two-year extension between 2021 and 2023 until the new CAP (2023 – 2027) can take effect. Extensions to the agri-schemes help provide continuation of delivery in key areas within the sector, schemes which were extended during the transition period included:

- Targeted Agriculture Modernisation Scheme (TAMS II)
- Green Low-carbon Agri-environmental Scheme (GLAS)
- Sheep Welfare Scheme (SWS)
- Area of Natural Constraint (ANC)
- Beef Data Genomics Programme (BDGP) and
- Organic Farming Scheme (OFS)



Limousin heifers.

The National Rural Network met with young farmer Claire Bambrick on her beef farm outside Callan Co. Kilkenny (May 2021). Claire is a qualified young farmer and graduated from University College Dublin (UCD) with a Degree in Agricultural Science in 2013. In 2017, Claire entered into a DAFM Registered Farm Partnership with her father.

The partnership is farming an intensive beef enterprise across almost 30 hectares.

The farming system consists of purchasing yearling heifers in spring, weighing approx. 370kgs and aged between 12 -14 months. These are fed on a predominantly grass-based diet with concentrate meals offered to help them reach the target weight of 550 – 570 kg by 20 months old.

The traditional breeds purchased for this system include Charolais, Simmental and Angus. Dairy to beef breeds have been added to the system in recent years, including crossbred Hereford and

“When the new stock sourced from other farms or the mart arrive on the farm, they can be unsettled until they become familiar with our farm. It is important to have good handling facilities and robust fences erected across the farm to keep both the livestock and us safe.”

In 2020, the partnership applied for the Young Farmers Capital Investment Scheme (YFCIS) under TAMS II to improve some safety elements on the farm. The YFCIS provides financial support to young farmers to upgrade their agricultural buildings and equipment. It helps them meet the capital costs associated with establishing their enterprises. The grant aid scheme also improves efficiency, drives growth and creates environmental benefits.

Successful applications under the YFCIS provide a 60% grant aid on eligible investment structures and items. As Claire was in a registered farm partnership with her father, the partnership is allocated a ceiling claim of €160,000, the first €80,000 of which could receive grant aid of 60% and the remaining €80,000 eligible for a 40% grant rate, should the investment ceiling be met.

“The TAMS II application was straightforward. Once we decided on what items would best enhance the safety of the handling facilities, the application was submitted, and we got approval within six to eight weeks.”

A weigh scales can cost in the region of €1,600 to €2,500, head scoop and leg hoist/lifter can cost in the region of €450 - €900 and €300 - €500, respectively, depending on specifications. The approximate total cost was in the region of €2,900 ex VAT. As the partnership was eligible for the 60% grant aid, this made the investment of approximately €1,160 more affordable and worthwhile. These items reduce stress on the animal when being



treated. Weighing animals regularly acts as an early identifier for poor thrive and can save money by ensuring cattle are sent for slaughter at the desired target weights.

“Having mixed breeds on the farm means some breeds reach target weights quicker than others. Cattle of similar weights are batched together for ease of management.”

Claire said, “The improved animal holding and handling facilities will firstly ensure the safety of both myself, my father and anyone else such as the vet. The number of fatalities in recent years on farms due to livestock is startling, and I won’t allow any chances to be taken on my farm.”

From an efficiency perspective, the handling facilities and holding pens have

improved animal flow in the shed. The cattle are calm and move stress-free through the crush area during health inspections and routine weigh-ins.

“Since improving handling facilities and beginning to weigh cattle, the general herd has become docile due to the regular handling they experience.” Claire practices recording cattle weights every six to eight weeks during the grazing season (March – November) and when animals are housed every two weeks.

The NRN would like to thank Claire for taking the time from her busy schedule to share her experiences of the TAMS II scheme.