



## Technical Note – Issued the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 2024

### Clarification regarding the concentrate 15% crude protein limit.

In response to current weather conditions, and the delayed turnout of livestock in many parts of the country, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine wishes to clarify matters regarding implementation of the concentrate 15% crude protein limit applicable from 15<sup>th</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September as set out in the Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters Regulations (SI 113 of 2022, as amended).

This measure has been in place since 2021 to reduce nitrogen surpluses during the main grazing season when good quality grass provides adequate crude protein for adult cattle. However, the Department recognises the primary importance of animal's receiving a balanced diet in line with their conditions.

The requirement applies to concentrates fed to **dairy cows and other cattle aged over two years, at grass from the 15<sup>th</sup> April to the 30<sup>th</sup> September.**

The requirement **does not apply where cattle are not outdoors fulltime at grass.** Given the exceptional weather conditions this year, Department Inspectors will be especially conscious of local weather and soil conditions and recognise that in certain parts of the country dairy cows and adult cattle may not be at grass fulltime in the coming weeks.

Even in situations where cattle are at grass fulltime, the Department has always, and will continue to allow for situations where a higher level of crude protein is required in concentrates to maintain animal welfare or to meet the animal's dietary needs. In that scenario the Department, at inspection, will accept written confirmation from the feed supplier, a recognised ruminant nutritionist or an accredited Farm Advisory Service (FAS) advisor stating that a higher level of crude protein is required.

Records of purchased feed should include the quantities and types of concentrate feed, including crude protein content, fed to livestock on the holding. Under SI 113 of 2022, these records should be maintained for 5 years and made available for inspection if requested.

The Department is acutely aware of the challenges that farmers are facing due to the continued inclement weather conditions, and therefore wish to clarify the options available to farmers within the current regulatory requirements as requested at the Fodder and Feed Security meeting.

Ends