

FARMING DIARY FOR AUGUST

Update on Harvest

We eventually got our second cut grass silage made on 24th & 25th July and were pleased with the yield. We also managed to get the slurry out to get the grass growing again and hope to take a third cut mid September. The wholecrop triticale was cut on 23rd August, and even though it was a nice day the ground was still a bit wet and sadly we have marked the fields. This doesn't matter so much in the field that is going to be ploughed in September, but in the one that was undersown with grass it means we have got long-term ruts in the field.

New Cow Tracks

We have been busy over the last week extending, widening and creating additional cow tracks across the farm



Digging up the stone



Tipping the stone in place



Levelling the stone

The original tracks were put in over 15 years ago and were only 6ft wide which was adequate at the time as Dad and I were only milking about 80 cows. We have since expanded the herd to 180 and as the width of these tracks only allowed the cows to walk in single file it's a long time before all the cows reach the yard! We have now increased the width to 12-15ft to bring them in line with our newer tracks to allow the cows to walk 2 or 3 wide.

Some of the track networks have been extended to gain better access to the grazing paddocks to avoid the cows continually treading the same areas of grass which they then don't want to eat. New tracks have also been made in two fields that previously didn't have one.



Making a sweeping corner to keep the flow of cows moving



Rolling the stone to compact it



Using the vibrating roller

We have used a local contractor, John Tonkins, with his 14 ton swing shovel to dig stone from a hill on the farm. We have had 4 tractors and dump trailers to haul this stone to the locations of the tracks. The stone has been tipped in heaps beside the hedges. We have then hired a 10 ton swing shovel to level the stone so that it is sloping from the hedge to enable the rain to run off back onto the field. The more surface water that is left standing on the tracks, the more the tracks erode over time.

The final stage is to compact the stone using a towed vibrating roller. It is important to ensure that all the little stones are pressed in tight so there are no sharp points to injure the cows' feet. John may then go over the tracks again just to level up any low spots.



The finished track



The finished track surface



'With everything man-made nature has the last say'

We have also started calving...

The first calf arrived on 31st August and we've already had our first set of twins too! Only 5 cows have calved as at 4th September but if everything goes to plan we should have another 80 calves by the end of the month!