



DESIGNED TO PERFORM



BEEF & DAIRY LIVESTOCK HOUSING SOLUTIONS





NEW BEEF & DAIRY HOUSING INNOVATIONS

We have developed an extensive portfolio of livestock housing solutions over the last 20 years. We remain committed to developing the best performing and highest quality products, which increases productivity and guarantees a fast return on investment.

In 2018, we launched our new range of EASYFIX Cubicles including the Calm, Siesta, Dream and Life. The new cubicle range is designed for use in conjunction with cow mats and mattresses, deep litter beds and sand type systems. Over 250,000 EASYFIX cubicles have already been sold in 40 countries and it remains the 'Safest and most comfortable cow cubicle in the world'.

EASYFIX Evolve is a pioneering advance in animal feed systems that optimises animal welfare and performance. Launched in 2018, the Evolve is a feed barrier system designed to extend the animal's reach and allow for increased feed intake. The unique design also provides safe access and egress for farm workers.

In 2017, we launched the new EASYFIX SR Slat Rubber system with a reinforced design, high grip profile and 8-year warranty. We also launched the new EASYFIX SDR Slat Rubber system with a smooth and sloped surface for increased animal comfort and to facilitate faster run off.

Our solution-led systems for the beef industry include the award-winning EASYFIX Slat Rubber System. Launched in 1996, EASYFIX Slat Rubber is still our No.1 selling product and is sold to beef, dairy and veal farmers in 40 countries around the world. We have also developed rubber matting solutions for lie back areas, toe spaces and walkways, calf comfort slats, a modular plastic trough for feed areas and a new flexible feed barrier system.

Our dairy housing solutions have been developed to increase cow comfort, reduce lameness, increase mobility and heat detection. The EASYFIX dairy housing range includes EASYFIX Cubicles and cow mattresses, dairy slat rubber systems, rubber matting solutions for milking parlours, walkways and feedlanes, calf comfort slats, a modular trough for feed areas and the new Evolve flexible feed barrier system.

We now provide a FREE design service for made to measure dairy cubicle housing systems. Our experienced team will arrange an on-farm visit to discuss your plans and provide you with a technical design and advisory service.

Our goal is to become the No.1 provider of livestock housing solutions across the globe.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Earls". The script is fluid and cursive.

Michael Earls
Managing Director

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DESIGNED TO PERFORM



EASYFIX Around The World

Australia	Hungary	Romania
Belgium	Iceland	Russia
Botswana	Ireland	Saudi Arabia
Bulgaria	Italy	Slovakia
Canada	Japan	Slovenia
Cyprus	Jordan	South Africa
Czech Republic	Korea	Sweden
Egypt	Netherlands	Switzerland
Estonia	New Zealand	UAE
Finland	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom
France	Norway	United States
Germany	Poland	Vietnam
Greece	Portugal	Zimbabwe

LIVESTOCK HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR WORLDWIDE MARKETS



SECTION 1

BEEF


EASYFIX SR SLAT RUBBER

An award-winning, innovative solution for the agricultural industry.

The award-winning EASYFIX Slat Rubber System was designed to improve animal comfort, welfare and the performance of beef cattle housed on concrete slats.

Our new reinforced design has a high grip profile and 8 year warranty.

The cushioning effect of the rubber increases standing times at the feed fence, this results in higher feed intake and increased average daily weight gains. This patented product has an easy to fit rubber-wedge solution and is made from the highest quality natural rubber compound. Our slatted rubber floor covering has been designed to fit old and new concrete slats.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New reinforced design.• High grip profile.• Reduces lameness.• Increases productivity - Average daily weight gains for cattle.• Better feed conversion.• Suitable for use with scrapers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New reinforced design.• High grip profile.• DLG Signum Test approved.• Patented two strip rubber system.• Suitable for new and used concrete slats.• All sizes of slats catered for.• Sloped profile for quick urine run-off to increase drainage as well as reduce emissions.• Self-wedge solution (no additional fixation material required).• No mechanical cutting of the slat.
WARRANTY	
8 years	

**Note: All dimensions provided are subject to rubber manufacturing tolerances.*

WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS SAY

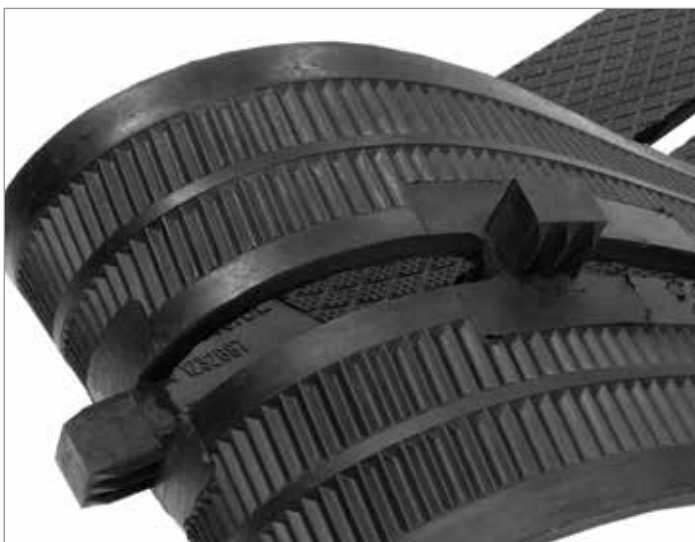
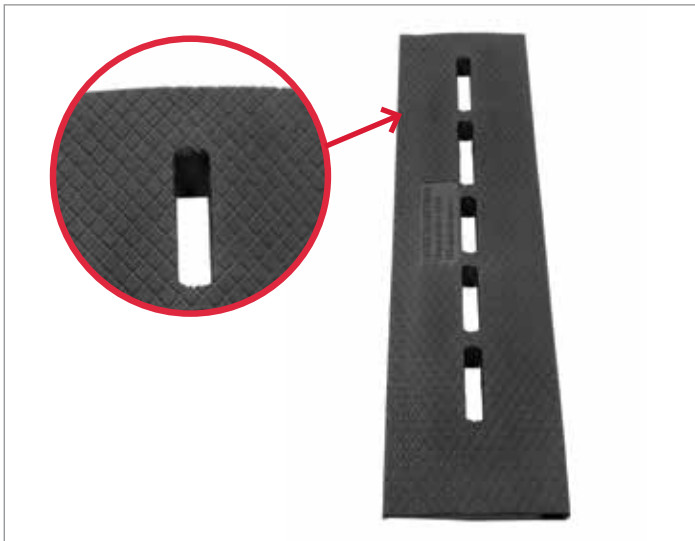
“We bought EASYFIX Slat Rubber and it was a big investment. The mats have really transformed our system. The company installed them and they have been a fantastic investment. Growth rates increased by between one quarter and one third of a kilo per day and I put that down to increased comfort.”

Adam Quinney, UK Beef Farmer

“I have found that the cattle spend more time lying down, feet problems and lameness have become a thing of the past and growth rates have improved significantly.”

Chris Bourns, Irish Beef Cattle Producer, Co. Galway

Finishes 1,400 cattle annually on EASYFIX Slat Rubber.



FARMERS
NO.1
CHOICE
FOR OVER
20 YEARS

NEW: EASYFIX SDR SLAT RUBBER (See Page 10 for details)



EASYFIX SDR SLAT RUBBER

EASYFIX SDR Slat Rubber was designed to improve the comfort, welfare and performance of cattle housed on concrete slats.

The smooth and soft rubber flooring, provides a comfortable and confident walking surface. It is suitable for installation in walkways, passageways and slatted housing.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smooth and sloped surface to facilitate faster run off.• Soft for increased animal comfort and welfare.• Reduces lameness.• Increases productivity – average daily weight gains.• Better feed conversion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patented two strip rubber with wedges.• Smooth and sloped surface with slip strips.• Suitable for new and used concrete slats.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
Custom sizes available for all slat sizes.	8 years



**Note: All dimensions provided are subject to rubber manufacturing tolerances.*



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

EASYFIX SLAT RUBBER SYSTEM

1. WHAT ARE THE MAIN BENEFITS OF USING EASYFIX SLAT RUBBER?

- Improves animal comfort, welfare and performance.
- Reduces lameness.
- Improved heat detection due to enhanced foothold.
- Enhanced grip – the unique surface profile of EASYFIX slat rubber provides animals with a greater foothold and allows for more natural movement and behaviour without fear of injury.

2. CAN OFF SIZED SLATS BE CATERED FOR?

Yes we can tailor rubber to all slat sizes.

3. HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

The lifespan of the product is linked to the application in terms of – Animal type (bulls vs suckler cows), length of winter, etc. but in most cases we would anticipate a lifespan of 15-20 years.

4. WILL IT WEAR?

All rubber products be it car tyres or slat mats will wear over time – however EASYFIX use a very high spec compound and the rate of wear is gradual over a prolonged period of time. Wear is also dependent on other factors such as length of housing period, animal type etc.

5. WHAT APPLICATION IS SUITABLE FOR HEAVY STOCK LIE BACK AREAS?

MG Max 4, MG Max 8 or MG Evo.

6. WHAT PRODUCTS ARE SUITABLE FOR TOE SPACES?

EASYFIX MG Traffic or EASYFIX MG Action (recommended for heavy stock and high volumes).

EASYFIX LIE BACK AREAS



EASYFIX MG MAX 4
(See page 16 for details)

Award-winning innovative solutions for the agricultural industry.

We have a range of products suitable for installation in lie back areas depending on their application. Our rubber matting solutions create a comfortable and insulated lying surface which increases the welfare and productivity of beef cattle, sucklers and heifers.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases animal comfort and welfare. • Eliminates the costs associated with straw bedding. • Reduces lameness. • Increases productivity: Average daily weight gains for cattle. • Better feed conversion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Rubber compound. • Easy DIY installation. • Easy to clean and maintenance-free.



EASYFIX MG MOTION
(See page 52 for details)



EASYFIX MG MAX 8
(See page 16 for details)



EASYFIX MG EVO
(See page 17 for details)

Ask Your EASYFIX representative for further details.

EASYFIX MG TRAFFIC



EASYFIX MG Traffic 1, 2, 3 and 4 have a 'penny' high grip surface and are ideal for entrance and exit lanes, feed faces and toe spaces.

The mats are available in four widths, have excellent grip and are hard wearing. Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides cattle with maximum grip and confidence. Very easy to install. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural rubber compound. 'Penny' grip design. Strong interlock on two sides. Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings. Easy to clean with water or brush scraper. 'Penny' grip on underside so that mats can be inverted.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
MG Traffic 1 305mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 12" x 88" x 3/4" * MG Traffic 2 610mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 24" x 88" x 3/4" * MG Traffic 3 915mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 36" x 88" x 3/4" * MG Traffic 4 1220mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 48" x 88" x 3/4" *	3 years

EASYFIX MG ACTION



EASYFIX MG Action is a high grip rubber mat available in four widths (1', 2', 3' & 4') and is ideal for installation under high volume and heavy stock.

The rubber mats provide a cushioned standing surface at the feed face resulting in higher feed intake and increased productivity. The mats can be installed in entrance and exit lanes, feed faces and toe spaces.

Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides beef cattle with maximum grip and confidence. Very easy to install. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural rubber compound. 'Penny' grip design. Strong interlock on two sides. Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings. Easy to clean with water or brush scraper. 'Penny' grip on underside so that mats can be inverted.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
MG Action 1 305mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 12" x 88" x 3/4" * MG Action 2 610mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 24" x 88" x 3/4" * MG Action 3 915mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 36" x 88" x 3/4" * MG Action 4 1220mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 48" x 88" x 3/4" *	5 years



EASYFIX CALF SLATS

EASYFIX Calf Slats provide an elevated flooring solution for young calves, which are portable, easy-to-store and reusable.

The calf slats offer an alternative to straw bedding and the treated timber with its soft rubber covering creates a dry comfortable lying surface for young calves.

The rubber covering is designed with slip strips and fitted to a treated timber platform, the platform is then elevated on 38mm rubber blocks.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calves always have a dry comfortable lying area thereby reducing infections. • Eliminates the need to use straw which is expensive. • Easy to monitor nutritional scours against the black rubber. • Easy and quick to install and remove. • Cuts down on labour and running costs. • Easy to clean with a power hose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to relocate and store. • Soft, sloped rubber covering with slip strip. • 30mm gap between the slats to allow liquids through, but stop cleats getting caught. • Treated timber which will last up to 10 years. • Rubber blocks underneath the timber to avoid contact with water.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
Option A 1730mm x 1280mm x 135mm • 68 1/16" x 50 1/4" x 5 1/4" * Option B 1800mm x 1130mm x 135mm • 70 3/4" x 44 1/2" x 5 1/4" *	5 years



**Note: All dimensions provided are subject to rubber manufacturing tolerances.*

EASYFIX MG MAX 4



EASYFIX MG Max 4 has a ‘penny’ high grip surface and is ideal for walkways and collecting yards.



The rubber mats provide a comfortable and confident walking surface for beef cattle.

Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides beef cattle with maximum grip and confidence.• Facilitates faster movement of animals.• Very easy to install.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural rubber compound.• ‘Penny’ grip design.• Strong interlock on four sides.• Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings.• Easy to clean with water or brush scraper.• ‘Penny’ grip on the underside so that mat can be inverted.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1000mm x 1000mm x 22mm • 39 3/8" x 39 3/8" x 7/8" *	3 years

EASYFIX MG MAX 8



EASYFIX MG Max 8 has a ‘penny’ high grip surface and is ideal for use in high traffic areas on large scale farms.

The rubber mats provide a comfortable and confident walking surface for animals and are suitable for installation in collecting yards, walkways and passageways with very high traffic. Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides cattle with maximum grip and confidence.• Facilitates faster movement of animals.• Very easy to install.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural rubber compound.• ‘Penny’ grip design.• Strong interlock on four sides.• Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings.• Easy to clean with water or brush scraper.• ‘Penny’ grip on the underside so that mat can be inverted.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1000mm x 1000mm x 22mm • 39 3/8" x 39 3/8" x 7/8" *	5 years

* Note: All dimensions provided are subject to rubber manufacturing tolerances.

EASYFIX MG EVO



EASYFIX MG Evo has a 'hexagonal' high grip surface and is ideal for use in collecting yards, feedpads, walkways and passageways.

The rubber mats provide a comfortable and confident walking surface reducing lameness and the associated veterinary and healthcare costs. Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides cattle with maximum grip and confidence. • Better locomotion and more natural gait. • Facilitates faster movement of animals. • Reduces lameness & the associated healthcare costs. • Very easy to install. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural rubber compound. • 'Hexagonal' high grip profile. • Stud profile underneath. • Strong interlock on four sides. • Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings. • Easy to clean with water or brush scraper.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1150mm x 1770mm x 24mm • 45 1/4" x 69 5/8" x 1"	5 years

EASYFIX MG CHEVRON 8



EASYFIX MG Chevron 8 is ideal for use in very high traffic, sloped or slippery floors such as lairage areas.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Penny' high grip surface with chevrons for maximum foothold. • 'Penny' profile on the underside for extra comfort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural rubber compound. • Interlocking on four sides. • 'Penny' grip profile underneath for drainage. • Not suitable for use with automatic scrapers. • Can be cleaned with a pressure washer or water hose.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1000mm x 1000mm x 22mm • 39 3/8" x 39 3/8" x 7/8" *	5 Years



EASYFIX EASYFEEDER

EASYFIX EasyFeeder is an interlocking plastic trough system for feed lanes.

The molded, non-toxic and shatterproof plastic has a smooth, raised and sloped plastic surface. It is suitable for use with all diet feeders and mixer wagons.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduces feed waste and labour.• Increases feed intake.• Reduces contamination from birds and rodents.• Feed always remains in front of the animal.• Suitable for use with all diet feeders and mixer wagons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interlocking plastic feed trough system.• Sections can be interlocked to give the required length.• Adjustable width to suit feeding needs.• Caps at the top for filling with water and release plugs at the bottom.• Molded fork lift points.• Lightweight shatterproof plastic.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1570mm (l) x 650mm (h) x 650mm (d) • 61 3/4" (l) x 25 5/8" (h) x 25 5/8" (d)	5 years





EASYFIX EVOLVE

EASYFIX Evolve is a pioneering advance in animal feed systems that optimises animal welfare and performance.

The Evolve is a feed barrier system for cattle, designed to extend the animals' reach and allow for increased feed intake. The unique design also provides safe access and egress for farm workers.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The open system allows essential head movements during feeding and more natural feeding behaviour. • Increases feed intake. • Provides better access to feed due to the increased reach of animals. • Eliminates injuries and marks traditionally associated with steel alternatives. • Reduces stress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galvanized steel frame with curved plastic divisions. • Flexible plastic pipes that shape to the animal's body. • Modular system. • Available in red, green and blue.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
Modular sections that can be adjusted for any size required.	5 years



EASYFIX MG MAX 8



EASYFIX MG Max 8 is a hard wearing mat, ideal for use in high traffic areas such as lairage areas and large scale farms.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Penny' high grip surface for maximum foothold. • Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. • 'Penny' grip underside so that mats can be inverted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural rubber compound. • Interlocking on four sides. • Can be cleaned with a pressure washer or water hose.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1000mm x 1000mm x 22mm • 39 3/8" x 39 3/8" x 7/8" *	5 years

EASYFIX MG CHEVRON 8



EASYFIX MG Chevron 8 is ideal for use in very high traffic, sloped or slippery floors such as lairage areas.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Penny' high grip surface with chevrons for maximum foothold. • 'Penny' profile on the underside for extra comfort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural rubber compound. • Interlocking on four sides. • 'Penny' grip profile underneath for drainage. • Not suitable for use with automatic scrapers. • Can be cleaned with a pressure washer or water hose.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1000mm x 1000mm x 22mm • 39 3/8" x 39 3/8" x 7/8" *	5 Years

**Note: All dimensions provided are subject to rubber manufacturing tolerances.*



SLATTED HOUSING IN IRELAND



Livestock Housing in Ireland and throughout Europe for beef cattle during the winter months is predominantly in buildings with slatted concrete floors.

In Ireland due to the seasonality of grass, the production system in use for rearing and finishing beef cattle consists of a grazing season of 8 months, followed by a winter housing period of 4/5 months duration. This winter period can vary, depending on the weather and is typical for housing of heifers and bullocks, whereas bulls can be housed for longer periods because they can be difficult to manage while on pasture.

Concrete slatted floors are the dominant winter housing system used in Ireland. The advantage of this type of system includes low labour costs, lower space demands, very efficient manure management and relatively clean animals.

A prolonged period standing on concrete is recognised as a major risk factor for lameness. It also causes more interrupted lying down movements, fewer lying bouts and the surface can become very slippery. Concrete slats are a less preferred lying area for growing cattle compared with rubber covered slats. Hard concrete slats cause compression lesions and leg diseases such as carpal bursitis in growing cattle.

Concrete also leads to the prevalence of claw and leg disorders. Severe sole lesions and white line haemorrhages are often found in bulls that are kept on concrete over the winter period. In very severe cases this leads to depressed appetite, reduced feed intake and a reduction in average daily weight gain.

In an industry that is accustomed to very tight margins, farmers cannot sustain income losses due to lameness, poor thrive, reduced finishing weights and extended housing periods.

It is estimated by beef finishers that the use of rubber on concrete slats nets an extra €50 per animal over the winter period. At a stocking rate of 2.2 square metres per animal and the cost of rubber at approx. €55 per square metre. The cost per head is approximately €121. As an investment the farmer will have payback within 2.4 years.

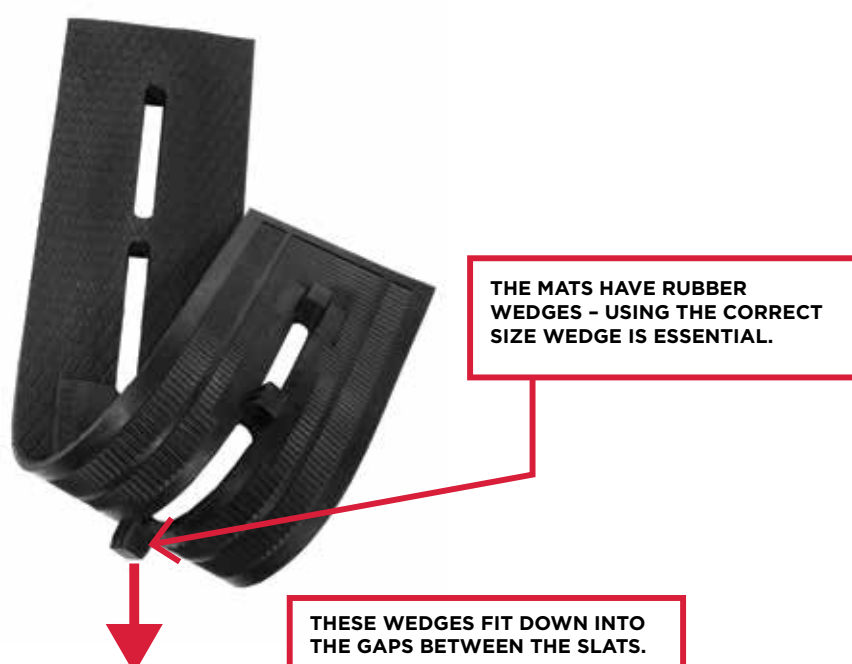
Given this relatively quick payback period, progressive farmers will continue to install EASYFIX Slat Rubber in their slatted houses.



TRIAL RESULTS ON EASYFIX SLAT RUBBER AT KILDALTON

FEATURES OF EASYFIX SLAT RUBBER:	MATS INSULATION PROPERTIES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubber is tough and long lasting, with a proper balance between softness and resilience. • Its unique profile enhances drainage from the slatted floor. • They can be applied to new and used slats. • Slat-mat pieces are designed to fit all makes and types of slats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metabolisable energy (M. E.) = 80% of the gross energy. • Net energy (N. E.) = 60% of the gross energy. • M. E. - heat increment = N. E. • N. E. is used for animal products and maintenance. • Insulation quality of mats reduces heat loss from the animals, hence increasing N. E. levels.

HOW THEY ARE APPLIED



PROBLEMS WITH CONCRETE SLATS

1 Cattle tend to be stiff and get swollen joints after spending more than two months on concrete slats. This reduces the bullock's thrive and weight gain, makes them more uncomfortable, and hinders the bullock's ability to get up and down with ease. The image on the right illustrates a Friesian bullock with a swollen knee joint.

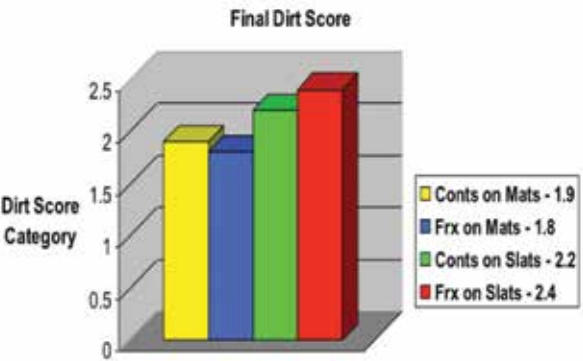


2 Animals on concrete slats swayed from side to side while standing. This was due to pain and discomfort, as cattle on concrete slats will either stand up or lie down for long periods of time. The picture on the right shows a bullock on the concrete slats getting up with difficulty due to the animal having sore knee joints, he takes the weight off his hind limbs by getting up front legs first. This is not a normal way for healthy cattle to rise.



PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON SLAT RUBBER

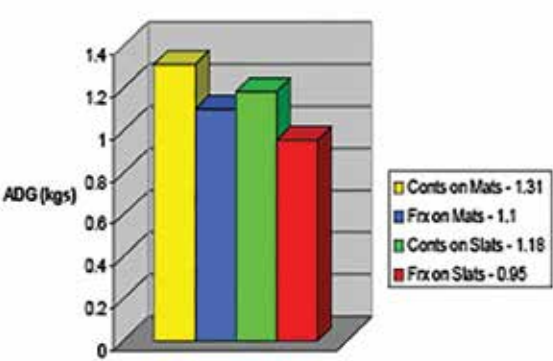
DIRT SCORE RESULTS



Continental cattle on EASYFIX slat rubber mats were 0.3 of a dirt score category less than their comrades on bare slats.

Friesian cattle on EASYFIX slat rubber mats were 0.6 of a dirt score category less than their comrades on bare slats.

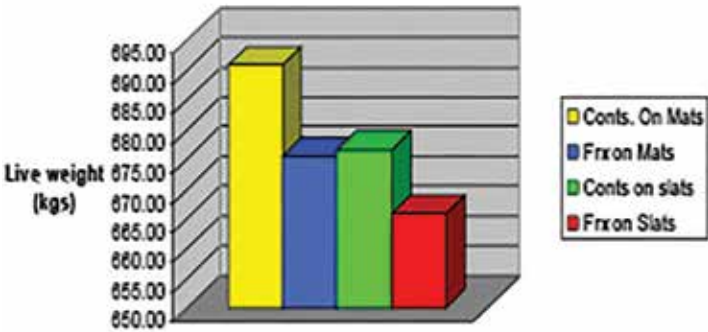
A.D.G. RESULTS



Continental cattle gained 0.13kgs live weight extra every day on EASYFIX slat rubber mats.

Friesian cattle gained 0.15kgs live weight extra every day on EASYFIX slat rubber mats.

AVERAGE PEN WEIGHTS



Continental cattle on EASYFIX slat rubber mats weighed 14.2kgs more than their comrades on bare concrete slats.

Friesian cattle on EASYFIX slat rubber mats weighed 10.1kgs more than their comrades on bare slats.

GRIP



- EASYFIX slat rubber mats have approximately **three times more grip** than the concrete slat.
- Small bubble-like perforations and grooves on the mats improve the grip for the animals whilst walking and getting up and down.
- Extra grip gives the animals more confidence and they act as if outside in their natural environment.
- They are often seen to be licking or “grooming” themselves showing the confidence of their foothold as illustrated by the image on the left.

STEP LENGTH

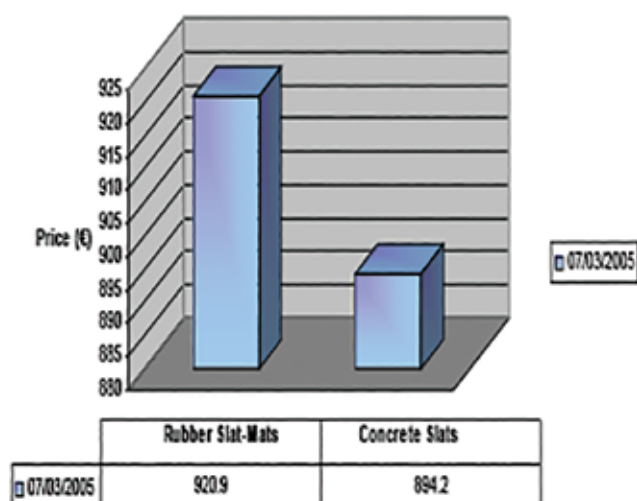
Comparison of cattle's step-length on the concrete slat and the EASYFIX slat rubber mats gave the following results:

- On EASYFIX Slat Rubber mat is 78cm.
- On concrete slats it is 56cm.
- On pasture it is 80cm.

VOID AREA

- There is a slit void area difference of 2.9%.
- Due to narrower void areas on the mats, there is a more even distribution of the animal's weight on their hooves helping to eliminate lameness.
- This smaller void area in the EASYFIX slat rubber mats failed to make the cattle dirtier due to the gradient on the EASYFIX improving drainage of dung and urine and making the cattle cleaner.

PRICE DIFFERENCE & ECONOMIC VIABILITY



EACH FRIESIAN ON EASYFIX SLAT RUBBER MATS MADE ON AVERAGE €37.44 MORE THAN THEIR COMRADES ON BARE CONCRETE SLATS.

ECONOMIC VIABILITY

Are the EASYFIX slat rubber mats economically viable to the finishing beef farmer?

Price Difference/Animal	€37.44/animal
Price Difference/m ² of slat rubber	€17.00/m ²
Cost of slat-mats	€55/m ²
Number of winters required to earn back investment	€55/€17.00 = 3.2

120 Day Winter*

CONCLUSIONS

- Animals gained more weight and were cleaner coming off the EASYFIX slat rubber mats.
- No animals got lame or incurred any stress or injury on the EASYFIX slat rubber mats.
- Cattle were more confident, livelier and more comfortable on the EASYFIX slat rubber mats.
- Animal step length was on average 22cm longer on EASYFIX slat rubber mats than on bare concrete slats.
- EASYFIX slat rubber mats had approximately 3 times more grip than bare slats.
- Cattle on concrete slats were stiffer, got up less frequently and with difficulty, lay down and stood up for longer periods of time, and swayed from side to side while standing.
- It takes 3.2 winters to earn back the EASYFIX slat rubber cost, where the length of the winter is 4 months, making them economically viable to the finishing beef farmer.
- Natural rubber compound ensures EASYFIX slat rubber mats will not lose their shape.

* Economic viability updated based on today's prices

CASE STUDY: LISBEG FARMS



The year 2005 proved to be a watershed in the farming practices of Richard and Deirdre Bourns at Lisbeg Farms. They made a conscious decision to improve efficiencies on their farm and change their focus of just chasing sixteen and twenty two month premiums. This also coincided with the return of their son Christopher from New Zealand and together, they drew up plans to change and improve work practices.

They set about producing all their own grain and root crop feedstuffs on farm, making them self-sufficient in all feed consumed. This had the dual benefit of improving ration quality as well as guaranteeing their cattle free of GM feedstuffs, which is very attractive to the processor.

The Bourns also made improvements to the ventilation in their buildings by raising the pitch of the roof and increasing air outlet space from 0.5 metres to 1.2 metres. This greatly reduced the amount of respiratory problems in their cattle. They also made changes to ensure adequate amounts of fresh, clean water, which is essential in good animal production.

THE GAME CHANGER

For a number of years, Richard had considered the installation of rubber on his slats, but found the price off putting. In 2009 however, he was experiencing up to 11% lameness and decided to introduce EASYFIX Rubber Products in half of one shed.

As he was still feeding bulls in July, Richard immediately noticed a difference in how his animals reacted on rubber, and the overall positive effect that the rubber had. Based on his observations, Richard decided to install EASYFIX Rubber Products in all of his sheds. Since installing EASYFIX, Richard has consistently noticed dramatic reductions in lameness each year, dropping from 11% in 2009 to 0.5% in 2014. Other positive outcomes following EASYFIX installation included increased ADG and reduced number of days to beef.

CHART 1 on p.27 indicates the high ADG that were achieved on Lisbeg Farms over a one year period in heifers, bullocks and bulls. These figures were obtained following installation of EASYFIX Rubber Products.

CHART 2 reveals major differences in ADG, % Lameness and Days to Beef both before and after EASYFIX Slat Rubber had been installed. Figures obtained from the 'Before' group are based on a group of 741 animals on concrete slats over a one year period. Figures obtained from the 'After' group are based on a group of 419 animals over a six month period.

From this chart, we derived that ADG were increased, % lameness was decreased and days to beef were reduced in the group of animals housed on EASYFIX Rubber Products.

PAYBACK

CHART 3 represents the payback or the economic benefit to Lisbeg Farms over a 100 day and 120 day winter period. With the current price of EASYFIX Rubber at €55 euro per sq metre and a stocking density of 2.2 sq metres per animal, the cost per animal of installing rubber is €121. The benefit over 100 days winter is €109.20.

This will give a payback over 1.1 winters. A similar short payback period is achieved with the longer 120 day winter. Prices of Beef currently is €3.90/kg.

CHART 1

BEEF PRODUCTION LISBEG FARMS 1/08/2014 TO 31/07/2015			
	HEIFERS	BULLOCKS	BULLS
ADG	1.2 KG	1.3 KG	1.45 KG
QUANTITY	290	161	991

CHART 2

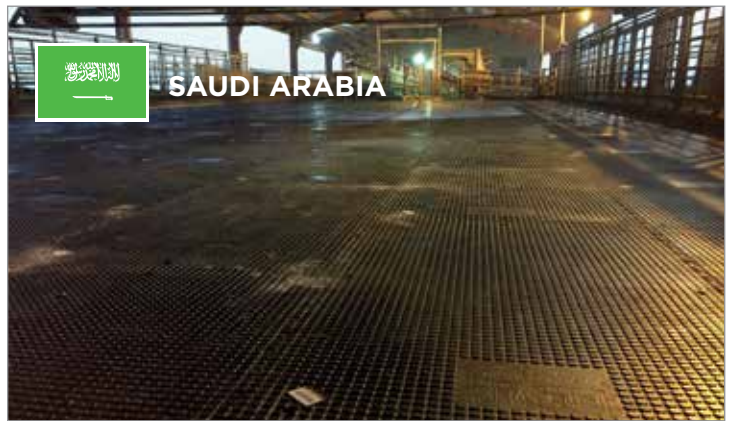
BEEF PRODUCTION BEFORE AND AFTER EASYFIX SLAT RUBBER INSTALLATION			
	*BEFORE - ON CONCRETE SLATS	**AFTER - ON EASYFIX SLAT RUBBER	DIFFERENCE
AVERAGE DAILY LIVE WEIGHT GAIN	0.7 KG/DAY	1.2 KG/DAY	+0.5 KG/DAY
LAMENESS	11%	0.5%	-10.5%
DAYS TO BEEF	150	120	-30
*BEFORE 1/08/2008 TO 31/07/2009 741 CATTLE SLAUGHTERED **AFTER 1/8/2009 TO 08/02/2010 419 CATTLE SLAUGHTERED			

CHART 3

EASYFIX SLAT RUBBER LIVE WEIGHT GAIN ROI			
	0.5 KG / DAY	56% KO	@ €3.90/KG
100 DAY WINTER	50 KG	28 KG	€109.20
120 DAY WINTER	60 KG	33.6 KG	€131.04

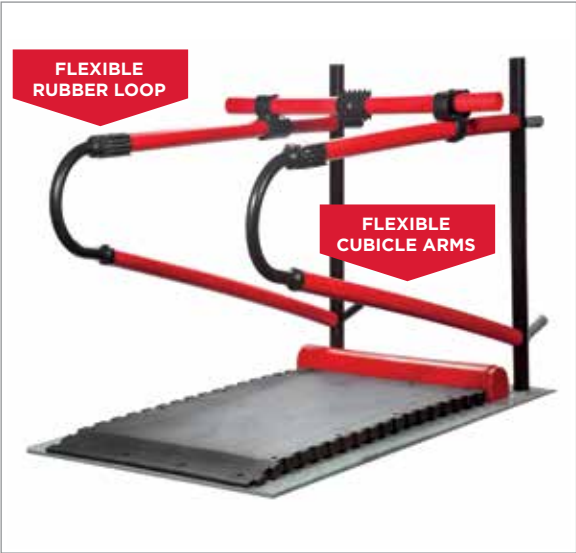
SECTION 2

DAIRY



EASYFIX DAIRY HOUSING SOLUTIONS AROUND THE WORLD





EASYFIX CUBICLES

The revolutionary EASYFIX Cubicle delivers the freedom of the outdoors-indoors and is proven to maximise cow comfort, improve safety and increase performance.

Since the launch of EASYFIX Cubicle in 2009 we have sold over 250,000 cubicles in 40 countries around the world.

The addition of the flexible rubber loop in 2014 has been a major success transforming the cubicle into the ‘Safest and most comfortable cow cubicle in the world’.

Our flexible cubicle system accommodates the size of each cow, encourages cows to lie correctly and for longer periods. Increased lying times combined with improved cow comfort leads to higher milk production.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

The flexible cubicle arms, rubber loop and rubber neck rail brackets provide freedom of movement into and out of the cubicle leading to a significant reduction in injuries.

Reducing injuries is a major factor that contributes to a reduction in healthcare and veterinary costs, as well as lowering replacement rates.

The fixed and flexible rubber couplings are designed to attach the neck rail to the cubicle. Its moulded natural rubber composition is cow friendly and requires no maintenance.

The patented flexible rubber coupling is designed to accommodate larger cows and improves their comfort and welfare.

The EASYFIX Scratcher is an innovative cubicle accessory designed to provide environmental enrichment and increased cow comfort. It has been developed to enrich the cows’ environment and encourages increased cubicle use.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Flexible and moveable arms lead to a reduction in injuries.All cow sizes are accommodated.Cows are encouraged to lie correctly in the cubicle bed.Cubicle beds are more spacious; cows lie down quicker and for longer periods.Improving cow comfort reduces veterinary costs & lowers cow mortality.Increased resting time leads to higher milk production.Improved cow welfare and better body condition.Reduced replacement rates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Flexible plastic pipes, rubber loop and rubber neck rail couplings.Fixed and flexible rubber couplings now available.Post manufactured from 60mm x 60mm x 4mm galvanised steel (Traditional steel cubicles are 2.7 – 3.0 mm)Easy to install.Available in red, green and blue.
WARRANTY	
10 years	

EASYFIX DREAM

NEW


EASYFIX Dream is a new cubicle system with a two-bend design for use in conjunction with a mat or mattress type system.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed for use in conjunction with cow mats or mattress type systems. The profile of the cubicle ensures cow lie in the correct position. Reduced soiling of the bed surface. Single post mounting system ensures unrestricted lunging space for the cow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible plastic pipes, rubber loop and rubber neck rail couplings. Fixed and flexible rubber couplings for neck rail. Post manufactured from 60mm X 60mm X 4mm galvanised steel (Traditional steel cubicles are 2.7 – 3.0 mm). Easy to install. Available in red, green and blue.
WARRANTY	
10 Years	

EASYFIX SIESTA

NEW


EASYFIX Siesta is a new cubicle system with a single bend design for use in conjunction sand based or deep bed systems.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed to offer maximum cow comfort for deep litter beds and sand cubicles. The profile of the cubicle ensures cow lie in the correct position. Reduced soiling of the beds surface. Single post mounting system ensures unrestricted lunging space for the cow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible plastic pipes, rubber loop and rubber neck rail couplings. Fixed and flexible rubber couplings for neck rail. Post manufactured from 60mm X 60mm X 4mm galvanised steel (Traditional steel cubicles are 2.7 – 3.0 mm). Easy to install. Available in red, green and blue.
WARRANTY	
10 Years	

EASYFIX CALM

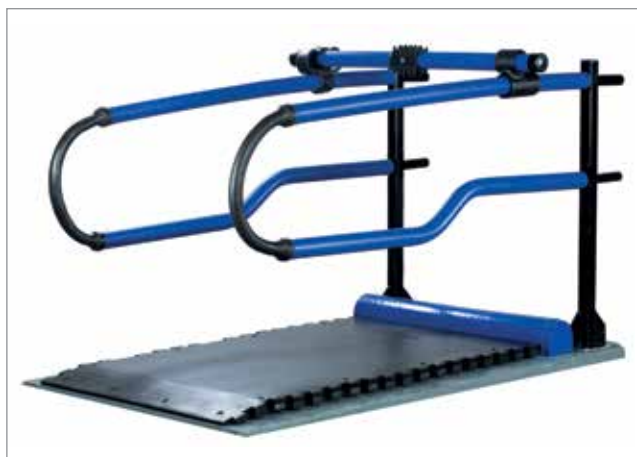
NEW


EASYFIX Calm a cubicle system with a straight flexible arm, design for use in conjunction with a mat or mattress, deep litter beds and sand type systems.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed to offer maximum cow comfort for deep litter bed, sand cubicles, or mat/mattress systems. The profile of the cubicle ensures cow lie in the correct position. Reduced soiling of the bed surface. Single post mounting system ensures unrestricted lunging space for the cow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible plastic pipes, rubber loop and rubber neck rail couplings. Fixed and flexible rubber couplings for neck rail. Post manufactured from 60mm X 60mm X 4mm galvanised steel (Traditional steel cubicles are 2.7 – 3.0 mm). Easy to install. Available in red, green and blue.
WARRANTY	
10 Years	

EASYFIX LIFE

NEW


EASYFIX Life is a new cubicle system with a raised two bend design which minimises animal contact with the flexible plastic arms. It is designed for use in conjunction with sand based or deep bed systems.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed to offer maximum cow comfort. The profile of the cubicle ensures cow lie in the correct position and prevents side lunging for cows when rising leading to reduced soiling of the bed surface. Single post mounting system ensures unrestricted lunging space for the cow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible plastic pipes, rubber loop and rubber neck rail couplings. Fixed and flexible rubber couplings for neck rail. Post manufactured from 60mm X 60mm X 4mm galvanised steel (Traditional steel cubicles are 2.7 – 3.0 mm). Easy to install. Available in red, green and blue.
WARRANTY	
10 Years	



ITALY



USA



WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS SAY

"I replaced 150 old Newton Rigg cubicles with EASYFIX cubicles and mattresses in 2015. Cow comfort is exceptional. The cubicles and mattresses are very durable and hygienic. They are also much safer: I've seen cows do some stupid things in the shed – but I've yet to see one even try to get stuck in an EASYFIX Cubicle!"

Michael & Catherine Gowing
350 cow dairy herd in Offaly, Ireland

"Cows are very comfortable in the EASYFIX Cubicles and if a cow is shunted against the flexible pipes she won't get hurt – unlike the old steel cubicles. They are easy to clean – because of the nice precise edges on the mats it meant that we could get them nice and flush with the concrete step between the cubicle rows – this means there are no little gaps for muck to lodge in and lift the interlocking rubber cow mats. The cow scratchers included on the EASYFIX cubicles were a bonus in terms of cow comfort."

Mervyn Stanley, Woodville Dairy Farm
(300 cows), Ireland

"We wanted to emphasise cow comfort, which is why we chose to go with EASYFIX Stall Dividers. The stall dividers are just like any others, but rather than a steel loop, it is made from a rubber loop. This slight difference allows for more flexibility and comfort for the cow. When a cow tries to get up, the stall doesn't knock her right back down. She is able to get up just about every time. They have enough flexibility that they keep the cows where they need to be but not enough that they are moving all around."

Mitchell Dairy & Grain, Winnebago, USA

"We saw the flexible EASYFIX cubicles on other farms and were impressed by them. We actually cancelled an order for steel ones. I was sceptical of the 3'9" centre-to-centre spacing that EASYFIX recommended for the cubicles, but in hindsight, we are now very thankful for it. It certainly straightened up the awkward cows that used to try to lie sideways in the wider steel ones. The EASYFIX cubicles flex to almost 4' anyway and the safety of them gives great piece of mind for us. When you have as much breeding gone into your pedigree stock as we have – the last thing you want to find in a morning is a top cow or heifer stuck in a steel cubicle! Look – even with the EASYFIX cubicles you'll get the odd cow that will try to push her way through the head-to-heads, but usually, they will go straight through – and the important thing is that they don't injure themselves."

Elwyn and Cheryl Thomas, Gelligatrog Pedigree Holstein Friesian Herd (216 cows), UK

"The cows are exceptionally comfortable in the EASYFIX Cubicles and we have noticed a huge drop in SCC compared to the previous straw and sand based systems. The sand bill has reduced significantly and we also got an extra 6-7 cubicles into the shed versus what we would have fit in using the old steel cubicles. We're very happy with the 3'9" centre to centre spacing that the EASYFIX cubicles are installed. They flex to four foot, so it's not an issue at all for our bigger cow. We keep a lot of bigger cows and lost a cow stuck in a steel cubicle back in 2014, so when we saw the EASYFIX product at various shows, it was the obvious solution to us."

Giles & Jeremy Clark, 400 cow operation at Longshaw Farm, UK

EASYFIX SCRATCHERS

NEW



The EASYFIX Scratcher is a new innovative cubicle accessory designed to provide environmental enrichment and increased cow comfort.



It has been developed to enrich the cows’ environment and encourage increased cubicle use.
The flexible protrusions create a safe environment for cows to scratch.
It also creates a better lying position.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental enrichment.• Increased cow comfort.• Encourages increased cubicle use.• No maintenance required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexible protrusions on two sides.• Suitable for installation with EASYFIX Cubicles.• Can be retrofitted to existing EASYFIX Cubicles.
WARRANTY	
3 years	

EASYFIX BRISKET BOARD



EASYFIX Brisket Board is ideal for use in new and existing cubicle housing.

The brisket board is designed to position the cow correctly when lying in the cubicle bed and prevent the cow lying too far forward, which can lead to soiling on the cubicle bed.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Position the cow correctly when lying in the cubicle bed.• Prevents the cow lying too far forward.• Eliminates soiling on the cubicle bed.• Designed to support the cow’s weight and allows her to extend her leg forward and rest in a natural position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Durable plastic material.• Curved design with no sharp edges.• Pre-drilled holes allow for easy installation.• Available in red, green and blue.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1150mm (l) x 150mm (h) x 180mm (d) • 45” (l) x 6” (h) x 7” (d)	5 Years

EASYFIX BRISKET BOARD: BLACK



EASYFIX Brisket Board is ideal for use in new and existing cubicle housing.

The brisket board is designed to position the cow correctly when lying in the cubicle bed and prevent the cow lying too far forward, which can lead to soiling on the cubicle bed.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position the cow correctly when lying in the cubicle bed. • Prevents the cow lying too far forward. • Eliminates soiling on the cubicle bed. • Designed to support the cow's weight and allows her to extend her leg forward and rest in a natural position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durable plastic material. • Curved design with no sharp edges. • Pre-drilled holes allow for easy installation. • Available in black.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
2450mm (l) x 140mm (h) x 190mm (d) • 96 1/2" (l) x 5 1/2" (h) x 7 1/2" (d)	5 Years

EASYFIX CALF SLATS



EASYFIX Calf Slats provide an elevated flooring solution for young calves, which are portable, easy-to-store and reusable.

The calf slats offer an alternative to straw bedding and the treated timber with its soft rubber covering creates a dry comfortable lying surface for young calves. The rubber covering is designed with slip strips and fitted to a treated timber platform, the platform is then elevated on 38mm rubber blocks.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calves always have a dry comfortable lie, thereby reducing navel infections. • Eliminates the need to use straw which is expensive. • Easy to monitor nutritional scours against the black rubber. • Easy and quick to install and remove. • Cuts down on labour and running costs. • Easy to clean with a power hose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to relocate and store. • Soft, sloped rubber covering with slip strip. • 30mm gap between the slats to allow liquids through, but stop cleats getting caught. • Treated timber which will last up to 10 years. • Rubber blocks underneath the timber to avoid contact with water.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
Option A 1730mm x 1280mm x 135mm • 68 1/16" x 50 1/4" x 5 1/4" * Option B 1800mm x 1130mm x 135mm • 70 3/4" x 44 1/2" x 5 1/4" *	5 years

*Note: All dimensions provided are subject to rubber manufacturing tolerances.

EASYFIX SDR SLAT RUBBER

NEW



EASYFIX SDR Slat Rubber was designed to improve the comfort, welfare and performance of cattle housed on concrete slats.

The smooth and soft rubber flooring provides a comfortable and confident walking surface for dairy cows and are suitable for installation in milking parlours, collecting yards, walkways and passageways with very high traffic. Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose. [FAQ'S: PAGE 12](#)

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Softer for increased cow comfort and improved welfare.• Smooth & sloped profile facilitates fast run-off and cleaner cattle.• Reduces lameness.• Increases productivity - higher daily milk yields.• Better feed conversion.• Suitable for use with scrapers.• Improves heat detection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smooth and sloped surface with slip strips.• Patented two strip rubber with rubber wedges.• Ribbed profile underside.• Custom sizes available for all slat sizes.• Suitable for new and used concrete slats.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
Custom sizes available for all slat sizes.	8 years



[FAQ'S: PAGE 12](#)

NEW AMMONIA REDUCING RUBBER AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

**Note: All dimensions provided are subject to rubber manufacturing tolerances.*





EASYFIX JUPITER S

NEW

The Jupiter S is a new 60mm cow mattress with a unique and innovative design.

The design incorporates an integrated brisket board at the front and pillow on two side of the mattress. This unique feature is a ‘world first’ and ensures optimum positioning of the cow when lying in the cow cubicle.

The mattress has a cushioned top surface which prevents hock damage and leg injuries. A studded profile on the underside provides maximum cow comfort, with a deflection of up to 22.8mm. The back of the mat has a sloped and non-abrasive profile which ensures animal waste is pushed into the passageway.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourages a comfortable lying position for cows in the cubicle bed.• Cows can stretch their front legs for maximum comfort.• Increases cow comfort, welfare and hygiene.• Increases productivity - higher daily milk yields.• Suitable for DIY installation & all cubicle sizes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural rubber compound.• Hidden interlock creates a seamless finish.• Stud profile underneath with up to 22.7mm deflection.• Sloped non-abrasive profile at the rear.• To adjust the width spacers are available.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1200mm (w) x 1930mm (l) x 60-100mm(d) • 47 1/2" (w) x 76" (l) x 2 3/8" - 4" * Weight: 76Kg	10 years



EASYFIX JUPITER F

NEW

The Jupiter F is a newly developed 60mm cow mattress with a unique and innovative design.

The mattress incorporates an integrated brisket board at the front and pillow on two sides. This unique feature is a 'world first' and ensures optimum positioning of the cow when lying in the cow cubicle.

The mattress has a 45mm layer of PU latex foam, creating a cushioned top surface for maximum comfort, with a deflection of up to 33mm. The back of the mat has a sloped and non-abrasive profile which ensures animal waste is pushed into the passageway. The mattress has been designed with a hidden interlock to create a seamless finish.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages a comfortable lying position for cows in the cubicle bed. Cows can stretch their front legs for maximum comfort. Increases cow comfort, welfare and hygiene. Increases productivity - higher daily milk yields. Suitable for DIY installation & all cubicle sizes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural rubber compound. 45mm latex - 50% foam and 50% PU. Latex foam enclosed in a 500 micron sealed wrapper. Sloped non-abrasive profile at the rear. Hidden interlock creates a seamless finish. To adjust the width spacers are available.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1200mm (w) x 1930mm (l) x 60-100mm(d) • 47 1/2" (w) x 76" (l) x 2 3/8" - 4" * Weight: 76Kg	10 years



*Note: All dimensions provided are subject to rubber manufacturing tolerances.



EASYFIX PHOENIX

EASYFIX Phoenix is a cubicle mattress offering a superior level of cow comfort. The natural resting position of the cow is supported by the soft lying area within the mat.

The cubicle mattress has a 25mm layer of latex foam and is interlocking on two sides with a sloped profile at the rear edge.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increases cow comfort and welfare.Increases productivity - higher daily milk yields.The open cell technology of the foam provides excellent comfort, durability and firmness.Suitable for DIY installation & all cubicle sizes.The width can be increased with the addition of spacers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Natural rubber compound.Interlocking on two sides.500 micron sealed wrapper enclosing 25mm latex foam.Foam 50% latex and 50% PU.Sloped non-abrasive profile at the rear.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1125mm (w) x 1800mm (h) x 37mm • 44 3/8" x 70 7/8" x 1 1/2" *	10 years



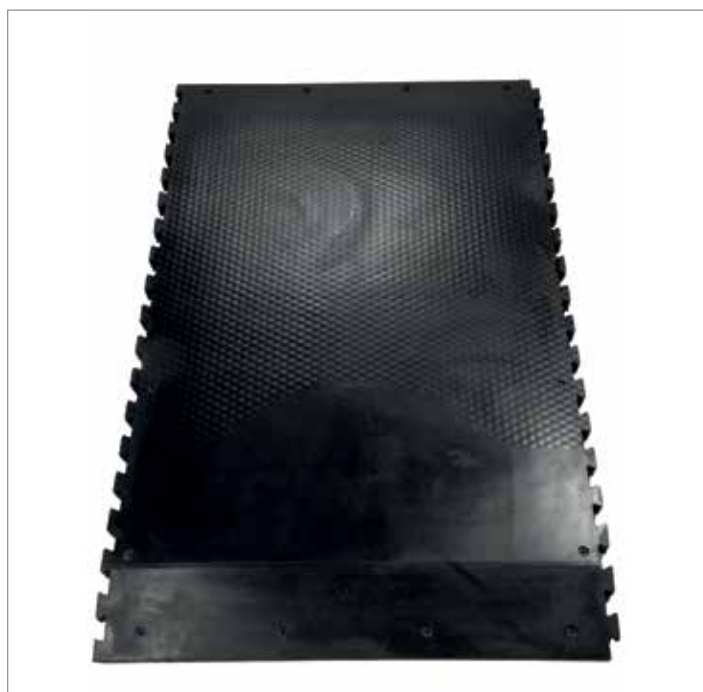
EASYFIX NEPTUNE

EASYFIX Neptune is a cubicle mattress offering the ultimate in terms of cow comfort.

The cubicle mattress has a 50mm layer of latex foam, is interlocking on two sides with a sloped profile at the rear. The cow's natural resting position is supported by the soft lying area within the centre of the mat.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases cow comfort and welfare. Increases productivity - higher daily milk yields. The open cell technology of the foam provides excellent comfort, durability and firmness. Suitable for DIY installation & all cubicle sizes. The width can be increased with the addition of spacers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural rubber compound. Interlocking on two sides. 500 micron sealed wrapper enclosing 50mm latex foam. Foam 50% latex and 50% PU. Sloped non-abrasive profile at the rear.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1125mm x 1830mm x 62mm • 44 3/8" x 72" x 2 1/2" *	10 years



**Note: All dimensions provided are subject to rubber manufacturing tolerances.*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

EASYFIX PHOENIX & NEPTUNE

1. WHY BUY A MATTRESS OVER A CHEAPER RUBBER MAT?

Cows can lie for up to 14 hours per day – the more comfortable you make the cubicle, the longer they will lie. Cows produce 5 times more milk lying down versus standing.

2. THERE IS A VAST RANGE OF OPTIONS AVAILABLE FOR CUBICLES, ALL CLAIMING TO BE THE BEST – SO HOW DO I DECIDE?

Top Cover – How thick is the top cover material? The EASYFIX mattress has a top skin of up to 12mm on the 25mm Latex Mattress and up to 12mm on the 50mm Latex Mattress – most continuous systems available range from 3mm to 6mm.

What is the Latex made from? A Latex Mattress is made up of two materials – Latex & Polyurethane. The Latex is the part that provides the memory and cushioning effect. EASYFIX use a 50:50 split in their latex and tests conclude that our latex loses 2% elasticity over a 10 year period. Competitors (if they know) will typically use an 80:20 split as this is a cheaper option, and the memory and cushioning of the latex will deteriorate over a shorter period of time.

The weakest part of any mattress is the back 4”– 6” where the cows step first to enter the cubicle – here is the point where you are most likely to find tears – at this point the EASYFIX Mattress has a minimum of 25mm of solid versus continuous systems 3mm-6mm.

With continuous systems, if a tear occurs the replacement is expensive as you would have to replace the entire run.

3. WHAT ABOUT HOCK DAMAGE?

EASYFIX has designed the top surface of the mattress with a finish that provides a level of grip that is non-abrasive to cows – compared to canvas type materials that can cause hock damage, which has implications for herd health and in particular fertility.

4. HOW CAN I TEST FOR COMFORT?

The simple knee test is a good indicator of comfort, free- fall to your knees and assess the impact- remember a cow when lying down transfers 70% of her bodyweight to her two front knees and free falls for 18-24” so a good cushioning surface will reduce impact on cows knees.

5. HOW DO YOU CLEAN THE MATTRESSES?

Mattresses can be cleaned using a hand scraper, brush or mechanically propelled cubicle bedder with a cleaning arm.

6. CAN YOU USE LIME OR OTHER ABSORBENT MATERIAL WITH THEM?

It is recommended with all cubicle mat/mattress systems to use a bedding material, such as sawdust, lime etc. This will absorb any liquid run off, ensure beds remain dry, and material with antibacterial agents or lime will ensure bacteria growth is lowered and therefore keep SCC low, and prevent mastitis.



EASYFIX LIBRA

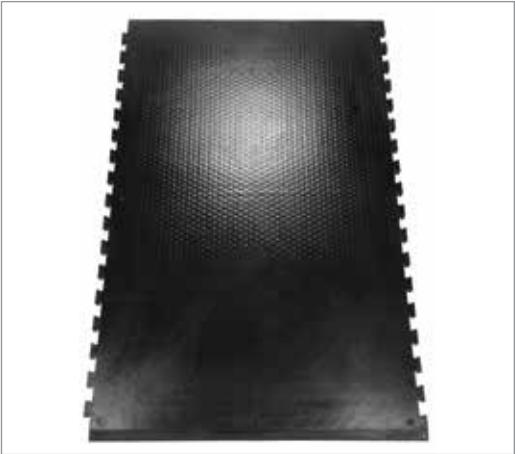


EASYFIX Libra is a straight edge cubicle mat providing a good level of cow comfort at a competitive price. It is suitable for dairy and suckler cows.

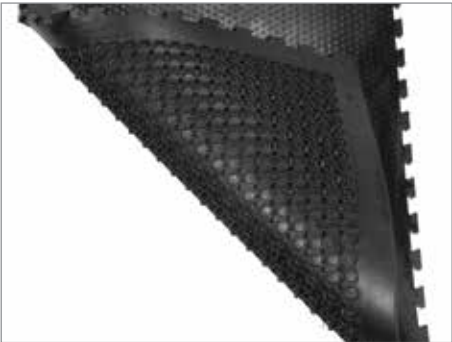


BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good level of cow comfort.• Increases productivity - higher daily milk yields.• Suitable for DIY installation.• Easy to clean 'Hammer top' surface.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Honeycomb and stud profile on the underside.• Available with straight edges.• Natural rubber compound.• Sloped profile at the rear.• Also available with interlocks on two sides.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1150mm (w) x 1830mm (l) x 23mm • 45 1/4" x 72" x 7/8" *	10 years

EASYFIX LIBRA I



EASYFIX Libra i is an interlocking cubicle mat providing a good level of cow comfort at a competitive price. It is suitable for dairy and suckler cows.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good level of cow comfort.• Increases productivity - higher daily milk yields.• Suitable for DIY installation.• Easy to clean 'Hammer top' surface.• The width can be increased with the addition of spacers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interlocking on two sides.• Honeycomb design on the underside.• Natural rubber compound.• Sloped profile at the rear.• Also available with straight edges.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1125mm (w) x 1800mm (l) x 23mm • 44 1/4" x 70 7/8" x 7/8" *	10 years

* Note: All dimensions provided are subject to rubber manufacturing tolerances.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

EASYFIX LIBRA

1. WHAT WIDTH WILL THE LIBRA I COVER WHEN INTERLOCKED?

The width is 1125mm.

2. HOW WIDE IS THE LIBRA I WITH THE DOVETAILS REMOVED?

The width is 1100mm.

3. CAN THE LIBRA I BE USED IN LIE BACK AREAS?

Yes, it may be used in lie backs but is not suitable for use under bulls or heavy stock.

4. IS THE MAT ABRASIVE AND LIKELY TO CAUSE HOCK DAMAGE?

All EASYFIX Cubicle Matting is designed with a non-abrasive finish and do not cause hock damage in cows.

5. WHAT IS THE EXPECTED LIFESPAN?

The EASYFIX Cow Mat was developed over 17 years ago. It is made from a high quality natural rubber compound. Based on product performance to date, we would expect the mats to last 20+ years.

6. CAN SPACERS BE USED TO INCREASE THE WIDTH OF COW MATS?

Yes. Spacers are available and will add 75mm / 3 inches to the width of the Libra i.

EASYFIX SATURN



EASYFIX Saturn is a cubicle mat ideal for sucklers and dry cows.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Studded profile underneath for additional comfort.• Easy clean non-abrasive surface.• Suitable for DIY installation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stud profile on the underside.• Natural rubber compound.• Available with straight edges.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1220mm (w) x 1830mm (l) x 17mm • 48" x 72" x 5/8" *	3 years

EASYFIX MERCURY



EASYFIX Mercury is a straight edge cubicle mat ideal for sucklers, dry cows and heifers.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Studded profile underneath for additional comfort.• Easy clean non-abrasive surface.• Suitable for DIY installation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stud profile on the underside.• Natural rubber compound.• Available with straight edges.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1140mm (w) x 1830mm (l) x 17mm • 44 7/8" x 72" x 5/8" *	3 years

* Note: All dimensions provided are subject to rubber manufacturing tolerances.

EASYFIX PLUTO



EASYFIX Pluto is a straight edge cubicle mat ideal for young stock in smaller training cubicles.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideal for young stock in training cubicles. • Slip resistant surface. • Studded profile underneath for additional comfort. • Easy clean non-abrasive surface. • Suitable for DIY installation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stud profile on the underside. • Natural rubber compound. • Available with straight edges.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
920mm (w) x 1520mm (l) x 17mm • 36 1/8" x 59 3/4" x 5/8" *	3 years

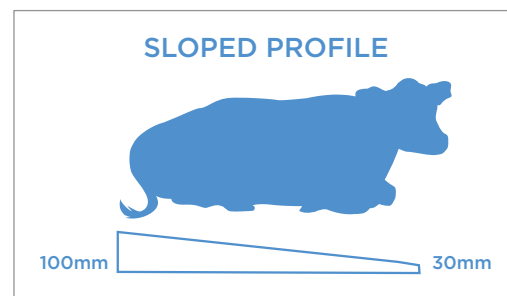
EASYFIX SPIRIT



EASYFIX Spirit has honeycomb shaped compartments to maximises the distribution of sand in deep bed cubicle systems.



The sloped profile towards the front allows the cows to lower and rise with ease.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximises the distribution of sand in deep cubicle beds. • Ideal for use with sand or organic bedding materials. • Suitable for DIY installation. • Suitable for use with sand rakes/ groomers. • No maintenance required. • Reduces sand use by 20%-40%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honeycombed shaped compartments. • Sloped profile towards the front of the mat allows greater depth of sand. • Natural rubber compound. • Semi-closed cells to ensure the mat stays in position.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1150mm (w) x 1400mm (l) • 45 3/8" (w) x 55 1/8" (l) (Sloped from 30mm to 100mm • 2" to 4")	5 years

* Note: All dimensions provided are subject to rubber manufacturing tolerances.

EASYFIX SDR SLAT RUBBER

NEW

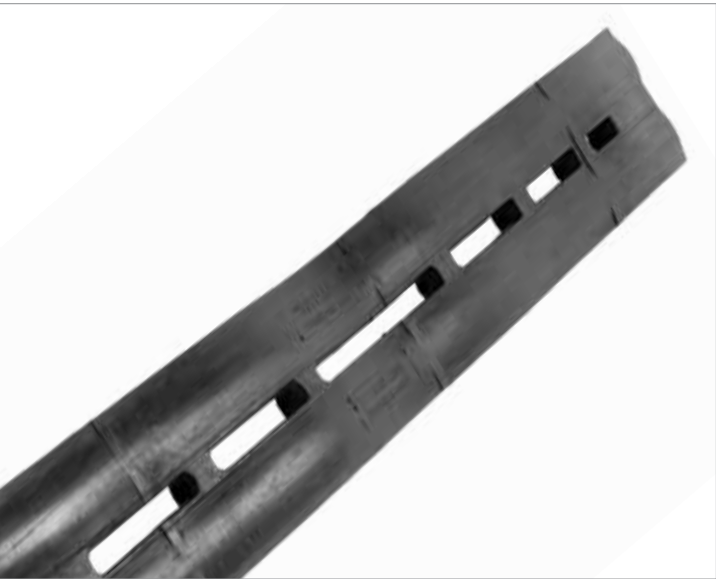


EASYFIX SDR Slat Rubber System was designed to improve cow comfort, welfare and the performance of dairy cows housed on concrete slats.

The smooth and soft rubber flooring provides a comfortable and confident walking surface for dairy cows and is suitable for installation in milking parlours, collecting yards, walkways and passageways with very high traffic.

Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Softer for increased cow comfort and improved welfare.• Smooth and sloped profile facilitates fast run-off and cleaner cattle.• Reduces lameness.• Increases productivity - higher daily milk yields.• Better feed conversion.• Suitable for use with scrapers.• Improves heat detection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smooth and soft surface with slip strips.• Patented two strip rubber with rubber wedges.• Ribbed profile underside.• Custom sizes available for all slat sizes.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
Custom sizes available for all slat sizes.	8 years



FAQ'S: PAGE 12

NEW AMMONIA REDUCING RUBBER AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

EASYFIX SR SLAT RUBBER



Award winning innovative solution for the agricultural industry.

The award winning EASYFIX Slat Rubber System was designed to improve the comfort, welfare and performance of cows housed on concrete slats. Our new reinforced design has a high grip profile and 8 year warranty. The cushioning effect of the rubber increases standing times at the feed fence. This results in higher feed intake and increased milk production.

The unique design features a high grip diamond surface, with a sloped profile and ribbed under surface. The patented product has an easy-to-fit rubber wedge solution, and is made from the highest quality natural rubber compound. The slatted rubber floor covering has been designed to fit new and used concrete slats.

FAQ'S: PAGE 12

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increases cow comfort, welfare and confidence.Reduces lameness.Increases productivity - Average daily weight gains for cattle, and higher milk yield for cows.Better feed conversion.Suitable for use with scrapers.Improves heat detection due to enhanced foothold and comfort – almost the same as pasture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">New reinforced design.High grip profile.DLG Signum test approved.Patented two strip rubber system.Suitable for new and used concrete slats.All sizes of slats catered for.Sloped profile for quick urine run-off to increase drainage as well as reduce emissions.Self-wedged solution (no additional fixation material required).
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
Custom sizes available for all slat sizes.	8 years



* Note: All dimensions provided are subject to rubber manufacturing tolerances.

EASYFIX MG MOTION



EASYFIX MG Motion is a ‘penny’ high grip interlocking mat which provides dairy cows with an excellent foothold in walking and standing areas.

The rubber mats provide cows with a comfortable and confident walking surface. The MG Motion is suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides cows with maximum grip and confidence.• Honeycomb design on the underside provides extra comfort and deflection.• Facilitates faster movement of animals.• Easy to install.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural rubber compound.• ‘Penny’ grip for maximum foothold and comfort.• Strong interlock on two sides creates a seamless joint.• Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings.• Easy to clean with water or brush scraper.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1125mm x 1800mm x 28mm • 44 1/4" x 70 7/8" x 1 1/8"	5 years

EASYFIX MG MAX 4



EASYFIX MG Max 4 has a ‘penny’ high grip surface and is ideal for use in milking parlours, walkways and collecting yards.

The rubber mats provide a comfortable and confident walking and standing surface for dairy cattle. Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides cows with maximum grip and confidence.• Facilitates faster movement of animals.• Very easy to install.• Can be recessed into the concrete in new builds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural rubber compound.• ‘Penny’ grip design.• Strong interlock on four sides.• Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings.• Easy to clean with water or brush scraper.• ‘Penny’ grip on the underside so that the mats can be inverted.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1000mm x 1000mm x 22mm • 39 3/8" x 39 3/8" x 7/8" *	3 years

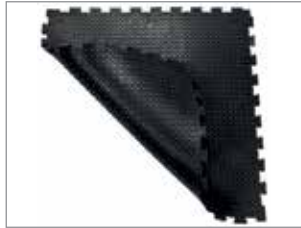
* Note: All dimensions provided are subject to rubber manufacturing tolerances.

EASYFIX MG MAX 8



EASYFIX MG Max 8 has a ‘penny’ high grip surface and is ideal for use in high traffic areas on large scale farms.

The rubber mats provide a comfortable and confident walking surface for dairy cows and are suitable for installation in milking parlours, collecting yards, walkways and passageways with very high traffic. Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides cows with maximum grip and confidence.• Facilitates faster movement of animals.• Very easy to install.• Can be recessed into the concrete in new builds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural rubber compound.• ‘Penny’ grip design.• Strong interlock on four sides.• Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings.• Easy to clean with water or brush scraper.• ‘Penny’ grip on the underside so that the mats can be inverted.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1000mm x 1000mm x 22mm • 39 3/8" x 39 3/8" x 7/8" *	5 years

EASYFIX MG EVO



EASYFIX MG Evo has a ‘hexagonal’ high grip surface and is ideal for use in milking parlours, collecting yards, feedpads, walkways and passageways.

The rubber mats provide a comfortable and confident walking surface reducing lameness and the associated veterinary and healthcare costs. Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides cows with maximum grip and confidence.• Better locomotion and more natural gait.• Facilitates faster movement of animals.• Reduces lameness & the associated healthcare costs.• Very easy to install.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural rubber compound.• ‘Hexagonal’ high grip profile.• Stud profile underneath.• Strong interlock on four sides.• Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings.• Easy to clean with water or brush scraper.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1150mm x 1770mm x 24mm • 45 1/4" x *69 5/8" x 1" *	5 years

EASYFIX MG TRAFFIC



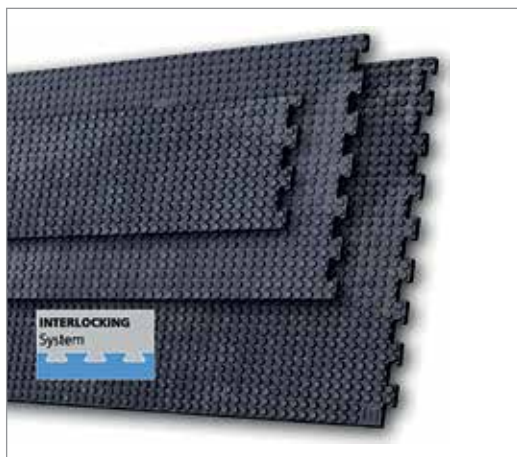
EASYFIX MG Traffic 1, 2, 3 and 4 have a 'penny' high grip surface and are ideal for entrance and exit lanes, feed faces and toe spaces.

The mats are available in four widths, have excellent grip and are hard wearing. Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides cows with maximum grip and confidence. • Facilitates faster movement of animals. • Very easy to install. • Mats can be recessed into the concrete in new builds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural rubber compound. • 'Penny' grip design. • Strong interlock on two sides. • Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings. • Easy to clean with water or brush scraper. • 'Penny' grip on the underside so that the mats can be inverted.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
<p>MG Traffic 1 305mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 12" x 88" x 3/4" *</p> <p>MG Traffic 2 610mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 24" x 88" x 3/4" *</p> <p>MG Traffic 3 915mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 36" x 88" x 3/4" *</p> <p>MG Traffic 4 1220mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 48" x 88" x 3/4" *</p>	3 years

EASYFIX MG ACTION



EASYFIX Action is a high grip rubber mat available in four widths and is ideal for installation under high volume and heavy stock.

The rubber mats provide a cushioned standing surface at the feed face resulting in higher feed intake and increased productivity. The mats can be installed in entrance and exit lanes, feed faces and toe spaces.

Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides cows with maximum grip and confidence. • Facilitates faster movement of animals. • Very easy to install. • Mats can be recessed into the concrete in new builds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural rubber compound. • 'Penny' grip design. • Strong interlock on two sides. • Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings. • Easy to clean with water or brush scraper. • 'Penny' grip on the underside so that the mats can be inverted.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
<p>MG Action 1 305mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 12" x 88" x 3/4" *</p> <p>MG Action 2 610mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 24" x 88" x 3/4" *</p> <p>MG Action 3 915mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 36" x 88" x 3/4" *</p> <p>MG Action 4 1220mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 48" x 88" x 3/4" *</p>	5 years

EASYFIX EASYFEEDER



EASYFIX EasyFeeder is an interlocking plastic trough system for feed lanes.

The molded, non-toxic and shatterproof plastic has a smooth, raised and sloped plastic surface. It is suitable for use with all diet feeders and mixer wagons.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces feed waste and labour. • Increases feed intake. • Reduces contamination from birds and rodents. • Feed always remains in front of the animal. • Suitable for use with all diet feeders and mixer wagons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interlocking plastic feed trough system. • Sections can be interlocked to give the required length. • Adjustable width to suit feeding needs. • Caps at the top for filling with water and release plugs at the bottom. • Molded fork lift points. • Lightweight shatterproof plastic.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1570mm (l) x 650mm (h) x 650mm (d) • 61 3/4" (l) x 25 5/8" (h) x 25 5/8" (d)	5 years





EASYFIX EVOLVE

NEW

EASYFIX Evolve is a pioneering advance in animal feed systems that optimises cow welfare and performance.

The Evolve is a feed barrier system designed to extend the cow’s reach and allow for increased feed intake. The unique design also provides safe access and egress for farm workers.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The open system allows essential head movements during feeding and more natural feeding behaviour.• Increases feed intake.• Provides better access to feed due to the increased reach of animals.• Eliminates injuries and marks traditionally associated with steel alternatives.• Reduces stress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Galvanized steel frame with curved plastic divisions.• Flexible plastic pipes that shape to the animal's body.• Modular system.• Available in red, green and blue.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
Modular sections that can be adjusted for any size required.	5 Years



EASYFIX MG TRAFFIC



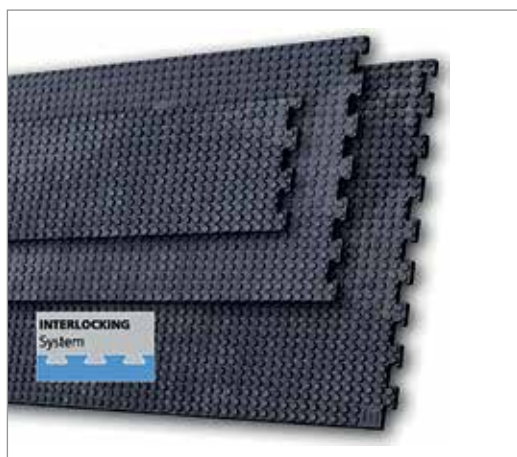
EASYFIX MG Traffic 1, 2, 3 and 4 have a 'penny' high grip surface and are ideal for entrance and exit lanes, feed faces and toe spaces.

The mats are available in four widths, have excellent grip and are hard wearing. Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides cows with maximum grip and confidence. • Facilitates faster movement of animals. • Very easy to install. • Mats can be recessed into the concrete in new builds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural rubber compound. • 'Penny' grip design. • Strong interlock on two sides. • Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings. • Easy to clean with water or brush scraper. • 'Penny' grip on the underside so that the mats can be inverted.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
MG Traffic 1 305mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 12" x 88" x 3/4" * MG Traffic 2 610mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 24" x 88" x 3/4" * MG Traffic 3 915mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 36" x 88" x 3/4" * MG Traffic 4 1220mm x 2235mm x 18mm • 48" x 88" x 3/4" *	3 years

EASYFIX MG ACTION



EASYFIX Action is a high grip rubber mat available in four widths and is ideal for installation under high volume and heavy stock.

The rubber mats provide a cushioned standing surface at the feed face resulting in higher feed intake and increased productivity. The mats can be installed in entrance and exit lanes, feed faces and toe spaces.

Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.

BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides cows with maximum grip and confidence. • Facilitates faster movement of animals. • Very easy to install. • Mats can be recessed into the concrete in new builds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural rubber compound. • 'Penny' grip design. • Strong interlock on two sides. • Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings. • Easy to clean with water or brush scraper. • 'Penny' grip on the underside so that the mats can be inverted.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
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EASYFIX MG EVO



EASYFIX MG Evo has a 'hexagonal' high grip surface and is ideal for use in milking parlours, collecting yards, feedpads, walkways and passageways.

The rubber mats provide a comfortable and confident walking surface reducing lameness and the associated veterinary and healthcare costs. Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides cows with maximum grip and confidence. Better locomotion and more natural gait. Facilitates faster movement of animals. Reduces lameness & the associated healthcare costs. Very easy to install. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural rubber compound. 'Hexagonal' high grip profile. Stud profile underneath. Strong interlock on four sides. Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings. Easy to clean with water or brush scraper.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1150mm x 1770mm x 24mm • 45 1/4" x 69 5/8" x 1" *	5 years

EASYFIX MG MOTION



EASYFIX MG Motion is a 'penny' high grip interlocking mat which provides dairy cows, with an excellent foothold in walking and standing areas.

The rubber mats provide cows with a comfortable and confident walking surface. The MG Motion is suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides cows with maximum grip and confidence. Honeycomb design on the underside provides extra comfort and deflection. Facilitates faster movement of animals. Easy to install. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural rubber compound. 'Penny' grip for maximum foothold and comfort. Strong interlock on two sides creates a seamless joint. Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings. Easy to clean with water or brush scraper.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1125mm x 1800mm x 28mm • 44 1/4" x 70 7/8" x 1 1/8"	5 years

* Note: All dimensions provided are subject to rubber manufacturing tolerances.

EASYFIX MG MAX 4



EASYFIX MG Max 4 has a ‘penny’ high grip surface and is ideal for use in milking parlours, walkways and collecting yards.

The rubber mats provide a comfortable and confident walking and standing surface for dairy cows. Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides cows with maximum grip and confidence.• Facilitates faster movement of animals.• Very easy to install.• Can be recessed into the concrete in new builds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural rubber compound.• ‘Penny’ grip design.• Strong interlock on four sides.• Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings.• Easy to clean with water or brush scraper.• ‘Penny’ grip on underside so that mat can be inverted.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1000mm x 1000mm x 22mm • 39 3/8" x 39 3/8" x 7/8" *	3 years

EASYFIX MG MAX 8



EASYFIX MG Max 8 has a ‘penny’ high grip surface and is ideal for use in high traffic areas on large scale farms.

The rubber mats provide a comfortable and confident walking surface for dairy cows and is suitable for installation in milking parlours, collecting years, walkways and passageways with very high traffic. Suitable for use with automatic scrapers and robotic scrapers, which have been adjusted for use on rubber floors. Ideal for cleaning with a pressure washer or water hose.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides cows with maximum grip and confidence.• Facilitates faster movement of animals.• Very easy to install.• Can be recessed into the concrete in new builds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural rubber compound.• ‘Penny’ grip design.• Strong interlock on four sides.• Recessed holes around the edges facilitate stainless steel fixings.• Easy to clean with water or brush scraper.• ‘Penny’ grip on the underside so that the mats can be inverted.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1000mm x 1000mm x 22mm • 39 3/8" x 39 3/8" x 7/8" *	5 years



EASYFIX SOFTFLOOR

EASYFIX SoftFloor is a high grip floor covering that reduces fatigue and offers a good level of comfort for operators in the parlour pit.



BENEFITS	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excellent anti-fatigue properties.• Very easy to install.• Resistant to milking machine acids.• Reduces stray voltage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High grip surface.• EVA material.• Interlocking on four sides.• Available in blue & green.
DIMENSIONS	WARRANTY
1000mm x 1000mm x 22mm • 39 3/8" x 39 3/8" x 7/8" *	5 Years

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

EASYFIX PARLOUR MATTING

1. WHY SHOULD I INSTALL RUBBER IN THE MILKING PARLOUR?

Rubber in the milking parlour can deliver many benefits for both the farmer and the cow. Milking times are reduced, cow flow increases, cows don't slip and get hurt, cows come into the parlour better. How is this possible? The average gait length for a cow on concrete is 600mm, grass is 800mm and rubber is also 800mm. This more natural movement and increased step length will move cows through the system at a faster pace.

Milk let down by cows is also improved through standing on a comfortable rubber surface versus hard, cold concrete as cows feel more relaxed.

Cows also come forward to the parlour easier as cows will opt to stand on rubber near the parlour entrance as opposed to concrete in the collecting yard.

All parlour designs usually require sharp turns by cows. Typical herringbone parlours will have 90 degree turns, rotary platforms require a 180 degree turn etc. Anywhere you ask a cow to turn, it puts pressure on the claw. This is a main source of claw damage leading to digital dermatitis or white line lameness. This is caused from the abrasive nature of concrete, whereas rubber provides a cushioned surface.

2. IS IT EASY TO CLEAN?

Cleaning time should be similar to concrete floors, all EASYFIX rubber is designed to withstand cleaning chemicals etc.

3. HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

With any rubber flooring it is vital to ensure that the correct mat is used in the correct area and understanding the volume of cows that are being milked will determine how long a product will last. Consider the traffic from a 1,000 cow herd milked three times a day versus a 100 cow herd milked twice a day – 1.1m cow passes vs. 73,000 cow passes per annum. EASYFIX strives to develop products that are durable and deliver value for money for customers- on average EASYFIX products should last 15+ years depending on application and traffic levels. **Note: If you are unsure about what product best suits contact a member of the EASYFIX product support team.**

4. WHAT MATS ARE AVAILABLE FOR MILKING PARLOURS AND COLLECTING YARDS?

EASYFIX MG Max 4 / EASYFIX MG Max 8 / EASYFIX Evo / EASYFIX Motion.

5. WILL THE EASYFIX MG MAX 4 COVER COVER 1M² WHEN INTERLOCKED? Yes.

6. DO THE EASYFIX EVO DIMENSIONS INCLUDE THE INTERLOCK?

Yes, they include the interlock.

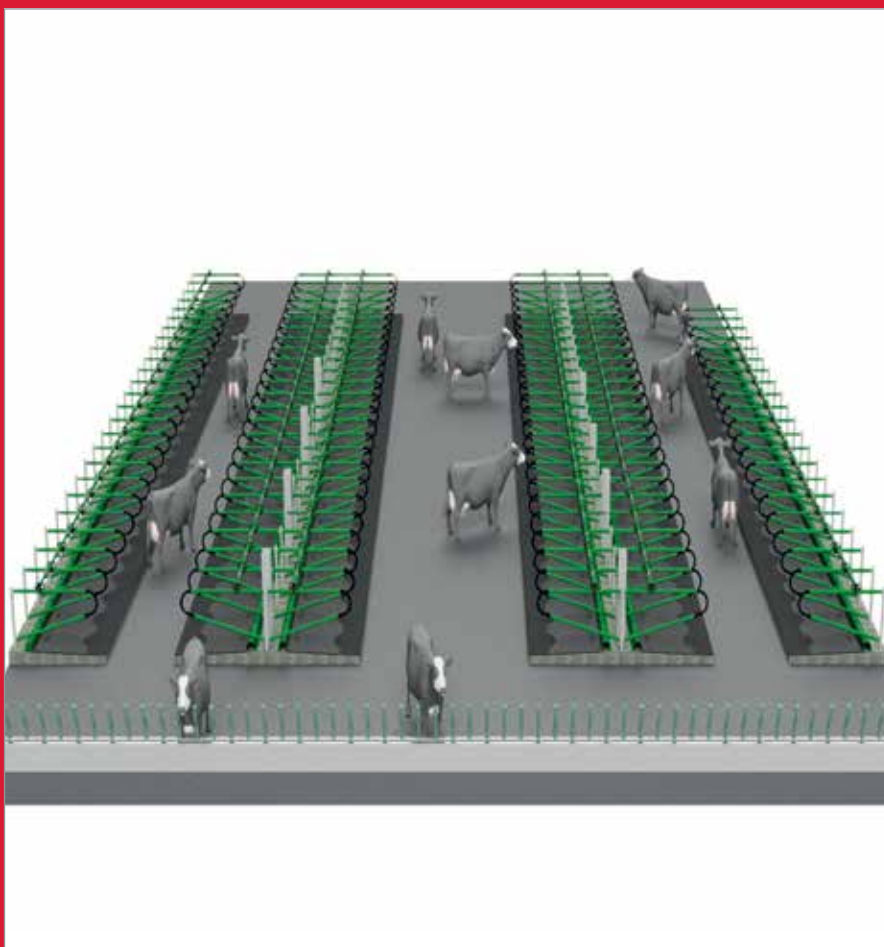
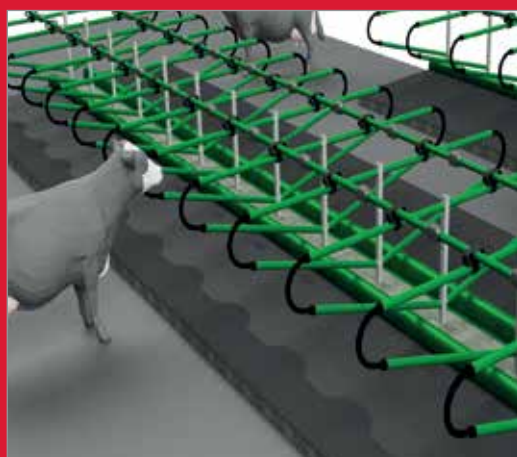
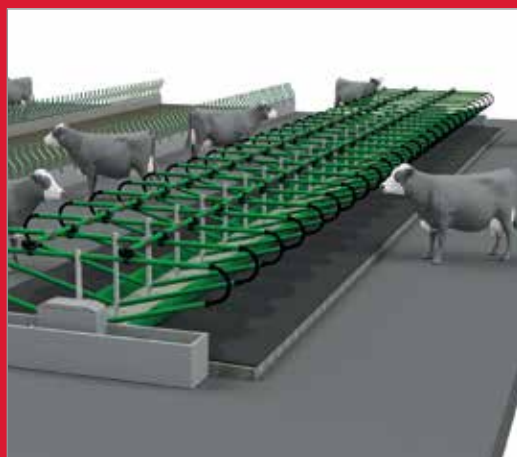
7. HOW DO YOU RECOMMEND CLEANING THE PARLOUR MATTING?

The matting is cleaned in exactly the same way as a normal concrete floor, chemicals and cleaning agents will not affect the mat.

8. WHAT MATS SHOULD YOU INSTALL IN THE PARLOUR PIT?

EASYFIX SoftFloor is a high grip floor covering that reduces fatigue and offers a good level of comfort for operators in the parlour pit. The EVA mat measures 1m x 1m x 22mm and is interlocking on four sides.

DAIRY HOUSING DESIGN SERVICE

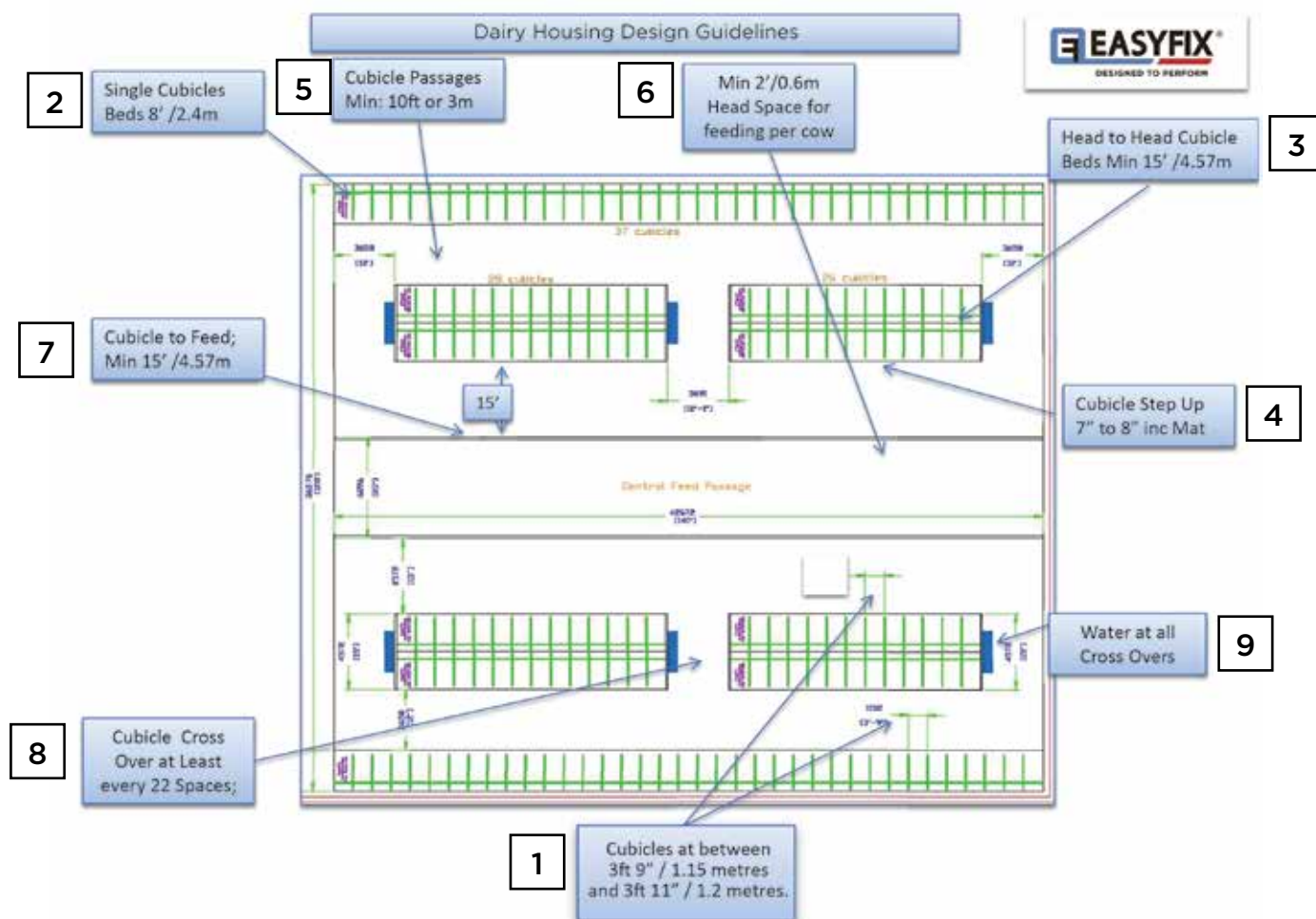


We provide a FREE design service for made to measure dairy cubicle housing systems.

We can also arrange a FREE on-farm visit to discuss your current dairy housing expansion plans, during which our experienced team will provide you with an on-site technical design and advisory service.

Contact us for a FREE on-farm consultation on 090 9643344 or email info@easyfix.ie

GUIDELINES FOR DAIRY HOUSING DESIGN



1. WIDTH OF EASYFIX CUBICLES

The optimum width for EASYFIX cubicles is between 3ft 9"/1.15 meters–3ft 11"/1.2 metres. This width will allow cows the optimum amount of room to lie down and lie comfortably in the cubicle bed. Conventional steel cubicles are set at 47"/1.2 metres. With the narrower placements in the EASYFIX cubicles you can achieve an extra cow space for every 15 cows or 6 cows in 100. This is an important factor in costing new builds.

2. LENGTH OF SINGLE CUBICLE BEDS

The recommended length for single cubicle beds is 8ft/2.4 metres at a minimum. This length will even allow very large Holstein cows enough room to rise and lunge forward in the bed when lying down and getting up. When old dairy cubicle houses are being retrofitted this is not always achievable, but certainly in new builds this measurement should be the target.

3. LENGTH OF HEAD-TO-HEAD CUBICLE BEDS

15ft/4.57 metres is the minimum recommended length for head-to-head cubicles; this will allow cows sufficient lunging room. It also facilitates the use of one post for two head-to-head cubicles in the EASYFIX system.

4. CUBICLE STEP UP

The recommended step up from the floor to the top of the mat should be 7"/178mm to 8"/203mm at a minimum. This height will help to maintain cleaner cubicle beds as it allows the effluent in the channel to be spread over a larger surface area. 5/6 inches is definitely too low.

5. CUBICLE PASSAGES

The width of the cubicle passage is recommended at a minimum of 10ft/3 metres. If the cubicle passage is any narrower it will impede and restrict the movement of cows as they leave adjacent cubicle beds. Depending on the cleaning mechanism in the shed, it can also lead to the channel between the cubicles filling up very quickly and the cows dragging the effluent up on the cubicle bed. In extreme cases, it can lead to dirty hooves, which in turn can lead to laminitis.

6. HEAD SPACE AT THE FEEDING FACE

Cows require approx 2ft/0.6 metre head space to feed sufficiently. This is particularly necessary for freshly calved cows where body reserves need to be maintained through maximizing intakes.

7. CUBICLE TO FEED FACE

The cubicle to feed face is critical and should be at least 15 feet or 4.57 metres. This space will facilitate cleaner passages and easier movement of cows from their cubicles to the feed face.

8. CUBICLE CROSS OVERS

Cubicle cross overs should be located after every 22-25 spaces maximum. This allows for better cow flow and access to water which should be located at each 22 cow sections.

9. WATER AT ALL CROSS OVERS

The availability of fresh clean water at all cross overs is highly recommended. As a rule of thumb a 750kg dairy cow will consume 16 gallons / 73 litres of water per day in cold weather and double that amount in hot weather. It is important that drinking troughs are placed at each cross over point in a shed, so that cows don't have to travel too far to access the trough. The choice of water trough is also important with sufficient capacity in the trough, good water pressure and also that the troughs are easily cleaned.



SINGLE CUBICLE INSTALLATION GUIDELINES

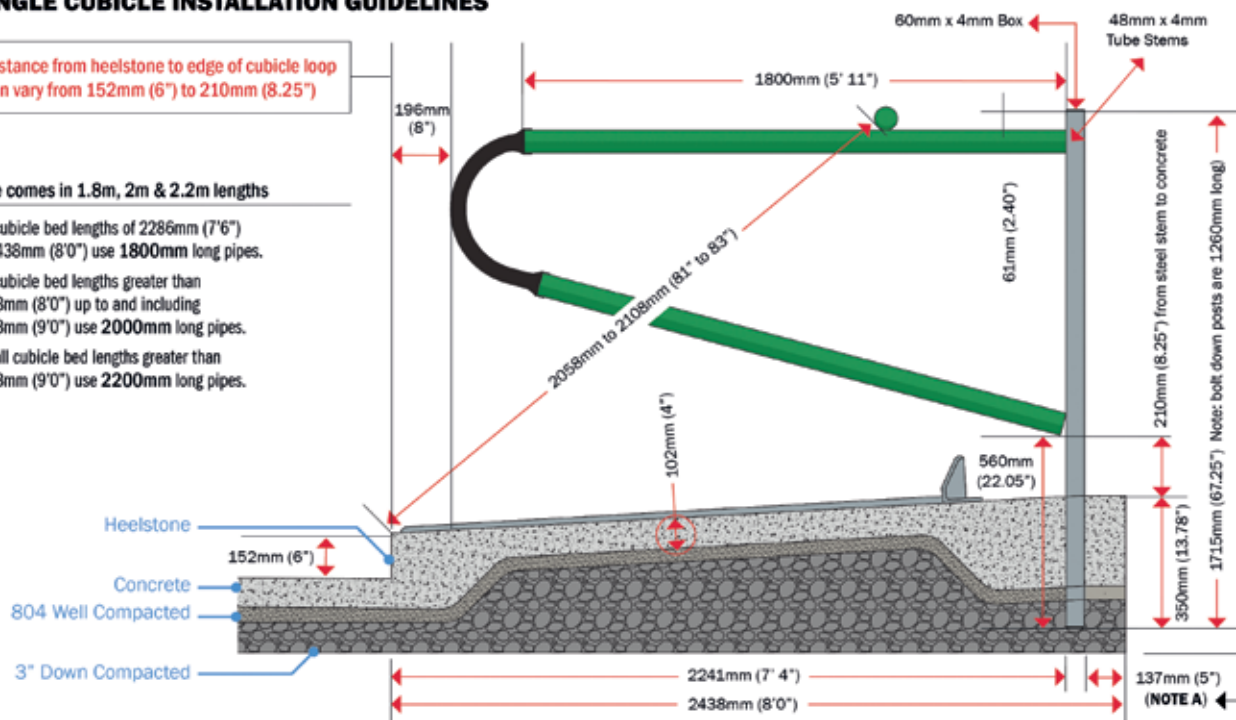
Distance from heelstone to edge of cubicle loop can vary from 152mm (6") to 210mm (8.25")

Pipe comes in 1.8m, 2m & 2.2m lengths

For cubicle bed lengths of 2286mm (7'6") to 2438mm (8'0") use 1800mm long pipes.

For cubicle bed lengths greater than 2438mm (8'0") up to and including 2743mm (9'0") use 2000mm long pipes.

For all cubicle bed lengths greater than 2743mm (9'0") use 2200mm long pipes.



NOTE A: This steel post position measurement can be adjusted to achieve the correct heelstone to cubicle loop measurement. Do not exceed 290mm adjustment.

DOUBLE CUBICLE INSTALLATION GUIDELINES

Pipe comes in 1.8m, 2m & 2.2m lengths

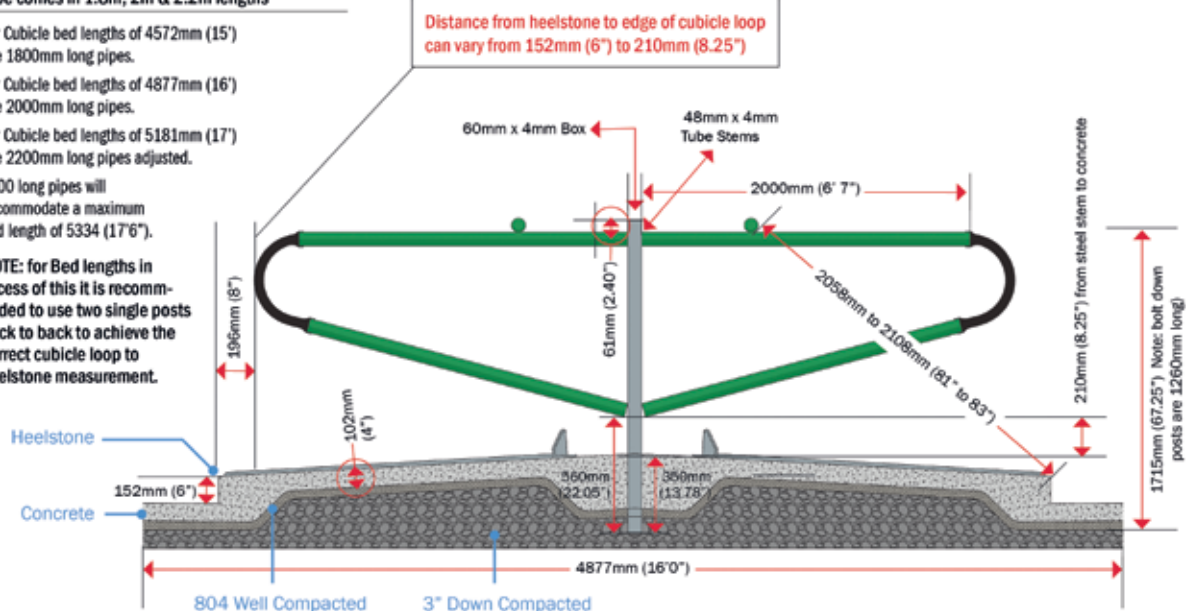
For Cubicle bed lengths of 4572mm (15') use 1800mm long pipes.

For Cubicle bed lengths of 4877mm (16') use 2000mm long pipes.

For Cubicle bed lengths of 5181mm (17') use 2200mm long pipes adjusted.

2200 long pipes will accommodate a maximum bed length of 5334 (17'6").

NOTE: for Bed lengths in excess of this it is recommended to use two single posts back to back to achieve the correct cubicle loop to heelstone measurement.



REDUCING LAMENESS IN DAIRY HOUSING



There is a growing awareness of the importance of controlling lameness in dairy herds. As in the case of most production diseases the causes of the problem is likely to be multifactorial.

The incidence of lameness and the lesions associated with lameness varies widely between each management system, for example between pasture and dairy cows housed for the winter period and a large part of the year.

Indoor concrete surfaces of milking yards and sheds can be abrasive, particularly in the case where an effort has been made to keep the surface rough to minimize cows slipping. Unfortunately, a combination of this roughness and moisture leads to excessive hoof wear.

A major cause of lameness in yards is a result of small stones and sand being brought into the yard from pasture and roadways.

Poorly designed farm yards with a lot of right angled turns leads to cows pivoting and twisting which causes extra pressure on the outside claw. This in turn can lead to claw lesions, manifesting as lameness.

Excessive use of electrified backing gates causes cows to compact at the back of the yard, to lift their heads and to move from side to side as they try to push forward. This interferes with the cows planned hoof placement, and hoof injury can result.

Likewise, when cows are being encouraged into the milking area, they can swerve away from the operator causing hoof injury.

Rubber with a good profile offers a superior grip without harmful effects to the claw. As well as helping to prevent and reduce lameness, rubber also offers cushioned flooring to cows that are old, with poor walking gait and existing lame cows. When lame cows walk on rubber flooring the recovery period is reduced.

Rubber matting which is placed in key areas around the farm yard will greatly help to offset the effect of hard concrete surfaces. Cows are more sure-footed when they walk on rubber and their actual step length increases to that of walking on grass.

Rubber with a good profile offers a superior grip without the harmful effects to the claw. As well as helping to prevent and reduce lameness, rubber also offers cushioned flooring to cows that are old, with poor walking gait and existing lame cows. When lame cows walk on rubber flooring the recovery period is reduced.

There is no doubt that the strategic use of rubber in the collecting yard, on the milking platform, at the feed face and around the crush area will greatly reduce the prevalence of lameness, speed up milking times, reduce vet bills and increase production.

IMPROVING COW COMFORT IN AND AROUND THE MILKING PARLOUR

Dr. Laura Boyle – Teagasc animal welfare scientist



Increasing herd sizes as well as time and labour constraints mean that concrete flooring found in collecting yards and milking parlours may be having a much greater impact on lameness in dairy cows than before. Cows have to stand for longer while waiting to be milked and at the same time, are under greater pressure to move quickly through the system. Improving cow comfort in this area will not only help to reduce lameness but will also improve cow flow, therefore reduce milking times.

But why worry about lameness? Lameness is the second most important production disease and a major reason for culling of dairy cows after mastitis. The pain and suffering associated with lameness makes it a major welfare problem of dairy cows. Research from Northern Ireland estimates that the average prevalence of lameness in dairy herds is 33%. This means that at any one time one third of the cows in a herd are lame.



Further south, where cows spend more time at pasture this figure is slightly lower at between 20% and 25%, but this is still too high. Scientists working for The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) compiled an influential set of reports on dairy cow welfare in 2009. In the EFSA report on lameness they concluded that 10% is an accepted prevalence, irrespective of the way in which milk is produced i.e. grass based, zero grazed etc. One of the main constraints on achieving this level is that farmers typically underestimate the scale of the problem as well as its impact on cow welfare and farm finances (could be as high as €200/ lameness case if productivity losses are taken into account).

In most cases, lameness can be avoided simply by paying better attention to the environment and most importantly, to conditions underfoot. In Irish pasture-based systems, roadways and concrete flooring are major risk factors for lameness. In spite of minimal periods of housing in several parts of the country, cows still spend a considerable amount of time every day standing and manoeuvring on concrete.

The 2001 Teagasc labour study showed that milking (cluster on/off) takes between 1.5 and 2.5 hrs. It is unlikely that this has changed much as larger herds have been matched with efficiencies in the milking process. This means that the last cows to enter the parlour (these are always the same animals!) could be standing on concrete for up to 5 hours/day. The last cows are often the ones that are lame which compounds the problem.

The Teagasc labour study also showed that 40% of cows were held at the parlour, often on concrete, after being milked. So being early in the process is no guarantee of an early release from concrete! The fragmentation of larger farms will contribute to this problem with roads to cross etc. Combine all of this with slips and falls as cows are hurried into position, and unnatural strains are placed on the hoof as cows are forced to make 90° turns at the parlour exit. It becomes easy to see why there is a role for rubber flooring in and around the milking parlour.

Cows have more confidence when they feel sure footed while walking. Rubber flooring offers a superior grip and is much kinder to the claw as the rough edges of concrete pose a risk to claw health. Furthermore, unlike rubber, concrete doesn't absorb any of the shock when cows fall on it meaning that all of the shock is absorbed by the cow. The cushioning advantage of rubber offers particular benefits to lame cows as pressure on the sole is reduced. This may even speed up the healing process. As cows are more relaxed when comfortable during standing, rubber flooring in the parlour may even make cows easier to milk. Strategic positioning of rubber can also encourage cows to move from the collecting yard into the parlour thereby further speeding up the milking process.

The prevalence of lameness on farms ranges from 0% to 80%, indicating that some farmers are much better at preventing and managing the problem than others. The strategic use of rubber flooring in and around the parlour, at the feed face and in other handling areas such as the crush can help farmers reap the financial rewards associated with reducing the prevalence of lameness in the dairy herd.

EXCEPTIONAL COW COMFORT AFTER REPLACING 150 STEEL CUBICLES WITH EASYFIX CUBICLES AND COW MATTRESSES

Doing it right first time is second nature to Michael & Catherine Gowing. To paraphrase Mark Twain: *“There are two types of people in this world - those who get things done and those who talk about doing.”* A quick tour around Scorduff Dairy Farm in Co Offaly, leaves the visitor in no doubt about which of those groups Michael Gowing fits in!

“Dairy farming is no big get-rich-scheme” says Michael, “but done right it will pay you back in the long run”. And *doing it right* seems to be the motto for the Gowings on this busy and efficient 350 cow farm. Originally a Laois man, Michael bought the then 290-acre farm in 2007. Michael and his wife Catherine - both of them former Macra Na Feirme Presidents - have grown the farm further over the past decade by purchasing and leasing more adjoining land and increasing herd size by 50%. Michael runs the farm along with two full time staff.



“We are the first generation on this family-farm” explains Michael. Children Caoimhe (5), Saoirse (3) and Michael (1) might be a little young to help out yet - but one gets the impression that it won’t be long!

Asked what “doing it right” entails - Michael has the answers at the tip of his tongue - as only a shrewd and experienced manager could.

Successful dairy-farming really boils down to 5 key ground-rules in Michael’s book. Eagle-eyed, modest and quick-witted, when Michael speaks you realise that these five simple rules could easily be applied to any management in life - farming or otherwise:

1. Learning on the job: Not one to shy away from an experiment or try something new - Michael says he never has a closed mind to picking up something new, be it from a discussion group, visitors to the farm, a neighbour or through his own trial and error. After first hearing about the benefits of parlour mats a number of years ago, Michael invested in EASYFIX rubber - for both the cows and the milker - this spring. “I was after selling the calves and I suppose EASYFIX got the touch” jokes Michael. “I was a little hesitant about the price at first but I can honestly say that it is the best investment I have made on this farm”. “I wouldn’t have said beforehand that I had any problems with the concrete for the cows in the parlour, but the difference in cow comfort and presentation for milking since installing the rubber is massive.” “I used to have these big tanks of cows that wouldn’t line up properly and would take up a space and a half. These cows vanished the day we put in the rubber. Cows are so much more confident because they are sure-footed. They present

perfectly for milking and cow flow through the parlour is exceptional now”. High praise indeed!

2. Running a well-defined and straight-forward System: The cows on the Gowings farm graze in a single group. There is no lame or sick herd. This allows for the fastest and most efficient use of labour at milking and setting up grazings. Cows calve from 1st Jan, which is early for a grass-based system, but it suits the Gowings system from a labour, housing and breeding point of view. The herd is now almost entirely HO/FR, with Norwegian Reds and Jersey crosses phased out over the years. Having found the system that suits Scorduff, Michael likes to keep things consistent - chopping and changing is not appreciated in a herd this size!

3. Attention to Detail: Doing the simple things right first time brings great reward in the long run and the smallest of efficiency gains can give a big pay-off. Back in 2015, liming the cubicles was a job no-one on Scorduff Farm was queuing up to take! However, with the investment in a Bobman this all changed and now there is no shortage of volunteers for the job. The Bobman sweeps the bottom third of the cubicles while at the same time dispensing sawdust and lime. The time taken to do this job has dropped from 2 hours to 20 mins per day.

Calf health is another area where Michael prioritises the basics; “Every last calf here is stomach tubed with biestings - even if he has been sucking. We won’t leave it to chance.” The 20,000 Gallon underground water reservoir is another smartly-designed feature on the farm.

When building the new cubicle house and tanks in 2009, Michael decided that he needed a better reserve of water; “350 cows can drink a hell of a lot of water” he jokes! While there are three wells on the farm, the supply is not great from any of them so they now all feed into the reservoir along with the rainwater collected from the considerable roof area in the farmyard. Michael has the reservoir set up with series of ballcocks at different levels. Rain water is used first, followed by the wells and then “in emergency” the mains supply kicks in.

4. Planning and Adapting to Change: 2009 was a tough year in dairying and it was no different on Scorduff farm where Michael & Catherine were just getting going in the new venture. And yet a period of terrible milk prices so soon after investing didn’t phase the ever-sanguine Michael. “Look” – he says – “it wasn’t easy; but you just have to cut your cloth to suit your measure in those times and that’s what we did.” That the Gowings came through that commodity price storm even stronger by “doing it right” is no surprise given Michaels considered and flexible approach to management.

5. Hard Work! The final and most important of Michael’s ingredients of successful dairying. Michael’s system may be consistent and streamlined, but it is no 9-5. Spring time is tough going in terms of hours but a compact calving season means that 90% will calve in 6 weeks. The secret to the compact calving season is simple, he says; “Just take the bull away!”

BREEDING & FEEDING

With a keen interest in Pedigree breeding, Michael’s list of bull breeds is not what one would expect on a typical dairy farm. Stock bulls include BB, LM, SI, SP, HE and AA. Michael operates the bulls on a rotation basis, with two bulls running with the cows at all times.

AI is all FR for the first four weeks, then changing to beef and finally the stock bulls go out for the last three weeks. All the AI is carried out by Michael, who also does some ET work and keeps a small number of Pedigree Beef cows on the farm. Michael likes a big, functional, fertile cow. He sees EBI as a useful tool, but only one of a range of tools he uses to select breeding stock. This spring brought great dividends with an elite bull calf being bought for AI.

“I have no problem spending time in the parlour – it’s the only place on a dairy farm, where the cow is making you money.”

The silage ground is typically cut twice and the reseeding rotation involves sowing winter triticale for whole-crop before putting back into grass the following August. He finds this system especially good for keeping control of docks and fields are very level afterwards as a result of being ploughed twice. The whole-crop silage is fed to milkers in winter and Michael finds it a super feed.

“Cows are clean, hold body condition very well and it cuts the meal bill!” Due to the short winter last year, this is the first year Michael has not needed to sow whole-crop as he had a pit left over in the yard. He is very happy with the EASYFIX silage mats. The whole-crop can be very dry so getting a good seal is even more important.

The EASYFIX silage mats form a continuous seal, are clean, easy to handle and are also a great deterrent to crows.

EASYFIX COW CUBICLES & MATTRESSES

Michael replaced 150 old Newton Rigg cubicles with new EASYFIX cubicles and mattresses two years ago. He sees cow comfort as exceptional and appreciates that they are very durable and hygienic.

“Cows do some stupid things in the shed – but I’ve yet to see one even try to get stuck in an EASYFIX Cubicle!”

EASYFIX slat mats are used for the bulls and the pedigree cows over-winter. Michael also installed the 40mm EASYFIX rubber matting in the parlour pit. “The milker can spend 4 hours a day standing on concrete” he says. “I have no problem spending time in the parlour it’s the only place on a dairy farm, where the cow is making you money.”

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Asked about plans for further expansion, Michael’s answer is straight-forward - “Down the line I’ll milk more cows if it pays to milk more cows”. “For the moment, the restrictions here are no longer quota, but sourcing good labour and the need to find a little extra family time at the end of a long day”.

“EASYFIX SLAT RUBBER WAS ONE THE BEST INVESTMENTS I HAVE EVER MADE”

Anthony Gibbon, along with his wife Nerys and three children, Erin (8), Nia (6) and Daniel (6mths), farm in the village of Mynyddygarreg, close to Kidwelly in South Wales. They run a herd of 330 commercial Holstein Friesian cows. Coming from a family steeped in farming tradition, Anthony's siblings have all stayed involved in agriculture in the area. Parents Islwyn and Gweneira, although retired now, remain active on the farm. Anthony's brothers Henry, Gethin and Robert are involved in farming locally as well.



SLIPPERY SLATS

The Muller supplier milks twice a day through a rotary Dairymaster parlour, which was first installed in 2010. Average herd lactation is 9,500L with lows out grazing from March to November. The Gibbons' main cubicle house is slatted and was built in 2004. However, about six years ago, Anthony first started to encounter problems with the slats. “We started to see a lot of injuries in the cows”. “We realised that the concrete slats were becoming slippery and cows were very nervous when standing up and lying down”. “A lot of cows were getting lesions on the inside of their hooves and performance and yield was suffering”.

After making several enquires, Anthony decided to install EASYFIX Slat Rubber Mats in three bays of the shed between heelstone and feed face. “It was an instant solution for us”, explained Anthony. “The very first day that the cows were on the EASYFIX slat mats you could see they were so much more comfortable and confident standing at the feed barrier”.

“They weren't worried about slipping and injuring themselves – and neither were we!” Yields and cow thrive improved almost instantly, due to increasing feed intakes and more relaxed cows at the feed barrier. Anthony could see that the hard-wearing and comfortable EASYFIX mats were the answer he had been looking for. Over the next few years Anthony put down EASYFIX slat mats on more pens, from the cubicle heelstone to the feedface, eventually completing the shed last year, all 467m².

“It's easily one of the best investments I have made around the farmyard in recent times” says Anthony. “We had been losing yield and had culled several good cows through injuries and lameness because of the slippery slats”. “Building any slatted housing in future I wouldn't hesitate to put down the EASYFIX mats on day one.” “The ones that are 6 years are still as good as the day they were fitted – I really am very pleased with how they have worn.”

GRAZING GAINS

Anthony had grazed the full herd over the summer for several years but that changed last year. “The high-yielders just couldn't handle the variability of the changing weather conditions”. After struggling through several bouts of acidosis, in 2016 Anthony finally decided that only the low-yielders would be going to grass anymore. “It's also a big help for staff – it's much easier have a set routine for staff to stick to in an indoor system”.

Anthony has invested in the grazing infrastructure in recent times, in order to improve efficiency in the grazing herd. Reseeding is carried out on rotation using tetraploid and diploid perennial ryegrass mixtures as well as white clover to raise the protein content. “2017 had been an exceptionally good year for grazing. Grazing efficiency has been excellent and cows have been very contented”.

When we visited in the summer, 300m of trackways close to the yard had just been raised by 3 feet to create a drain on each side and keep the track clean for cows in wet periods. Drainage works were also underway on a hilly field up the road. “We got a shock when we went in to mow the silage last year and nearly got stuck with the tractors. It had always been a very dry field before.” Several new springs had emerged from the side of the hill which Anthony has now drained via pipe and stone shores to the stream at the field edge.

Anthony also upgraded the farm's water infrastructure last year. “We had used the big precast concrete tanks as water drinkers for cows in all the fields because without the huge capacity cows would be queuing and getting thirsty”. A new 30,000L underground water reservoir beside the farmyard, fed by two wells solved all the farm's water problems overnight.

A ROLLING HERD

The Gibbons maintain a rolling herd with cows calving all year round. “Cows tend to last well in the herd. Our average is close to 6 lactations and we have some cows here up to 16 years of age”. “Some of those old girls are getting a little bit of special treatment though” – jokes Anthony. Replacements are bought at auction as either heifers or young cows. “My ideal cow has a tidy frame, good milker, healthy and with good feet. ” “I do like the bigger cow – but definitely not too big. You know the one that milks like a train – but she’ll never last!” Cows are walked through the footbath once a day after milking to harden the hoof and keep lameness issues at bay. The Genus AI technician generally calls once a day to serve cows on heat. “It’s another advantage of the EASYFIX slat rubber – catching cows on heat is now so easy – they mount each other much quicker than on concrete”.

A QUALITY DIET

The Gibbon brothers used to perform contract silage work for other farmers several years ago. “Now the silage work is split 50:50 between ourselves and an outside contractor. When kids came along it became too hard for us to keep up the contracting as well as the farming”. Anthony aims for 3-4 cuts from all the silage ground. “We aim for high quality by taking advantage of the best weather conditions to mow. If that means getting in 5 or 6 mowers to get 220 acres knocked in a day, that’s what we’ll do”.



Some of the excellent quality swards on the Gibbons farm seen with the drainage work ongoing in the background



Cut by conditioner mower, grass is tedded and a 24-36 hour wilt usually results in the desired 30% DM crop. “Slurry goes out after every silage cut – even if the tanks are almost empty”. Only slurry that must cross or travel the roads is spread by tanker, with the rest spread by umbilical system and dribble bar. “We really try to minimise the amount of tankers that go in the fields to reduce compaction and rutting damage”. Cows are fed a TMR with wheat as the starch source. Feed-to-kill is performed by feeding a nut in the parlour to highs yielding over 30l/day and lows over 20l/day. “I find the TMR allows us to maintain a consistent diet which is important in terms of sustaining peak yield.”

“2016 was a tough year – but you can’t starve the cows just because you’re not getting paid for the milk”, recalled Anthony.

“Our policy was to look after the cows so that they would be ready to roll when price rose again – and they looked after us!”

As to the future on this Carmarthenshire farm, its obvious no attention to detail will be spared in the Gibbon family’s continual drive toward efficiency and progress.

CHOOSING EASYFIX CUBICLES AND MATTRESSES OVER STEEL

“Simplicity and efficiency are our goals in this enterprise”

Last year was a year of significant change on Woodville Dairy Farm on the banks of the Little Brosna in south Co Offaly, where Mervyn Stanley farms with his wife Orla and their three children. They are farming in partnership with Eric and Ruth – Mervyn’s parents.

While Mervyn had never been a stranger to progress on the family’s 200 cow farm, progress had always come in incremental steps, that is until 2016 came along. “Bit-by-bit and year-by-year was how we developed up until last year” says Mervyn.

“You could say the quota going was a factor, but really what drove our expansion from 200 to 300 cows was the opportunity to take a long-term lease on a 100 acre block of land right next door”. “Those opportunities don’t come around very often so we saw our chance and decided to take the bull by the horns and go for it”; Mervyn explained.

To accommodate this increase to 300 cows, the on-farm investment during 2016 included upgrading the parlour including a new three phase supply, reseeding of the leased land, 1.5km of new roadways, paddocking infrastructure, sinking a new well, and finally, a 6-bay double cubicle house including EASYFIX cow cubicles and interlocking cow mats.

Increasing cow numbers by 50% in one year was no mean feat and Mervyn puts the success of this step-change in the farm enterprise down to the quality and dedication of the help on the farm. Mervyn’s father Eric still plays an active role, while Norton Greene and eagle-

eyed herdsman Joe Gannon keep the operation ticking over on a daily basis.

Despite the help on hand, having 300 calving down, including 120 heifers made for tough going during the peak spring period. While the big jump in calf numbers required much greater management input, Mervyn explained that a big factor that helped to suppress scours and infections was the greater space and ventilation for the calves in the new calf-rearing house.

NEW CUBICLE HOUSE

The first thing that strikes you as you enter the Stanley’s new 6-bay cubicle house is the air-flow and brightness. Mervyn designed the shed in such a way as to maximise feeding space, ventilation and cow comfort. The combination of extra height at the eaves, spaced roof sheeting and a wide ridge outlet allowed for excellent ventilation. This is obvious from the almost total lack of dust on the roof timbers and one would never think

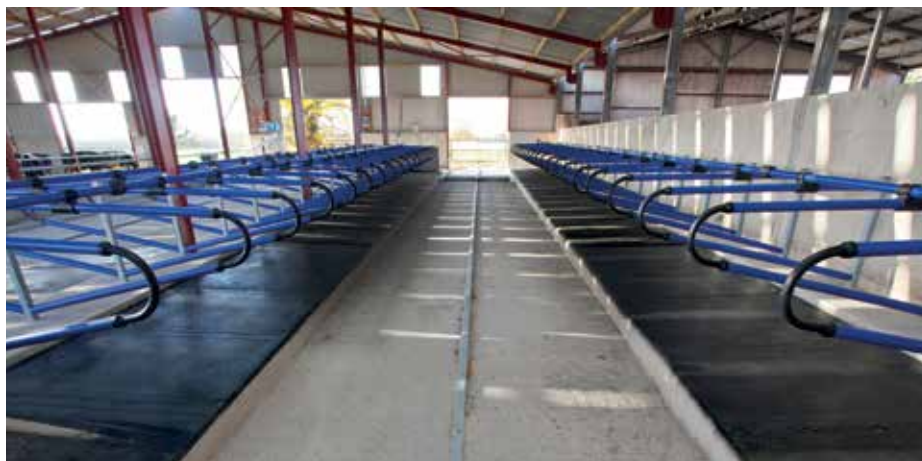
the shed had been home to 140 cows over the past winter! “Good ventilation means we can eliminate condensation in the shed and this should really extend the life of the timbers and steel-work and improve cow health” says Mervyn.

Mervyn is delighted with the performance of the new EASYFIX cow cubicles and would not hesitate to choose them over steel in the future. While the plastic cubicles were slightly more costly, he sees the benefits as threefold: “Cows are very comfortable in them and if a cow is shunted against one she won’t get hurt – unlike your old steel cubicle”.

“They are easy to clean – Because of the nice precise edges on the mats it meant that we could get them nice and flush with the concrete step between the cubicle rows – this means there are no little gaps for muck to lodge in and lift the interlocking rubber cow mats”

As a result, the cubicle beds can be very easily kept clean with lime and sawdust at every milking. Mervyn reckons that because the problem of rust is eliminated with these new cubicles they should have a lifespan multiple times that of the old steel ones. “At least it won’t be me that’ll have to worry about replacing them!” he jokes.

“The cow scratchers included on the EASYFIX cubicle rails were a bonus in terms of cow comfort” says Mervyn. The shed was erected by local builder Padraig O’Toole and Mervyn credits his attention to detail – especially in the concrete work, with how easily the cubicles and scrapers were installed afterwards.



“They are easy to clean... the nice precise edges on the mats meant that we could get them nice and flush with the concrete step between the cubicle rows.”

THE COW HERD

The Stanley's herd is derived from generations of good British Friesian cow lines from Eric's time with more Holstein blood introduced in recent years. In terms of his ideal cow Mervyn is uncompromising – “I want her to have it all really; EBI, solids, fertility, mobility.”

“As well as being able to yield well within a compact, spring-calving system, I look for a good square, deep barrelled cow who can go back in calf quickly and have no trouble on her feet”.

Given that the leased land is over 2km from the parlour it is no surprise that Mervyn needs to stay on top of lameness. A hoof parer comes to treat lame cows fortnightly during the summer and there are plans to improve the surface of roadways by blinding with quarry dust during the year.

Mervyn performs all his own AI, with over 20 cows a day being served when I visited during the good weather of early May.

With 100 heifers going through the parlour this spring, a second man was required in the pit for early season milking, but the Dairymaster Sequential Bailing System is a great help in terms of speeding up the cow flow both entering and exiting the parlour. “All cows can be milked in 2 hours in the morning and under two in the evening”.



GRAZING

While managing 300 cows in one group at grass in a spring calving herd may seem a challenge, Mervyn's secret is simplicity. “Some fellas tie themselves up in knots planning complicated grazing systems”. “We like to keep it simple here.” While grass quality remains high and Stanley's herd was not restricted by drought in early May – Mervyn says it was touch-and-go for a while after 25 acres of paddocks were taken out for bales in early May. Mervyn will continue with a minimum of 1kg meal a day through the breeding season in order to get the herd of mostly heifers back in calf. The two cuts of high quality pit silage and all bales are made by contractor now, allowing the Stanleys to get on with ensuring grassland management is optimised over the summer. The layout of roadways and paddocking is top class and it is obvious a lot of thought went into the planning and design. Even

a new “ring-road” around the farmyard means that cows now no longer have to follow the same route as tractors and machinery through the yard. This means that during silage-making or slurry-spreading there are no interruptions to either cow or machinery flow. During periods of wet weather or on the shoulders of the grazing season extra gaps are opened to paddocks and strip wires are used regularly to minimise poaching.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Mervyn is cautiously optimistic about the outlook for dairying, but when asked about plans for further development on the farm, he smiles. The plan is to let the new expanded system bed-in for a few years before any further growth would be considered.

But this Centenary Co-op Supplier will not be resting on his laurels though! Plans are already in place for a new 360k Gal over-ground circular slurry store for later in the year. Ingeniously, this new tank will not be located in the farmyard but rather, almost 1km away on a greenfield site next to the leased land block.

This will mean that slurry can be pumped by umbilical system about Christmas time from the tank in the yard to the new tank. This will leave slurry closer to where it will ultimately be spread and could save 400-500km/year in terms of tractor and tanker journeys.

Attention-to-detail and an effective planning and design stage to every development means that efficiency and simplicity is guaranteed and the future of this picturesque Co Offaly farm is bright indeed.



THE EASYFIX SOLUTION - COW COMFORT IS SECOND TO NONE

Matthew Smith farms the 560-acre Lower Castle Hayes Estate alongside his father Philip and mother Kath, close to Needwood, Burton-on-Trent. The company, Smith Farming Ltd, runs an impressive, mostly Holstein x Monteblliarde herd with 320 cows milking at peak.



The farm's arable land grows mainly maize and winter wheat. The Smiths moved to Lower Castle Hayes in 2000, having previously run a 100-cow herd on 196 acres. The affable and engaging Matthew is acutely aware of the need to maximise system efficiency and its clear to visitors that nothing on this farm is left to chance. "We aim to do things right and do things once", jokes Matthew. Its certainly a farm where planning and organisation is second to none.

THE EASYFIX SOLUTION

The attention to detail Matthew practices is evident in the farm's housing facilities. In the new shed, currently being built, he will install 76 cow cubicles with EASYFIX Jupiter Mattress & 120ft EASYFIX feed-lane matting. When asked about the decision to choose EASYFIX, Matthew is forthright – and it's obvious that much research was done before the purchase. "In 2011 we installed 250 EASYFIX double-foam mattresses into existing cubicles", he said. "We had to cut out the previous (non-EASYFIX) mats. Cows had been lying in the scraper alley. But the first day the new EASYFIX mattresses went in, all the cows went straight to lay down in the cubicles! I just wished I'd known about them, to put in when the shed was done first!" Matthew is fulsome in his praise for the EASYFIX mattresses. "Cow comfort is second to none. They are also very easy to clean – whereas other mats would let in 15% water and become a breeding-ground for bugs". The new mats are just brushed off once per day and sawdust and lime is applied. When asked about any cons with the EASYFIX cow mattresses Matthew is definitive: "None, honestly! We have been very happy with them – the only thing was, that we would have

installed the EASYFIX plastic cubicles as well if we had known about them at the time".

THE SMITH SYSTEM - BREEDING

All calving on the Smiths farm takes place from June to Dec. Breeding begins on 1st Sept. Calving is planned to achieve maximum return from cows during the high-price milk months. "We are supplying Arla on a manufacturing milk contract with a bonus for butter-fat and winter production". The herd average calving interval is 400 days. Matthew explains that it would be less, but late calvers allowed to slip around to June. "We aim to have all cows 50 days dry – we tried less but some got too short" he said. "May is also a good break before calving starts for people to get holidays."

Matthew will use Jersey AI bulls this year on MOxFR cows, in order to breed more butter-fat into the herd. The Smiths breed all their own replacements to minimise disease and to get a cow best suited to their system. Cows are lasting longer and the system is less hard on larger cows since the Smiths started crossing the mainly Holstein herd with Montbelliarde 5 years ago. "We wanted to put more power and will-to-live back into the cow. It was no fun coming out to a cow having done the splits in the passage. That's not an issue with the stronger, hardier, more surefooted Monty-cross", explained Matthew. "You can't spend all your time looking after the cows. They need to look after you!"

A desire to increase solids yield was also a factor in the decision to breed in the Monty blood. "We are getting better rewarded now for butter-fat, so it made sense." With the switch to Montbelliarde bulls, yields dropped back slightly from

9,500 to 9,000l/head. But solids were up. Herd average now stands at 3.5% protein, 4.1% fat. The use of Jersey bulls for this year will further boost solids production in the herd down the line.

Milk recording is carried out with NMR every 6 weeks. This information is studied carefully by Philip and Matthew



and breeding decisions follow. Culling of cows is usually due to yield, feet, udders, fertility, SCC, or poor body condition. The Smiths make use of Sexed Semen to reduce the number of dairy breed bull calves. Conception rates with the Sexed Semen are good, at 60% for heifers and 50% for cows. Two Aberdeen Angus bulls are run with the herd to clean-up after AI. All bull and beef heifer calves are sold to Blaine Beef. Heifers were previously B&B'd out for the winter prior to breeding.

However, in order to better manage condition and feet issues they will now be housed in the new heifer shed on site. Dermis is controlled with 3 days spraying and all cows are foot-bathed 5 evenings per week in a Zinc, Copper & Formalin mixture. All hooves are trimmed routinely twice per year to keep lameness to a minimum.

THE SMITH SYSTEM - FEEDING

Simplicity is key to the success of the Smiths diet. A TMR is fed to all cows via a Keenan feeder. No meal is fed in the parlour. The only purchased feed fed on farm is the protein supplement. This purchased protein generally comprises 30% Soyabean Meal, 30% Rapeseed Meal, 30% Distillers Grains and some Soya Hulls for fibre. The rest of the feed is grown on farm, including a five-cut grass silage crop, maize silage and crimped wheat.

The Smiths aim to achieve a high starch silage of about 34% from the maize and 12MJ of ME. "We had a great year in 2016 with the maize and achieved all targets but it looks even better this year" said Matthew when we visited in August. "We are very reliant on the success of the 150-acre maize crop. We had two very bad years in 2012 and 2013 and as a result, in the winter of 2012/13 the feed bill for the cows over winter was £100,000".

Maize is sown in mid-April. Key to success for the Smiths is getting a fine seedbed to get the seed in deep. This gives protection from any late frosts. The other factor Matthew changed over the past two years was to drop the seed rate back from 45,000 to 40,000 seeds per acre. This means less competition for nutrients, more light getting into the base of the crop over the first two months and ultimately a much better chance of two good cobs per plant and Starch >30%. "When it works out as well as this year and last it means much less purchased feeds and a far lower winter feed bill for the cows".

100 acres of winter wheat is sown after the maize in rotation. Wheat is crimped with Maxammon, a urea & urease-based additive. In early 2016, the

Smiths experienced problems with re-absorption and lower conception rates in the herd. The source of the problem was traced to an ME deficiency which was solved by adding more protected fats to the diet. Thankfully for Matthew, with the better quality, higher ME maize and grass silage of 2016 and 2017 this is no longer a problem.

The Smith's grass silage clamp was only half full when we visited in mid-summer. "We are now relying on the late summer/early autumn burst of growth to give us a bulky 5th cut" said Matthew. The silage is cut on 4-week intervals. All the work is done by contractor, harvesting 200ac in 2 days.

"We wanted to put more power and will-to-live back into the cow. It was no fun coming out to a cow having done the splits in the passage".

Following mowing with a conditioner mower, the crop is tedded, wilted, raked and chopped. So far, 2017 quality has been excellent. Despite some which was made in the fine weather this summer being exceptionally high DM (>50%), it preserved perfectly because it was very high in sugars. "The biggest problem was the spout blocking on the chopper due to the amount of sugar in the grass!" "We are currently crossing the pit face twice in the week so there's no trouble with heating". Grass silage tested at 72.2% D Value and 16.5% protein. Due to

the high dry matter, 5-6 litres of water had to be added to the TMR mix per cow. This results in less sorting of feed by the cows: "when it's too dry, the grains drop out, so the added water gives a slight increase in intakes".

FUTURE PLANS

"Arthur, our veteran milker is still in the yard for 5am every morning for milking" explains Matthew. "But Arthur's not getting any younger and it's harder and harder to get good staff." The Smiths have been considering a new parlour and have looked at the option of installing robots. "We have also looked at the option of a robotic rotary and increasing to 500 cows." "It will all be at least 3-4 years down the line and totally dependent on the profitability of milk as we go forward".

As for 2016, Matthew said that if they had experienced 6 months more of bad prices where they were losing 6-7p/l, they would have really had to question their future direction.

"On a rented farm like this, if you're not profitable you'll quickly end up out on your ear", Mathew surmised!

Other areas in which the Smiths are pushing the boundaries of efficiency are related to soil nutrient management. Maximum value is achieved from manures via a separator for the slurry. Solids are kept for application to the arable land and the liquid fraction is stored in towers and applied to silage ground after each cut at 2,000 gal/acre.

The Smiths are also active participants in the Pathfinders Discussion Group via Arla. "I find the group great for discussion around pricing etc" says Matthew. "As a result of that discussion we were able to agree a price to pay our contractor per tonne for clamp silage".

Whether robots feature or not, what is certain is that the future is bright for the Smith family on this excellently run East Staffordshire farm!



EFFICIENT AND WELL-PLANNED DESIGN AT GELLIGATROG

Upon entering the farmyard of Elwyn & Cheryl Thomas, the visitor instantly recognises the workplace of a family who take enormous pride in their dairy operation.

Elwyn & his wife Cheryl farm close to Kidwelly in south Carmarthenshire. As well as the Thomas family – including daughter Anwen (14) – this farm is also home to the renowned 215-strong Gelligatrog pedigree Holstein Friesian herd.

Everything in this 200-acre farm is organised, tidy and well-appointed with no shortage of clean concrete and galvanized steel about the yard. Elwyn & Cheryl have invested heavily in this impressive Meadow Foods supplying dairy farm over the past three years.

A BUSY BUILDING SCHEDULE

“We realised back in 2013 that it was time to either get bigger and better, or get out” explained Elwyn. “And breeding and milking top quality cows was what we loved doing, so we said let’s stay at it and do it right!”

A new expansive and airy cubicle house with parlour alongside was constructed in 2015 to accommodate the growing herd, which increased 50% in numbers over the three years.

186 head-to-head EASYFIX Cow Cubicles were installed on sand beds. “We had seen these flexible EASYFIX cubicles and been impressed by them on other farms.” “We actually cancelled the order for the steel ones” explained Elwyn. “I was sceptical at the time of the 3’ 9” centre-to-centre spacing that EASYFIX recommended for the cubicles. But in hindsight we are now very thankful for it. It certainly straightened up the awkward cows who used to try to lie sideways in the wider steel ones.

These EASYFIX cubicles flex to almost 4’ anyway and the safety of them is great piece of mind for us. When you have as much breeding gone into your pedigree stock as we have – the last thing you want to find of a morning is a top cow or heifer stuck in a steel cubicle!” “Look – even with the EASYFIX cubicles you’ll get the odd cow that will try to push her way through the head-to-heads, but usually they will go straight through – and the important thing is that they don’t injure themselves”.

The shed is split with dividing gates into three sections: 1 for the high yielding group, 1 for the lows and 1 for the heifers. Cows exit through an alley in the middle bay of the shed into the

adjacent parlour. A new DairyMaster 16-unit swing-over, rapid exit parlour was installed at the same time as the shed in 2015. The Thomas’ installed all the extras to ensure smooth flow of cows and a speedy milking process. That included Automatic Cluster Removers, a backing gate and an Auto-ID e-tag reader which can control the auto-drafting gate to segregate cows for AI.

“I suppose the cows would be the best judge of how well the parlour works” says Elwyn. “They go in and out of here with no fuss – there is no looing or noise and cows are contented and chewing. We can now milk the 215 cows in less than 2 hours”. EASYFIX Milking Parlour Mats were also installed. “It gives the cows great comfort and leaves them more relaxed when entering or exiting the parlour. They’re not afraid of a slip or an injury and neither are we!”

Elwyn also installed the EASYFIX SoftFloor mats for the milker in the pit to give maximum operator comfort.

A NOVEL DESIGN

The efficient and well-planned design of the new 12-bay cubicle shed was Elwyn’s brainchild. Two 20-foot wide, fully-roofed feed passages flank either side of the cow area. Within the cow area are two rows of head-to-head cubicles with wide feed lanes at either side. There is plenty of room for cows to pass by behind those eating at the feed-face, without any pushing or shunting. Elwyn installed 480ft of EASYFIX feed-lane matting to provide maximum comfort for cows at the feed-face. On the south-west side of the shed, Elwyn erected an Intershape electric windbreaker screen than can be raised or lowered



depending on the weather conditions and the air-flow required through the shed. Additional clear-light sheets were fitted in the roof on the south west side to maximise the daylight in the shed. “If we were building it again, the only thing we would change would be to raise the heel-stone of the cubicles by a couple of inches” said Elwyn. It’s a little bit low now, especially with the rubber matting in the feed lanes. It means more sand comes out of the cubicles than we would like”. Otherwise, the only change the Thomas’ plan to make, is a possible 4-bay extension to the adjacent parlour shed, which would house a new calving area, bringing all cow housing together in one compact unit. This would also allow Elwyn to completely bird-proof the cubicle house, using netting at the ridge overshoot and around the gable end doors.

Cow lanes in the shed are scraped to a lagoon twice a day during milkings with a skid-steer. Sand in the cubicles is topped up once per week. “We find that cow lameness and injury problems have been almost eliminated in the new shed – thanks mainly to the cubicles and the EASYFIX rubber mats” explained Elwyn. Cows are also walked through a footbath mix of lincospectin and formalin, 5 evenings per week.

HERD HUSBANDRY

“Call me old fashioned, but I couldn’t go to a milking robot – I like working with and handling cows – it’s why I’m in the job” said an animated Elwyn. “I spend a lot of time here with the cows and I enjoy it. There is so much that you won’t see with a robot!” And you can see why Elwyn feels this way – cow husbandry is his strong point and key to his breeding selection decisions. This doesn’t mean that he is technology shy

though. The Thomas' now use an Alta cow watch collar – monitoring heat and rumination. It tends to pick up 4-5 cows in heat every week that Elwyn would have missed before – and I spend a lot of time in here with the cows – “faffing about” he says!

All AI is done DIY by Elwyn with cows served twice/day. All low-yielders are bred to BB with a Limousin stock bull cleaning up.

Milk recording is carried out by CIS once/month. Bulls are selected (and cows culled) primarily on udders, feet, milk components and functionality.

All cows graze outside for 4-5 hours in good weather. Low yielders are out for 4-5 hours grass per day Mar-Nov. During the summer they get 2/3 of winter ration, fed once per day by TMR. No meal is fed in the parlour.

High yielders typically average 37l/d with top cows producing 55l/d. These are fed twice per day with a TMR. “I may consider a feeding robot” says Elwyn, “but not feed bunkers, as having to clean out would be an extra job”.

The TMR generally consists of high quality grass silage, whole-crop spring wheat silage or maize, plus Soya Hulls &

ration. Silage is cut 3-4 times/year. The TMR is pushed up to cows 5 times per day. “I don’t like a floor clean” says Elwyn. Overspill goes to the young stock.

“Breeding and milking top quality cows was what we loved doing, so we said let’s stay at it and do it right!”

“One of the greatest benefits of the new shed has been being able to manage the heifers as one separate group” he explained. They are fed twice/day on the same regime as the high yielding cow group. “It’s led to a whole lot less bullying and hardship on the heifers, having them separate to the cows. We can now calf them at 26 months. Previously it would have been 30 months”.

PEDIGREE SALES

The Thomas' sell 30 pedigree HF bulls and 60-70 heifers every year. “We sell them from the yard generally”. With an average lactation yield of 10,000L and 55L/day top yields, combined with the reputation for excellent



breeding and stockmanship, the Thomas' don't need to do much in the way of advertising. However, they still like to attend 4-5 shows in the year with cows, competing in places such as Fishguard, Shepton Mallet, South Pembrokeshire Co Show, etc. Cheryl often takes care of the showing and daughter Anwen is also keen to partake, recently winning the Young-Handlers Class at the Royal Welsh Show in 2017.

“This is as clean and tidy a yard as I’ve stood in for a long time” I compliment Elwyn as I prepare to go. “And why shouldn’t it be?” he asks, almost taken aback; “We are producing food after all!” And that sums up the straightforward, no-nonsense approach the Thomas Family take to the job of top-quality milk production and excellence in breeding!



SWITCHING FROM A STRAW AND SAND BASED SYSTEM TO EASYFIX

Staffordshire farmer Giles Clarke & his son Jeremy run an impressive 400 cow operation at Longshaw Farm close to Leek.

Managing 450 acres of rolling countryside west of the Peak District, the soil type is mainly a heavy clay and getting cows or machinery out on the land is only an option from April – October.



Previously, the Clarkes ran 2 x 150 cow units, but in 2015, the decision was made to consolidate the operation to the yard at the home farm. “We needed to replace the parlour and an old straw yard here, so Giles decided to make best use of the extra investment by bringing the two herds together for simpler, better, more efficient management” explained Jeremy. By Christmas 2015 the new 11-bay cubicle house was ready for fitting-out and the Clarkes chose EASYFIX Cow Cubicles and double-foam mattresses for the job.

Asked how the switch from straw and sand to EASYFIX cubicles and mattresses is judged now two years on, the response is instant: “Brilliant – We are delighted with them!” says Jeremy. “The cows are exceptionally comfortable in them and we have noticed a huge drop in SCC compared to previously”. The cubicle house is scraped twice-a-day into a new slatted tank and so sand wasn’t an option. “The sand bill has reduced significantly and we also got an extra 6-7 cubicles into that shed versus what we would have fit in using the old steel cubicle”.

The Clarkes are very happy with the 3’9” centre to centre spacing that the EASYFIX cubicles are installed at: “They flex to four foot, so it’s not an issue at all for our bigger cows”. In fact, the Clarkes now prioritise the bigger, older cows to the new shed with the EASYFIX cubicles, in order to prolong their lifespan in the herd. “We do keep a lot of bigger cows and had lost a cow stuck in a steel cubicle back in 2014 so having seen the EASYFIX product at various shows, it was the obvious solution to us”.

EASE OF FITTING

“You’d have to say the name doesn’t lie – it couldn’t have been easier,” jokes Jeremy, when asked about the process of fitting the 105 cubicles and mattresses – which he says he completed by himself in a few hours – despite a sore head after a Reaseheath Young-Farmers night out! Jeremy recently completed his 3-year course at the Agricultural College where he received great practical training, a hectic social life and an introduction to EASYFIX cow products. “Getting the posts fit accurately and good and square is the most important part – after that it’s very simple”.

The Clarkes were instantly impressed with the improvements in cow performance and comfort on the rubber. In fact, they were so pleased that in 2016 they installed another 20 EASYFIX cubicles beside the new parlour, for fresh, lame and any antibiotic cows. “We lime the cubicles using a dispenser on the loadall 3 times per week. Lime is mixed with waste paper. We previously used sawdust but it was prone to blow around too much so we find the newspaper better”.

MANAGING A PRODUCTIVE ROLLING HERD

“We keep mostly Holstein X cows here with a few Montbéliarde crosses also. We also keep a few larger, milky Friesians. We like the bigger cow here, Giles would have found that the smaller cow doesn’t tend to last as long in the herd”.

Last year the Clarkes herd averaged 9,500L on a 305-day lactation. The low milk price in 2016 was the catalyst that drove Giles to change over to a Feed-

to-Yield system through the parlour. “It instantly saved us a tonne of corn a day as well as an increase in yields.”

After consolidating the two herds into one in 2015, the Clarkes let the newly-merged system bed-down in 2016, before increasing cow numbers by 100 in 2017. A rolling herd is maintained at Longshaw Farm. Jeremy explains; “We did rear heifers here before, but we’d prefer to milk more cows now, rather than devote land to young stock.” Replacements are purchased at auction either as heifers or second-calvers. The Clarkes are running enough cows now for the land-base and management. “We could increase numbers further but it would be at the expense of a more complicated management system”

The rolling herd means that all cows are bred to Belgian Blue AI bulls. Cows on heat are served by the Genus technician once a day. The Clarkes have had good results using the short gestation BB bulls and have received top prices for calves.

“The EASYFIX Cubicles were so easily fit – even with a sore head after a Reaseheath Young-Farmers night out!”

A SIMPLE DIET

The introduction of the Electronic ID tagging and the in-parlour Feed-to-Yield system came along with the new parlour installation in 2016. "Combining the two herds, Giles was very aware of needing to keep management as simple as possible and feeding all the grain through the parlour allowed that," explained Jeremy.

Silage is cut on a 4-weekly interval over the summer; typically testing at 78-80dmd. The Keenan PACE system used to keep control of the simple mix of good quality wheaten straw and grass silage. "Keep it Simple Stupid is our motto when it comes to diets here!" The mix is fed by wagon once per day and pushed up 3 to 4 times per day.

The Clarkes did trial Zero-Grazing at one point, but it was a short-lived experience: "Look - it worked perfectly in dry weather, but once we got a run of wet weather it was a disaster!" "The land was being ruined by mucking and compaction, and all we got into the yard from it was wet muck and grass." "Yields really fell off a cliff with the variability in the quality and moisture in the grass. I'm sure it has a place in drier regions, but with the rain we get here it was a non-runner"; Jeremy surmised.

The low-yielding group of cows do get out to grass between April and October but in wetter periods of the summer they have had to be housed due to poor ground conditions.

The Clarkes have sown Supercut tetraploid mixtures as well as over-sowing Italian Ryegrass on a 5-year rotation on the silage ground in recent years. "We have used a Guttler Greenmaster for the over-sowing. The spring tines and heavy roller on the seeder allow for good soil-seed contact".

NEW INFRASTRUCTURE

The parlour installed in 2016 was a ATL 24-unit swing-over. Two people are in the pit for milking, generally Jess & Phil. The parlour features all the bells and whistles including automatic cluster removers and auto-wash-down.

The Clarkes are currently in the process of replacing an old straw-yard with a new 6-bay cubicle house. This will further reduce the need for bought-in straw and reduce the workload involved in bedding. "At that stage, we will then have just the calving shed straw-bedded which will be a huge time-saving" says Jeremy. The expense of sand purchase and handling has also reduced considerably with the installation of the EASYFIX double-foam mattresses.

In addition to the new shed, the hardworking, and ever-innovative Clarkes have a new 80kw Anaerobic-digester in the pipeline. "We are looking forward to it" says Jeremy. "It will be used for bedding and slurry only, but

it should reduce the volume of slurry we have to spread as well as giving us better Nitrogen efficiency from the digestate".

The Clarkes have used a dribble-bar for slurry spreading for the past 18 months. "It's a super job! Myself and Jordan do the slurry here and we couldn't believe the difference in grass growth from the extra N getting to the grass roots!"

A FAMILY BUSINESS

Keeping the business running smoothly as the generations pass by is a challenge for any family farm but the Clarkes are managing it well. "Keeping on top of the paperwork is a big job for this farm especially as we are supplying a Tesco contract" explains Jeremy. The peace of mind brought by the stable price of the Tesco contract is a big help. "And Giles has been able to stay out of my hair and concentrate almost full-time on the book-work recently" he jokes. A foot injury several months back restricted the time Giles could spend about the yard but with the hard-working and positive attitude shown by the next generation, he should have no worries but that Longshaw Farm is in very safe hands until his full return to action!





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