

Northern Ireland

Production of naturally spreadable butter from grazing dairy cows



WORK PACKAGE 4
DAIRY SECTOR ANALYSIS

SPREADEASY BUTTER

Dromona Naturally Spreadable Butter (NSB) is a unique value added product manufactured by Dale Farm Cooperative in Northern Ireland that supplies the consumer with a **naturally churned butter but with softer and more easily spread characteristics**. The product is produced by a combination of spring grass in the dairy cow diet, supplemented by a special butter ration produced exclusively by United Feeds, the animal feed company owned by Dale Farm. This ration when fed to cows at turnout gives the necessary characteristics to the raw milk to allow the production of this unique product.

Dale Farm is Northern Ireland's leading dairy company owned by a cooperative of 1,300 dairy farmers and employing more than 1,000 people. Dale Farm has a proud heritage and an extensive range of products including milk, cream, cheese, ice cream, yogurt and spreads, available worldwide.

United Feeds is a manufacturer of blended and compound feeds for dairy, beef and sheep with production facilities in Belfast and Dungannon. As part of Dale Farm, the largest UK farmer-owned dairy cooperative, United Feeds has a unique ethos centered on the companies' commitment to provide innovative nutritional solutions and a comprehensive on-farm advisory service, which is wholly focused on securing optimal livestock performance and efficiency.

FARMER INVOLVEMENT



Key facts:

- 150 Dale Farm suppliers involved
- 95 cow average herd size
- 2,200 litres average daily milk supply
- 10 week supply period
- Concentrate feed level 4.0 or 7.0 kg/cow/day
- Milk quality assessment through milk fat iodine content measurement

Farmer milk price bonus (pence/litre)

Farmer milk price bonus (pence/litre)	
Payable from NSB ration received	1.70
Additional when Iodine Value >38.5	0.30
Additional when Iodine Value >41	0.30
Additional when Iodine Value >43	0.30
Additional when Iodine Value >45	0.40

SWOT ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

The SWOT analysis examines the sustainability of the production of Natural Spreadable Butter (NSB) production.

01

STRENGTHS

- NSB milk from dairy cows grazing 24 hours each day.
- NSB is made spreadable through natural feeding without using additives.
- Active participation of local dairy farmers.
- The NSB product is based on peer reviewed research.
- Rapeseed in the concentrate feed is 100% sourced within Ireland.



02

WEAKNESSES

- Production of NSB requires concentrate feeding.
- Feeding whole rapeseed depresses milk fat production.
- Reduced milk fat content reduces butter yield.



03

OPPORTUNITIES

- Recent increases in butter consumption could lead to increasing product demand.
- Substituting soyabean meal with rapeseed can potentially reduce concentrate production GHG emissions.



04

THREATS

- Increased promotion of the vegan diets.
- Consumer pressure to reduce the proportion of human edible ingredients in animal diets.
- Government targets to reduce GHG emissions.



TESTIMONY



**Henry Stewart
Pilot Farmer
Co. Tyrone
Northern Ireland**

//

The Stewart family supplied milk to the Dale Farm dairy co-operative for the production of Natural Spreadable Butter in 2020. During the summer the dairy cows are grazing in the fields day and night.

The grazed grass diet combined with the feeding of the United Feeds special butter ration naturally reduces the proportion of long chain saturated fats in the cows' milk.

This natural reduction of saturated fats increased the spreadability of the butter churned from the milk. Dale Farm Natural Spreadable Butter production has been produced each spring for almost 20 years.



For more information

www.dalefarm.co.uk

The natural production process is supported by published local research carried out at the Queen's University of Belfast and the Agricultural Research Institute for N. Ireland.

Milk from the participating dairy farms is analysed using a laboratory iodine test in the Dale Farm milk testing laboratory. The iodine test value indicates if the milk is suitable for churning into Natural Spreadable Butter.

The milk iodine test results are made available to participating farmers, the Dale Farm Liaison Team and United Feeds Advisers who support farmers to produce milk suitable for churning into Natural Spreadable Butter. Approximately 1,000 tonnes of Natural Spreadable Butter is produced each year.

//

CONTACTS

Martin MULHOLLAND (CAFRE) : martin.mulholland@daera-ni.gov.uk



www.dairy4future.eu



Project funded by



**Interreg
Atlantic Area**
European Regional Development Fund

