

NEIGHBOURING HERDS

Why do Neighbouring Herds Matter?

If your neighbour has a TB breakdown, your cattle could become infected through direct nose to nose contact; especially if the boundary is a single fence, wall or narrow hedge.



Conacre

The use of conacre is common in Northern Ireland. However, the more conacre, the more neighbours, the greater the risk of introducing TB in your herd. If ground is rented, the fences may not be well maintained increasing the risk of cattle breakouts.

To minimise the risk:

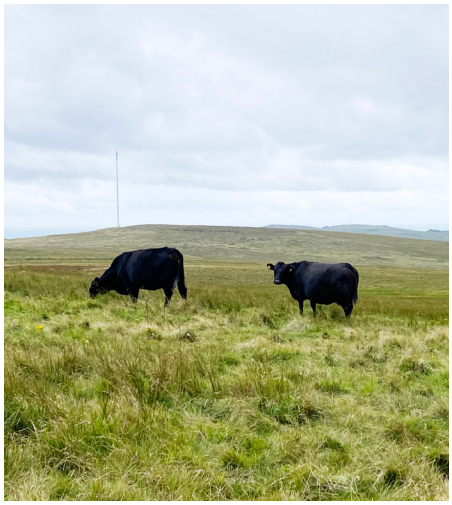
- try to graze conacre with lower risk livestock such as sheep, or liaise directly with neighbouring herds not to graze cattle in adjoining fields.
- maintain fences, or erect temporary electric fences on rented land, to increase distance with neighbours and prevent breakouts.

Common Ground

Avoid grazing common ground as this allows freely mixing of cattle from different herds.

Shared Grazing

Avoid grazing pasture that has been grazed recently by cattle from other farms. The TB bacteria can survive up to 2 months in the summer, and up to 6 months in the winter, in cow pats on pasture.



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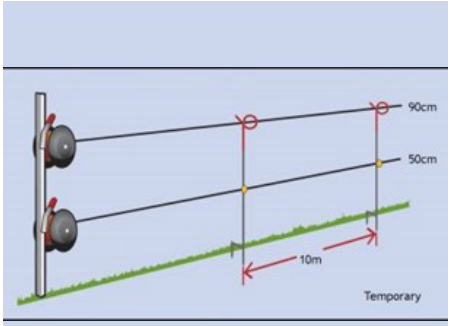
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How can I prevent contact between my herd and the neighbours' cattle?



Picture A



Picture B



Picture C

Communication and Agreement

Plan field rotations with your neighbours so that herds are not grazing in adjacent fields at the same time.

Natural Boundaries

Rivers, woodland and hedgerows, with well maintained fences on either side, can successfully prevent contact with neighbouring herds (Picture A).

Temporary Electric Fencing

Additional inner electric fencing can be erected at boundaries with neighbouring herds to increase the distance between cattle. Ensure a sufficient distance between the inner electric fence and the outer permanent fence to prevent nose-to-nose contact.
A single strand at 90cm is sufficient for adult cattle.

If there are calves, a second strand at 50cm is required (Picture B).
The electric fence can be moved when cattle rotate pastures.

Permanent Double Fencing

A minimum of 3m between permanent fences is required (Picture C).
Whilst expensive, this can be a worthwhile investment. The space in-between may be eligible for nature habitat schemes.

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