

2021 KT Walsh Scholarship (MAIS) Project Summary

1. Project Title and Associated Programme

KT Programme	ASSAP Programme
Project title	Achieving improvements in water quality through targeted Organic Manure Storage advice

2. Project background

Losses of nutrient from organic manures has a very significant impact on water quality in Ireland and also has a significant contribution to GHG and ammonia emissions. Having sufficient storage at farm level is essential to minimising these losses.

A survey of DAFM audits in 2016 indicated that there are farms with inadequate manure storage. Increased stock numbers since 2016, examining real capacity as opposed to a technical calculation of capacity and the management at farm level particularly in relation to clean, soiled and dirty water all have an impact on the real storage requirement at farm level.

Inadequate slurry storage and poor management of the available storage combine to pose a significant threat to water quality and to objectives to reduce other environmental impacts. In the most serious cases it is leading to farmers spreading slurry in the closed period, thus increasing the risk of nutrient and pathogen losses to water. In less serious cases it is reducing options for achieving optimum use of slurry nutrients (and reduction of chemical fertiliser) and forcing farmers to apply organic manures during inappropriate conditions for nutrient uptake.

3. Project aims and objectives

The overall objective is to develop an advisory strategy which will assist advisors and farmers in tackling slurry storage shortfalls.

- Identifying the nature and extent of slurry storage at farm levels relative to requirement
- Identifying the level of production of slurry on the farm with particular emphasis on water entering the system
- To build an understanding of potential solutions at farm level and of potential uptake of those solutions
- Development of a toolkit to improve advisers capability to deal with slurry storage as an issue
- To develop materials to promote best practice in relation to slurry storage