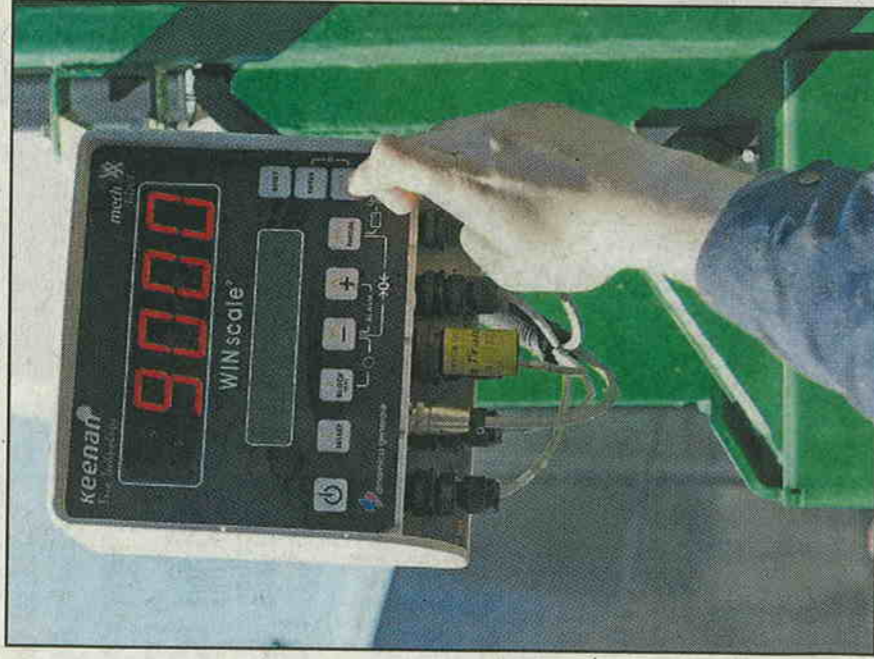


Keenan diet feeder company claims



New mech-fiber Keenan mixers are fitted with measurement, monitoring and control equipment to achieve the diet physical formulation which the company says is the new key to huge gains in feed efficiency.

by Stephen Cadogan

TOP Irish farm machinery maker Keenan has set ambitious targets for its mech-fiber livestock feeding concept.

Already on 25,000 farms worldwide with its diet feeders, the Co Carlow company bids to take another big step on the world stage with its mech-fiber system, which the company describes as "a seismic shift in ruminant feeding".

Research results from three prestigious universities have been unveiled, confirming big profit gains on 500 selected dairy farms using Keenan

feeders in France and Britain — and, more important, coming up with an explanation for the improvement.

Scientists say it is not the feeding, but the unique feed mixing action of the machines made in Carlow, that enables these farms make up to 30% extra profit.

As a result, the company has taken a completely new tack — focusing on the physical structure of rations, and adopting the mech-fiber tag for their worldwide marketing, backing it up with 10 years of knowledge on how to process the best ration mix.

Keenans have such a high level of confidence in its new offering to buyers and users of its machines that executive chairman Gerard Keenan revealed they may start dealing with farmers on a gainshare basis, settling for part of their fee to come from the extra profits which Keenan believe the farmer will make from mech-fiber feeding.

Mr Keenan also revealed he is in advanced negotiations with major international feed companies interested in joint ventures, enabling them to latch onto mech-fiber as a carrier for their products.

Research findings back up

the Keenan belief that they can practically guarantee a big enough increase in farm profits to settle for gainshare which they have floated as an alternative payment method. Detailed investigations began in 2008, revealing that 500 Keenan users increased profit margins €260 per cow in France and €90 in Britain, within one year of adopting Keenan methods.

Research at Manchester University showed that the cows in France were fed less, but yielded better. Daily milk yield increased by 2.5 litres, although feeding was reduced



One of the new Keenan mech-fiber mixers at work on the Coopon Carse farm at Wigtownshire, in Scotland.

AIB young farmer package launched

AIB has launched a package for young farmers aged 18 to 35 who are inheriting a farm, starting their own farm business, or entering into a farm partnership. It includes access to short- and long-term finance, account transaction fees waived for the first two years, cash handling fees up to €100 per quarter waived for the first two years, and two years' free subscription to AIB's internet banking for business.

IFA Director of Livestock Kevin Kinsella, centre, officially opening new premises in Ballinasloe, Co Galway for EasyFix Rubber Products, with the company's MD Michael Earls and business development manager Noel Kelly. The company has recently formed strategic alliances with De Laval for distribution of its slat rubber system throughout Europe, and with Connolly's Red Mills in Britain for its equine range.

Picture: Andrew Downes

Breakthrough

that Keenan revealed their latest nutrition breakthrough.

The farm produces 1.5 kg of milk for 1 kg of feed dry matter.

They don't graze their heavy land, and feed a total mixed ration to 500 dairy cows, housed all year round, averaging about 2,100 gallons at 3.84% fat and 3.33% protein.

The farm was ideal for measuring the potential of

KEENAN aims for 2,000 farmers to be signed up to their mech-fiber service by the end of 2009.

There's a good chance that Koepon Holdings, one of the largest privately owned livestock organisations in the world, will have their several herds of high quality Holsteins on the mech-fiber system.

It was on one of their farms, at Coopon Carse in Wigtownshire, Scotland

Mech-fiber deals

KEENAN'S mech-fiber system may be one of the first ever services sold to farmers on a gainshare basis,

with the Co Carlow company setting for part of their fee from farming clients around the world to come from the extra profits which Keenan believe the farmer will make from mech-fiber feeding.

The idea has been floated at a number of meetings with farmers.

Farmers can buy a three year licence to adopt Keenan's latest patent protected cattle feed and feeding technology for €166 per month plus taxes (5.53c per day per cow in a 100 cow herd).

Or farmers can buy,



Start-up vegetable garden

A GALWAY company has latched onto a boom in home vegetable growing. Green Touch Plants offer a startup kit of vegetable beds for people interested in growing their own vegetables. The basic flat pack (25) is a wooden frame for the vegetable bed, or the flat pack can be delivered, assembled and filled with top soil for €95.

Homegrown food got a boost this week when the Corrigan's City Farm new TV series on RTE1 started following 24 volunteers striving to transform a plot of derelict wasteland in Cork into a productive smallholding.