

YOURVIEW

MARKET CONDITIONS

Farmers must keep informed

Seamus O'Callaghan, managing director,
Durapak Agri Ltd, Ballincollig, Co Cork

DEAR SIR: I am writing to express our deep concern about the 'difficult market' conditions as outlined by Justin McCarthy on *page 6* of last week's *Irish Farmers Journal* (3 October 2009). Price reductions are obviously of major concern, however, farmers are also suffering through lack of information because research work conducted by Teagasc at Grange in Co Meath during 2006 and 2007 has not yet been published.

In 2006 and 2007, Teagasc carried out a very extensive trial using 360 beef bullocks, and they compared three different slatted rubbers with out-wintering pads and bare concrete slats. The preliminary data was released by Teagasc at their open day on the 8 May 2008 — the *Irish Farmers Journal* referred to the results on *page 8* of your issue on 20 September 2008. Since then, there hasn't been a mention.

Durapak came out on top, producing animals with an increase in carcass weight at 14 kilos over and above bare concrete slats, which is worth between €42 and €45 per head of animal (386 kilo carcass weight to 372 kilo = 14kg extra). In addition, the Durapak mat (as well as the out-wintering pads) produced animals who achieved a higher carcass classification worth possibly €10 to €25 per head of animal.

So there are ways by which farmers can improve their performance, and in times of tight cash flow and a shortage of credit,

farmers can obtain substantial returns by investing in Durapak Slatted Rubber. In truth, there is a wide variation on the returns for farmers investing in slatted rubber, as it depends on the quality of the various products on the market, and farmers are being short changed by the non-publication of the final results.

In the tough times, farmers have to be extremely careful in how they invest their money. And they deserve to have all the facts and relevant information, and be fully informed when making investment decisions.