



Profile

Started: 2013 (40 cows)

Previously: farm manager

***Milking 150 cows /30ha
(fragmented)***

Aim: 170 cows/ 41ha

Lesson Learned:

**Believe in your
goal of becoming
a dairy farmer**

Focus: Looking Back

1. Purchased stock in 2013

- **Grant approval delayed....**

2. Plan cash flow/ keep debt manageable

3. Allow for further expansion from the start

- **Plan for extra cubicles/slurry/feed face**

4. Stock enabled better borrowing capacity

5. Work on a good dairy farm before conversion

Take home message

***“Leasing a farm is viable provided you treat the
farm like your own and have a good
relationship with the owner”***



Profile

Wexford

Started: 2017

Previously: suckler & sheep

**Milking: 145 cows/
47ha contract rearing**

Aim: 200 cows

Lesson Learned

Have labour organised to work with you and replace you when necessary

Focus: Grassland

1. Grass measuring on Pasturebase

2. Reseeding programme in place

- **Good soil fertility & drainage**

3. Good roadway network

- **Paddock sized for 3 grazing's**

4. Good supply of quality water

- **Adequate piping and troughs in place**

Take home message

“Join a dairy discussion group as soon as you make the decision to go dairy farming”



Profile

Wexford

Started: 2016

Previously: beef & tillage

Milking: 225 -2 platforms

Aim: 290 cows/ 80 ha

Lesson Learned:

**Have a plan but
also allow for
possibility of
expansion**

Focus: Business Planning

- 1. Can't start early enough – have research done. Budget to foresee the big spend**
- 2. Joined a discussion group 2 years in advance – opportunity to learn**
- 3. Cow type instrumental to rapid expansion**
- 4. Kept system simple – no other enterprises**

Take home message

***“Have a 5 year physical and financial plan and
refer back to them regularly – be flexible ”***



Profile

Offaly

Started: 2018

Previously: Beef & Tillage

Milking: 83 cows /40ha

Aim: 110 cows

Lesson Learned:
**Have the right
team around you
from day 1**

Focus: Getting Started

- 1. Sourcing the right stock**
- 2. Improving roadways/water & reseeding**
- 3. Budget on lifespan/priority of investment**
- 4. Finding the right balance between
work/happiness and profit**
- 5. Joined a discussion group**

Take home message

***'If you want to realise your farm's full potential
then dairy is the best way to do so'***



Lesson Learned:

**Delayed turnout
due to a delay in
grassland
infrastructure**

• *Profile*

- Offaly
- Started: 2018
- Previously: suckler & calf to beef
- Milking: 120 cows /36.5 ha
- Plan: 150 cows

Focus: Buying Good Genetics

1. Up skilled myself, to buy high quality stock
2. An extra €100/heifer gets you ↑ EBI heifers
3. Only purchase from a few healthy sources
4. Difficult to know health status of source

Take home message

“I wanted to be my own boss, I am passionate about dairying, we needed 2 incomes, so the only way to do was to become a dairy farmer “



Profile

Lesson Learned:

**Pre Season
Preparation is Key**

Tipperary

Started: 2015

***Previously: Suckler &
Tillage***

Milking: 125 cows/ 57ha

Aim: 120 cows

Focus: Stock & Grass

1. Sourced the right cow for our system

- **Good EBI, high fertility**
- **Challenge to source x-bred heifers**

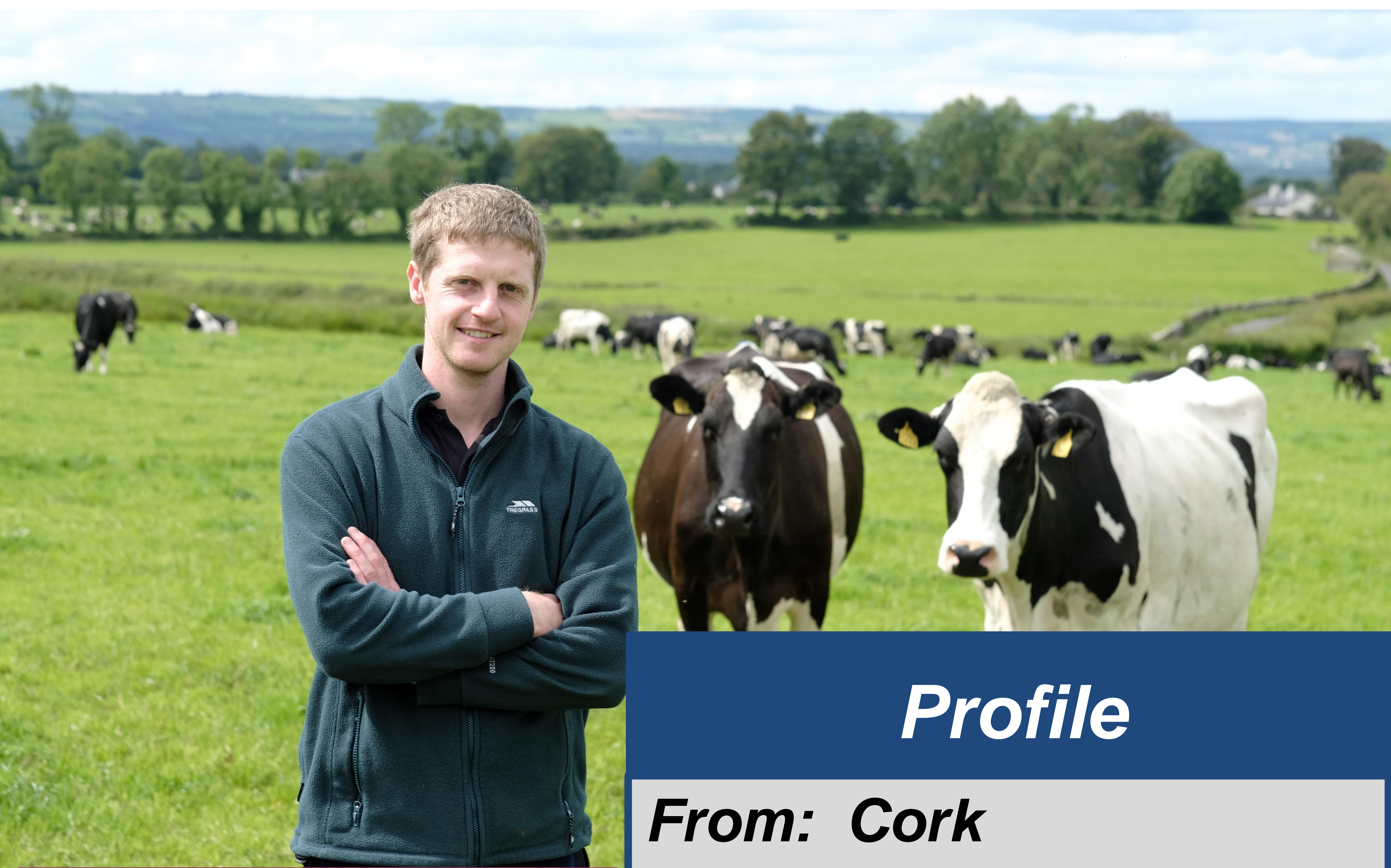
2. Entire farm reseeded to top 10% of grasses

3. Soil fertility is key

3. Measuring grass weekly - Pasturebase

Take home message

***“ Stay open minded, listen to all advice and
keep your system simple ”***



Profile

From: Cork

Farming : Limerick

Partnership: 400 cows

***Experience: 2 years (UK);
current farm pre-
partnership***

Lesson Learned:

“You need a great team of people when farming at large scale”

Focus: New pathways

- 1. Gain experience & save!**
- 2. Develop a strong support network – class mates, adviser etc.**
- 3. Work with good people – if the relationship isn’t right the venture can’t work**
- 4. Loads of opportunities out there**

Take home message

“There are plenty of challenges in farming – be patient and keep a positive outlook”



Lesson Learned:

Being part of a good discussion group is vital

Profile

***From: Cork (non-farming)
Farming in Kilkenny
Partnership: 180 cows
Aim: Planning to grow***

Focus: New pathways

- 1. You don't need to own a farm or be from a farm – just love what you do and do it well!**
- 2. Working in England and NZ was key to gaining the skills required & still learning!**
- 3. Invest in good stock and deliver on-farm goals consistently**

Take home message

“Progression is all about developing your skills and aligning yourself with the right people”



Profile

- ***County Waterford***
- ***Manager/ profit share 270 cow farm in Cork***

Key learnings from PDDFM

Working on highly profitable efficient grass-based farms with the best mentors has thought me how to run a simple farming system

Advice for starting a career in dairy

- 1. Work with the best farmers to learn as much as possible**
- 2. Have realistic achievable goals**
- 3. Farming can be enjoyable, find the system that suits you best**

My farming quote

“Don’t wait for an opportunity. Create it!”



Profile

- **County *Waterford***
- ***Manager 150 cow farm in Waterford***

Key learnings from PDDFM

1. Adapt to different farming systems

Not all systems are the same, goal is to hit KPIs

2. Planning for the future

How to identify the right opportunity for me

3. Have mentors

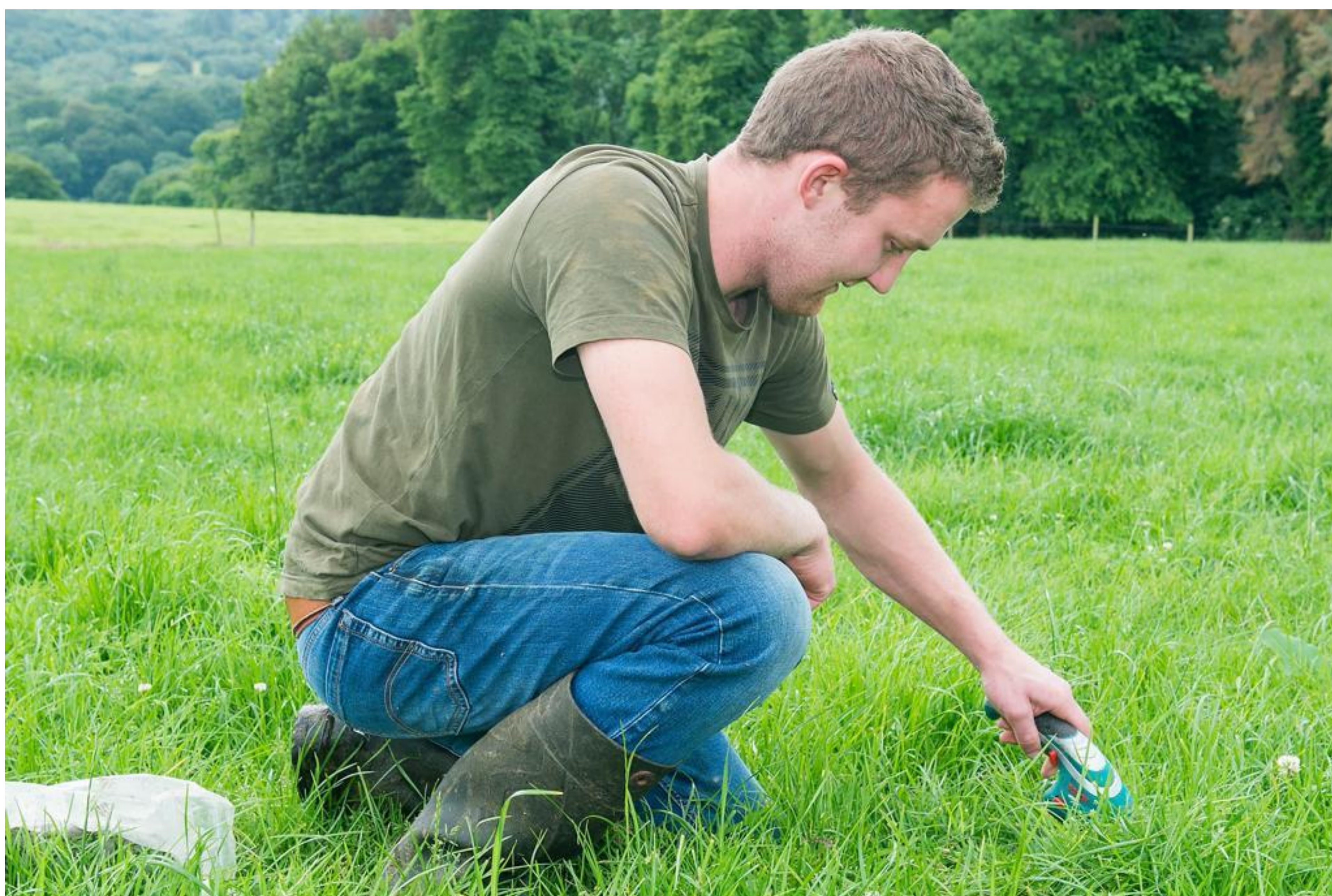
Gives advice and confidence to make decisions

Future plans

- **Currently buying into the herd I manage**
- **Goal to own 100 cows by the time I'm 30**

My farming quote

“Once the cows are happy, I'm happy!”



Profile

- ***County Longford***
- ***Manager 460 cow farm in Cork***

Key learnings from PDDFM

- **Financial & business planning**
- **Created a support network including mentors**

Advice for starting a career in dairy

- 1. Get as much experience as possible**
- 2. Identify mentors- help your decision making**
- 3. Build a sustainable business**

High EBI cows, 450 kg MS from grazed grass

My farming quote

“Going forward we, the dairy industry, need to keep our systems simple, sustainable and most importantly enjoyable!”



Profile

- ***County Tipperary***
- ***100% dairy focus since 2005***
- ***Milking 220 cows on 73 ha MP (Total area farmed- 98ha)***

Advice for starting a career in dairy

1. **Education is key - get up to speed on the science behind farming**
2. **Get ‘the basics’ right**
3. **Take every opportunity to upskill**

‘The basics’ for me

- ✓ **Cow type and breeding**
- ✓ **Soil fertility** (driver of tonnes of grass grown)
- ✓ **Financial management & discipline**
- ✓ **Time management & people skills**

My farming quote

“Dairy farming is hard work & challenging, but very exciting, rewarding & full of opportunity!”



Profile

- ***County Cork***
- ***Milking 320 cows on 147 ha***

Advice for starting a career in dairy

- 1. Have a written plan, update 5 year plan every year**
- 2. Work and surround yourself with the best**
- 3. The best decision is the right one, the next best decision is the wrong one, and the worst decision is making none**

Working with PDDFM students

- **I love working with and mentoring young people**
- **They bring new ideas and energy to farming**
- **Constantly improving KPIs and technical knowledge**

My farming quote

“Attitude determines altitude!”



Profile

- *County Meath*
- *Milking 300 cows*

Advice for starting a career in dairy

1. Delegate and become a people manager
2. Use good SOPs to allow attention to detail to be achieved & revise regularly
3. Do a five year plan and revise regularly - you will be surprised what you can achieve

Working with PDDFM students

Great to work with enthusiastic people who want to further themselves in the dairy industry and play a small part in developing their skills

My farming quote

“Always assume that you may not be there tomorrow so have SOPs in place”