



Ten-Point Action Plan on supporting Dairy Calf to Beef Systems in Ireland

Actions based on Breeding, Communications, Knowledge Transfer and Promotion



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



BORD BIA
IRISH FOOD BOARD



The Dairy Calf to Beef Ten-Point Action Plan has been developed in support of Food Vision 2030, in particular Action 1 (Promote greater integration of dairy and beef sectors especially in relation to the production of beef coming from the dairy sector) and Action 13 (Develop and support dairy beef systems) of Mission 2 – Goal 1 (Viable and Resilient Primary Producers, with Enhanced Well Being).

The Calf Stakeholder Forum continues to promote several initiatives to improve calf welfare on dairy farms. The quality of the calf leaving the dairy farm remains the key factor in developing a sustainable dairy beef system, and must be a key priority for all stakeholders.

The Dairy Calf to Beef Ten-Point Action Plan identifies actions that can be undertaken at farm level (on both beef and dairy farms) and at processing level that will ensure optimal calf health and welfare, and will facilitate greater uptake of dairy calf to beef systems.

A draft version of the Action Plan was launched for consultation on 18 January 2024. More than twenty submissions from a broad range of stakeholders were received during the consultation process which ended on 16 February 2024. A meeting with representatives of the farm organisation took place during the consultation phase also. Observations from the comprehensive, useful and constructive submissions received have been taken on board and reflected in the document where practicable.



Action 1: Profitable and Environmentally Sustainable Dairy Beef



Progress to Date:

Research conducted at Teagasc Grange has established profitable and environmental sustainable dairy beef production systems using key technologies in relation to dairy beef genetics, calf rearing and health plus grassland management.

	Lead Organisation	Supporting Organisation	Timing
1a. Publish a series of factsheets on the key performance benchmarks for dairy beef systems that prioritise high farm profitability, high nutritional low carbon footprint beef, low purchase nitrogen surplus per hectare and high animal welfare ethical management practices.	Teagasc	DAFM	Q3 2024
1b. Organise a dedicated dairy beef conference in 2024 highlighting the latest development in new technologies.	Teagasc	DAFM	Q4 2024
1c. Disseminate knowledge on Dairy Beef through: www.teagasc.ie/dairybeef500 website and other social media.	Teagasc	DAFM	Ongoing
1d. Report dairy beef as a separate cattle enterprise in the Teagasc National Farm Survey (NFS) to monitor its annual financial and technical situation.	Teagasc	DAFM	Q4 2024



Action 2: Sexed Semen



Progress to Date:

Approximately 275,000 straws of sex-sorted semen were available for the 2023 breeding season, with this number expected to increase in 2024. The AI industry has reported significant increases in the use of beef AI in dairy herds with a corresponding reduction in the use of dairy AI (driven by the adoption of sexed semen).

	Lead Organisation	Supporting Organisation	Timing
2a. Targeted communication to issue to dairy farmers to incorporate sexed semen into their plans for generating replacement heifers.	Teagasc	ICBF/AI Companies Breed Societies	Q1 2024
2b. Provide clear communication on the optimum strategies to use sexed semen technology.	Teagasc	ICBF/AI Companies Breed Societies	Q1 2024

Action 3: Breeding & Genetics



Progress to Date:

The Dairy Beef Scheme in the CAP Strategic Plan will be launched in Q1 2024. The aim is to improve the value of dairy beef calves through incentivising the use of genetically superior beef AI/stock bulls (3 to 5 star on the DBI beef sub-index) in the dairy herds. The Commercial Beef Value (CBV) reflects the potential profit of animals in a dairy beef production system. This provides confidence to beef farmers when purchasing dairy beef calves. The launch of the National Genotyping Programme should promote the use of the CBV, as it will be available on mart screens for all genotyped calves.

	Lead Organisation	Supporting Organisation	Timing
3a. Launch and publicise the Dairy Beef Scheme.	DAFM	ICOS/AI Companies/Breed Societies/ICBF/Teagasc	Q1 2024
3b. Promote the increased use of AI sires with high DBI (incl Beef sub-index) genetics on dairy farms.	Teagasc	ICBF/AI Companies/Breed Societies	Q2 2024
3c. Engage with marts to ensure that CBV is clearly communicated to farmers when purchasing calves.	ICOS	ICBF/AI Companies/Breed Societies/Teagasc/DAFM	Q2 2024
3d. Develop a communication strategy targeted at beef farmers on the benefits of sourcing calves based on CBV.	ICBF	ICOS/AI Companies/Breed Societies/Teagasc/DAFM	Q2 2024
3e. Develop strategies to accelerate the rate of genetic progress within the DBI.	ICBF	Teagasc/AI Companies/Breed Societies/DAFM	Q4 2024

Action 4: Capital Grants available under TAMS 3



Progress to Date:

TAMS 3 currently grant-aids several calf specific investment items such as calf housing, calving gates and pens, calf creep pens, calf dehorning crates, milk carts and computerised feeders, livestock monitors (cameras), as well as health and fertility monitoring equipment for dairy cows. Grants range from 40% to 60% in the case of Young Farmer Scheme, Women Farmers Scheme, and Farm Safety.

	Lead Organisation	Supporting Organisation	Timing
4a. Include specific TAMS 3 advice on dairy beef in communications to beef and dairy farmers.	DAFM		Q2 2024
4b. Issue communication on the grants available under TAMS for dairy beef investments.	DAFM		Q1 2024
4c. Host specific TAMS webinar on calf housing investment items.	DAFM	Teagasc	Q2 2024

Action 5: Knowledge Transfer



Progress to Date:

A small number of dedicated dairy beef discussion groups have been set up nationwide as part of DairyBeef 500. Teagasc has set a target of 3 such groups for each of its 12 advisory regions by 2025. The scale of the ambition should be increased and roll out accelerated. New entrants to Dairy Beef should be supported.

	Lead Organisation	Supporting Organisation	Timing
5a. Include specialist speakers on dairy beef production within the existing KT scheme.	DAFM	Teagasc/ACA/ICBF	Q2 2024
5b. Engage with Teagasc and ACA on establishing more discussion groups in 2024.	DAFM	Teagasc/ACA/ICBF	Q1 2024
5c. Meat and Dairy processors to encourage uptake of dairy beef technologies and integration.	MII/DII	Teagasc/ACA/ICBF/DAFM	Q1 2024
5d. Dairy processors to promote and support their dairy farmer suppliers to use high DBI bulls (incl on Beef sub-index).	DII	Teagasc/ACA/ICBF	Ongoing
5e. Dairy beef will feature strongly at Beef and Dairy 2024 Open Days.	Teagasc	ICBF/Bord Bia/DAFM/MII	Q2 2024
5f. Run farm courses on dairy beef production.	Teagasc	ACA/ICBF	Ongoing
5g. Increase dairy beef advisory capability.	Teagasc	ACA/ICBF	Ongoing

Action 6: Demonstration Farms



Progress to Date:

The Teagasc DairyBeef 500 campaign was launched in the autumn of 2022 and runs up to the end of 2027. The campaign involves key stakeholders in the beef industry. The objective of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign is to reach a target net margin of €500 per hectare on DairyBeef farms. There are 16 farmer demonstration farms and the Tipperary Calf-to-Beef demonstration farm in the DairyBeef 500 Programme.

	Lead Organisation	Supporting Organisation	Timing
6a. Organise a nationwide network of farm walks in summer 2024, including DairyBeef 500 farms and other suitable farms.	Teagasc	ACA/DAFM	Q1 2024
6b. Launch and run an Open Day at the Tipperary Calf-to-Beef demonstration farm in 2024 (this farm is a joint venture between Dawn Meats, Shinagh Estates & Teagasc).	Teagasc	ACA/DAFM	Q3 2024
6c. All livestock farmers in the country to be targeted with direct tailored messages informing them of above events.	DAFM	ACA/Teagasc	Ongoing



Action 7: Encourage Sustainable Relationship between Dairy and Beef Farmers

Progress to Date:

DAFM has existing incentives to encourage collaboration and farm partnerships, for example the Collaborative Farming Grant. In addition, Macra has also provided the land mobility service to enhance land mobility.

	Lead Organisation	Supporting Organisation	Timing
7a. Collaborate with key stakeholders with a view to encouraging and developing networks and suitable partnerships between dairy and beef farmers.	ICOS	DAFM/MII/DII/Teagasc/ICBF	Q1 2024 & ongoing
7b. Explore the role of marts to act as a broker between farmers where formal relationships or partnerships could be established.	ICOS	DAFM/MII/DII/Teagasc/ICBF	Q2 2024 & ongoing
7c. Examine scope for funding partnerships between beef and dairy farmers including to cover establishment costs.	DAFM	DAFM/MII/Teagasc/ICOS	Q2 2024
7d. Include CBV on all transactional events - mart dockets.	ICOS	DAFM/ICBF	Q4 2024
7e. Include CBV on all transactional events - factory kill sheet.	MII	DAFM/ICBF	Q4 2024

Action 8: Marketing Beef

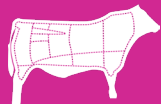


Progress to Date:

Reverse the decline in carcass weight and disimprovement of the grading profile of Irish dairy progeny. Enhancing these important factors would benefit producer returns, and result in a higher proportion of prime carcasses meeting the in-spec criteria (minimum conformation O=) to optimise price bonuses under the QPS. Achieving this through improved genetics and management will underpin Ireland's overall beef quality reputation. The marketing reputation of both Hereford and Angus dairy-beef crosses has been well-established.

	Lead Organisation	Supporting Organisation	Timing
8a. Include dairy beef in the scope of market communication of quality beef from Ireland and underpin the ability to meet customer and scheme requirements, based on developments in dairy beef systems.	Bord Bia	Teagasc/MTI/ICBF	Q2 2024

Action 9: Beef & Dairy Processors



Progress to Date:

Beef processors have networks of suppliers that they can engage with. Dairy beef will be an increasingly important supply of beef in the future. Beef processors should promote the adoption of the best practices in relation to dairy beef genetics, calf rearing and grassland management. Vertically integrated dairy and beef systems have a role in terms of beef genetics specification, farm to farm movement and achieving specific carcass specifications for specific market requirements.

	Lead Organisation	Supporting Organisation	Timing
9a. Develop and evaluate a range of industry led vertically integrated models for dairy and beef farmers, including formal tie-ups between beef processors and dairy beef farmers e.g. Kepak/Tirlán Twenty20 and ABP's Advantage Beef Programme.	Teagasc	MII/DII	Q4 2024
9b. Communicate the benefits of producing high quality dairy beef.	MII	Teagasc	Q2 2024



Action 10: Improved Calf Health & Welfare



Progress to Date:

Actions to improve calf health and welfare have been discussed at the Calf Stakeholder Forum. Animal Health Ireland (AHI), in conjunction with Teagasc, has been running CalfCare workshops for several years. These have been very well received and are effective. AHI has published information leaflets and videos on calf health and rearing.

	Lead Organisation	Supporting Organisation	Timing
10a. Organise a series of roadshows on calf health and welfare, building on the current AHI CalfCare model.	AHI	Teagasc	Q1 2024 & Ongoing
10b. Facilitate an increase in capacity to hold calves for longer on dairy farms through the construction of new calf sheds including through promotion of TAMS for calf housing and calf rearing equipment.	DAFM	Teagasc/AHI	Q2 2024
10c. Promote best practice on colostrum feeding, animal health plans and overall calf and animal management.	AHI	Teagasc/DAFM	Ongoing
10d. Promote best practices and procedures to assure calf health and welfare at marts.	ICOS	AHI/DAFM/Teagasc	Ongoing
10e. Promote the use of the existing FAWAC calf welfare guidelines and AHI information leaflets and videos on calf health and rearing by farmers and calf rearers, and the development by the sector of codes of practice based on these for use on farms.	AHI	AHI/DAFM/Bord Bia/Teagasc	Q1 2024

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For more information visit: www.teagasc.ie/dairybeefactionplan



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