



Sustainable Dairy Beef Production

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# DairyBeef500

## Programme Outline





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*The DairyBeef500 Demonstration Farmers are sponsored by:*



*Ballyvadin Demonstration Farm is sponsored by:*



*For more information please visit: [www.teagasc.ie/dairybeef500](http://www.teagasc.ie/dairybeef500)*



# Introducing the DairyBeef500 team



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# 1. Introduction

The beef sector remains one of the most important industries in the national economy. It supports in excess of 70,000 beef farmers as well as approximately 10,000 employees across the processing, distribution and transport sectors. Exports in 2021 were valued at approximately €2.1 billion. Additionally, it has a huge multiplier effect in the overall economy and its importance to regional development. Its key strength is its grass-fed steer/heifer beef output with strong sustainability credentials. However, the income situation on cattle farms remains challenging, with the National Farm Survey showing an average farm income of just €9,043 on cattle rearing farms in 2020. On average, costs of production exceed market prices and the reliance on direct payments is critical. Without a substantial increase in beef price and/or improvements in efficiency the vast majority of cattle farmers will continue to rely on direct payments for a significant proportion of their income.

The number of suckler cows increased significantly in the late 1980's and 1990's following the MacSharry reform of the Common Agricultural Policy when coupled payments were introduced. Suckler cow numbers peaked in 1998 at 1.25 million cows. The introduction of decoupled payments in 2004 resulted in a reduction in the number of suckler cows. Since 2008, the number of suckler cows has reduced by approximately 285,000, while the number of dairy cows has increased by 481,000 (December CSO). This has resulted in a reduction in the proportion of cattle slaughtered of suckler origin from 53% in 2010 to 43% in 2020; while cattle of dairy origin increased from 47% in 2010 to 57% in 2020. Current trends in both dairy and suckler cow numbers indicate that this trend will continue. Teagasc need to consider this change in the origin of beef when planning future beef programmes.

The changing dynamics within the dairy sector obviously impact directly on the incomes of those involved in dairy beef production, in terms of the reduction in beef of suckler origin, the increase in dairy origin beef and changes in the non-dairy sires used on the dairy herd. In 2019, approximately 54% of dairy cows were bred to dairy sires while the remaining 46% were bred to beef sires. Approximately, 78% of the beef sires used were either Aberdeen Angus or Hereford (45% Aberdeen Angus and 33% Hereford), with the remaining 22% mostly continental beef breeds.

Of the approximately 1 million Irish dairy calves available for beef production annually, 35% are retained on dairy farms, 35% are moved/sold to beef farms and 30% are exported. Over the period, 2015-2019, there were on average 10,000 beef farmers who purchased dairy-beef calves annually and they reared an average of 37 dairy beef calves per farm. One of the big issues over this period was the high attrition rate of farms rearing dairy beef calves, only 39% of those who reared dairy beef calves in 2015 were still doing so in 2019. Typically 23% of farmers involved in dairy beef production exited the system in any one year over that period. Addressing the increased production for dairy beef whether viewed as a challenge or an opportunity is a priority issue for the future.

Recent research conducted at Teagasc Grange has established that a well-managed dairy beef steer system has the potential to sustainably produce consistently high-quality beef in addition to positive margins at farm level whilst meeting market requirements. The adoption of key




technologies in relation to grazing management, calf rearing, and the use of appropriate dairy beef genetics are the key drivers of this change. This system also reflects favorably on animal welfare as the animals have access to pasture over an extended grazing season and produces beef with a reduced carbon footprint.

In response to the changes in both dairy and beef systems, Teagasc have developed a new campaign which focuses on dairy beef production. The DairyBeef 500 Campaign will include a number of current dairy beef projects, including: the Green Acres Dairy Calf to Beef Programme; male dairy calf contract-rearing project; dairy calf to beef grazing systems study; and the evaluation of a range of beef sires of different beef breeds for crossing in the dairy herd. Additionally, the campaign will collaborate with existing Teagasc programmes, which will include the new Teagasc Signpost Programme and the Grass10 programme.

The DairyBeef 500 Campaign has set a target of €500 net profit per ha (not including family labour and land costs). It is envisaged that the programme will consist of beef farmers with a wide range of intensities. On intensive farms, the objective will be to grow and harvest as much grass as possible achieving high output of carcass weight per hectare. On more extensive farms, there will be a greater focus on the provision of environmental ecosystem services in combination with lower output of carcass weight per hectare; the optimum mix will depend on the individual farmer's circumstances and priorities. Examples of current environmental programmes are the Burren Programme, the Hen Harrier Project and the current REAP (Results Based Environment Agri Pilot Programme).

*The objective of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign will be to promote the adoption of best practice at farm level to increase the future viability and sustainability of the Irish beef sector. It will promote greater integration of the dairy and beef sectors, to ensure that there is a market outlet for calves from the dairy herd, and to provide an attractive business option for beef farmers.*



The development of a sustainable DairyBeef sector will coexist side-by-side with a sustainable and profitable suckler beef sector. These two distinct beef production systems provide options to suit the preference of individual beef farmers depending on labour availability, farm infrastructure and capital availability (among other factors).



## 2. Proposal

Teagasc is proposing to run a 5 year (2022-2026) campaign focused on maximising the potential of beef production from the dairy herd.

## 3. Aim & Objectives

The aim of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign is to promote and demonstrate DairyBeef systems, which are socially, environmentally and financially sustainable.

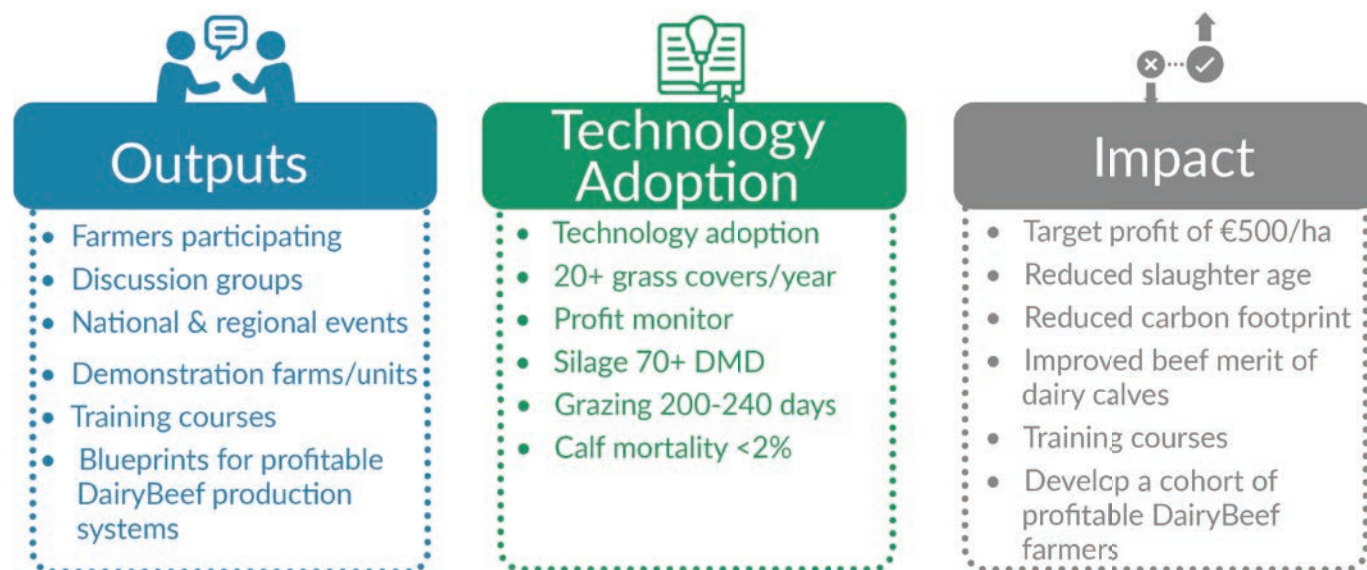
### **The objectives of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign include:**

- Target a net margin\* of €500 per hectare;
- Create greater integration between Beef and Dairy industries;
- Improve the beef merit of calves coming from the dairy herd;
- Increase the adoption of best practices, especially in relation to grassland management and calf rearing;
- Reduce the environmental footprint of DairyBeef production;
- Establish a cohort of profitable DairyBeef producers.

*\*Net Margin of €500/ha does not include farm family labour or land costs.*

## 4. Key Performance Indicators

The success of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign will be measured at three levels:



## 5. Role of Dairy Farmers

The DairyBeef 500 Campaign will be predominantly focused on supporting and encouraging beef and dairy farmers who are engaged in dairy beef systems. However, all dairy farmers have a role to play as the producers of calves for dairy beef production.

### **The expectations from dairy farmers are:**

- Increased use of the Dairy Beef Index to select high beef genetic merit sires;
- High standards of calf health and welfare;
- Optimise the use of sexed semen to maximise the use of beef cross-breeding;
- High standards of early calf nutrition including the feeding of high quality colostrum; and
- An openness to advice and information on improving the quality of dairy beef calves.



## 6. Delivery of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign

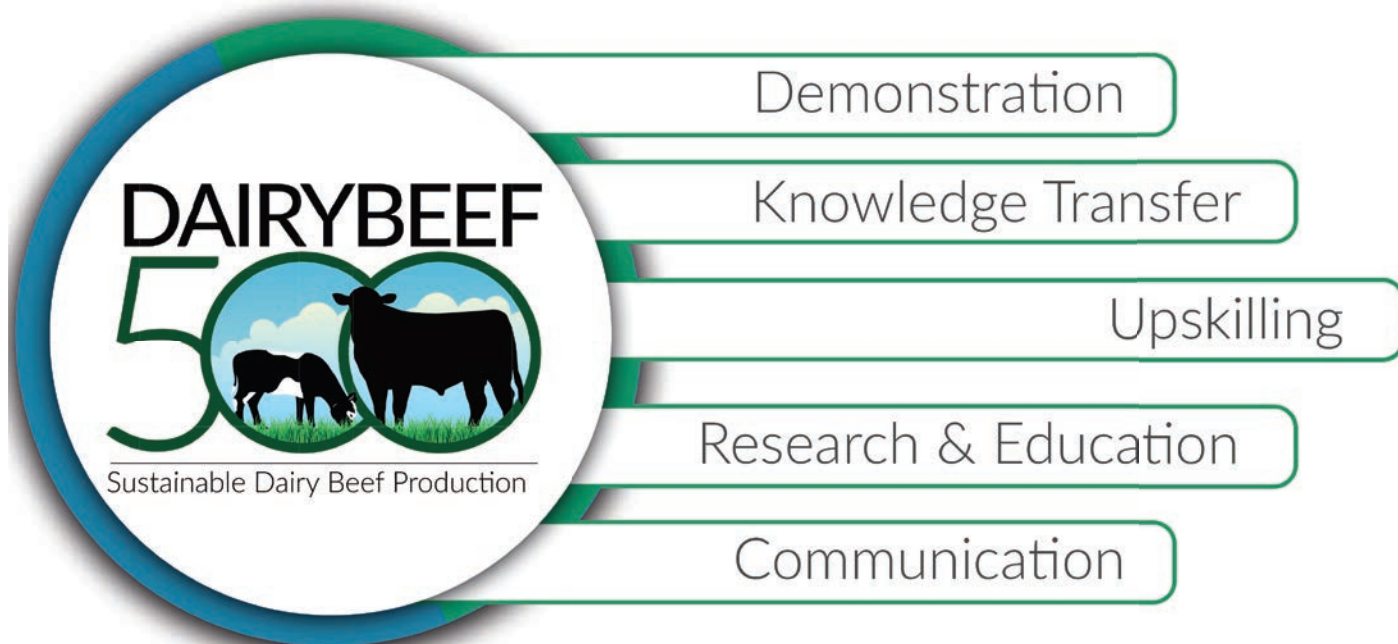
The objectives of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign will be delivered by way of a number of key pillars (some of which are specific to the DairyBeef 500 Campaign while others are overlapping with other campaigns and Teagasc programmes e.g. calf to beef & suckler systems).

There are considerable information/advisory resources in place which can be utilised or adapted for use within the DairyBeef 500 Campaign.

*The key pillars of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign are:*

- Ballyvadin **Demo Farm**;
- DairyBeef 500 **Demonstration Farms**;
- A strong **Knowledge Transfer** supporting programme;
- **Upskilling** farmers, advisors, lecturers/teachers and students;
- A supporting **Research and Education** Programme;
- Weekly **Communication** outputs.

The 6 pillars are interlinked and will be underpinned by a coordinated campaign of events/activities.



One of the challenges in the delivery of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign is that there are potentially a number of target groups to deliver to including:

- Beef farmers (purchasing calves for sale as stores or finished animals);
- Contract rearers of dairy beef calves;
- Dairy farmers (producers of calves for sale);
- and dairy farmers who rear their own calves.

While other factors such as the availability of labour, extent of facilities/infrastructure and existing farm system will also impact on the potential target audience for the campaign.



## 6.1 Ballyvadin Demonstration Farm

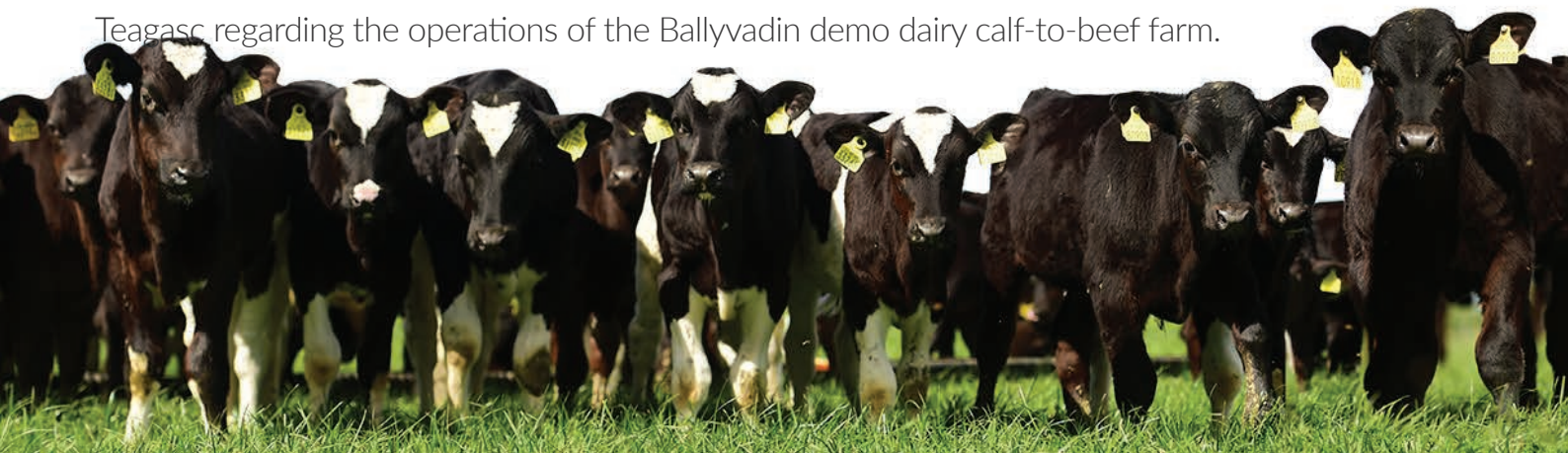
Building a sustainable outlet for the ever-increasing dairy and dairy-beef calves coming from the dairy industry is a priority. There is a requirement to develop profitable dairy calf-to-beef systems using excellent dairy-beef genetics and grassland management. The dairy calf-to-beef demonstration farm is based at Ballyvadin, Fethard, Co. Tipperary, and is a joint venture between Teagasc, Dawn Meats and Shinagh Estates Ltd. The Ballyvadin farm will demonstrate the deployment of best technologies in sustainable beef production. Additionally, will produce beef of high quality from both the processor and consumers perspective.

### Key Demonstration Actions

- Demonstrate the significant advantage of strong collaboration between beef and dairy farmers in the transfer of calves between both parties.
- Operate a financially sustainable farm business using excellent pasture management, early age at slaughter and high animal health and welfare.
- Minimise both nitrogen and phosphorus losses to the environment.
- Implement mitigation strategies that reduce the impact of dairy calf-to-beef farming on climate change.
- Incorporate a proportion of the farm into high-diversity landscape features.
- Implement mitigation strategies to reduce ammonia emissions to the environment.
- Reduce the use of antibiotics and anthelmintics

Ballyvadin farm is 112 ha of free draining clay loams and will be sown with perennial ryegrass/ clover swards receiving ~ 125 kg N/ha. The farm will be stocked initially with 300 calves that will be reared through to beef as steers and heifers. The number of animals slaughtered will be adjusted taking cognisance of forage supply and feed demand (age at slaughter with adequate fat cover). The target will be to maximise production from grazed grass and high quality silage with animals being slaughtered from 20 to 26 months depending on gender and beef genetics.

Ballyvadin farm will procure approximately 300 spring born calves each year from a small number of farms at between 2 to 4 weeks of age. These calves will be a minimum of four stars on the commercial beef value (CBV) index and will include both steers and heifers. All animals will be slaughtered when they reach a minimum carcass fatness of 3-. Ballyvadin farm will be lease from the land owner by Teagasc for a 15 year period. Dawn Meats Ltd, Shinagh Estates Ltd and Teagasc will enter into a share-farming agreement. This agreement will define the supply of land, stock, labour and all other inputs required for the successful operation of Ballyvadin dairy calf-to-beef farm. Separately there will be service management agreement between Ballyvadin Farm Ltd and Teagasc regarding the operations of the Ballyvadin demo dairy calf-to-beef farm.





## 6.2 DairyBeef 500 Demonstration Farms

Demonstration farms/units will be a key pillar of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign. The demonstration farms/units will illustrate key technologies including: calf rearing; grassland management; calf health, nutrition; financial management; animal health & welfare; environmental sustainability; and appropriate use of dairy beef genetics. It is intended that the demonstration farms should source above average beef genetic merit calves.

### Key Demonstration Actions

- At least one demonstration farm in each advisory region (building on the network of Green Acres farms);
- There will be a range of dairy calf-to-beef systems on the demonstration farms;
- Communication plan for messages/lessons emerging from the demonstration farms/units; and
- Maximise the level of advisor & farmer engagement (for advice and training) with demonstration farms/units (accepting the dependence on the voluntary commitment of the farmers involved).

The aim is to ensure that there is at least one demonstration farm in each advisory region. In addition, it is proposed to establish a unit on each agricultural college farm to ensure that students are exposed to best practice in the enterprise.

#### *Each demonstration farm will provide:*

- Opportunities to test research outcomes in real farm scenarios;
- Evidence of the implementation of best practice and the challenges in achieving high levels of performance;
- Opportunities for informing/upskilling of advisors, lecturers/teachers, technicians and farm staff;
- Opportunities for farmer engagement/information events; and
- Opportunities to document and share farm management practice on an ongoing basis through a programme of information sharing: events; publications; media including social media; and regular newsletters/blogs/social media posts.

The demonstration farms/units will also encourage models of production for different systems including: dairy farm finishing; dairy & beef farmer contract rearing arrangements; and beef farmer systems for dairy beef.

The existing network of demonstration farms under the Green Acres programme will be an integral part of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign.





# DairyBeef 500 Map of Farmers







## Irvine Allen

- **Location:** Mount Temple, Moate, Co. Westmeath
- **Farm size:** 58ha
- **Current system:** 21-29 month Friesian steer beef
- **Local Teagasc advisor:** John Kelly

Irvine purchased his first batch of dairy-beef calves in 2012. Previous to this he had 10-12 suckler cows and was buying in 35 weanlings annually; all animals were brought to slaughter. Since then, he has sold out his suckler cows in order to expand his calf-to-beef enterprise.



## Ciaran Bartley

- **Location:** Boher, Co. Limerick
- **Farm size:** 74ha
- **Current system:** Friesian steers (22-24 months) and early-maturing heifers (20 months)
- **Local Teagasc advisor:** Aileen Walsh

Ciaran Bartley runs a dairy calf to beef enterprise on 74ha – some of which is heavy – in Boher, Co. Limerick.



## Peter Byrne

- **Location:** Castledermot, Co. Kildare
- **Farm size:** 72ha
- **Current System:** 19-22 month heifer and 22-26 steer beef
- **Local Teagasc Advisor:** Christy Watson

Peter farms 72ha of dry land on the Kildare/Carlow border. Up until 2008, he was running a suckling to beef and sheep enterprise on the farm, alongside a tillage enterprise. Over time, the farm has transitioned away from suckler and sheep production to a calf-to-beef enterprise.



## Pat Collins

- **Location:** Castlemartyr, Co. Cork
- **Farm size:** 34.4ha of grassland
- **Current System:** Calf to bull beef and calf to store
- **Local Teagasc advisor:** Karen Dukelow

Located just outside Castlemartyr, Co. Cork, Pat Collins operates a mixed farming system, consisting of 34.4ha of grassland – the majority of which is leased – and a tillage enterprise.





## Martin Connolly

- **Location:** Milltown, Castleplunket, Co. Roscommon
- **Farm size:** 60ha
- **Current System:** 21-22 month Friesian bull beef
- **Local Teagasc advisor:** Gerard Cregg

Martin has been rearing dairy-bred calves, bringing them to beef, for many years. A number of years ago, he was purchasing continental weanlings and store cattle along with the dairy calves and bringing them to slaughter.



## Shane Cranny

- **Location:** Myshall, Co. Carlow
- **Farm size:** 40ha
- **Current System:** Friesian calf to beef
- **Local Teagasc advisor:** Eoin Woulfe

Shane Cranny operates a dairy calf to beef operation in Myshall, Co. Carlow, where 100 autumn-born Holstein Friesian male calves are purchased.



## Michael Culhane

- **Location:** Killaloe Co. Clare
- **Farm size:** 79ha
- **System:** Continental, Friesian and early-maturing steer and heifer calf to beef 21-28 months
- **Local advisor:** Conor O'Reilly

Michael runs a total of 79ha of land of which 38ha is leased near Killaloe in Co. Clare. The farm previously ran 70-80 suckler cows, selling weanlings and stores off grass.



## JP Hammersley

- **Location:** Lattin, Co. Tipperary
- **Farm size:** 37ha
- **Current System:** Friesian steers (22-24 months)
- **Local Teagasc advisor:** Joe Hand

Farming in Lattin, Co. Tipperary, JP Hammersley runs a system where British Friesian bull calves are brought to beef as steers at 22-24 months.





## Richard Long

- **Location:** Ballymacarbry, Co. Waterford
- **Farm size:** 57ha
- **Current System:** Steer and heifer beef (20-24 months)
- **Local Teagasc Advisor:** Austin Flavin

Richard brings early-maturing and continental calves out of the dairy herd to beef as steers and heifers at 20-24 months. In the region of 100 calves are purchased each year and the breeds consist of Angus, Hereford, Limousin, Belgian Blue, Aubrac and Charolais.



## Aidan Maguire

- **Location:** Navan, Co. Meath
- **Farm size:** 60ha
- **Current System:** Calf to 18-20 month heifers and 22-26 month steers
- **Local Teagasc Advisor:** David Argue

Aidan is currently farming 46ha of grassland and 14ha of forestry in Navan, Co. Meath. The farm is in two blocks with 40ha being owned and 20ha leased. Previous to rearing dairy calves, Aidan had been operating a tillage enterprise along with keeping a group

of suckler cows. Almost 20 years ago, he decided to cut back on cow numbers, quit the tillage and start to operate a dairy calf to beef enterprise.



## Peter O'Hanrahan

- **Location:** Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny
- **Farm size:** 94ha
- **Current System:** Friesian and early-maturing steers
- **Local Teagasc Advisor:** Enda McLoughlin

Having transitioned from a suckler enterprise to calf to beef production a number of years ago, Peter O'Hanrahan – who farms in partnership with his father Tom – has built numbers to increase output over recent years.



## Eoin O'Muircheartaigh

- **Location:** Ballydavid, Tralee, Co. Kerry
- **Farm size:** 55ha
- **Current System:** Calf to store/steer finish
- **Local Teagasc Advisor:** Eugene Doherty

Eoin farms in south west Kerry close to the coast with up to 100 calves purchased each spring. The calves are a mix of Friesian, Hereford and Angus bulls which are finished as steers or sold live as forward stores. Eoin plans to move to a full finishing system. Eoin participates in a dedicated dairy calf to beef group with other calf to beef farmers in the Kerry region.





## James O'Sullivan

- **Location:** Union Hall, Co. Cork
- **Farm size:** 31ha
- **System:** 20-22 month early-maturing heifers
- **Local Teagasc advisor:** Anna Sexton

James farms along the coast in West Cork with some extremely good quality land that is free draining and fertile in nature. A second smaller block of land is slightly heavier and colder due to its elevation.



## Gareth Peoples

- **Location:** Drumlougher, Co. Donegal
- **Farm size:** 45ha of grassland
- **Current system:** 24 month Holstein Friesian steers
- **Local Teagasc advisor:** Gary Fisher

Gareth peoples operates a calf-to-beef and tillage enterprise under a registered farm partnership with his parents in Co. Donegal. Calf numbers have been growing year-on-year with all animals purchased from the one dairy farm. A new five-bay slatted shed has

just been completed on the farm and Gareth is keen to make strides in grassland management over the duration of the programme.



## Jarlath Ruane

- **Location:** Corbally, Claremorris, Co. Mayo
- **Farm size:** 45ha
- **Current System:** 20-24 month steers
- **Local Teagasc Advisor:** Cathal Conaty

After graduating from Mountbellew Agricultural College in 2018, Jarlath decided to get more involved with the running of the home farm alongside his father Austin.



## Charlie Smyth

- **Location:** Virginia, Co. Cavan
- **Farm size:** 50ha
- **System:** 24-26 month Holstein Friesian steers
- **Local advisor:** Roslyn Fay

Charlie Smyth, a relatively new entrant to calf-to-beef production, farms 50ha just outside Virginia, Co. Cavan – on a mixture of owned and leased ground.



## 6.3 Knowledge Transfer Programme

Knowledge transfer between advisors and farmers is the core element of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign. The campaign will be delivered by the Teagasc team of drystock advisors (calf rearing, grassland management, core farm management) and dairy advisors (breeding decisions). Therefore all drystock and dairy advisors will be engaged in the delivery of information and advice to farmers. A lead drystock advisor will be identified in each advisory region and allocated responsibility for coordinating the campaign in the region, supported by a corresponding dairy advisor. The campaign will include elements which serve both clients and non-clients.

### Key Knowledge Transfer Actions

- All farmers involved in the DairyBeef 500 Campaign identified within the Teagasc CRM database;
- The DairyBeef 500 Campaign in each advisory region will be coordinated by a lead drystock adviser supported by a corresponding dairy advisor;
- Aim for at least three specific DairyBeef discussion groups to be set up in each of the advisory regions;
- At least one DairyBeef public event held in each advisory region annually; and
- DairyBeef 500 Campaign will collaborate strongly with both the new Teagasc Signpost and current Grass10 programmes.

#### *Advisors will engage with farmers at a number of levels including:*

- Promotion of DairyBeef production and general information provision to all clients (direct to farmers and through a range of media);
- Specific targeting of information to younger farmers and recent graduates of Teagasc training programmes (identified within the Teagasc CRM);
- Specific information provided to farmers engaged in DairyBeef production (identified within the Teagasc CRM);
- Specific information provided to dairy farmers (identified within the Teagasc CRM);
- Improving dairy beef breeding will be addressed at least once annually by dairy discussion groups;
- Face to face advisory contact/visits;
- Specific DairyBeef discussion groups established in each region. The discussion groups will utilise a range of approaches – on farm meetings, WhatsApp, Zoom, Podcasts and social media; and
- Facilitating events/activities on Demonstration Farms/units and opportunities for farmers to engage with relevant researchers and projects.

The DairyBeef 500 Campaign knowledge transfer programme will focus on a small number of critically important aspects of farm management including; breeding/genetics for the dairy herd; calf rearing (including calf health and welfare); grassland management; financial management; labour and time management; animal nutrition and performance & contract and rearing options.

The key messages, information and events/activities will be focused on the main aspects of farm management.



## 6.4 Upskilling of Farmers & Teagasc Personnel

DairyBeef production is not a new concept or enterprise and therefore considerable knowledge and skills already exists. However, the DairyBeef 500 campaign will focus on enhancing the knowledge and capacity of: advisors; lecturers/teachers; technicians; farm staff; farmers; and students. A specific key resource will be the publication of a DairyBeef manual which addresses the relevant key aspects relating to dairy beef production. The manual will be developed for usage in a range of formats/media. Specific aspects of the manual will be targeted at farmers and advisors reflective on their individual needs and the depth of information required e.g. more detailed technical information for advisors.

### Key Upskilling Actions

- A Teagasc DairyBeef manual will be published covering all relevant aspects including: calf rearing; grassland management; nutrition; calf health; calf welfare; calf housing; dairy beef genetics; DairyBeef systems; labour efficiency; & financial performance;
- The DairyBeef manual will be developed for utilisation in a range of formats/media: print; online; audio/visual; and interactive;
- Upskilling opportunities provided for advisors/lecturers/teachers/technicians/farm staff to enhance their skills on key aspects relating to DairyBeef production;
- A specific training course for farmers developed and run annually for new entrants to DairyBeef production in each advisory region;
- Short training/refresher courses for farmers delivered in each advisory region on relevant topics including: calf rearing; grassland management; nutrition; calf health; calf welfare; calf housing; dairy beef genetics; DairyBeef systems; labour efficiency; & financial performance; and
- Teaching resources for students revised and updated to ensure that all aspects of best practice relating to DairyBeef production are addressed.

The advisory team (drystock and dairy) will play a critical role in creating awareness of opportunities, informing farmers on best practices, sharing information and approaches and ultimately influencing decision making and practice change on farms. Lecturers/teachers, technicians and farm staff part a similar role in influencing the students undertaking the range of Teagasc educational programmes. Training workshops will support and enhance the knowledge and technical skills of advisors, lecturers/teachers, technicians and farm staff. The training will focus on the main elements of performance in DairyBeef including: calf rearing; grassland management; dairy beef genetics; financial management; different systems/approaches; calf health and welfare, environmental sustainability; and research updates.

Similar to the upskilling for advisors, specific training courses for farmers will be delivered as part of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign. Training courses will be delivered on demonstration farms/units and other farms where appropriate. The aim of these training courses is to upskill farmers in best practice in grassland management and calf rearing.



A DairyBeef enterprise may have particular appeal to younger and prospective farmers undertaking Teagasc educational courses. As part of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign a number of specific initiatives will be undertaken focused on the education of young farmers. Demonstration units will be established in agricultural colleges, lecturers/teachers, technicians and farm staff will receive upskilling and content relevant to DairyBeef will be revised or developed for delivery to students at all levels.





## 6.5 Supporting Research & Education Programme

There are a range of relevant research projects ongoing within Teagasc both specific to DairyBeef production (including dairy calf to beef system evaluation; male dairy calf contract rearing project; dairy calf to beef grazing systems study; & improving efficiencies of dairy-beef systems) and covering the broad areas of beef and dairy production.

### Key Research Actions

- Enhance the understanding of the influences of key technologies on the profitability of DairyBeef production including;
  - Dairy calf genetics; grazing management; silage quality;
  - Early calf nutrition impact on lifetime performance;
  - Health & welfare; calf housing;
- Evaluate a range of contract rearing systems with the objective of getting greater integration between the beef and dairy industries;
- Whole farm modelling both the biological and financial performance of a range of DairyBeef systems;
- Focus on both intensive and extensive systems of production;
- Produce beef of high quality from both a human nutritional and marketing perspective;
- Increased engagement between researchers, advisors and farmers by way of:
  - Research updates;
  - Annual research forum for advisors;
  - Annual research insights event for farmers; &
  - Input from researchers into training and upskilling; and
- Efficient and prompt communication of research messages to advisors and farmers to facilitate adoption/adaption of farm management practices.

As part of the process of building the capacity of advisors, the DairyBeef 500 Campaign will focus on supporting the engagement of advisors (drystock and dairy) with the ongoing research projects and the research outcomes.

#### ***This will be achieved in a number of ways, including:***

- Regular research updates (website, e-mail, newsletters, webinars etc) to address research findings, ongoing trials and emerging issues;
- An annual forum will be established for the sharing of research initiatives, new projects and outcomes with advisors;
- An annual research insights event will be undertaken for the sharing of research initiatives, new projects and outcomes with farmers and the wider industry. The format for the event is likely to include a conference/seminar element combined with a farm walk; and
- Inputs from researchers into advisor, lecturer/teacher, technicians and farm staff training/upskilling activities.



In addition, the DairyBeef 500 Campaign will channel relevant messages to farmers from research by a range of approaches including:

- Events on research farms/units (where possible);
- Input from researchers into farmer events (open days, farm walks, discussion groups);
- Publications – internal and external;
- Social media and general media articles; and
- Teagasc website.





## 7. Communication

A comprehensive communication effort will be central to the delivery of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign. One of the key elements of the campaign will be the communication of the opportunities within DairyBeef systems and the delivery of key messages regarding best practice farm management. Communication will cover a range of audiences including: farmers engaged in rearing dairy beef calves; dairy farmers; prospective dairy beef producers; students; general agri industry and stakeholders.

### Key Communication Actions

- Regular timely newsletter distributed to all DairyBeef producers (identified within CRM) & maximise usage of social media;
- Annual research conference/event sharing up to date information held in conjunction with a farm walk;
- Specific section on the Teagasc website developed as a repository of all information on DairyBeef producers and will include relevant research projects, reports, press articles, newsletters, farmer profiles. Content revised and updated on an ongoing basis;
- DairyBeef 500 Campaign profiled and promoted at all showcase events in which Teagasc participates;
- DairyBeef included as part of major dairying events e.g. open days, dairy conferences;
- In order to support communication of the message to farmers, analysis undertaken within the National Farm Survey to monitor the profitability of DairyBeef production;
- Campaign brand and identity (including a campaign logo) built; and
- Communication with range of industry stakeholders.

In order to maximise the reach of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign messages across different audiences (the Teagasc CRM will allow for the targeting of information to specific farmer audiences), a range of communication channels will be used including:

- Events (farm walks, open days, discussion group meetings, training courses, education courses, public events e.g. Ploughing championships/shows);
- Publications (reports, weekly newsletter (print and electronic), articles for publication);
- Website (specific content provided on beef and dairy sections of Teagasc website and regularly updated; website to serve as a hub for collation of material for easy access);
- Media (including local & national tv/radio; local newspapers; farming publications); and
- Social media (including live streaming of events; podcasts; webinars; YouTube clips; Twitter; and other relevant media).





The initial focus of the communication initiatives will be building the brand recognition of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign. All efforts will focus on the clear referencing and identification of all activities/events as being part of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign.

In addition, communication will be undertaken with a range of relevant industry stakeholders to inform them on the delivery of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign and to gain insights and support to the development of a profitable and sustainable DairyBeef industry. Some of the key stakeholders include: Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Bord Bia; Irish Cattle Breeding Federation; Animal Health Ireland; AI companies (AI technicians influence sire selection on many farms); private agricultural colleges; ICOS; farm organisations; and dairy and meat processors.





# Project Management

The resources and expertise required for the delivery of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign will be drawn from across the spectrum of Teagasc staff who will contribute to the campaign by way of their existing roles including: managers; advisors; researchers; administrators; technicians; farm staff; and others.

Similarly, the range of aspects of farm management and practices to be addressed within the DairyBeef 500 Campaign have a common theme with other advisory and research programmes/campaigns within Teagasc including: grassland management (Grass10); nutrition; financial performance; calf rearing; animal health; and genetics.



## ***The specific resources will include:***

1. A high level cross-directorate management team will provide overall direction and guidance to the campaign;
2. The campaign manager will take overall responsibility, drive the campaign and ensure that the objectives are met and the benefits achieved;
3. The campaign manager will be supported by three DairyBeef development officers;
4. The campaign manager will have the support of a part time campaign administrator;
5. At regional level, a lead advisor will take the lead on the delivery of the campaign within the region (supported by a corresponding dairy advisor) but all beef and dairy advisors will be required to engage with the campaign;
6. A budget will be allocated for the establishment and running of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign;
7. A targeted media campaign will also be required to create awareness, promote the campaign and the messages emerging; and
8. A budget to deliver on specific research projects related to Dairy Beef production.
9. While the Ballyvadin will have its own management structure, the Campaign manager of the DairyBeef 500 Campaign will participate on these committees.

In addition to the specific resources outlined above, the DairyBeef 500 Campaign will be supported by Specialist Teagasc resources across the organisation including those related to: the environment, animal genetics, calf rearing, animal welfare, and financial management.









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