

Teagasc PhD Walsh Scholars Opportunity

“Understanding the drivers of productivity in international dairy farming”

Walsh Scholarships Ref Number 2025017

Background

Traditionally, research which measured the productivity of Irish dairy farms has focused on metrics and drivers using Irish and European data. However, with increasing globalisation of dairy markets and volatility in performance, the drivers of performance in the international context is becoming increasingly important. Whilst the European policy landscape is increasingly placing sustainability at the core of policy objectives, the impact of these [EU] shifting policy objectives on international competitiveness is still largely unknown. In light of this background, the previous efficiency and productivity indicators for Irish dairy farming, will be re-focused to address the international context and the impact of the evolving agricultural/environmental policy dimension on performance at dairy farm level internationally.

The PhD candidate will use an inter-disciplinary approach to address the following project aims;

- (i) Establishing a metric for understanding the drivers of Irish dairy farm productivity on a regular basis
- (ii) Comparing the drivers of dairy farm productivity in an international comparative analysis
- (iii) Understanding the role of policy and/or technology adoption in productivity change in an international comparative analysis
- (iv) Clarifying the relationship between productivity and competitiveness on dairy farms internationally

The PhD candidate will enrol at The University of Queensland, and will study under the supervision of Professor Christopher O'Donnell, and will be co-supervised by Dr. Fiona Thorne, Dr. Michelle McCormack and Prof. Laurence Shalloo of Teagasc. Additional co-supervisors from DairyNZ or Dairy Australia may also contribute to the supervisory team. The PhD candidate will spend time in The University of Queensland campus, DairyNZ and Dairy Australia and at a Teagasc research centre in Ireland, at various times during the PhD studies.

Requirements

- A background in agricultural economics, food and agribusiness management, economics or related subjects;
- The successful candidate should be enthusiastic, self-motivated and will interact well within a larger research team;
- The successful candidate must meet [all academic entry requirements, including minimum English language proficiency, for the PhD program at The University of Queensland](#)

Desirable

- Experience communicating to a variety of audiences, including academic and farmer audiences
- Publication of prior research, ideally relevant to the area of PhD research
- Experience with statistical programming tools (preferably R) and experience with good practise programming methodology such as documentation and version control

Award

The PhD programme is for a maximum of 4 years and will commence as soon as possible.. Scholarship funds are tax free for full-time doctoral candidates. The scholarship funding is €31,000 per annum and includes University fees of up to a maximum of €6,000 per annum and flat rate stipend of €25,000 per annum and is tenable for up to 4 years.

The successful applicant will receive tailored guidance on their research, be part of The University of Queensland's research-focused School of Economics' community, the Teagasc, DairyNZ and Dairy Australia research community. At the earliest possible opportunity during the tenure of a scholarship, the awardee will be required to prepare a series of journal articles to disseminate research findings and achieve desired impact.

Further Information/Applications

For further details about the project, contact Dr. Fiona Thorne at fiona.thorne@teagasc.ie or Prof. Christopher O'Donnell at c.odonnell1@uq.edu.au

Application Procedure

To apply for this studentship, please submit a CV and covering letter outlining why you would like to be considered for the position to: fiona.thorne@teagasc.ie and c.odonnell1@uq.edu.au.

Please note that this is the first step to apply and does not guarantee admission to the PhD program at The University of Queensland. The preferred candidate will be invited to submit a full application to the University; see the [UQ Study website](#) for an overview of this process.

Closing date 11th July 2025