

# **An investigation into why the production of young bull beef is not attractive to Irish Farmer's**

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## Abstract

The beef industry is one of the most significant Irish native industries in Ireland. However the proportion of drystock farms that are economically sustainable remains relatively low. Variability in the level of profits been made on these farms is what gathers a lot of interest from the Irish beef industry as whole along with the interest of Irish beef farmers.

The study was focused on three main objectives: firstly to explain the different bull beef production systems and how they differ from the conventional beef systems in Ireland. The second objective was to identify if young bull beef production is likely to be viable in the near future and the third was to investigate the reasoning behind some farmer's unwillingness to convert to young bull beef production in Ireland.

As part of the research 50 surveys were handed out in Co. Mayo to 25 Green Certificate students and to 25 beef farmers who were members of a beef knowledge transfer discussion group. The results from the respondents showed that a large proportion of the farmers felt they didn't have the required infrastructure to raise bull beef and that there was too much physical risk associated with producing young bull beef. The findings would suggest that farmers who are relatively new entrants to agriculture are more willing to adapt to young bull beef production. To get a factories view on the bull beef industry in Ireland an interview with a Dawn Meats manager was carried out. He believed that the market still demands steer and heifer beef but there is still markets available for young bull beef. He suggested that young bull beef production will not suit every farmers system. Furthermore he believed that in years of favourable beef prices some farmers have the potential to make it the highest profitable beef production system.

In summary it is said to believe that the current progression in young bull beef production is down to the good factory prices and research from Teagasc suggesting that bull beef production is a very efficient production system which has the potential to return a good profit to the farmer. With that said price volatility will always play a major role in the future of the bull beef industry in Ireland.