

# Teagasc/UCD Michael Smurfit Business School Course in Business Strategy

Bitcoin? Stocks? Vintage wine? The best investment is always in yourself. This course, accredited by UCD at Level 8, requires your presence for a total of just six days (three modules/components) during November and December.

The course is well proven, having taken place seven times, with over 100 farmers from all farm enterprises graduated.

Just some of the areas addressed in the course include:

- Building a strategy around my farm enterprise – apply learning in a practical way to your business.
- Developing your financial forecasting skills.
- Introduction to tax management.
- Making the investment case – how do banks interpret financial information.
- Negotiation strategies and preparing for negotiations.



• Understanding ourselves as managers.

There are still places available for 2022. If you would like to know more,

or express your interest in this course, contact Mark Moore on 087-417 9131 or email [Mark.moore@teagasc.ie](mailto:Mark.moore@teagasc.ie).

## Bloom

Teagasc had an exhibit at Bloom, the theme of which was 'Healthy People – Healthy Planet'.

As part of the exhibit, researchers explained potential peat alternatives. Eoghan Corbett, a Teagasc researcher working in peat research, says: "Visitors were generally not aware of just how important peat is (and has been) in glasshouse crop, nursery stock, field vegetable and mushroom production and how the professional horticultural sector depends on high-quality growth media that provides reliable and predictable yield and quality of produce."

"We spent time discussing the potential that indigenous bio-resources (e.g wood) and emerging technologies (pyrolysis) may have in peat-alternative substrate production."

"There was real interest in Ireland's move towards a more circular economy, whereby resources are better managed through their entire life cycle."



Teagasc head of horticulture Dermot Callaghan discussing alternatives to peat with An Taoiseach Micheál Martin.

# Look but don't touch

The ICRAD-funded project BM-Farm involves researchers at University of Murcia in Spain, INRAE, as well as researchers at Teagasc Moorepark investigating a range of factors affecting piglet health and welfare using physiological biomarkers and gut microbiome.

Piglets are born completely dependent on the sow, but they develop very fast into independent and resilient animals. This transition is accelerated in commercial farms – it happens in just four weeks.

Having a good understanding of what takes place during these few weeks is key to improving the health and welfare of piglets, and to maximise their growth without the need for veterinary support.

Studying this development is challenging, however, because piglets suffer stress with any manipulation. Stress changes the physiology of the animal very quickly and many of the parameters change in seconds.

"That is why using samples that are not invasive – like saliva or faeces – is a more desirable alternative," says Edgar García Manzanilla, Head of Pig Development Department at Teagasc.

"Saliva was underestimated in the past as a fluid for veterinary use, but now researchers know how much valuable information can be obtained from this fluid. All it takes to collect saliva is a piece of sponge or a rope that the piglets chew for a few minutes."

The project team has collected saliva from pigs and sows at different stages and analysed 25 biomarkers for inflammation, specific immunity and oxidative status, among others. The group will also analyse the microbiome of saliva and faeces.

Saliva is the best type of sample to understand the effect of the environment on the microbiome of pigs.

"This is because they root all day and they sample literally every single stone in the environment. The findings from these studies are promising, and help our researchers to build a clearer picture of how a proper development during early life looks like in pigs," concludes Edgar.

*Adapted from TRResearch autumn 2022.*

## The Dairy Edge

Since The Dairy Edge podcast launched in January 2018, a new episode has been released each week and the podcast achieved a milestone 500,000 listens in July 2022.

Presented by Emma-Louise Coffey, The Dairy Edge covers practical advice, cutting edge research and farmer insights in an effort to incorporate best practice and achieve excellence in dairy production at farm level.

The Dairy Edge is a free resource available to farmers and industry and can be accessed on your phone, PC or tablet at a time that suits you.



### ADVERTORIAL



## Replacement heifers remain a priority

Maeve Regan,  
Head of Ruminant Nutrition, Agritech

As the next generation of milking cows, it is important that we do not lose focus on achieving replacement heifer target weights over the autumn.

Hitting target weights at this point of the year is crucial to ensure heifers are on course to achieve the main goal of being 60% of their mature weight when bred at 15 months.

Over the next few months, optimal average daily gain may be difficult to maintain as grass growth and quality declines and grazing conditions become more challenging in late autumn.

Therefore, it is important to consider where your replacement heifers are in relation to targets (% of mature weight) currently.

### Target Weights:

By weighing now, compared to weighing at the point of housing, this allows the opportunity to identify heifers that are not on target, group accordingly and make alternative plans for those heifers under target weights.

The threshold figure for 2022 spring born weanling heifers is approximately 190 kg in mid-September (approximately 33% of an assumed mature weight of 570 kg). Heifers that are lighter than this should be separated and given priority access our highest quality grass and concentrates depending on their weight relative to the herds target.

### Supplementation:

Higher weight gains can be achieved from grass rather than from winter/silage diets and a good response to autumn supplementation can be achieved. If grass is in short supply or quality/conditions are deteriorating, under-target heifers should be fed a supplement until housing time to maintain or increase growth rates. 1-2 kg of concentrate/head/day should be sufficient.

Research shows that youngstock at grass in summer can achieve a weight gain of 0.85 kg/day on grass alone. While in the autumn where 1 kg of concentrate plus high-quality grass are offered, average daily gains of 1 kg/head/day can be achieved.

**For further advice on finishing cattle from grass contact your local Agritech Sales Advisor or visit [www.agritech.ie](http://www.agritech.ie)**



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