TEAGASC PHD WALSH SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

“The Role of Sustainability certification in dairy production”

Ref Number 2019227

Background
Over the past decade a large number of certification schemes have been developed in the dairy sector to stimulate more sustainable production. Well-known examples include Origin Green (Ireland), On the way to Planet Proof (The Netherlands) and GLOBALG.A.P. (global). For farmers, certification schemes can provide an incentive to adopt or invest in more sustainable production practices. Meanwhile, for consumers certification schemes can give insight in the environmental and animal welfare impact of food products they purchase. Sustainability certification is therefore widely viewed as a promising way to stimulate sustainable production but there are many unknowns. In recent years, the number of certification schemes has expanded rapidly and sales of certified products continue to increase, however, it’s unknown whether they actually result in more sustainable outcomes. This project therefore aims to evaluate the role that sustainability certification schemes play in dairy production and to identify and develop pathways for improvement. It will evaluate progress being made to increase sustainability at farm level and evaluate the investments and returns for individual farmers participating in certification schemes. A key focus of this project will be around sustainability certification and indicators in the context of grass based systems.

Requirements
Applications are invited from graduates holding an MSc degree in Agricultural Science, Animal Science, Environmental Science or related discipline. The candidate should have good communication skills in the English language (oral and written). Knowledge in the area of sustainable animal production, sustainability indicators and/or certification, and research experience with farm interviews to collect qualitative and quantitative data, and data processing are desirable. Candidates should also be able to communicate with scientists, industry and farmers.

Award
The PhD Scholarship is a joint research project between Teagasc Moorepark, Ireland and the Animal Production Systems group, Wageningen University, the Netherlands, and part of the VistaMilk project. The student will be based at Teagasc Moorepark and will be registered at Wageningen University, working under the supervision of Dr Laurence Shalloo (Teagasc), Prof. Dr. Imke de Boer and Dr Evelien de Olde (Wageningen). The Scholarship will start on the 1st of September 2020. The Scholarship funding is €24,000 per annum and includes University fees of up to a maximum of €5,500 and student stipend at a flat rate of €18,500 per annum and is tenable for 4 years. Initially the PhD Scholar is appointed for a period of 18 months. Continuation of the appointment with another 30 months will be based on performance evaluation.

Application procedure and further information
Applicants should submit a CV and covering letter detailing their motivation, qualifications and experience to Dr Laurence Shalloo, email Laurence.Shalloo@teagasc.ie Teagasc, Animal & Grassland Research and Innovation Centre, Moorepark, Fermoy, Co. Cork, Ireland; Phone +353(0)2542306;

Closing date: June 20th 2020

VistaMilk
The VistaMilk SFI Research Centre is a unique collaboration between Agri-Food and ICT research institutes and leading Irish/multinational food and ICT companies whose mission is carry out fundamental and translational research for precision pasture-based dairying. The Centre is hosted by Teagasc, in partnership with the Tyndall National Institute, Ireland’s national microelectronics institute, the Telecommunications Software & Systems Group (TSSG) at Waterford Institute of Technology and the Insight Centre for Data Analytics (at UCD, NUIG, DCU). VistaMilk is funded by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine (DAFM) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).