



COP 23 PANEL SPEAKERS

Teagasc LIFE BEEF CARBON Newsletter 2

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From November 6 to 17, on the occasion of COP 23, the whole world mobilized in Bonn around the fight against climate change. The cattle sector was not left out and has an important role to play. Teagasc, the French Livestock Institute ASOPROVAC and the Italian council for agricultural research are playing a leading role and presented the progress of the LIFE BEEF CARBON project. This ambitious program is one of eight international agricultural initiatives labeled in the Climate Solutions Agenda at the Paris Agreement in 2015. The "LIFE BEEF CARBON" program was selected by the European Commission's LIFE program with three other projects (among several dozen currently underway) to showcase its ambitions, its ability to bring together multiple actors and its national and European dimensions.

Thanks to this invitation, the partners took the opportunity to take stock of the management of greenhouse gas emissions but also carbon storage by suckler and dairy calf to beef farms. The partners of this large-scale European project outlined the progress of the work and the results already obtained from innovative farms. They presented the operationally of the actions conducted with testimonials from both European R & D partners and farmers who have engaged in the process.

Teagasc presented the Carbon Navigator online farm management tool that is used by 51,000 Irish beef farmers. It measures the environmental gains that can be achieved on farm by setting targets in several areas.

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Jean Baptiste Dolle opened the debate on mitigating livestock emissions at the COP 23 EU event.

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Phase 3 Better Beef

The new phase of the Better Beef program will team up with LIFE BEEF CARBON to reduce carbon footprint.

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News from SAI platform

The Sustainable Agriculture Initiative platform recently met to discuss progress in the beef supply chain.

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The online tool focuses on 6 “win-win” measures to reduce beef farm emissions and increase profit. The measures are:

- (1) Longer grazing season
- (2) Lower age at first calving
- (3) Increase calving rate
- (4) Improve soil fertility and nitrogen use efficiency
- (5) Increase growth rate
- (6) Improve manure management

The tool is linked to the Bord Bia sustainability and quality assurance scheme database. Data is captured on farms by advisors or auditors. The farms performance is compared against its peers on similar soil types in the same region.



The Carbon Navigator estimates the relative or percentage reduction in a beef farms footprint that will occur if management practice targets are met. The individual effect of measures shows there is currently no silver bullet solution

security and climate". This mobilization of agricultural sectors in the fight against climate change fully participates in the transformations of agricultural models placed at the heart of the work of the General States of Food that the



for agricultural emissions. However, the cumulative impact of measures can be significant. The partners also showed the potential to reduce emissions by increasing carbon storage. Katja Klump, soil researcher at the French national institute for agricultural research, INRA, presented what is possible in terms of soil carbon storage on beef farms. She highlighted the complementary relationships between soil productivity and carbon storage that farmers can potentially exploit.

The efforts of the sector were acknowledged at a follow up French side event by Stéphane Travert, the Minister of French Agriculture. He renewed the strong commitment of the Ministry in the initiative" 4 for 1000: soil for food

French government initiated this summer and which aim at a healthier, safer, sustainable and accessible diet for all. The initiative was endorsed by the members of LIFE BEEF CARBON. Source: French livestock institute



The Teagasc / Irish Farmers Journal BETTER Farm Beef Programme is moving from strength to strength with Phase 3 of the programme involving 27 farmers officially launched on Monday, 30 January in Tullamore. The first two phases have delivered for both the

Phase 3 of Better Farm Beef Launched

farmer participants in the programme, and for the thousands of beef farmers who have visited the farms and read about the impact of the technologies that have been adopted. The BETTER Farm Beef Challenge is supported by ABP, Dawn Meats, FBD and Kepak.



The Teagasc / Irish Farmers Journal BETTER Farm Beef Challenge will be managed by Alan Dillon, while two new advisors, John Greaney and Tommy Cox have been appointed to work with the new participants as they address the challenges ahead. One of these will be

carbon. These innovative farms will tackle this as part of LIFE BEEF CARBON through a series of challenges or actions.

The gross margins of those participating in Phase 2 of the Better Farm Beef Programme have increased by 52% since they joined the programme in 2012.

Technical efficiencies delivered 83% of this improvement. Cattle farmers in every region of the country have had the opportunity to see these improvements implemented on these farms.

Speaking at the launch, Dr Frank O Mara, Director of Research in Teagasc thanked

all the farmers and their families who have participated in the first two Phases of the programme and in particular the new farmers who have volunteered to participate in the new third phase. He acknowledged the commitment and continuing support of the partners in the initiative, ABP, Dawn Meats, FBD, Kepak and the Farmers Journal.

Each farmer participant will have to select from a list of mandatory and optional challenges to tackle over the next four years. The BETTER Farm Beef challenges are:



- Two tonne grass challenge - All farms to aim to increase by 2 Tonne/DM/ha
- Farm finance challenge - Gross margin target €1250/ha on average
- Breeding challenge - Increase average replacement value of herd by €20 over course of programme and meet all herd fertility targets
- Herd health challenge - Aim to reduce antibiotic input by 20% and develop herd health plan
- Soil fertility challenge - Aim for 70% of farm at index 3 P&K. Ph - aim for 6.1 (5.7 on peat soils)
- Green farming challenge - incorporate clover into 20% of swards
- Meet the markets challenge - All farms quality assured. All stock to meet processor specifications.
- Farm safety challenge - Farms to introduce 2 positive changes annually
- Mixed grazing challenge - Establish blueprint for successful mixed grazing on farms
- Labour/structures challenge - Labour use focus/ Drystock farm partnership focus

A regular flow of information on the participating farms will flow through Teagasc and Irish farmer journal media articles, web content, and social media channels.

Source: Better Beef Programme

SAI Platform - BEEF FSA

Sustainability is hinged on engaging

farmers but sometimes they are last to be consulted on this crucial issue. This was one of the key challenges discussed at the recent Global Sustainability Forum organized by the Irish Food Board (Bord Bia) in partnership with SAI Platform and WWF.

During one of the sessions, Peter-Erik Ywema, SAI Platform's General Manager said: *"We have means to allow farmers to communicate with customers and customers to understand where their food is coming from but we need to create a language around what the issues at stake really are and agree on them. It's about water, biodiversity and soil health but also about fair income and other economic, social, environmental and rural issues. We need to set a scope of what is relevant and allow supply chain partners to address them in a way that makes sense for them."*

David Croft, Sustainable Development Director at beverage company Diageo, said while co-operation was key to sustainability, it had to benefit the entire chain. *"Farmers and producers need to be incentivised not just penalised. There needs to be more carrot as well as stick in this conversation and to be truly collaborative we need to get all parties round the table, including policymakers to cement agreements."*

The Irish Food Board, Bord Bia, recently brought together hundreds of sustainability professionals –including many of SAI Platform's members, to discuss ways to increase production and

consumption of food and drink, sustainably. The Global Sustainability Forum dealt with topics such as harmonizing metrics for measuring sustainability targets, responsible sourcing, ethical supply chains, food waste, sustainable intensification and consumption.

The group will soon start a stakeholder consultation on the new European Beef Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA). After about a year of development, the European Beef FSA module will be shared with invited expert stakeholders for consultation throughout early spring. The group has worked diligently to develop a FSA module tailored to the European beef sector's needs. The European Beef FSA will be delivered through a joint approach with existing beef assurance schemes and will be used to benchmark against existing schemes to provide the desired alignment on sustainable beef production.

Contrary to other (crop) FSA modules, the European Beef FSA has initially been designed for use in Europe. A global module may be developed in the future although this will depend on demand. The SAI Beef Working Group is a member of the Global Round Table for Sustainable Beef (GRSB), which encourages regional approaches and some are already running. SAI Platform's European Beef FSA will be shared with the GRSB as a possible resource for other beef producing regions to contemplate, if they currently do not have any sustainability referencing materials already in place.

Source: SAI platform



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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