



Teagasc LIFE BEEF CARBON Newsletter 3

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EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL GRASSLANDS

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European Grassland Federation - 2018

The European Grassland Federation (EGF) conference is taking place in Cork in June with over 450 delegates from 31 countries expected to attend. This is the 27th meeting, and the first time the EGF conference returns to Ireland since 1988. The week-long international event will be officially opened by Professor Gerry Boyle, Teagasc Director, when he will speak about the theme of this year's event - 'Sustainable Meat and Milk Production from Grasslands'.

Teagasc are the main organisers of EGF2018 which is taking place in the Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork. This is one of the biggest EGF conferences in recent years and has a range of sponsors and supporters notably, SFI, FBD, Yara, Lely, True North technologies, Teagasc, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, DairyMaster, Goldcrop, Dairygold, Failte Ireland, Nutribio, AFBI, Germinal, DLF Seeds, Grasstec and Irish

Grassland Association, Cork Convention Bureau and the Stapledon Memorial Trust. This year's conference will introduce new grassland research areas. The Grazing Working Group will organize a Masterclass. This will be held in Teagasc and allow delegates to experience at first hand the grazing management tools, technologies and measurements deployed by researchers and on farms. Delegates will visit Teagasc Moorepark for a mini open day in the morning and have the choice of 5 farm and industry tours in the afternoon.



European Grassland Conference

The 27th EGF conference moves back to Ireland after a 30 year break.

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Italian EU network

Researchers present LIFE BEEF CARBON in Verona to Europe's environmental experts and industry representatives.

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Dr Michael O'Donovan, Teagasc and chairman of the EGF organising committee, remarked; "the farm tours will allow the conference delegates to experience top class grassland farms, grass and clover evaluation, and smart technologies on farms. It is great that some of the winners from the Grassland Farmer of the Year competition in 2017 will host farm visits. The farms of both Eddie O'Donnell and Ger Dineen will be visited. The other farms on the tours are also well worth visiting; Sean Dennehy is an outstanding sheep farmer, and John MacNamara and Donal Sheehan are excellent dairy farmers." The content of the conference programme has changed, to a more modern, enterprising format with Big Data and Smart Technology as new sessions in the conference, as well as incorporating a workshop on Knowledge Transfer. Professor Frank O' Mara the current President of the EGF and Director of Research in Teagasc, has directed this change of focus. There are more than 70 scientific papers on these topics, indicating their growing importance in the international grassland research community. Teagasc have developed an offline App for Android devices for Pasturebase Ireland (Ireland's national grassland database).

This is crucial to ensure farmers can access Pasturebase easily. Many farmers don't have full internet coverage throughout their farms, so this is a really important step forward for increasing on-farm grassland measurement. We expect to have the App available for

and will finish with a visit to Hillsborough research facility in Northern Ireland.

Source: Teagasc



iphones in two weeks. At the moment there are about 1,300 farmers measuring grass cover weekly on their farms, and through technologies such as PastureBase Ireland we hope to significantly increase this number.



The conference runs from Sunday 17th June to Thursday 21st June. A post conference tour will visit the Teagasc Athenry Research Centre, the Newford suckler beef demonstration herd in Athenry, the Teagasc Grange Research Centre in County Meath,

European Italian Network



Mitigating the carbon footprint of beef at the farm level is possible thanks to work undertaken by LIFE BEEF CARBON. The researchers of this international project presented their latest work at a recent EU network in Verona, Italy to breeders, technicians, environmental scientists and industry experts.

Several testimonies were provided during the network by researchers and stakeholders regarding the climate and sustainability initiatives they are

developing with their beef suppliers. One beef supplier, **Fabio Colomberotto**, representative of **Colomberotto spa**, explained their "life clock" approach to sustainability and how they target improving all aspects of the food chain i.e. habitats, animal, laboratory right through to slaughter house. He said "positioning our modern farm nearby the slaughterhouse saves on energy costs and reduces carbon emissions. We have invested in solar panel technologies to further reduce emissions and cut our fossil fuel requirements". They are collaborating with University of Padova and University of Ferrara to further improve the sustainability of their business



Enhancing soil health and carbon storage were also presented by stakeholders and researchers as a key mechanism for reducing climate altering

gases. **Maria Pacchioli**, a scientist for **CRPA**, presented their soil carbon findings for the LIFE Forage4Climate project and said "the adoption of good farming practices in terms of soil fertility has substantial potential to build carbon and cut emissions". The early work of LIFE BEEF CARBON suggests carbon storage or sequestration could reduce the total emissions from a beef farm by 50%. **Josselin Andurand**, coordinator of LIFE BEEF CARBON said "further reductions in the beef footprint are possible by increasing yields and improving animal health".

The message from Interbev, a market oriented company, was that carbon and sustainability were becoming more important feature of consumers buying decisions and that the industry should continue to strive to reduce their environmental impact. The meeting was concluded by **Jean Baptiste Dolle**, Head of Environment of French Research Livestock. He commended the progress the sector has made in improving its environmental performance, but highlighted that more needs to be done to meet future societal demands.



GRSB 2018 elections

The Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) announced Ms. Nicole Johnson-Hoffman, Chief Sustainability Officer and Senior Vice President for OSI Group, as President of the GRSB for 2018. Dr. Leon Mol, Director of Product Safety & Social Compliance for Ahold Delhaize has been elected Vice President, and Cameron Bruett, Head of Corporate Affairs for JBS, has been re-elected Executive Committee Member At-Large. Ms. Johnson-Hoffman, formerly GRSB Vice President, takes over from Mr. Dennis Laycraft of Canadian Cattlemen's Association, who exits after serving a full, 2-year term, and who will now formally serve as Past President. Dr. Leon Mol is new to the GRSB Executive Committee after serving on the Board of Directors, and Mr. Cameron Bruett is also a previous President of GRSB. These three new GRSB executives join Mr. Carlos Saviani of World Wildlife Fund, who is the Secretary – Treasurer, and Executive Committee Member At-Large, Dr. Ignacio Blanco-Traba of McDonald's Global, to make up the 2018 GRSB Executive Committee. Ms. Johnson-Hoffman says "The GRSB focuses on continuous improvement, regardless of region, production system, scope of operation, or past performance. I'm pleased to be leading a growing membership-based organization that believes there are many paths to sustainability. GRSB brings together people from across the world, who represent all segments of the beef value chain, including individual producers, who ultimately agree there's massive value in sharing knowledge, and who want to partner to drive exciting new levels of performance in areas impacting GRSB's Principles and Criteria of Sustainable Beef".



"Continuous improvement in beef sustainability takes different forms and GRSB celebrates all the proactive work that's being done across the globe. In some parts of the world sustainability is being driven by innovative producer education programs focused on soil management and quality cattle care. In other places, people are creating production system efficiencies that enable a reduction in the amount of water used in beef processing plants by tons each day. And in other locations, passionate people are coming together to form new regional

roundtables focused on beef sustainability to aggressively address region-specific challenges." Johnson Hoffman adds. "Sustainability doesn't come from focusing on just one thing. Sustainability is not a buzzword. It's not an initiative. It's not a program. Sustainability is holistic. Sustainability is progressive. And the need for our work in sustainable beef only grows. GRSB is working to connect dots and drive best-in-class learning and thinking that prioritizes our planet, people and animals and we expect to see further growth in our organization in the coming months. We welcome those who are committed to sustainable beef to join us in this important work." encourages the new GRSB President. Dr. Leon Mol brings a global retailer point of view to the GRSB executive team and agrees the momentum that's been built within GRSB since 2010 is exciting and the collaborative approach that's been taken is powerful. "Sustainability is about continuous improvement, not perfection. The pre-competitive environment GRSB fosters and the way in which we're collaborating with regional roundtables and other key stakeholders is opening up new channels of transparency and monitoring progress. Consumers are asking for it and GRSB can act as a bridge and work to deliver what the market is waiting for." Dr. Mol adds, "GRSB is collaborating in South America, Europe, Brazil, China, U.S., Canada, and more. Our work starts with a platform where knowledge is aggregated and shared and can move into joint initiatives for research projects and studies, which would not happen in a fragmented setting. Ahold Delhaize takes responsibility for sustainability and I'm excited to work in this new leadership capacity with GRSB." Mr. Bruett, who was an integral voice in the early formation of GRSB says he's witnessed tremendous progress in global beef sustainability efforts and asserts that "Where we have weaknesses or opportunities for improvement, we should acknowledge them and focus on improving and documenting progress. GRSB recognizes there are many different approaches to sustainability and will continue to avoid prescriptive ways of doing business, and that is critical to our success." The new GRSB Executive Committee shares optimism and excitement about the future impacts GRSB will make and encourages you to visit grsbeef.org for more information. The Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) is a global, multi-stakeholder initiative developed to advance continuous improvement in sustainability of the global beef value chain through leadership, science and multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration. The GRSB envisions a world in which all aspects of the beef value chain are environmentally sound, socially responsible and economically viable. Source: GRSB

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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