



# Most Profitable Beef Suckling Systems

Teagasc/Irish Farmers Journal *BETTER Farm  
Programme Case Studies*

Adam Woods, Teagasc, Grange

Profitable Suckling Event

Cillin Hill 13<sup>th</sup> February 2012

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# Outline of Presentation



- Profitability- the benchmarks
- Profitable Suckling Systems
  - The 5 key Ingredients
- Profiles of Suckling Systems
  - Teagasc/Irish Farmers Journal BETTER Farm Case Studies
  - Advantages and Disadvantages to each

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# Profit Levels 2010

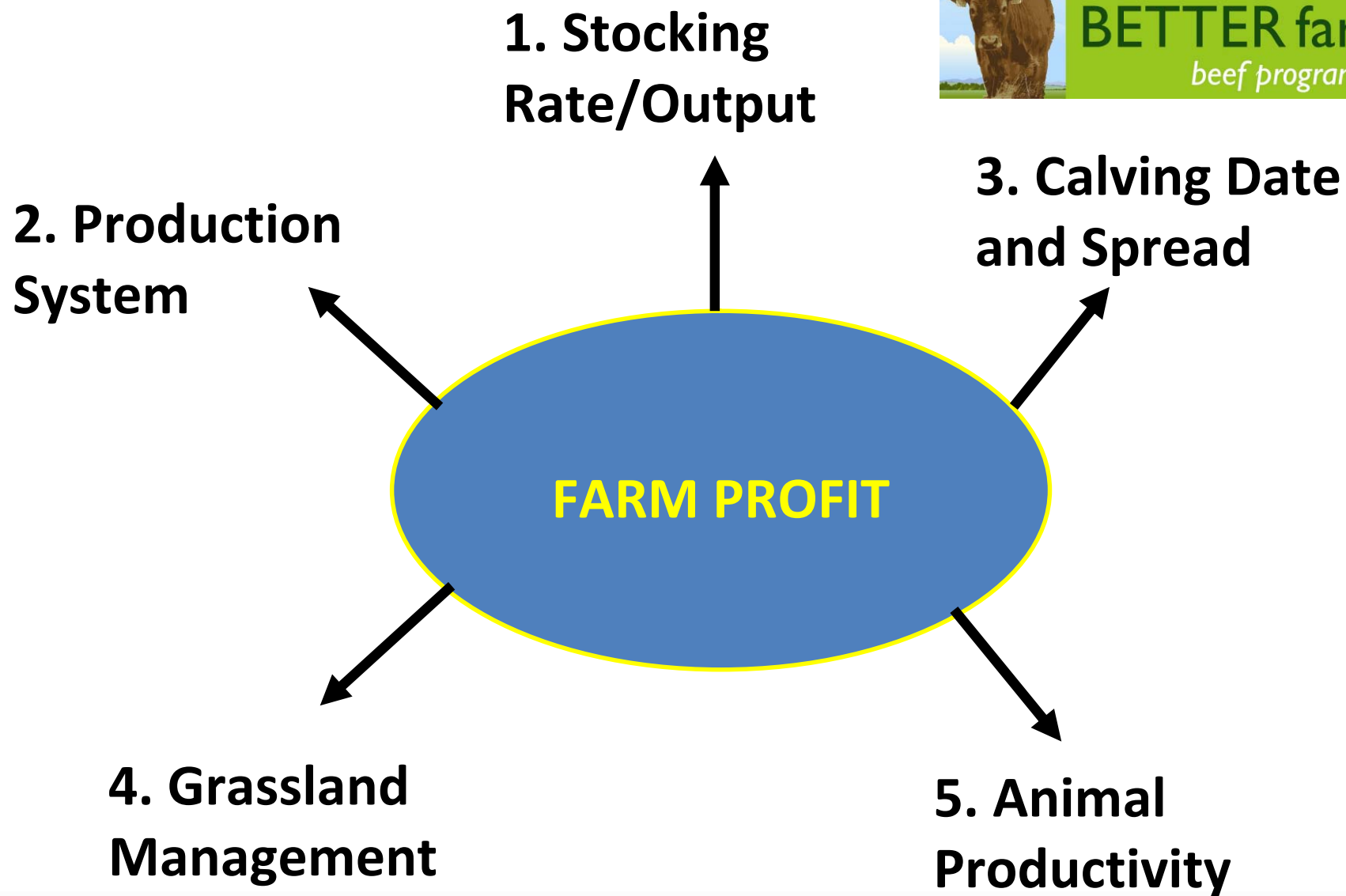


NFS*	Average ePM	Top 33%	Top 10%	BETTER Farms
€186	€344	596	€758	€850* (2011)

- Choose the category you are in
- Choose the category where you want to go to
- Choose how you are going to get there

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# Choosing the system



- Land Type
- Farm Infrastructure
- Housing
- Labour
- Finance
- Need to be focused and driven
- Do the basics



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# Production Systems



- Suckling to weanling
- Suckling to store bull/heifer
- Suckling to store steer/heifer
- Suckling to beef steer/heifer
- Suckling to beef bull/heifer
- Many different systems
- Some systems intertwine



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**Stocking Rate**

**X**



**Output per L.U.**

**X**



**Price (€ / Kg)**



**= Output Value per Ha.**

# Achieving High Output



Based on GM per ha.	Top 10%	Bottom 10%	Difference
Stocking Rate LU/ha	2.17	1.53	+0.64
Kg / LU	381	224	+157
Kg / ha	827	342	+485
Output Value (€)	1446	540	+906

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# Each 0.1 increase

# in LU/Ha,

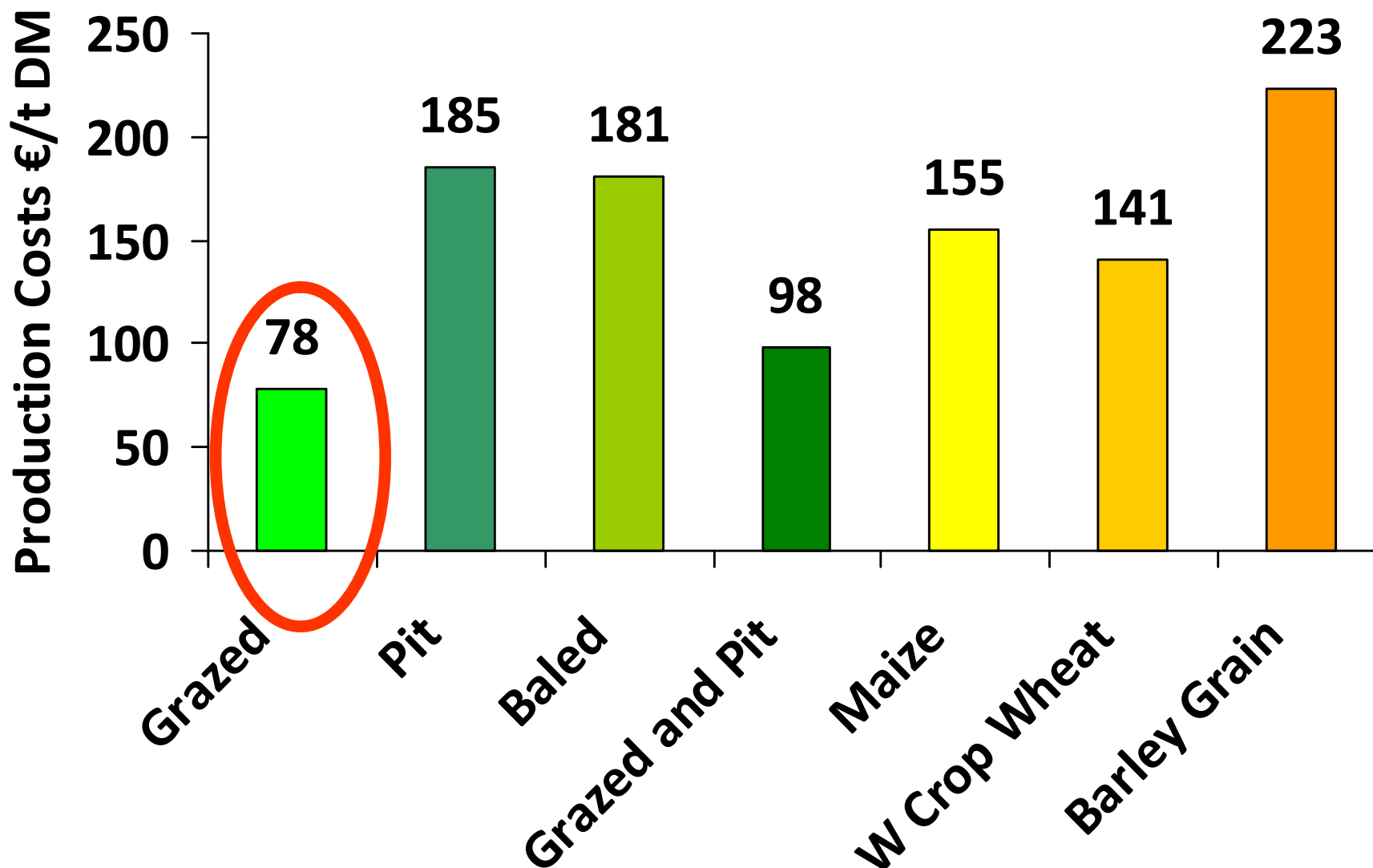
# increases

# margins by

# €30/Ha



# Grass-Our Cheapest Feed



# Potential of Grassland



- Farms walked weekly
- Close up in rotation in autumn
- Early Turnout of priority stock
- Maximise grazing season
- Identifying poor performing paddocks
- Targeted reseeding
- Additional paddocks
- Fertiliser Plans
- Efficient use of slurry



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# Getting Grass Right



**Regular Budgeting Essential**



**Appropriate Fertiliser Application**

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# Production per cow



- Cow fertility
- Bull fertility
- Calving Pattern
- Replacement Costs
- Mortality
- Animal Performance



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# Breeding



	National Av.	Top 15%
Calving Interval (days)	406	366
Calves / cow / year 50 cow herd	0.78 39 calves	0.96 48 calves
Females not calved in 12 month period	14.2%	0%

**8 extra weanlings sold / 50 cows @ €700 each = €5,600 higher output.**

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# Teagasc/Irish Farmers Journal BETTER Farm Programme Case Studies



- Cathal Crean
  - Intensive Bull System
- Paul Farrell
  - Steer/Heifer off grass



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# Demo Farm, Wexford

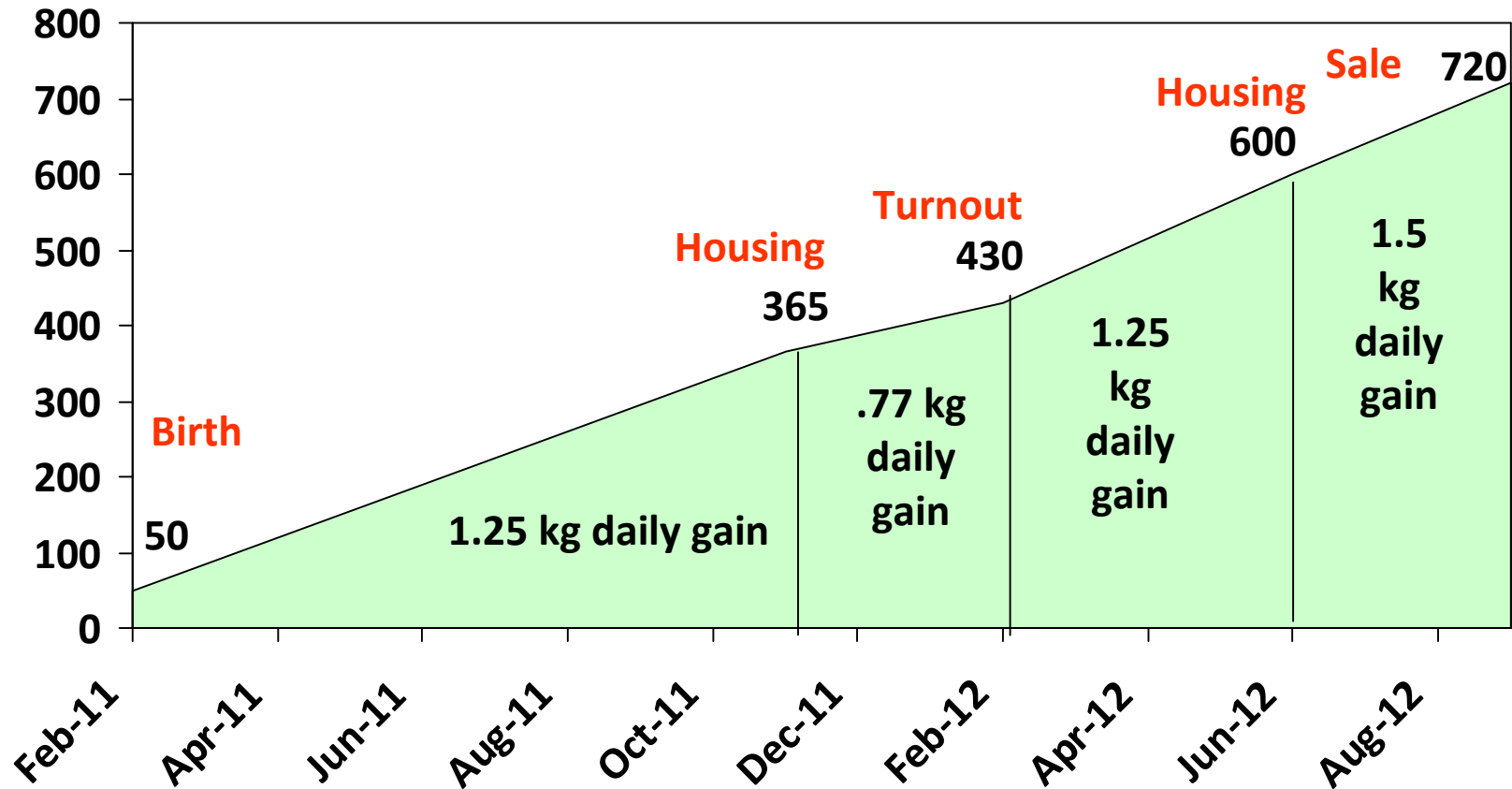


- 77 Ha
- 100 cow herd
- Spring Calving-all stock finished
- System
  - Limousin X cow and Terminal Sire Charolais
  - Replacements bred on farm
  - Finishing bulls indoors and heifers off grass





# Bull Performance



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# Analysis



- Advantages
- Highest output System
- Maximises gains from grass
- Maximises genetic potential of stock
- Options for sale
- Closed system
- Disadvantages
- Incurring cost of expensive finishing phase
- Bulls specialised job
- Cashflow
- Price speculation

# Demo Farm, Kilkenny



- 83 Ha
- Grass based system
- Traditional Breed Influence
- Low Labour
- Lower Carcass weights
- Lower Costs
- Bonus Payments



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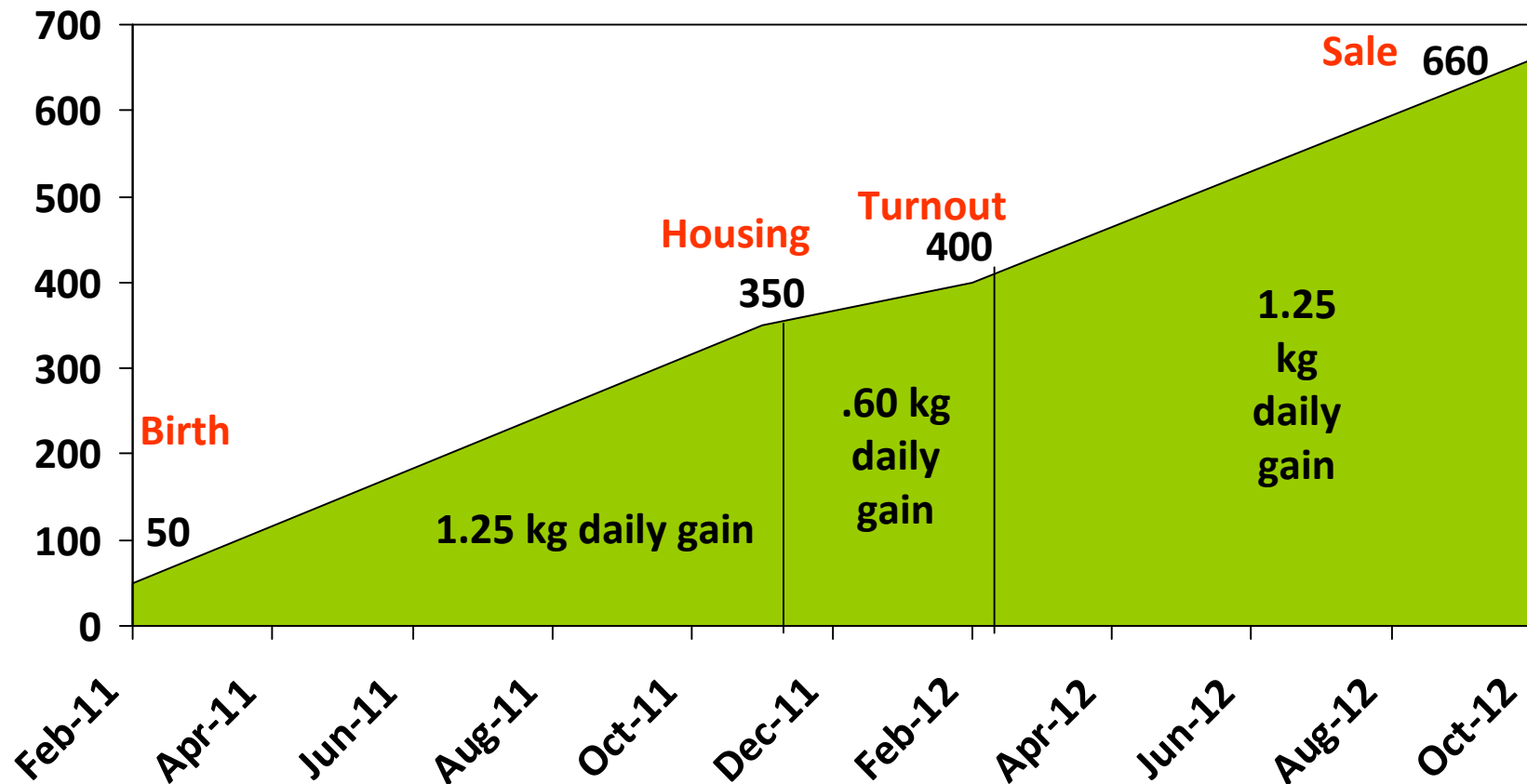


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# Steer Performance



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# Analysis



- Advantages
  - Low labour system
  - Lower cost system
  - Simple System
  - Bonus Payment
  - Capitalises on Grass
- Disadvantages
  - Tied into finishing
  - Weanling/store market not as lucrative
  - Lower Carcass weights
  - Time of finish

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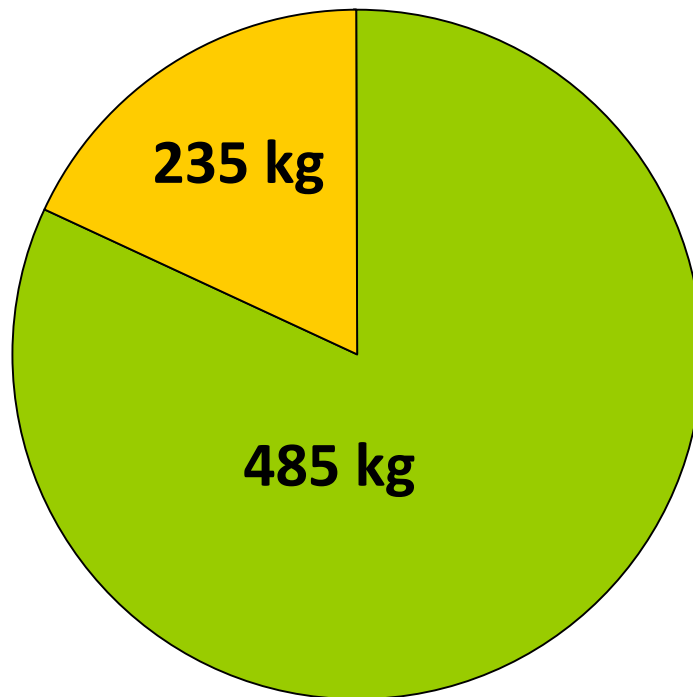


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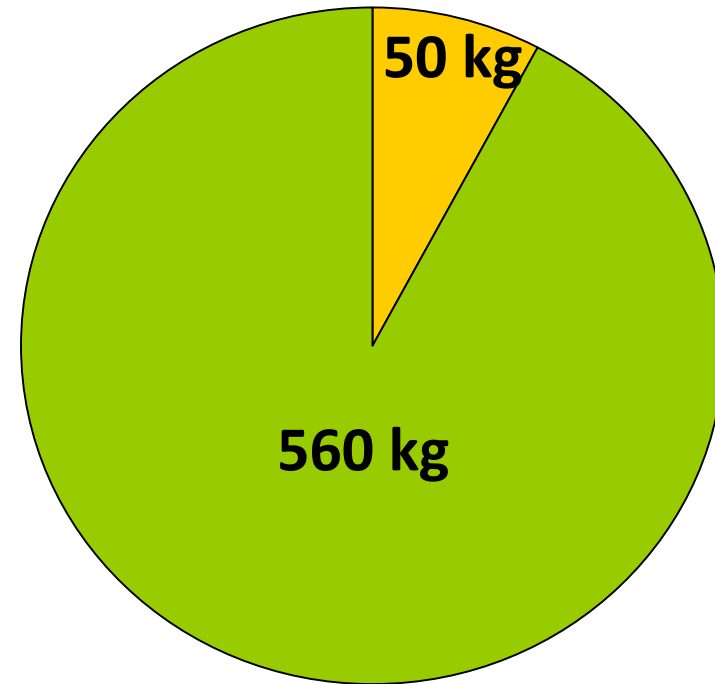
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# Lifetime Gain at Grass



**Bull Beef**



**Steer Beef**

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# Concentrate Input



	<b>Bull System</b>	<b>Steer System</b>
<b>Birth-Weaning</b>	84kg	63kg
<b>Weaning-Turnout</b>	200kg	150kg
<b>At Grass</b>	45kg	170kg
<b>Ad-Lib indoors</b>	1100kg	
<b>Total</b>	1429kg	383kg

# 2011 Data



	Wexford Farm	Kilkenny Farm
S. Rate LU/ha	2.12	1.83
Kg/Lw/ha	689	664
Kg/L.U.	325	362
Gross Output	1522	1351
V. Costs €/ha	495	419
Gross Margin €/ha	1027	932
Vet/ha	84	57

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# Summary



- Most systems can leave profitable margin if fundamentals are correct
- Bull beef systems achieve highest output
  - However also high cost system
  - Performance must be good at all stages
- Grass based steer system looks promising and shows good potential for future



**Producing in spec cattle to  
market requirements**