

Dairy Farmers Forum 2015: Developing successful careers in dairying: people & skills

Animal & Grassland Research and Innovation Centre

Teagasc Moorepark'15 Open Day

Wednesday 1st July, 2015

Time: 2pm

Venue: Open Day Forum Marquee



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in dairying: people & skills**

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(located "E" on the map)**

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Farmers Forum 2015

‘Developing successful careers in dairying: people & skills’

Speakers:

Padraig Keane, Co. Offaly
Giaran Fogarty, Co. Waterford
Andrew Cronin, Co. Cork
Esther Walsh, Co. Waterford
Jim O’Leary, Co. Tipperary
Sean O’Donnell, Co. Mayo
Tory and David Baker, Co. Offaly

Chairman:

Kevin Twomey, Co. Cork



AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Padraig Keane

Ballywilliam, Kilcormac, Birr, Co. Offaly



Education/training

2013: Level 6, FETAC/QQI certified FRS Best Practice in Milking Course.

2012: AgITO National Certificate in On-Farm Milk Quality (*New Zealand*).

2008-2012: Level 8 Honours Degree in Animal and Crop Production, UCD.

Dairying experience

- Three months placement with Kevin Heavin (110 cows, Co. Offaly)
- Eight months with John Hoebergen (550 cows, Matamata, New Zealand)
- One year with Jim & Grainne O'Dwyer (250 cows, Co. Laois)

Discussion group

Member of West Offaly & Shared Vision Discussion groups.

Farming history

Developed a passion for dairy farming while completing professional work experience from UCD on dairy farms in Ireland and New Zealand.

In 2013, together with my parents, I successfully applied for 200,000 litres of milk quota through the New Entrant Scheme and converted the family farm from beef to dairy in 2013. Currently in second season of milk production.

Brief description of current farming operations

- Currently milking 67 Holstein-Friesian dairy cows.
- Stocking Rate: Total farm 2.25 LU/ha / Milking platform 2.9 LU/ha.
- Grass growth 2014: 12.3 t DM/ha.
- Milk solids production: 724 kg/ha.
- Supplements fed: 550 kg DM/cow.

Main skills/abilities required

Financial, grassland management, animal husbandry, time management, patience and people skills.

Advice to young people seeking a career in dairying

Undertake further education after secondary school. Make the most of this time, especially work placement. Seek out the best farmers. I would recommend travelling abroad to expose yourself to different people and farming practices.

Start on time, finish on time, make the most of your day.

Listen to constructive criticism and learn from positive people.

Farming mentors

John and Gertrude Keane (*Parents*); Páidi Kelly and James Murphy (*Friends*); Jim Moyles and John Roche (*Agricultural advisors*); West Offaly and Shared Vision (*Discussion Groups*); Kevin Heavin, John Hoebergen, Jim Dwyer (*Farmers*); Jack Kennedy (*Irish Farmers Journal*) and Pat O'Keeffe (*Glanbia*).

Five year farming goals

Maximise profitability from a one man unit with 100-120 dairy cows and be in a position to avail of future opportunities.

Interests outside of farming

Macra, hurling and running.

Ciaran Fogarty

Rathgormack, Co. Waterford



Education/training

2014: Level 7 Professional Diploma in Dairy Herd Management.

2013: Level 6 Advance Certificate in Dairy Management.

2012: Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture.

2008 - 2009: Level 6 Professional Cookery.

Dairying experience

- Three months placement with Michael O’Gorman (150 cows, Co. Waterford)
- Six months with Jason Strawbridge (1,500 cows, Ashburton, New Zealand)
- One year with Shane Maxwell & Esther Walsh (800 cows, Co. Waterford)
- One year with Adrian and Pierce Casey (200 cows, Co. Waterford)

Discussion group

Member of Professional Diploma in Dairy Farm Management Discussion group.

Farming history

No home farm but developed a love of dairy farming working on uncle's farm during school holidays.

In 2013, successfully applied to Kildalton Agricultural College.

Brief description of current farming operations

- Currently milking 200 Holstein-Friesian Jersey crossbred dairy cows on the farm of Adrian and Pierce Casey, Kilmacthomas, Co. Waterford.
- Stocking Rate: Total farm 2.18 LU/ha / Milking platform 2.6 LU/ha.
- Grass growth 2014: 11 t DM/ha.
- Milk solids production: 964 kg/ha.
- Supplements fed: 600 kg DM/cow.

Main skills/abilities required

Grassland management, good stockmanship, ability to work with a team.

Advice to young people seeking a career in dairying

Go out and gain as much experience as you can on well-run dairy farms to learn new things so you can have a whole new skill set if you are to take over your home farm to better it as a business.

Farming mentors

Jason Strawbridge farm owner and manager of 1,500 cows in New Zealand. He taught me a lot that I still hold with me to this day.

Five year farming goals

To gain further experience in dairy farming and become a share farmer owning my own stock.

Interests outside of farming

GAA, mainly football.

Andrew Cronin

Crookstown, Co. Cork



Education/training

Level 6 Higher Certificate in Agriculture at Cork Institute of Technology/
Clonakilty Agricultural College.

Dairying experience

- Three years in share farming with Pat and Mary Smyth (400 cows, Co. Cork)
- One year on farm of Kevin Twomey (300 cows, Co. Cork)
- One year as Farm manager at Ballydague Farm (200 cows, Co. Cork)
- Four months on Greenfield Dairy Farm (300 cows, Co. Kilkenny)
- From a Dairy Farm (80 cows, Co. Cork)

Discussion group

Member of Greenshoots, Shared Vision and Crookstown Discussion groups.

Farming history

Grew up on a dairy farm at home and decided that I wanted a career in dairying in my early 20's.

Joined CIT in conjunction with Clonakilty Agricultural College and completed two years of the Higher Certificate in Agriculture. As part of my placement, I worked on the Greenfield farm in Kilkenny.

Worked on the Farm of Kevin and Margaret Twomey at Renny, Ballyhooley for 12 months and for a further 12 months as farm manager at Ballydague Farm.

Brief description of current farming operations

- Currently sharefarming 400 Holstein-Friesian Jersey crossbred spring calving dairy cows in a low cost grass-based system with Pat and Mary Smyth.
- Stocking Rate: Total farm 2.5 LU/ha.
- Grass growth 2014: 11.5 t DM/ha.
- Milk solids production: 750 kg/ha.
- Supplements fed: 300 kg DM/cow.

Main skills/abilities required

People management, grass stock management, financial management.

Advice to young people seeking a career in dairying

Get into the best dairy course available to you. Build your CV by getting experience working with some of the most successful farmers in the country. Keep your ear to the ground for the right opportunity (*there will be many*) and be prepared to leave your comfort zone to take the exciting plunge into business ownership.

Farming mentors

My parents, business partners, Kevin Twomey, Discussion groups.

Five year farming goals

To stock the dairy farm at 2.5 cows/ha and maximise production efficiency and profitability and further develop working relationships with business partners and staff.

Interests outside of farming

Hurling.

Esther Walsh

Moorehill Farms Lismore, Co. Waterford



Education/training

Level 7 Certificate in Farm Business Management.

Level 6 Diploma in Dairying at Clonakilty Agricultural College.

Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture at Kildalton Agricultural College.

Dairying experience

- Six months on farm of Jerome Desmond (70 cows, Co. Cork)
- Six months on farm of Tim Leader (100 cows, Co. Cork)
- One year FAB placement on farm of Anthony O 'Driscoll (110 cows, Co. Cork)
- One year working with Bob and Karen Fisken (700 cows, Rotarua, New Zealand)
- One year working with Trevor and Harriett Hamilton (1,200 cows, Dunsandel, New Zealand)
- 10 years managing Moorehill farms (800 cows, Co. Waterford)

Discussion group

Member of Shared Vision Discussion group

Farming history

Grew up on a suckler farm and developed a love of farming and the outdoors working with my father and relief milking with neighbours.

Joined Moorehill Farms as farm manager in 2006. Currently responsible for the management of two 400-cow dairy operations, young stock rearing and six full-time staff.

Brief description of current farming operations

- Currently managing 800 predominantly Holstein-Friesian Jersey crossbred dairy cows on the farm of Shane Maxwell, Lismore, Co. Waterford.
- Stocking Rate: Total farm 2.7 LU/ha.
- Grass growth 2014: 13 t DM/ha.
- Milk solids production: 1,100 kg/ha.
- Supplements fed: 500 kg DM/cow.

Main skills/abilities required

Grassland management and utilisation, breeding and fertility management. Youngstock management, people management and financial management.

Advice to young people seeking a career in dairying

Get yourself farm management qualifications. Don't return to the home farm too quickly but go and work on other farms for a few years. Seek the advice and experience of the farmers you work with.

Never proclaim to know everything, always be willing to learn.

Working and travelling away from home broadens the mind and is an experience in itself.

Set yourself some goals and review them regularly.

Have a plan and know where you want to go.

Farming mentors

Dairy farming friends, previous and current employers and positive people.

Five year farming goals

To become a business partner in a large scale dairy operation.

Interests outside of farming

Travel and sporting events

Jim O'Leary

Garryduff, Ardfinnan, Co. Tipperary



Education/training

1975: Completed the Farm Apprentice Board (FAB) Farm Management Course through Mountbellew Agricultural College.

1971: Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture - Mountbellew Agricultural College.

Dairying experience

- Successful dairy farmer with 35 years of experience
- Worked on many farms as part of FAB training
- Monthly discussion group meetings with annual learning trips e.g. Wales, Northern Ireland

Discussion group

Member of Galtee Discussion group.

Farming history

Set up Farm in 1977 from a green field site: Spring milk, compact calving to grass, low cost base.

Significant financial commitments during 1980's due to development work undertaken prior to quota introduction.

Participated in various Moorepark trials and is a host farm mentor for Agricultural college students.

Brief description of current farming operations

- Currently milking 60 Holstein-Friesian dairy cows
- Stocking Rate: Total farm 2.4 LU/ha
- Grass growth 2014: 12.5 t DM/ha
- Milk solids production: 1,200 kg/ha
- Supplements fed: 650 kg DM/cow

Main skills/abilities required

Skilled at grassland management and stockmanship

Advice to young people seeking a career in dairying

Complete all relevant education, gain experience working with positive farmers in Ireland and overseas.

Farming mentors

The farmers and their wives who encouraged me in the Farm Apprenticeship Scheme during the 1970's, Kevin and the lads in the Discussion Group, thanks to all of them.

Five year farming goals

To maintain a profitable efficient simple dairy farm system and to continue to enjoy farming

Interests outside of farming

Sport, schools and local community

Sean O'Donnell

Behy beg, Ballina, Co. Mayo



Education/training

Macra Young Farmer of the Year 2014.

Nuffield Farming Scholarship 2013.

Numerous Teagasc courses.

Level 8 Degree in Business Studies (GMIT).

Level 5 Green Cert in Mountbellew.

Dairying experience

- Took over the home farm in 2008 (40 cows, Co. Mayo)
- Studied farm fragmentation in Canada, UK, Holland and New Zealand as part of the Nuffield Farming Scholarship 2013

Discussion group

Member of West Awake Discussion group.

Farming history

Grew up on our home dairy farm and took over in 2008 when my father entered the early retirement scheme. Started with 40 Holstein-Friesian cows on 32 ha.

Brief description of current farming operations

- Currently milking 110 predominantly Holstein-Friesian Jersey crossbred dairy cows on 60 ha.
- Stocking Rate: Milking platform 3.1 LU/ha.
- Grass growth 2014: 13.7 t DM/ha.
- Milk solids production: 1,270 kg/ha.
- Supplements fed: 550 kg DM/cow.

Main skills/abilities required

Highly motivated, hard work, and good organisation.

Advice to young people seeking a career in dairying

Focus on becoming “Brilliant at the Basics” – Utilising lots of grass through compactly calved cows, turning it into lots of high value milk solids at low cost.

Farming mentors

Teagasc advisors, fellow farmers, West Awake Discussion group.

Five year farming goals

To maximise the profitability of the home farm and position myself to take advantage of future opportunities elsewhere.

Interests outside of farming

GAA, Coaching u-6 and u-8 football teams. Swimming.

Tory and David Baker

Killeen, Birr, Co. Offaly



Education/training

David completed the Level 5 in Gurteen Agriculture.

Tory is a qualified Maths, P.E. and German teacher with a Level 8 degree from UL.

Undertaken various courses in farm entrepreneurship and leadership, change management and accounting in recent years.

Dairying experience

- Successful dairy farmer with 30 years of experience
- Worked for 14 months on various New Zealand Dairy farms
- Discussion group meetings and farming trips overseas

Discussion group

Member of Blackwater and Bottom line Discussion groups

Farming history

1985 - 1990, David and Tory milked 80 cows on a leased farm in Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary.

1990 - 1996, they milked 170 cows on a leased farm in Newmarket, Co. Cork.

1996 - present, they lease 550 acres in Birr and milk 450 cows and rear followers. 11 years left of a thirty year lease.

Brief description of current farming operations

- Currently milking 450 predominantly New Zealand Friesian Jersey crossbred dairy cows.
- Stocking Rate: Milking platform 2.6 LU/ha.
- Grass growth 2014: 12.3 t DM/ha.
- Milk solids production: 1,033 kg/ha.
- Supplements fed: 527 kg DM/cow.

Main skills/abilities required

Staff and financial management, building relationships with land owners.

Advice to young people seeking a career in dairying

Set goals, find a successful mentor, be willing to work hard to achieve goals. Protect family time.

Farming mentors

Mike Murphy, Matt Ryan, Paddy O'Keeffe , New Zealand farmers.

Five year farming goals

To make the farm system robust enough to allow us to travel and gain further experience.

Interests outside of farming

Rugby, cycling, golf, all sports and travelling.

Notes

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