

DAWN DIRECT



Christmas Message

WHILST 2024 has been full of challenges such as the weather, environment and trade disruption due to an atypical BSE case, we have also seen an increase on the price levels paid for cattle and sheep. Whilst output prices have improved in 2024, we still need to face into key areas in 2025 such as working together to improve water quality and supporting the work being done to reduce methane emissions. Water quality initiatives being supported by Dawn Meats and Teagasc such as the EIP program will see further focus in 2025. The Genotyping program introduced this year by ICBF has been a great success and the work being done to improve the CBV whilst reducing key areas around the age of slaughter has been valuable.

We will continue to develop premium markets for Irish high-quality grass-fed lamb and beef. We do this in the political environment of new governments in Ireland, across Europe, the US and now indeed where the new EU commission are trying to force through the Mercosur deal. We hope that like-minded agricultural countries such as Poland, France and Italy work with Ireland to oppose this deal so as not to undermine the high-quality products that we sell. We fully support the Farm Organisations and the new Irish Government in opposing this trade deal.

On behalf of everyone at Dawn Meats, thank you for your valued business throughout the year. Wishing you and your families a Healthy & Happy Christmas.

Thank you

Niall Browne | Chief Executive



SETU wins 9th Great Agri-Food Debate

SETU WERE announced as the winners of the 9th Annual Great Agri-Food debate, organised by Dawn Meats and co-sponsored by McDonald's.

The team from SETU (South East Technological University) secured the win by defeating Antrim-based CAFRE (College of Agriculture Food & Rural Enterprise) in what the judges described as a tightly contested Grand Final.

SETU were declared the winners having successfully opposed the motion that: *"People believe social media influencers more than scientific fact about red meat consumption."*

The team from SETU included Ellen Feery, Brittany Davis, Edward Hatton, Alisha Flynn, Saoirse Cassidy and Ellen Doherty, the team captain.

The semi-finals and the Grand Final of this year's competition were held in-person on Thursday 28th November, on the winner's home turf at the SETU Arena in Waterford.

Emma Forbes of CAFRE won the Best Speaker award in the Grand Final. Her fellow team members were team captain Victoria Morrison, Anna Jackson, Molly Cunningham, Caitriona O'Kane and Louise Weir.

The Great Agri-Food Debate provides an opportunity for agriculture students from colleges and universities in Ireland and the UK to compete by debating topical issues relevant to the agri-food sector.

The Grand Final was judged by Niall Browne, Chief Executive of Dawn Meats, John Byrne, Franchisee at McDonald's, and John Murray, Director of Meat, Food and Beverages at Bord Bia. Jack Kennedy, Editor of the Irish Farmers Journal, moderated the Grand Final.

Commenting after the debate, Niall Browne, Chief Executive of Dawn Meats said: *"It is fantastic to hear lively discussions at this year's Great Agri-Food Debate final and encouraging to know the future of the industry is secure with this cohort of students. Each year, we aim to address key topics in our industry, and it is a pleasure to listen to students voice their arguments and showcase their deep understanding of complex issues. I'd like to congratulate this year's winning team, SETU. Many thanks to all involved, including the participants, judges and moderators, for making this event such a success."*



The recordings of this year's debates are available on the Dawn Meats YouTube channel



Demonstration Farm Update



THE LAST of the cows were housed at the end of October, benefiting from favourable weather conditions that allowed them to remain outdoors over a month longer than usual for Roscommon. Although the cows could have stayed out on grass even longer, the farm opted to reserve the additional grass for younger stock.

In mid-November, all cows were weighed and body condition scored:

- » The average weight at housing was 641 Kg, with an average body condition score (BCS) of 2.97.
- » Following scoring, cows were grouped and penned based on their condition and their time calving.

- » Despite the challenges of the year, no cows were found to be underweight or in need of extra meal feeding compared to previous years.
- » The first calvers are in good condition, with an average body condition score (BCS) of 2.7 and an average weight of 553 Kg.

A notable observation:

- » While the Newford cows struggled to maintain body weight during the early year of 2024, they successfully regained the lost weight during the excellent Autumn, aided by a surplus of grass. At weaning, the Newford cows were approximately 60 Kg below their target weight but are now back on track.

- » Body condition scoring at this time of year has consistently proven to be a critical aspect of farm management over the past five years. It supports easier calving and contributes to strong breeding performance.
- » Since early December, all cows have been receiving 100g of pre-calving minerals daily, added to their silage each morning.
- » To ensure optimal health, all cows have had their tails and backs clipped, and by mid-December, they will be treated for liver fluke and lice.

A DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF THE HERD'S WEIGHT AND BODY CONDITION AT HOUSING IS PROVIDED BELOW:

CALVERS – 11TH NOVEMBER 2024											
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
	Kg	Kg	Kg	Kg	Kg	Kg	Kg	Kg	Kg	Kg	Kg
Average Kg	553	611	634	●	677	691	700	694	725	●	624
Body Score	2.7	3.0	3.1	●	3.0	3.2	3.0	2.7	3.0	●	2.7

Replacement Heifers

- » The replacement heifers were housed on December 5th.
- » Their target weight is 340 Kgs for breeding at the end of April 2025.
- » On the 26th November they weighted at grass 242 Kg and they are on target to meet their April breeding target.
- » They are receiving 2 Kg of a high ration, 16 % protein coarse ration.

Housing of Weanlings

MALE



Sire	LM 4330	Nox De Lorgelot
Born	22nd February 2024	19th February 2024
Birth Weight	44 Kg	48 Kg
Weight	409 Kg on 26th Nov 2024	354 Kg on 26th Nov 2024
ADG from birth	1.22 Kg	1.02 Kg

- » The Newford male weanlings were housed on the 26th of November at 336 Kg.
- » ADG from birth 0.97 Kg/ day and achieved an ADG from weaning to housing 0.60 Kg/ day (74 days).
- » Receiving 2 Kg of conc per day @ 16% protein ration and good quality 72 + DMD silage.

FEMALE



Lapon	CH 8262	CH 8262
3rd March 2024	26th February 2024	17th February 2024
44 Kg	40 Kg	54 Kg
319 Kg on 6th Nov 2024	336 Kg on 6th Nov 2024	370 Kg on 6th Nov 2024
1.11 Kg	1.17 Kg	1.20 Kg

- » The 40 weanlings heifers were still at grass and were weighted on the 6th of November and the average weight was 316 Kg.
- » Newford Farm is aiming to finish all of these heifers at 19 months of age.
- » The plan is to leave them out at grass (weather permitting) until mid-December and return them back to grass at the end of January 2025 (weather permitting).
- » At the moment they are receiving 2 Kg of a 16% coarse ration at grass.

Student Open Days

Newford & Tipperary Demonstration Farms

IN NOVEMBER we were delighted to host two Student Open Days at the Newford Suckler Calf-to-Beef Demonstration Farm and the Tipperary Dairy Calf-to-Beef Demonstration Farm, welcoming a combined total of over 420 students from across Ireland.

NEWFORD

At Newford more than 170 students engaged in discussions covering:
Farm Overview and Objectives | Breeding Performance | Grassland Management | Finishing Specifications and Performance | Water Quality | Marketing Meat Cuts.



TIPPERARY

The Tipperary Open Day saw over 250 students join us to explore the opportunities within the dairy calf-to-beef system.
Key topics included: Farm Overview and Objectives | Optimising Beef Finishing | Grassland Management.



Inspiring the Next Generation

The highlight of both events were the Live Forum Discussions. Here students gained valuable perspectives and insights, opportunities to connect with industry professionals, and a chance to explore the diverse career opportunities in agriculture.

Sheep Farming Survey



WITH THE growing trend of sheep farms being managed on a part-time basis, improving labour efficiency has become a vital aspect of future-proofing Ireland's sheep meat industry. Teagasc has recently launched a survey, and we strongly encourage our suppliers to participate. This study aims to identify the key labour challenges faced by sheep farmers and pinpoint opportunities for labour-saving improvements. Your input is invaluable.

To take part in the survey, simply scan the QR code.



ACTIVATE Launch

DAWN MEATS and McDonald's have launched a new incentivised sustainability programme. Since early 2024, 50 farmers have already participated and a further 150 have been recruited through our supplier network and are currently undergoing training with a view to be in operation from early 2025.

The ACTIVATE programme involves a total investment of €4.4 million over three years and will provide payments to participating farmers for successfully implementing agreed sustainability plans and reducing emissions.

The programme, which is the first of its kind in Ireland, has been created to accelerate the adoption of cost effective on-farm sustainability practices and will involve both online and practical training for farmers to support them in achieving their emissions reduction targets.

Progress will be assessed annually and ACTIVATE members will be compensated through a "sustainability dividend" for their engagement, active collaboration and successful delivery of target outcomes.

McDonald's, the leading global foodservice retailer, will co-sponsor the programme while the initiative will also be supported by Bord Bia, the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF) and Teagasc. ■

Procurement Contacts

Merry Christmas from the team

Anthony Dowd	Ballyhaunis (Beef)	087 2625090
Roger Ryan	Ballyhaunis (Lamb)	087 2534327
Paul Mullaney	Charleville	087 9614323
Daniel Bergin	Charleville	087 9178779
Conor Howley	Charleville	087 9113953
Micheál Murphy	Charleville	086 2456413
Bernard Cullen	Kildare (Beef)	087 2563070
John Kennedy	Kildare (Lamb)	087 2605386
Shane Hanlon	Kildare (Beef & Lamb)	087 7669814
Peter Quinn	Rathdowney	086 2611816
Eoin O' Sullivan	Rathdowney	087 1956004
Sean Behan	Grannagh	087 2561836
Kevin Cullinane	Grannagh	087 4192123
Walter Cleary	Grannagh	087 7382295
John Neville	Grannagh / Charleville	087 2232469
Niall Grufferty	Slane	086 8937517
Sarah Gogarty	Slane	086 0485145



Award Success

DAWN MEATS is proud to celebrate two recent accolades that highlight our commitment to sustainability and excellence in sustainable practices.

At the **World Steak Challenge**, we were honoured with the first-ever **ESG Award**, introduced in 2024 to recognise businesses making significant contributions to sustainable beef production. This prestigious global award underscores our dedication to reducing emissions, protecting biodiversity, and supporting sustainable farming practices through our Plan Four Zero, a science-based strategy driving our journey to Net Zero. Additionally, we earned multiple Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals for the exceptional quality of our beef steak products, further cementing our global reputation for excellence.

Closer to home, we were thrilled to receive the **Excellence in the Green Agenda Award** at the **Waterford Business Awards**, which recognises businesses making a positive impact on the local environment. This achievement celebrates over 20 years of sustainability commitments being central to our business plan and acknowledges the significant strides made by our entire workforce.

These awards are a testament to our unwavering commitment to building a more sustainable food system while maintaining world-class quality. Thank you to all who support our mission for a better, greener future. Learn more about our sustainability efforts at www.planfourzero.com.

In the Spotlight – Graduate Series



NAME:

Oisín Phelan

ROLE:

Commercial Planner

DEGREE:

Bachelor of Business (Honours)

UNIVERSITY:

Waterford Institute of Technology

SITE:

Grannagh

START DATE:

June 2022



Interested in a placement opportunity or our Graduate Programme? Apply Today: careers@dawnmeats.com

AFTER COMPLETING the Brighter Futures Graduate Programme at Dawn Meats, I have navigated a successful start to my career path in the red meat industry having taken advantage of the programme's structured support system and many development opportunities.

In my current role I oversee various European markets for our Grannagh site such as the Italian, Belgium and Luxembourg markets as well as UK and Irish Retail. Daily tasks include monitoring our production so I know how much product I will have available for various customers. This involves the preparation of specification sheets which are to be followed by the operatives in Production.

It can be a challenge as we are working with tight deadlines every week and it is a balance getting everything right – managing and meeting customer expectations based on production levels, ensuring the price is right for both us and the customer, and meeting the tight shipping deadlines. However, it is very rewarding. The most enjoyable part of my job is dealing with people from different

countries all over the world. I find it very enjoyable talking to people on a daily basis who come from many different cultures and backgrounds and forming strong working relationships.

The training and development you receive with Dawn Meats is excellent. I was very impressed with how the business immediately shows an interest in developing you for the future. Whether it is through additional courses or the on-the-job training, Dawn Meats give many opportunities for you to progress and pursue a career path within the company. Many employees within Dawn Meats have come through the graduate programme, from Directors to various department managers.

To be successful in a Commercial or Operations role with Dawn Meats you have to be proactive, have a strong work ethic and show initiative. The more you put into these roles, the more you will learn and develop your career. If you are a driven and well organised individual who wants to grow your career at a fast pace, Dawn Meats is an excellent place to do it. ■

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