

DAWN DIRECT



Christmas Message

AS WE APPROACH the end of 2025, it's a fitting time to look back on a year that has brought remarkable progress and achievement for Dawn Meats and our farmer suppliers. Thanks to excellent weather, beef production flourished and our latest Newford report overleaf, mirrors a period of strong performance and exceptional returns for producers. While we remain mindful of ongoing challenges such as Mercosur, our outlook for 2026 remains positive, with beef supply remaining tight and consumer demand expected to gently moderate as financial priorities shift.

This year also marks a significant chapter in our story, as Dawn Meats proudly becomes the first Irish meat processor to

invest in beef and lamb operations in New Zealand, sealing a transformative agreement at the close of 2025. This expansion not only signals growth for our group but also promises fresh opportunities for our farmer partners.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and congratulations to our dedicated suppliers and the entire Dawn Meats team for contributing to our recent victory at the World Steak Challenge, in producing the "World's Best Steak". Such recognition underscores the exceptional quality of Irish beef and the unwavering commitment of everyone involved.

On behalf of Dawn Meats, thank you for your loyalty and support throughout 2025. May you and your loved ones enjoy a joyful, restful, and safe Christmas season.

Thank you
Niall Browne | Chief Executive



World's Best Steak

WE ARE DELIGHTED to announce that Dawn Meats has been named producer of the "World's Best Steak" amongst a quartet of Dawn winning products at the World Steak Challenge this year.

While this award is a proud moment for everyone at Dawn Meats, we recognise that it is a shared success – made possible by Ireland's fertile land, temperate climate, and the dedication and expertise of our beef farmers.

For many years, we have promoted Irish beef internationally with our belief that "Great Grass Makes Great Beef." Today, this vision is recognised globally, with Irish grass-fed beef continuing to earn regular acclaim across Europe and around the world.

"Providing consistent quality meat products from sustainable sources to support rural communities, human health and nature's ecosystem", remains our company purpose, and we celebrate this great recognition for all the team at Dawn Meats and our farmer suppliers. ■

IT TAKES THE WORLD'S BEST CATTLE TO PRODUCE

The World's Best Steak



Winners of

THE WORLD'S BEST STEAK
WORLD'S BEST GRASS-FED SIRLOIN
WORLD'S BEST GRASS-FED RIBEYE
EUROPE'S BEST STEAK

AT THE WORLD STEAK CHALLENGE



WE ARE DELIGHTED to share that 2025 has been an exceptional year for Newford with strong performance across slaughter age, thrive, and returns – as reflected in the heifer disposal details below.

	HEIFERS						
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Conformation Score	R=	R=	R=	R=	R=	R=	R=
Fat Score	3=	3=	3=	3=	3+	3=	3+
Carcase Weight (Kg)	299	299	311	296	320	306	325
Live Weight	569	570	583	564	588	594	617
Kill Out %	53%	52%	53%	52%	54%	51%	53%
Age (Mts)	20	20	20	Under 18	19.5	21.1	20.2
	599 days	609 days	605 days	544 days	587 days	642 days	615 days
Value	€1,117	€1,188	€1,396	€1,507	€1,602	€1,753	€2,532
Price / kg	€3.74	€3.97	€4.49	€5.06	€5.01	€5.72	€7.78



Agricultural colleges and universities pictured at Newford Farm Open Day 5th of November 2025

Slaughter Performance

Since 17th November, 24 beef heifer have been drafted off the farm

Based on an average draft date of 4th November:

- » Average grade: R = 3 +
- » Average liveweight: 617 kg.
- » Average carcass weight: 325 kg
- » Kill-out percentage: 53 %.
- » Grades achieved: 4 “R-”, 12 “R=”, 6 “R+” & 2 “U=“
- » Average sale price: € 2,532/head (€ 7.78 per kg)
- » Average slaughter age: 20.2 months (615 days)
- » Finishing diet: ad lib silage and 5 kg concentrates.
- » On average each heifer drafted consumed roughly 696 Kgs of ration over her lifetime, average €221 per heifer. Heifers consumed a 12% crude protein ration before slaughter.
- » Meal feeding started at grass on the 18th of August, housed on 24th of September.
- » These 24 heifers went to grass on the 1st of February 2025 at an average wgt of 379 Kgs.
- » Weight gain: 238 kgs from turnout to drafting.

Calf Performance

All 2025 born calves are thriving and remained at grass until early December.

At the end of October all calves were treated for lungworm following on from vet’s advice as there had been a lot of coughing and by treating the calves also reduce the risk of them getting pneumonia been contributed from the lungworm

- » On the same day, the calves also received their IBR vaccination.
- » The calves were weaned on the 26th of September, and the male’s calves were weaned at 337 Kgs (ADG from birth of 1.38 Kg per day)
- » The heifers were weaned at 316 Kg (ADG of 1.28 kg per day from birth)
- » With the recent wet weather, the farm moved the animals on quickly in paddocks to prevent poaching.
- » All calves are getting 1.5 kg of concentrates (10.2 % crude Pr) at grass on a laneway.



update



AFTER A YEAR of strong farming performance – from barley and silage production to cattle rearing and finishing – our Ballyvadin team is now preparing for the arrival of the next batch of newborn calves in the coming months.

Following an outbreak of summer scour earlier this year, management in Tipperary is working closely with our veterinary partners to implement an updated herd health plan aimed at preventing a recurrence in 2026.

Despite this challenge, the 2023 crop delivered excellent liveweight gains and maintained good overall health. This success is largely thanks to the outstanding husbandry on the farms of origin, particularly in providing adequate colostrum and preventative treatments.

In October the farm signed a lease on an extra 55 acres of neighbouring land. Over the past few months this land has been developed from tillage to grassland and will be ready for grazing in the

springtime. This ground was sown to a white clover sward mix in 2026, the farm will aim to take in 420 spring born calves.

Over the past couple of months, 140 animals have been finished off farm. 123 finishing cattle remain housed on farm – 86 steers averaging 566kg and 37 heifers averaging 496kg. these animals are on a diet of ad-lib pit silage and 5kg/head/day of a 12% CP nut consisting mainly of barley, maize and soya. Below is a summary of animals finished off farm to date.

	STEER	HEIFERS
Number Slaughtered to Date	56	84
Carcass Weight	309 kg	271 kg
Carcass Grade	O+	O+
Carcass Fat Score	3+	3+
Age at Finish	20.1 months	19.6 months



Future Flocks in Athlone



MAKING THE MOST of the fine summer and autumn weather, we brought together our Ballyhaunis, Kildare, and Future Flocks groups for a highly successful seminar at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Athlone, on the evening of 25 November.

Over the course of two and a half hours, members – joined by around 30 regular suppliers and members of the press – enjoyed insights from an excellent panel of speakers. Each panellist delivered a focused 15-minute presentation before opening the floor to questions. The Q&A session was lively and engaging, allowing the 60+ attendees to explore key topics in depth.

The evening concluded with valuable networking opportunities, giving participants the chance to share ideas and maximise the learnings from the session.

On behalf of Rebecca Rainey and all of us at Dawn Meats, we extend our warmest wishes for a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year to all attendees and suppliers. ■



Procurement Contacts

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
Steven Kelly	Slane	087 2131866
Stephen Frend	Rathdowney	086 1224226





Free Water Quality Advisory Service

DAWN MEATS is proud to offer a free advisory service to help farmers minimise the impact of their farms on water quality. This initiative is part of the new €60 million Water European Innovation Partnership (EIP) 'Farming for Water' project—the largest EIP ever undertaken in Ireland.

The project takes a collaborative approach, working closely with the agri-food industry to improve water quality through innovative agricultural practices and farmer engagement. By implementing targeted measures at local, catchment, and national levels, we aim to protect and enhance this vital resource for future generations.

Our Water Quality Advisor, Alana Coyne, is here to help you make the most of these opportunities. Alana, a qualified dairy farm manager with an honours degree in agriculture, she joined Dawn Meats in August 2025. She works directly with farmers to reduce nutrient loss and prevent watercourse pollution.

Alana believes farming with nature is essential and that high-quality water is both a point of pride and a necessity for all living things.

Through her passion for farming and working with farmers Alana will assist in helping identify issues, agree effective solutions and helping farmers access the funding available through the EIP to assist them.

Find out more, contact Alana with your Eircode:

E: alana.coyne@dawnmeats.com | M: 086 8343436
For more details, visit <https://farmingforwater.ie>.



In the Spotlight – Graduate Series



NAME:

Gabriel Bell

ROLE:

FSQ Manager

DEGREE:

Bachelor of Agriculture Science

UNIVERSITY:

???

SITE:

Slane

START DATE:

January 2024



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

I STARTED on the Graduate Programme on the Food Safety and Quality (FSQ) team and quickly got involved in every aspect of the FSQ operations. From daily and weekly tasks such as temperature checks, micro sampling, pH checks, and glass and hard plastic audits, to more recently stepping into the role of site FSQ manager. A challenging role, but due to the valuable experience and skills I gained during the two years on the graduate programme the transition has been smooth.

From the start I was actively involved in third party and customers audits which gave me a deep understanding of legislative requirements, customer requirements and certified standards which has significantly helped me after changing roles. Due to the smaller size of the site in Slane, I was fortunate to gain experience across a wide variety of areas. This setup allowed me to take part in all aspects of FSQ, as well as gaining insight into other

business operations such as procurement and production. I am looking forward to continuing with my new role and dealing with the challenges and responsibilities that it brings.

Candidates that get involved in the Brighter Futures Graduate Programme are given an opportunity to develop a deep understanding in the meat industry with a wide range of departments available.

Graduate days are held throughout the year which allows for graduates from all sites around the country to connect, share knowledge and build professional relationships. Each graduate is also assigned a mentor who provides feedback on progress and can offer guidance for personal and professional career development. Graduates should take advantage of the knowledge and expertise of the team around them to take full advantage of the programme and to help start their career in the food industry. ■