

DAWN DIRECT



FOLLOWING A RIGOROUS yet successful lambing season, Future Flocks members are progressing with the knowledge exchange program as planned. Monthly informational sessions will continue through July, ensuring comprehensive support and guidance throughout the upcoming months.

On the evening of Tuesday 12th May, members from the Kildare and Ballyhaunis groups joined a highly informative webinar hosted by Dr Emmet Kelly (UCD). A well-known clinician and lecturer in Farm Animal Clinical studies at UCD's School of Veterinary Medicine, Dr Kelly delivered an excellent overview of the increasingly topical issue of Bluetongue Disease, focusing on its epidemiology and control.

With the high-risk summer period approaching, the session provided valuable, practical insights while also addressing and dispelling common myths around the disease.

Further sessions for our Kildare and Ballyhaunis participants are scheduled to take place on 26th and 28th of May, with details to follow.



ON A FINE but windy afternoon on 22nd of April, we were delighted to welcome over 400 visitors to our first Newford Open Day at Scrine, Co. Roscommon.

The event received very positive feedback on the day and in the weeks since, and has provided many first-time visitors with clear insights into the farm's layout, operations, objectives and outcomes achieved at Newford. Under the theme of 'controlling the controllables', attendees explored how focused, practical management decisions based on reliable data can drive measurable outcomes.

Throughout the day, speakers encouraged visitors to consider the various projects on display, assess their results, and reflect on whether similar approaches could deliver positive outcomes within their own farming enterprises – whilst continuing to supply market-ready cattle.

Our Open Day booklet, 'Breeding Profitable Sucklers', proved to be an excellent summary of Newford's objectives and key performance indicators. We would encourage all Irish suckler beef farmers to download the booklet as a useful reference resource. ■





PERFORMANCE ON the Tipperary Dairy Calf-to-Beef demonstration Farm continued to improve for the spring-born 2024 cattle, with drafting taking place from September 2025 through to early March 2026. Improved weather and grazing conditions, higher beef genetic merit and more targeted finishing management all contributed to stronger overall results. The Commercial Beef Value (CBV) of 2024 – born calves averaged €145, an increase of €13 on the previous year.

A differentiated finishing strategy was implemented based on gender, liveweight, maturity type and carcass potential. Early-maturing steers and heavier late-maturing heifers were introduced to concentrates from late summer, while early-maturing heifers remained

on a grass-based system for longer to support frame development. Stronger, late-maturing steers with higher carcass potential were carried on a grass-only diet until housing. On average, heifers consumed 300kg of concentrate during finishing, while steers received 437kg.

Carcass results clearly reflected the benefits of improved genetics. Higher-CBV cattle delivered heavier carcass weights, better conformation scores and increased sales values. Dairy x beef steers averaged 315kg carcass weight at 21.2 months of age, while dairy x beef heifers averaged 271kg at 20.4 months. In contrast, dairy x dairy steers finished later and returned lower margins, reinforcing the importance of using suitable beef sires within dairy herds supplying the system.

TABLE 1: 2024 BORN HEIFER AND STEER SLAUGHTER PERFORMANCE PER CBV QUINTILE

CBV Star Rating	No	CBV €	Slaughter Age (months)	Carcass Weight (kg)	Conformation	Fat	Sale Price (€)
Heifers	153	166	20.4	271	O+	3+	2108
★	15	66	20.5	258	O=/O+	3+/4-	2007
★★	21	115	20.1	266	O=/O+	4-	2105
★★★	31	140	20	270	O=/O+	3+/4	2111
★★★★	39	170	20.3	269	O=/O+	3+	2096
★★★★★	47	235	21.1	280	O+	3=3+	2149
Steers	157	156	21.2	315	O+	3=3+	2398
★	23	69	20.8	296	O=/O+	3=3+	2299
★★	29	108	21.3	302	O+	3=3+	2308
★★★	35	137	21	310	O+	3+	2386
★★★★	31	170	20.9	318	O=O+	3=3+	2407
★★★★★	39	249	21.6	339	O=R-	3+	2558



In spring 2026, a total of 442 calves were purchased from nine source farms, with calves arriving between March 1st and April 8th at an average liveweight of 55kg. Purchase prices were based on prevailing market values and adjusted for liveweight and CBV, further embedding genetic merit into purchasing decisions.

Looking ahead, the 2026 breeding programme has been designed to build on these results by better aligning sire selection with system requirements. A balanced approach is being taken, with 60% early-maturing sires and 40% late-maturing sires selected to combine lifetime efficacy with carcass weight and value potential. Early maturing sires are being targeted to produce cattle capable of finishing

earlier with moderate concentrate input, helping to control costs and reduce exposure to input price volatility. Late-maturing sires are being used selectively on suitable cows to maintain carcass weight and conformation, with their progeny managed accordingly through the growing and finishing phases. Across all selections, strong emphasis is placed on CBV, calving ease and carcass traits to ensure calves are suitable for dairy systems while remaining profitable for calf-to-beef production.

The farm will host its second national open day on July 22, 2026. The event will include a comprehensive review of animal and financial performance, along with discussions of key technologies that support farm efficiency and practical demonstrations.

TABLE 2: COMMERCIAL BEEF VALUE (CBV) AND INDIVIDUAL CARCASS TRAITS PER BREED OF 2026 BORN CALVES

Breed	No	CBV	Min CBV	Max CBV	Carcass Weight	Conformation	Age at Finish
AA	200	€141	€31	€230	1.7	0.1	-5.5
AU	71	€232	€160	€316	4.8	0.6	0.4
CH	35	€275	€168	€360	15.5	0.7	6.0
HE	63	€136	€17	€185	-0.8	0.1	-3.3
HO	2	€7	-€26	€39	-5.5	-0.5	6.4
LM	71	€228	€67	€326	6.7	0.8	4.4



Summer Tradeshows

THIS MONTH, our teams have been proudly representing the business on the global stage, exhibiting at two major international trade fairs and engaging with customers, partners and industry peers across Europe. These events underline our continued commitment to international markets and to building strong, long-term customer relationships.

Our Italian team exhibited at TUTTOFOOD Milano, showcasing the strength of our quality Irish beef and lamb offering to a global audience. The event provided an excellent platform to highlight our provenance, expertise and commitment to delivering consistent and sustainable, high quality added value meat products for customers.

We also had a presence at Interzoo in Nuremberg, the world's leading trade fair for the pet food industry. Attendance at Interzoo reinforces our growing presence in this sector and our focus on high-quality, trusted pet nutrition solutions.



Irish Wagyu Launches in Canada

IN APRIL, Dawn Meats launched Irish Wagyu steak in Toronto in conjunction with Bord Bia. It is now the only market in North America where Irish Wagyu is available.

The launch follows Dawn Meats winning the World's Best Steak last year at the World Steak Challenge, one of the leading global competitions for beef producers. In addition to winning the overall global title, Dawn Meats also won the award for the World's Best Grass-Fed Ribeye for its Premier Butcher Ribeye Wagyu Cross steak.

Niall Browne, Chief Executive Officer of Dawn Meats, said: "Irish Wagyu beef is produced and processed in close partnership with our specialist farms and its launch in Canada reflects demand for Irish steak where quality and consistency are highly valued, particularly in high-end hotels and restaurants. Dawn Meats is committed to sustainably producing high-quality, nutritious and great-tasting grass-fed beef products. We consistently strive to achieve high standards for our customers, and we are thrilled to launch this product to the Canadian market." ■

CLASSIC PORSCHE TRACTOR GIVEAWAY



DAWN MEATS is proud to sponsor the Classic Porsche Tractor Giveaway, supporting an exceptional student restoration project at Mercy Secondary School, Ballymahon.

The beautifully restored 1958 Porsche Junior is now available to win – a genuine piece of Porsche heritage. The lucky winner will also receive official signed documentation from the Porsche family, verifying the tractor's authenticity and history, along with an exclusive visit to the Porsche Museum in Stuttgart.

All proceeds will be shared equally to directly support the school and Ronald McDonald House.

To follow the restoration journey, visit @projektporschejunior on Instagram



Scan the QR code to purchase raffle tickets and support this worthy cause today.



Rewe Showcase

LAST MONTH, the Dawn Meats German team proudly showcased our 'Black Premium' quality Irish beef at our retail customer REWE's Merchandise Experience Day, alongside the Meat Master Club.

Through live cooking demonstrations, visitors experienced what sets 'Black Premium' apart – 100% Irish grassfed beef, exceptional eating quality, full traceability and a strong commitment to sustainability and animal welfare.

Thank you to everyone involved, and to all who stopped by to taste the unmistakable world-class quality of our 'Black Premium' Irish Beef.

Junior Achievement Ireland

WE ARE PROUD to support Junior Achievement Ireland and see the real impact of our colleagues volunteering their time and expertise, in supporting local communities and children at all stages of the education cycle.

In April, our volunteers were delighted to take part in Employability Workshops and Mock Interviews with 2nd level students at Abbey Community College and Coláiste Cois Siúire, helping them build confidence and strengthen their interview and communication skills as they prepare for the world of work.

A huge well done and thank you to our colleagues for representing Dawn Meats with such professionalism, encouragement and enthusiasm.

Our partnership with Junior Achievement Ireland is an important part of how we support and empower young people in our local communities and we're proud to play a role in helping the next generation learn, grow and succeed.

In the Spotlight – Graduate Series



NAME:

Ambroise Nester

JOB ROLE:

Operations Graduate

DEGREE:

MSc Animal Production

UNIVERSITY:

Université de Tours
(France)

SITE:

Dawn Kildare

START DATE:

January 2025



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

MY TIME on the Dawn Meats Graduate Programme has given me real responsibility from the start. After my induction, I worked on a project in Kildare's Lamb Boning Hall in which I was given some supervising responsibilities. I am now working there full time as a junior manager, overseeing daily production, working hand in hand with administrative departments and support services.

Dawn Meats is giving me countless learning opportunities. I have gained many management skills (and still working on most of them) and have been exposed to many areas of the business, both onsite and within the wider Group. I am given tasks which strengthen my skillset and challenge me to develop further. I've also had opportunities away from my

day-to-day duties such as representing the business at careers fairs, awards ceremonies, inter-site visits, graduate team-building events and seminars to name but a few.

We work in a fast-paced, and at times, challenging environment but the graduate programme allows you to work with people with shared interests and contribute to supplying well-known retailers and restaurants on a national and global scale. If you are looking for professional growth and recognition, you should apply! My tip for applicants would be to show interest, willingness, initiative and ambition.

I am looking forward to seeing what's next for me at Dawn Meats and where my career will take me! ■

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