

**Current challenges in the beef sector, what solutions already exist and how can increased uptake of these solutions be achieved**

**Irish AKIS Coordination Group  
Teagasc, Grange, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

**Pearse Kelly  
Head of Drystock Knowledge Transfer Department**

# Irish Beef Sector – Key Facts & Trends

## Beef's Role in Irish Agriculture

- 1/3 of total agricultural output
- 80% of farms keep beef animals
- 55% are specialist beef farms

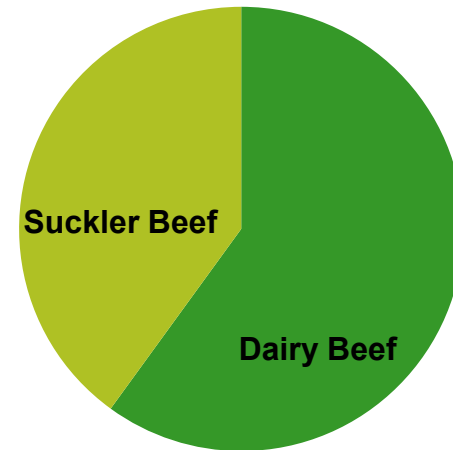
## Changing Herd Composition

- 60% of beef from dairy-bred animals
- Decline in suckler cow numbers

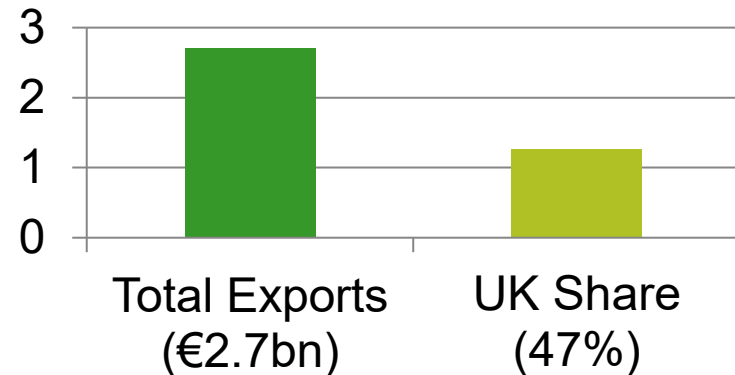
## Exports & Outlook (2023)

- €2.7 billion in exports
- 47% to UK market
- Export volume down 3%; further reductions expected

Origin of Beef Production



Irish Beef Exports (2023)



# Beef Sector Statistics 2021–2024

🟢 Cattle Output stable around €3 billion since 2022

📦 Beef exports: volume 503→493 kt; value dipped (€2.68bn→€2.6bn)

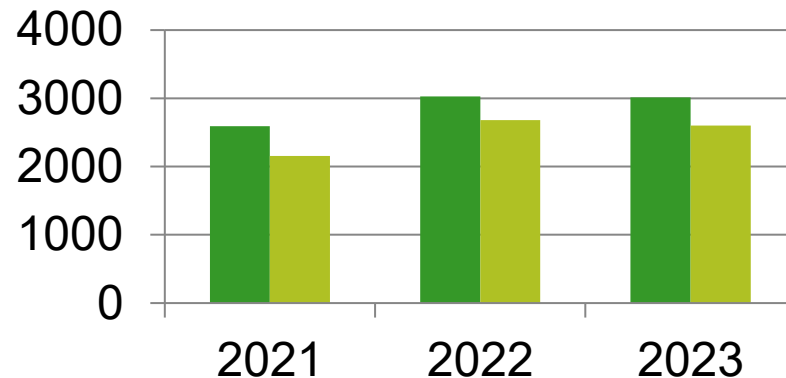
🐄 Suckler herd continues to decline (−14% since 2021)

👶 Cattle <1 year fell to 1.92 million in 2024

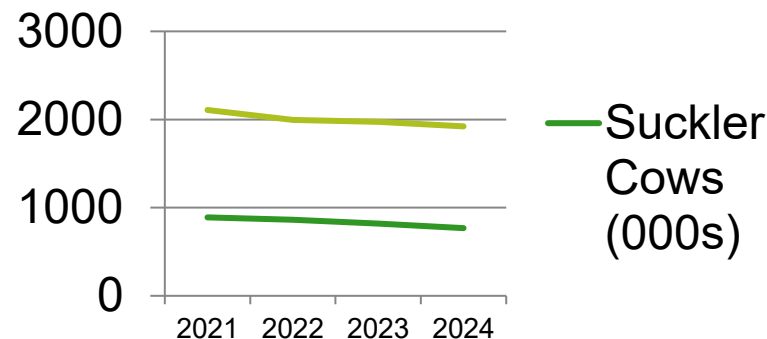
🌾 Farm structure:

- Cattle Rearing: ~32 ha, income ↑ (€336→€432/ha)
- Cattle Other: ~36 ha, income ↑ (€482→€558/ha)

Cattle Output & Export Value (€m)



Suckler Cows & Cattle <1 Year (000s)



# Key Performance Indicators – Irish Suckler Farms (>20 Cows)

Indicator	2023	Target	Status
Herbage Utilized (t DM/ha)	6.5	8.6	● Moderate
Calving @ 23–26 months (%)	23	100	● Poor
Steer Finishing Age (months)	27.5	22.5	● Too high
Steer Carcase Weight (kg)	388	395	● Close
Fertiliser N (Protected Urea, %)	3	100	● Low
GHG Emissions (kg CO <sub>2</sub> eq/kg LW)	10.8	7.9	● High
Net Margin / ha (€)	44	1,240	● Low

● = On Target    ● = Moderate    ● = Below Target

# Key Performance Indicators – Irish Dairy Calf to Beef Farms

Indicator	2023	Target	Status
Herbage Utilized (t DM/ha)	7.6	10.6	● Moderate
Steer Finishing Age (months)	27.1	22.0	● Too high
Steer Carcase Weight (kg)	319	310	● On target
Fertiliser N (Protected Urea, %)	10	100	● Low
GHG Emissions (kg CO <sub>2</sub> eq/kg LW)	12.8	11.5	● High
Net Margin / ha (€)	167	1,760	● Low

 = On Target    
  = Moderate    
  = Below Target

# Beef Knowledge Transfer Programme

- Aims

- To improve the livelihoods of beef farmers and the sustainability of the beef sector

- Economics



- Environment



- Lifestyle/labour



- Animal welfare



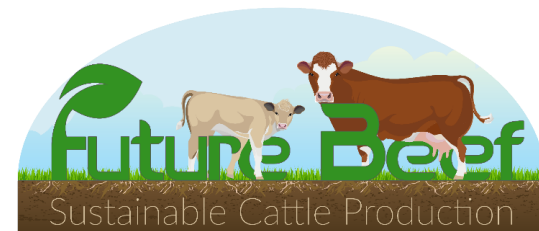
# National Outputs from the Teagasc Beef Programme

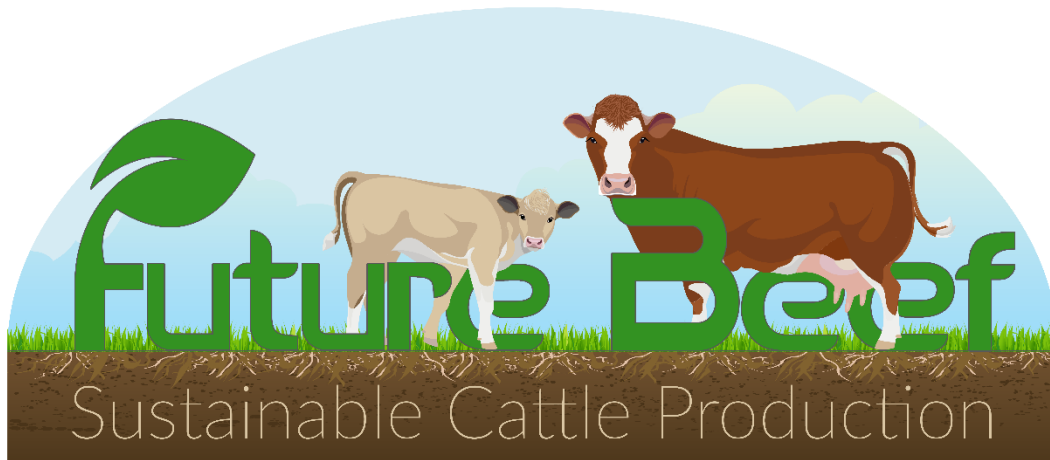
- > 2,000 beef farmers in Teagasc **Beef Discussion Groups**
- **200 – 300 Beef Profit Monitors** completed annually
- Monthly Printed Beef Newsletters – posted to clients
- Two monthly eNewsletters – Suckler & Dairy Beef
- Annual Teagasc Beef Finishing Budgets
- Today's Farm Magazine (Bi-Monthly) :- **Beef Technical Articles**
- **Weekly articles** published on Teagasc Daily App
- The Beef Edge Podcast – over 4,000 listens per month
- Strong presence on social media – X / Facebook / Instagram



# Beef Demonstration Farm Programmes

- Two large scale commercial beef demonstration farm programmes
- **Future Beef** has 22 commercial demo farms and three Teagasc staff – aimed at suckler farmers
- **DairyBeef 500 campaign** has 16 demo farms and four Teagasc staff – aimed at calf to beef farmers
- Significant industry financial support for both these five year programmes
- All farms are also part of the **Teagasc Signpost Programme**
- Farms are being used for workshops, discussion group visits, farm walks & events, data collection.





## Teagasc Future Beef

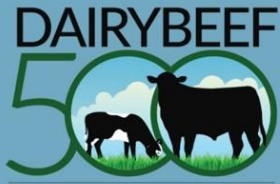


### Future Beef Farmers

Ger Mc Sweeney	Millstreet, Co. Cork	John Barry	Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
Ed Curtin	Newmarket, Co. Cork	Eamonn & Donnchadh McCarthy	Glendine, Co. Waterford
William Kingston	Drimoleague, Co. Cork	Ruairi Cummins	Kilmoganny, Co. Kilkenny
Prionnsias Creedon	Macroom, Co. Cork	John Dunne	Portlarington, Co. Offaly
Aonghusa Fahy	Ardahan, Co. Galway	Ken Gill	Edenderry, Co. Offaly
James Skehan	Killaloe, Co. Clare	Wesley Browne	Monaghan, Co. Monaghan
Michael McGuigan	Longwood, Co. Meath	John Pringle	Aughrim, Co. Wicklow
Michael & Niall Biggins	Headford, Co. Mayo	Sam Pierce	Bannow, Co. Wexford
Olivia Hynes	Four Roads, Co. Roscommon	Kay O Sullivan	Mallow Co. Cork
Shane Keavney	Ballinlough, Co. Roscommon	Cathal Irwin	Castlebar Co Mayo
Trevor Boland	Dromard, Co. Sligo	Kepak Farm	Dunboyne, Co. Meath
Oliver O Hara	Leckaun, Co. Leitrim	Newford Farm	Athery Co. Galway



# DairyBeef500 Programme Farmers



Sustainable Dairy Beef Production





## Demonstrating Best Practice

- 16 Commercial Dairy Calf to Beef Demo Farms
- New Teagasc Dairy Beef Demo Farm in Co. Tipperary
- Calf to Beef Demo Unit in all agricultural Colleges



## Teagasc Knowledge Transfer Programme

- Three Dairy Calf to Beef Disc. Groups in each Teagasc region
- Farm walks every year in each Teagasc region
- Direct mailing to clients interested in dairy calf to beef topics



## Upskilling & Training

- New DairyBeef 500 Calf to Beef Manual
- New Entrants to dairy beef training course
- Short courses to upskill farmers



## Research Programme

- Factors influencing profitability
- Assess suitable contract rearing options
- Annual research conferences for farmers and advisors



## Communication

- Communication plan developed by Teagasc PR
- Annual Budget of €50k allocated for dissemination

# Teagasc Demonstration Beef Farms

- **Tipperary Dairy Calf to Beef Demonstration Farm** established in Ballyvadin, Co Tipperary
- Joint venture between **Teagasc, Dawn Meats and Shinagh Estates Ltd**
- Implementing the latest technologies to improve profit and reduce emissions on a calf to beef demo farm
- **Newford Suckler Demonstration Farm** in Co Roscommon
- Established by **Teagasc and Dawn Meats** with support from **McDonalds** in 2015
- Regular updates combined with timely knowledge transfer events to showcase the technologies being implemented on a suckler to beef the farm.



# Beef KT Workshops

- Small targeted workshops to address single **High Priority** issue on beef farms
- Local advisory staff, cattle specialist beef researchers, industry stakeholders collaborating together.
- Typical Workshops with
  - ICBF
  - Animal Health Ireland
  - Bord Bia
- Much more one to one contact compared to farm walks
- Opportunity to send participants ‘pre-reading’ material



**icbf** **teagasc**  
Agriculture and Food Development Authority

## CALVING HEIFERS AT 24 MONTHS WORKSHOPS

MORNING & AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS PER LOCATION

DATE	LOCATION	CONTACT
THUR 20TH OCT	KEN GILL, EDENDERRY, CO. OFFALY	TEAGASC TULLAMORE (057) - 932405
FRI 28TH OCT	MICHAEL & NIALL BIGGINS, HEADFORD, CO. MAYO	TEAGASC BALLINROBE (094) - 954125
WED 2ND NOV	CURTEEN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, CO. TIPPERARY	TEAGASC THURLES (0504) - 21777
WED 2ND NOV	BALLYHAISE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, CO. CAVAN	TEAGASC BALLYHAISE (049) - 4338300
THUR 10TH NOV	JOHN PRINGLE, AUGHIRM, CO. WICKLOW	TEAGASC TINAHELY (0402) - 3871
FRI 11TH NOV	KILDALTON COLLEGE, PILTOWN, CO. KILKENNY	TEAGASC KILKENNY (056) - 772153
TUE 22ND NOV	CLONAKILTY AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, CLONAKILTY, CO. CORK	TEAGASC CLONAKILTY (023) - 896330

Increased Profitability  
Reduced GHG  
Reduced labour requirements

**THE WORKSHOPS ARE FREE.**

FOR INFORMATION OR TO BOOK SEE <https://tr.ie/135072> OR contact the Teagasc offices listed.



**CalfCare 2025 On-Farm Events**

## CalfCare

Maintaining Performance from Weaning to Housing

How to maintain recommended average daily gain, to achieve optimal performance.

Key health risks to avoid a growth check in your cattle.

All events start at 7.00pm

MON 23 JUN	Garath Peoples Tullymore, Carrigrohane, Co. Donegal	F82 HK20
TUES 24 JUN	Tipperary Call to Beef Demonstration Farm Fethard, Co. Tipperary	E01 E000
MON 29 JUN	ABP Demo Farm Clonagat Co. Carlow	T21 R564
THURS 30 JUN	Irish Ales Williamstown, Co. Wick	A32 T027

# Increased Use of Digital Media

- Beef KT programmes are increasingly using digital media to disseminate key messages



Selecting the most suitable system for your beef farm

Watch video in full here

DairyBeef 500 Newsletter - January 2023



## DOWNLOAD the new Teagasc APP

Improve your farm performance with the latest news & technical information updated DAILY from Teagasc!



Available on



# Teagasc Beef Online & Social Media

@TeagascBeef 



@TeagascBeef 



## Teagasc Beef Website

Dairy

Beef

Research

Grassland

Breeding & Genetics

Nutrition

Animal Health

Demonstration Farms

Financial

Grange

Publications

Sheep

Pigs

Equine

### Beef

Cattle farming is the enterprise taking place on the greatest number of farms in Ireland. Through knowledge transfer and research programmes, Teagasc work with the sector to be competitive and sustainable.



Research



Grassland



Breeding & Genetics



Nutrition



Animal Health



Demonstration Farms



# How does Teagasc exchange knowledge with its beef farmer clients?



One to One Advice



Discussion Groups



Print Media



Farm Walks



Large Events



Conferences & Seminars



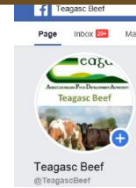
Webinars



Podcasts



Social Media Accounts



Videos



Digital Media



Virtual Events

# Role of EU CAP / DAFM Schemes



An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

**COMMENCEMENT OF €47.8M IN PAYMENTS UNDER THE SUCKLER CARBON EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME**



Department of  
**Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine**  
An Roinn  
**Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara**

Farmer Schemes & Payments

Knowledge Transfer Programme



icbf  
**National  
Genotyping  
Programme**

An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

NGP Apply here



An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

## BEEF WELFARE SCHEME 2025

### Worth €75/Calf

Applications Closing 24/9/25

**ACTIONS REQUIRED:**

1. Meal Feeding (Mandatory): €35/Calf
2. Vaccination (Optional): €15/Calf
3. Faecal Testing / Forage Testing (Optional): €25/Calf

**MAXIMUM OF 45 ELIGIBLE CALVES PER ACTION**

Talk to Your Teagasc Advisor/Consultant to Apply

Contact Aoife Bergin 087-1898417 or Kevin Quish 087-1898584 for Further Information



AGRI BUSINESS

Time To Start Weighing for SCEP 2024



icbf



An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

# Role of Agri- Media



Irish Independent 

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**FARMING**



# Tools Currently Available to Irish Beef Farmers to address challenges



**PastureBase Ireland**

Sign up today and join the 3,600 Irish dairy, beef and sheep farmers who are using PastureBase to manage their grass production and utilisation.

support@pbi.ie  
046-9200965  
www.teagasc.ie/PBI

Sign Up Today!

**ICBF Mart Tracker**  
Smarter Sales, Smarter Buys!

**KEY FEATURES:**

- View lot numbers, breed, age and sex
- Access genetic data on eligible animals
- Save time by knowing what's available before you arrive
- Free to use - No login required!
- Available on Mobile & Desktop via the ICBF website

Don't Miss Out - Try It Today!

SCAN ME

CONTACT ICBF:  
023-8820452  
query@icbf.com

# AGNAV

**Teagasc Profit Monitor**

The best tool available to help you understand your farm business finances!



SUPPLIER:	A. FARMER
HERD NO:	A123456
DATE OF SLAUGHTER:	01/01/2016
FACTORY:	BRANCH XYZ

## Beef HealthCheck Report

TAG	SEX	AGE (mths)	CARCASE (kg)	LIVER SCORE	LUNG SCORE
IE 12 34567 8 0001	E	20	330	1	3
IE 12 34567 8 0002	C	22	360	3 / 5	1
IE 12 34567 8 0003	D	40	400	2	1
IE 12 34567 8 0004	B	44	500	1	1
IE 12 34567 8 0005	E	19	340	1	2
IE 12 34567 8 0006	C	20	350	1	4
IE 12 34567 8 0007	D	56	410	4	1

**Teagasc NMP Online**



# National Beef Knowledge Exchange Events

- Major Beef Knowledge Exchange Event every 2<sup>nd</sup> year in Teagasc Grange – BEEF2024
- One annual National Beef Conference
- On-farm National Beef Events:
  - Future Beef / DairyBeef 500
  - Newford / Tipperary Farm



## Collaboration Across the Industry



### Strengths Leveraged

Each sector contributes its unique value



### Unified Message

Industry speaks with one clear voice



### Expertise Shared

Knowledge and innovation exchanged



### Clear Goals Ahead

Driving continuous improvement together

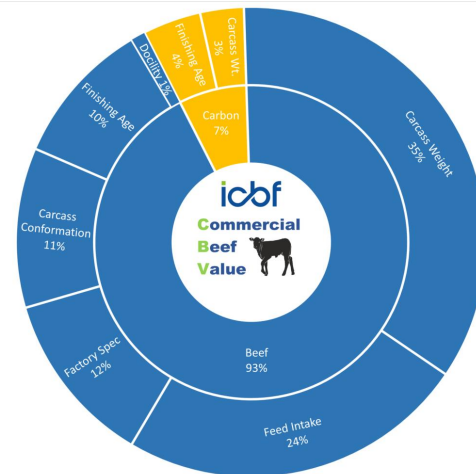
# Case Study – Using Innovation to Improve Performance & Profit on Farms Purchasing Stock



## The Issue:-

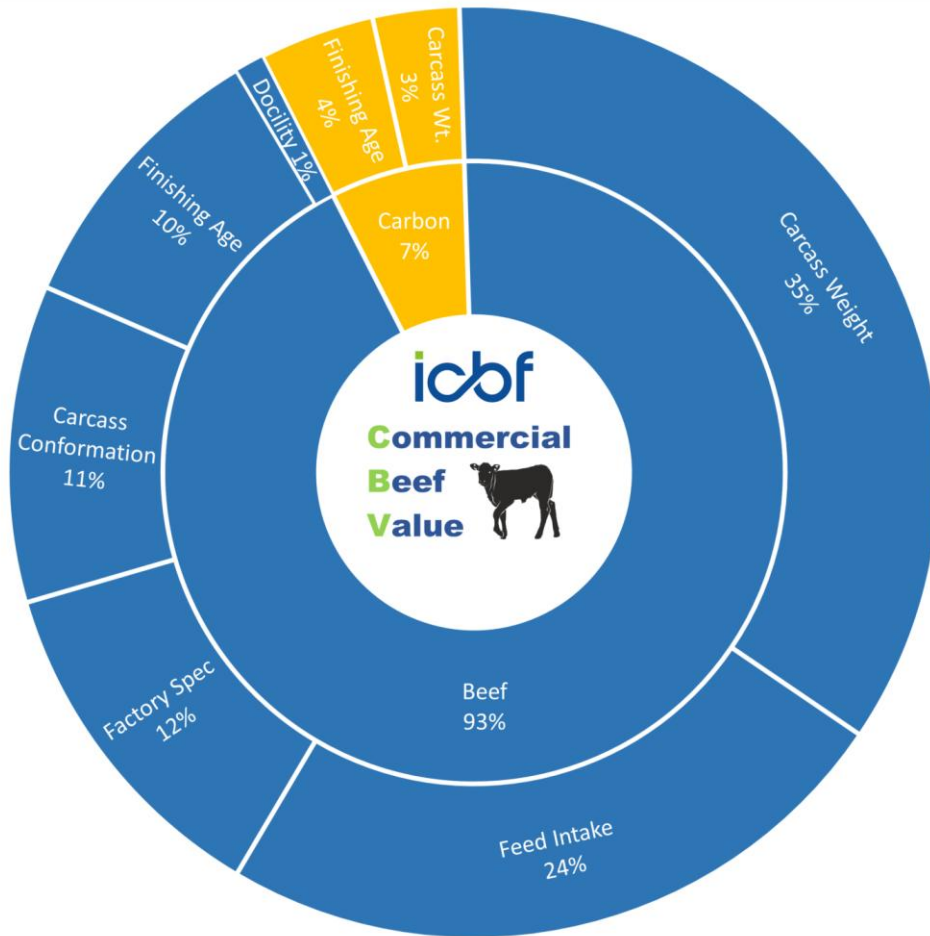
“Irish Beef farmers looking to buy stock, especially very young beef sired calves from the dairy herd had **very little or no information** on the genetic make up of the stock they were buying”

## The Solution:-



# Case Study – Using Innovation to Improve Performance & Profit on Farms Purchasing Stock

ICBF & Teagasc Researchers developed the CBV tool for farmers to use



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine



**Lot No 800**

**Qty 1**

**BLK 0 KGS**

**QA Days Breed**

**DOB**

**Moves Dam-BRD**

**Y 70+d**

**HEX**

**14/02/21**

**2**

**FR**

**Remarks**

**TB Test**

**29/09/2022**

**BVD Test**

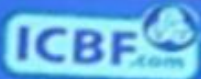
**Yes**

**ICBF Evals**

**1**

**Owenacurra**

**Seller**



**Tag No**  
**1970**

**Comm. Beef Value**  
**€82**

**Within Breed**  
**★★★★**

**Genomic Eval**  
**Yes**

**17:53:12**



# Working Together for a Stronger Beef Sector

- ❖ The Irish beef sector faces real challenges — from **profitability** to **environmental sustainability**.
- ❖ **Proven solutions** already exist — grounded in science, innovation, and **practical farm experience**.
- ❖ By **working together** — farmers, industry, researchers, and policymakers — we can continue to strengthen farm resilience and deliver a **sustainable** future for Irish beef.

**Collaboration drives progress – every link in the chain matters**

## **For More Information Contact**

Pearse Kelly

Head of Drystock Knowledge Transfer

046-9061162

087-6184287

[pearse.kelly@teagasc.ie](mailto:pearse.kelly@teagasc.ie)

# Thank You