



Teagasc Drystock Knowledge Transfer Department

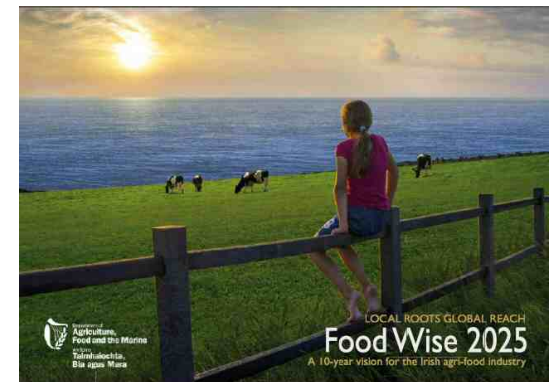
Pearse Kelly
Head of Department

Overview of Irish Beef & Sheep Farming

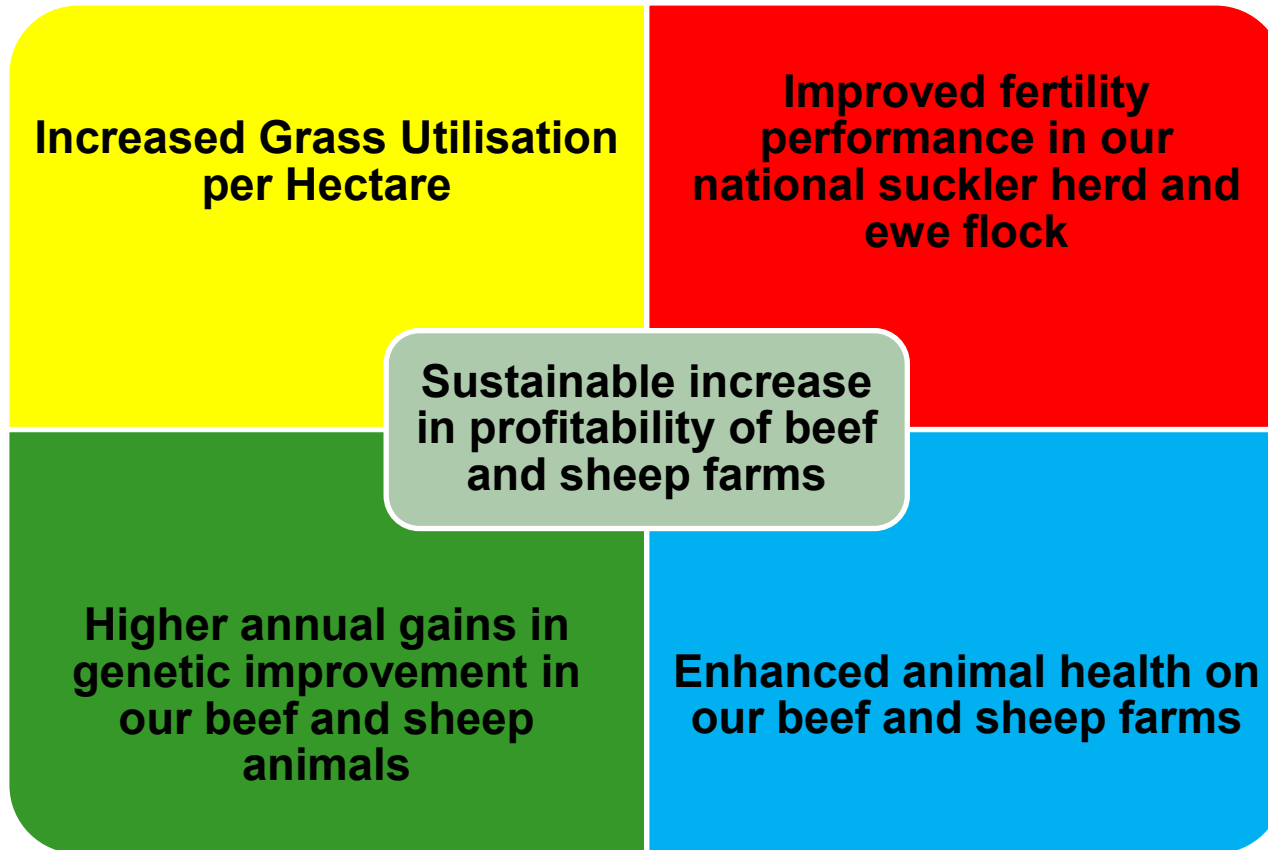
- Ireland has approx. **94,000 beef farmers** which accounts for **39% of Gross Agricultural Output (2015)** and in 2016 accounted for 21% of total agri-food exports
- **970,000 suckler cows** with an average herd size of less than 20 cows
- 26,100 single suckling herds with greater than suckler 10 cows
- Systems include (a) suckling, (b) store to store, (c) store to beef and (d) calf to beef
- In 2016, the average gross output (*including direct payments*) on single suckling farms was €1,119/ha, with a gross margin of €754/ha and **net margin of €352/ha**.
- Currently (*Dec. '16*) there are **36,313 sheep farmers** with a breeding flock of **2.6 million ewes** (*4% increase on 2015 levels*) with an output of €240 million in 2016
- About 80% of the national ewe flock is comprised of lowland ewes with the balance comprising of hill breed ewes.
- In 2016, the average gross output (*including direct payments*) on lowland sheep farms was €976/ha, with a gross margin of €622/ha and **net margin of €308ha**.

Objectives of the Drystock KT Department

- Increase the **profitability** and **competitiveness** of Irish beef and sheep production systems.
- Improve the **environmental sustainability** of Irish beef and sheep production systems through improved **nutrient use efficiency** and **reduced greenhouse gas emissions**.
- Enhance the **quality and safety** of Irish beef and sheep meat
- Assist in the **delivery of new technologies** to key stakeholders within the Irish beef and sheep industries
- Contribute to the achievement of the targets set out in **Food Wise 2025**.



Strategy of the Drystock KT Department



Structure of Drystock KT Department

- Regional cattle and sheep specialists based at a number of locations.
- Specialised advisers based at a number of locations
- **Five Cattle Specialists (incl. Head of Dept.)**
 - Pearse Kelly, Aidan Murray, Karen Dukelow, Alan Dillon & One Vacancy
- **Three Sheep Specialists**
 - Michael Gottstein (Head of Sheep), Ciaran Lynch & Damian Costello
- **4 Specialised Advisers**
 - Teagasc Green Acres Calf to Beef Programme – Two Vacancies Currently
 - John Greaney & Tommy Cox - Specialised Advisers on Teagasc-Farmers Journal BETTER Farm Beef Programme
- **One Full Time Programme Administrator** – Loreto Ferguson

Teagasc Regional Units & Advisory Offices



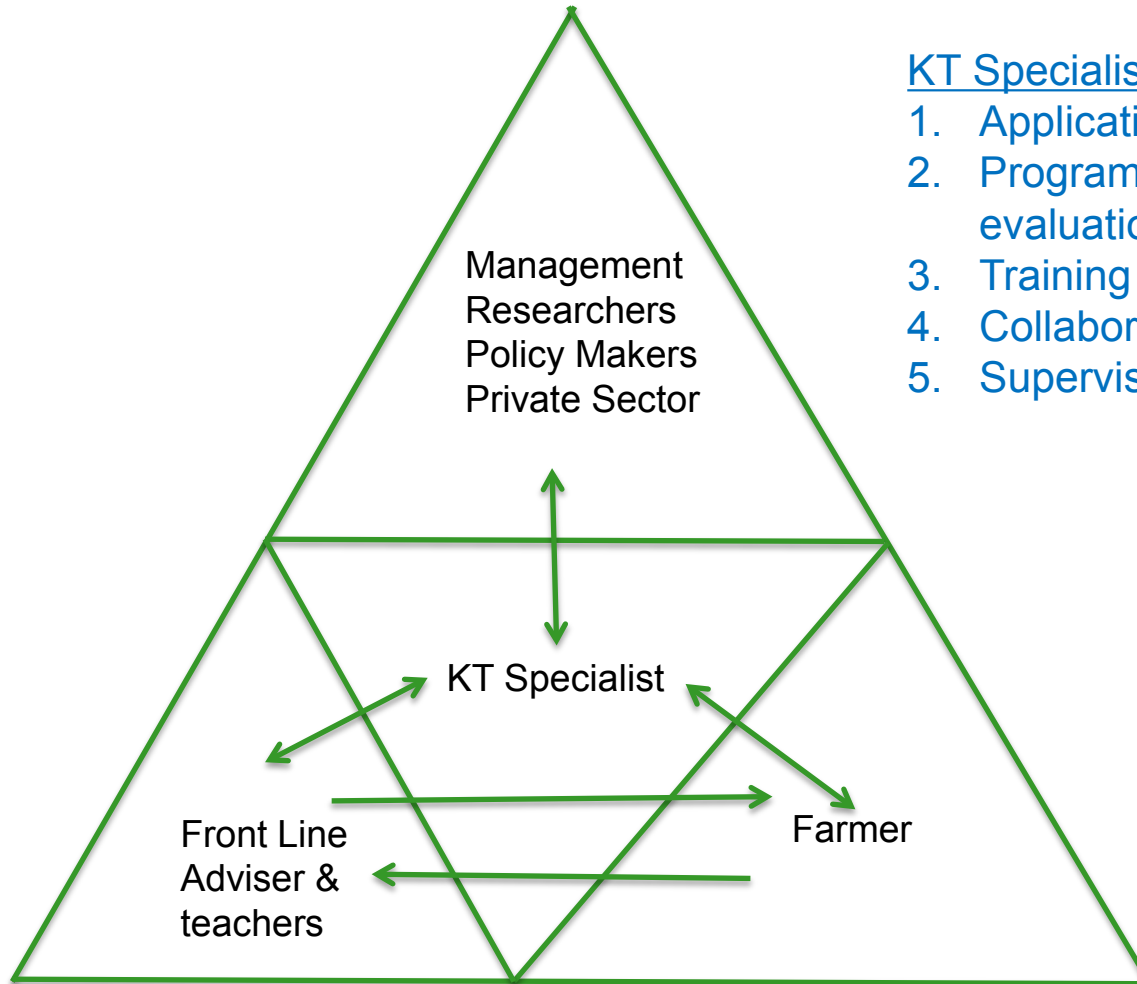
12 Regional Units

Over 50 Advisory Offices

110- 120 Drystock advisers

30 – 40% < 5years experience

Role of the Teagasc KT Specialist



KT Specialist Responsibilities:-

1. Application of research
2. Programme planning, delivery & evaluation
3. Training & mentoring of advisers
4. Collaboration with industry
5. Supervising KT Walsh Fellows

Strategy achieved through.....

- Inputting into the local regional units **annual drystock business plans**
- Providing technical **in-service training** on beef & sheep topics to B&T advisers and Teagasc education staff
- Providing support to the beef & sheep **Knowledge Transfer Groups**
- Regularly produce knowledge transfer publications
- Organise **public knowledge transfer events**
- Providing advice to **Agricultural Colleges** on their farm plans and facilitate college beef and sheep discussion groups



Strategy achieved through.....

- Providing in-service training to Private Agricultural Consultants through the **Teagasc ConnectEd Programme**
- Working closely with the **Teagasc Grass10 Campaign**
- Publishing material on **websites & social media**
- Manage and operate the **Teagasc-Irish Farmers Journal BETTER Farm Beef Programme**
- Manage and operate the **Teagasc-Green Acres** Calf to Beef Programme
- Disseminating the information coming from the **Teagasc BETTER Sheep Programme**
- Working with the relevant research departments within Teagasc.



Collaborations



Example 1

Teagasc-Irish Farmers Journal BETTER Farm Beef Challenge

■ Phase I of the programme 2008 – 2011

- **16 Suckler Farms – supported by ABP, DAWN Meats, Kepak & FBD**
- Gross margin increased from €386/ha to €843/ha- 118% increase or €27,000 on average per programme farm- 66% of this increase was from increased technical efficiency

■ Phase II of the programme 2012 – 2016

- **35 Suckler & Beef Farms. Same funders.**
- By the end of Phase II programme farmers had achieved a 53% increase in gross margin per ha (average €18,655 per farm). 87% of this was due to improved technical efficiency.



■ Phase III of the programme 2017 – 2021

- **27 Suckler Farms – at least one per county. Same funders.**
- Alan Dillon – Programme Manager & Two advisers– John Greaney & Tommy Cox
- Phase III is focusing on targeting improvements in very specific areas that are all measurable e.g. growing two tons extra grass per hectare per year.
- Phase III is using a significant amount of social media for knowledge transfer from the farms
- Weekly articles in IFJ throughout the year , On-farm events will begin in 2018

Example 2

Teagasc Green Acres Calf to Beef Programme

- 3 Year Dairy Calf to Beef Programme
- 5 Main Sponsors & 1 Media partner
- 10 Participating Farms
- 8 Counties represented (Midlands & North East)
- 1 Full Time Adviser – Gordon Peppard
- Targeting to achieve a **Net Margin of €500** per hectare
- Demonstrating best practice under 6 pillars



Location of the farmers

Conor Greene

Christy Dowd

Michael Ryan

John Lalor

Michael Flynn



Eamon Kirk

David Drum

Ben Sweeney

Joe Farrell

Pat Bowden



Teagasc Green Acres Calf to Beef Programme

- Monthly articles in the Farming Independent
- Regular Open Days on the Farms
- Updating of the Sponsors staff
- KT Groups visit the farms
- **From 2014 to 2016:-**
 - **Gross margin per ha has risen by 59% (€513 to €867)**
 - **Net Margin has risen from -€40 to €308 per ha**



Green Acres **Farming Independent** **Grassland** **LIFFEY MILLS** **volac**

Making the leap to a calf to beef system

Rowanman farmer Christy O'Leary is up and running in making the leap to a calf to beef system, with the *Green Acres* support.

ANIMAL HEALTH PLAN A FOCUS ON PREVENTION

Green Acres Breeding Pays II

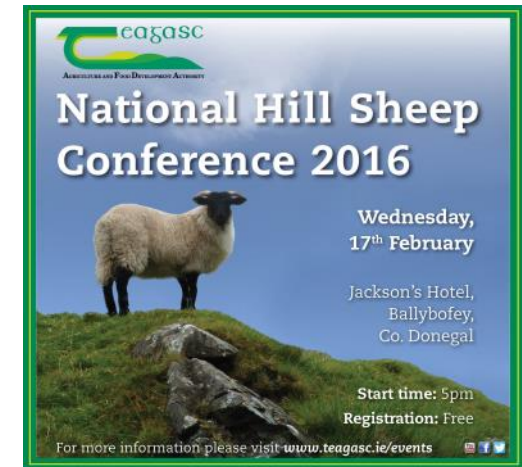
CALF TO BEEF: THE KEY MESSAGES

Year	2014	2015	2016
Grass yield (t/ha)	10.5	11.5	12.5
Grass yield (t/ha) - 2017	13.5	14.5	15.5



Example 3

Increased Sheep Events



- Significant increase in public knowledge transfer events for Irish sheep farmers over the last five years
- Two annual Teagasc National **Lowland Sheep Conferences**
- One annual Teagasc National **Hill Sheep Conference**
- Every **BETTER Sheep Farm** has a farm walk/event every 2nd year
- Biennial **Open Days in Athenry - >5,000 attend**
- Breeding workshops held in livestock marts annually
- Seasonal **Grass10 Sheep walks**



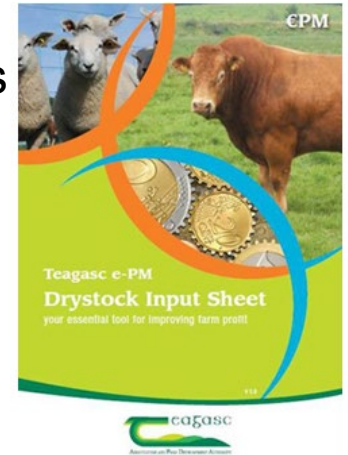
Outputs from the Drystock KT Department

- 112 Teagasc Advisers have 4,879 beef farmers in 297 Teagasc **Beef Knowledge Transfer Groups**
- 63 Teagasc Advisers have 1,968 sheep farmers in 121 Teagasc **Sheep Knowledge Transfer Groups**
- Monthly Beef & Sheep Newsletters & Annual Teagasc eProfit Monitor Analysis – Drystock Farms, Teagasc Beef Budgets
- Today's Farm Magazine (Bi-Monthly) :- **Beef & Sheep Technical Articles**
- Specialised publications** such as Beef Production System Guidelines, BDGP training material, Beef Manual, Grazing Guide, Sheep Manual
- 5 – 6 joint on-farm events annually with **Animal Health Ireland** on improving beef health



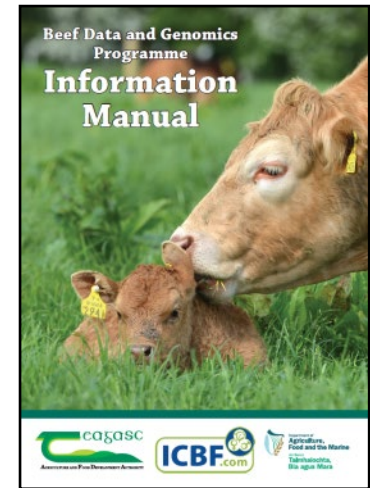
Outputs from the Drystock KT Department

- Average of **928 Teagasc Beef eProfit Monitors** over last 5 years used in the annual analysis
- Average of **242 Teagasc Sheep eProfit Monitors** over last 5 years used in the annual analysis
- Six technical **beef in-service training days** delivered annually
- Six technical **sheep in-service training days** delivered annually
- Average of 4 – 5 days extra in-service training delivered annually to new advisers on beef and sheep topics
- 5 – 10 on-farm beef events delivered annually
- Teagasc **National Beef Conference** every October
- Major **BEEF Open Day** every 2nd year , >5,000 attendance



Beef Data Genomics Programme (BDGP) Training

- BDGP is a six year funded programme (€300m) through the Rural Development Programme
- Compulsory part of the programme is that all participants complete a **four hour training programme**
- Teagasc Drystock KT Department **trained 171 tutors** to deliver over **1,000 courses** to over 26,000 farmers in 2016 and 2017
- Teagasc Drystock KT Department developed all of the **training material** which included a training manual, slides, work-sheets and videos
- Teagasc Drystock KT Department co-ordinated the running of all of the courses and liaised with DAFM on the recording of the data.



Teagasc Beef & Sheep Websites

- Dairy
- Beef**
- Research
- Grassland
- Breeding & Genetics
- Nutrition
- Animal Health
- Demonstration Farms
- Financial
- Grange
- Publications
- Sheep
- Pigs
- Equine

Beef

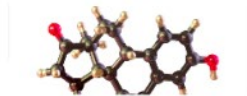
Cattle farming is the enterprise taking place on the greatest number of farms in Ireland. Through knowledge transfer and research programmes, Teagasc work with the sector to be competitive and sustainable.



Research



Grassland



Breeding & Genetics



Nutrition



Animal Health



Demonstration Farms



- Dairy
- Beef
- Sheep**
- Research
- Grassland
- Breeding & Genetics
- Nutrition
- Flock Health
- BETTER Farm Sheep
- Financial Management
- Publications
- Athens
- Events

Sheep

Sheep production is the fourth most important animal enterprise in Ireland, operating on both hill and lowland farms. The teagasc research and advisory programmes centre around low cost grass-based production systems.



Research



Grassland



Breeding & Genetics



Nutrition



Animal Health



BETTER Farm Sheep

Drystock KT Department on Social Media

@TeagascBeef 



@TeagascSheep 



@TeagascBeef 



Impact of KT Drystock Department

- **Impact of the Drystock KT Department is achieved through:-**
 - In-service training of advisers
 - Joint Industry Programmes
 - KT discussion groups meeting 6 – 7 times per year
 - Major Open Days
 - Annual Conferences
 - Regular Publications
 - High number of on farm events annually
- **Exit Surveys:** Very positive feedback
- **Beef Discussion Groups:** 80 to 297
- **Sheep Discussion Groups:** 30 to 121
- **Teagasc Beef eProfit Monitors:** <500 annually to over 1,200
- **Teagasc Sheep eProfit Monitors:** <200 annually to over 400

Impact of KT Drystock Department

Grass

Grass Utilised (t/ha) on beef farms	2010 – 2012	2013 - 2015	
All National Farm Survey (NFS)	5.33	5.67	+6%
Teagasc Clients (NFS)	5.59	6.04	+8%

Beef Breeding

Heifers calving (22 – 26 months)	2011 – 2013	2014 - 2016	
All Suckler Herds (ICBF)	15%	18%	+3%

Sheep Breeding

Lambs reared per ha	2010 – 2012	2013 - 2015	
All National Farm Survey (NFS)	9.20	9.65	+5%
Teagasc Clients (NFS)	9.69	9.90	+2%

For More Information Contact

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Thank You