

**Animal Research Programme –  
Sustainable Production Systems and System Analysis  
RMIS No: 6090**

**Title**

The evolution of dairy farming systems in Ireland with specific emphasis on the impacts of and processes underpinning technological adoption among existing and new entrant dairy farmers.

**Abstract**

The competitive advantage of Irish milk production systems is fueled by high milk productivity from grazed pasture underpinned by excellence in pasture management. The phased abolition of EU milk quotas by April 2014 is now well advanced and is anticipated to result in a significant increase in milk production on Irish dairy farms. As part of the reforms, EU milk quotas will be expanded annually by 1 per cent over the period 2009 to 2013 with one quarter (0.25%) of this overall increase allocated on a permanent basis to new entrants to dairy production. Within this context, dairy production research must explore and quantify the likely impact of innovative new processes and technological development science to facilitate productivity gain among new and existing dairy farm businesses post milk quotas.

The routine absorption of new technology/innovations is acknowledged to be critical to sustaining productivity and competitiveness in the dairy sector and appropriate research and extension activities must be targeted to support and facilitate farmers' adoption processes. The objective of this study is to define the evolving characteristics of dairy farming systems in Ireland with specific emphasis on the impact of and processes underpinning technological adoption among existing and new entrant dairy farmers.

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