

# Grassland Science Department

## **Title**

The influence of animal genotype and calving date on the productivity of milk production in the BMW region of Ireland

## **Abstract**

Recent analysis carried out within the EU has suggested that milk quotas are now constraining the development of an efficient European dairy industry. When milk quotas are removed, other factor inputs will become limiting such as land, stock, supplementary feed or labour availability. Quota removal will require new innovative blueprints which facilitate the expansion of profitable milk production systems taking cognisance of overall farm productivity, economic efficiency and environmental and animal welfare sustainability. Within the context of the Border Midlands West (BMW) region, the potential to produce milk efficiently from grazed pasture has been established based on experimental herd at Ballyhaise college in recent years and the continued development of systems specific to this region require that alternative animal genotypes and calving dates are considered. The identification of the optimum calving date is critical on more marginal soils due to its effect on lactation length, milk production and grazed grass utilisation. The objective of this project is to quantify the biological and financial effects of alternative calving date and animal genotype combinations for pasture-based dairy production systems in the BMW region.

**Project Leader:** Brendan Horan

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