

## TEAGASC NATIONAL DAIRY CONFERENCE 2016

Technologies  
for success**Dr Tom O'Dwyer**

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**T**he Teagasc National Dairy Conference 2016 will take place in the Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork on Tuesday 6 December and the Mullingar Park Hotel, Mullingar, on Wednesday 7 December.

While the tough spring challenged many dairy farmers, the good grass growth experienced on most farms for the remainder of the year has meant that most dairy farmers have managed through the low milk price. And, as the year closes, milk prices are at last moving in the right direction.

This conference provides an opportunity for farmers and agri-professionals to learn about new ideas, share information, get answers to questions, meet colleagues and, probably most importantly, be inspired to take action. Teagasc has organised a farmer-focused, practical conference and has invited a stellar lineup of speakers to take part.

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The theme of the conference is: “Technologies for Success” and each of the speakers will highlight important technologies that can be used on dairy farms by dairy farmers in an effort to manage that which they can control. Technologies which dairy farmers can use to improve their farm business performance are the focus of this year's event.

This year's conference follows the format adopted successfully at last year's event, with a mixture of lectures and workshop sessions.

In the morning, Dr Pat Dillon, head

of the Teagasc Animal and Grassland Research and Innovation programme will present the keynote address focusing on how Irish dairy farming is positioned, with a particular emphasis on future growth opportunities.

The second presentation will be by New Zealand dairy farmers, Pete and Anne Morgan. They will describe how they have built robustness into their dairy farming business. They are both enthusiastic about the sustainability of grass-based dairy farming.

The morning lectures will be rounded off with a panel discussion with three leading dairy farmers. They will discuss the critical success factors which are important to their farming businesses. For the Cork conference, the dairy farmers will be: Michael Gowen (Cork), Donald Bate-man (Tipperary) and John Phelan (Waterford). For the Mullingar conference the dairy farmers will be Eamon Fagan, Brian Reidy and Brian Gilsenan.

Similar to last year, Teagasc is providing six workshops on both afternoons. Attendees can choose to attend three workshops, from a list of six, at the time of booking (see list, below right). The workshops this year again cover a range of topics with a great mix of Teagasc, other professional and farmer presenters. All of the workshops will be interactive, with plenty of time for audience involvement.

Further details about both events are available on the conference webpages at [www.teagasc.ie](http://www.teagasc.ie). Spaces are limited by venue capacity on both days so book early. Attendees will be asked to indicate the workshops they wish to attend when booking.

The cost of attendance is the same as previous years: €60 for Teagasc farmer clients and ConnectEd members and €120 for all other attendees. Registration includes: entrance to the conference, including a choice of three workshops; morning/afternoon teas, lunch; and a copy of the conference proceedings.

If there is one thing you do before the end of 2016, make it that you attend the Teagasc National Dairy Conference. It will be worth it.

**WORKSHOPS**

**Three sessions from the six listed below can be selected at time of booking:**

- 1** What has clover to offer to Irish dairy farmers?
- 2** How can you retain more cash in your business in 2017?
- 3** What AI bulls should you use in 2017?
- 4** What steps can you take to reduce calf scour in spring 2017?
- 5** What are the causes and solutions to a herd lameness problem?
- 6** “Your health is your wealth”: are you looking after yourself?



Ger Courtney leads one of the highly interactive workshops at last year's dairy conference.

## Feedback on workshops

The aim of incorporating workshops into the conference programme last year was to allow even greater interaction between participants and between participants and experts. To gain completely objective feedback on this initiative, Teagasc asked participants when leaving the conference to provide anonymous feedback.

The majority of comments about the workshops were positive and those asked felt that the sessions were a valuable addition to the conference



programme:

- "Breakout sessions very good and should be part of future conferences."
- "Afternoon workshops went well, good farmer participation and got a good chance to question."
- "Found the group sessions very interesting."
- "Break-out sessions were top-class."

How about a full day of breakout sessions for next year?"

So if you missed last year, or are coming again, you can look forward to this innovative component of the Teagasc National Dairy Conference.

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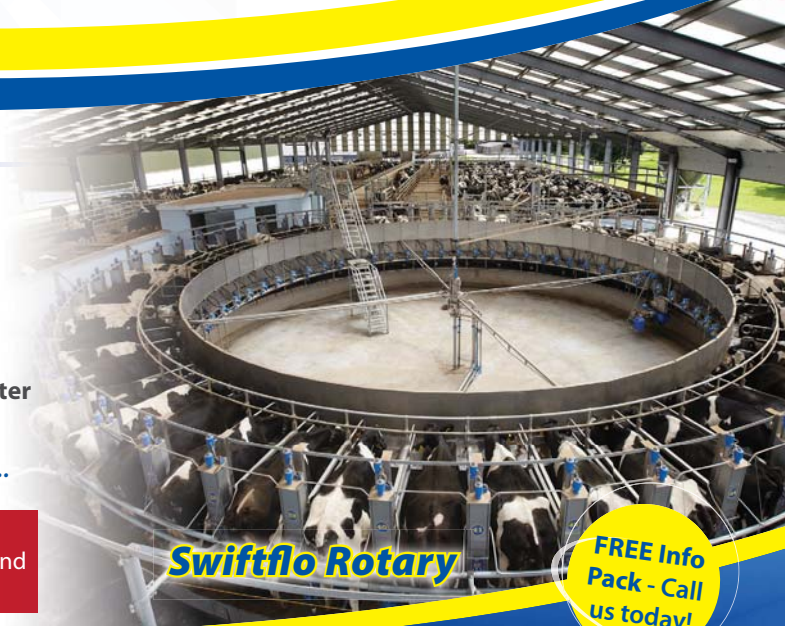


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