

# Teagasc Moorepark Open Day

## – 10 reasons to visit

### Tom O'Dwyer

Head of Dairy Knowledge Transfer,  
Teagasc Animal and Grassland  
Research and Innovation Programme

**T**eagasc will open the gates to its Animal and Grassland Research and Innovation Centre (AGRI) Moorepark on Tuesday 4 July for a major open day. This major event happens every two years and should attract thousands of dairy farmers and their families; make sure to mark the date in your diary.

The focus of this year's Open Day is "Resilient Technologies"; these are the technologies which will help dairy farmers, and the entire dairy industry, to flourish in both the good times and the more challenging times. Resilient dairy businesses – i.e. those that adopt these proven technologies – will be technically and financially efficient, generate surplus cash, consistently achieve financial expectations and be simple to operate. Moorepark 2017 will highlight a range of resilient technologies now available to Irish dairy farmers, including:

#### Grazing management

- PastureBaseIreland database and online decision support tool;
- GrassHopper measuring device;
- Grazing infrastructure including land drainage;
- Pasture profit index (PPI) and recommended lists;
- Achieving high levels of grass utilised – target 10t grass DM/ha/year;
- Increasing herd and farm performance by including clover in swards.

#### The perfect cow

- High EBI index and fertility sub-index;
- 90% calving in six weeks;

- 5.5 lactations per cow;
- The place for crossbreeding.

#### Managing yourself and others – the people challenge.

- Labour efficiency – streamlining your working day; coping with peak workload in the spring;
- People management – including making your farm an attractive place to work and developing people management skills.

#### Developing a resilient dairy business

- Strategic planning – knowing, and being in charge of, your future direction;
- Achieving technical and financial efficiency.

Teagasc researchers, advisors and specialists will be on hand to update you on the latest research and advice in relation to these, and other, resilient technologies.

So why should you attend the Moorepark 2017 open day?

**1 What you earn depends on what you learn:** We live in a knowledge economy. It is vitally important that dairy farmers are up to date with the current technologies and developments. The Moorepark 2017 open day will highlight the relevant technologies which will enable dairy farmers to develop resilient, sustainable and profitable dairy farming businesses.

**2 How you put into action what you learn will influence what you earn:** But it is not just about what you learn. You have to be able to put into action what you have learned. Demonstrations will be a key feature of the event and will include: grazing management, reseedling, farm infrastructure, better breeding decisions



(‘the perfect cow’) and efficient milking. Workshops focusing on strategic planning, milk quality, people management and converting to dairy farming will also be featured.

#### **3 The best investment you can make is an investment in yourself:**

You have to make the time to attend events that can help you to develop...as a dairy farmer, as a person. Too many dairy farmers don't invest enough in themselves, yet the same farmers could make large investments in equipment, livestock or buildings. Put the date in your diary – Tuesday 4 July – and commit to investing that day in your development.

**4 Knowledge is power:** Knowledge is a powerful factor that enables people achieve great results. No individual dairy farmer can pros-





A large crowd in attendance at a previous year's Teagasc Moorepark open day.

per and flourish without the right knowledge. And there is no end to knowledge or your ability to acquire it. We can all benefit from learning new things. What you learn at the open day might help you come to better decisions in the future.

**5 Meet Teagasc researchers, advisors and specialists:** This is the one day in 2017 when all staff involved in the Teagasc dairy programme will be available for you to meet. Come along and take the opportunity to get answers to your questions. There will be opportunities to ask questions in the Technology Villages, at the workshops and at the special forums.

**6 The people challenge:** There is a growing concern that the people challenge could become a limiting factor for the future

growth of the Irish dairy industry. This challenge is multi-faceted and encompasses:

- Making dairy farming an attractive career choice for young people;
- The availability of skilled people to work on dairy farms;
- The ability to manage the additional complexities of larger herds, including managing employees;
- Achieving sustainable workloads for all people working on dairy farms.

One of the Technology Villages at Moorepark 2017 is devoted to this issue. Teagasc colleagues working in this area, such as Páidí Kelly, Marion Beecher, Pat Clarke and Abigail Ryan, will be on hand to discuss people-related issues with visitors to the Open Day. The new Teagasc *Employing Labour* publication will be available on the day and Teagasc expects that this guide will be a valuable resource for dairy farmers employing labour.

**7 The sustainability challenge:** Irish grass-based systems of milk production are more sustainable than most other systems of milk production throughout the world. Our clean, green image is used as a marketing tool by our milk processors. We need to prove our green credentials and be prepared to adjust our farming practices to meet both the changing requirements of international customers and our environmental sustainability obligations.

Teagasc research has identified the steps needed to increase the sustainability of our dairy farms including steps to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, improve water quality and improve herd health and milk quality.

**8 The Brexit challenge:** While the final shape of the Brexit deal is not known, we can be sure Brexit will mean disruption for Irish milk processors, and ultimately Irish dairy farmers. In the face of Brexit, Irish dairy farmers must manage what they can manage themselves first. This will mean a relentless focus on driving productivity, the adoption of a low-cost mindset and careful assessment of investment decisions. Teagasc Moorepark research findings can help dairy farmers, and those in the wider dairy industry, to plan for the changes which will be the inevitable result of Brexit.

**9 Get involved in debate/discussion – villages and forum:** The Open Day will feature two special forums, each of which will involve a Q&A panel discussion. Each forum will be facilitated by Sharon Ní Bheoláin from RTE *Six One News*. The first will examine “Brexit and Irish Dairying”, and will include panellists such as the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine Michael Creed and other key stakeholders in the dairy industry. The second will discuss the question “Just how attractive is a career in dairying?”

**10 Meet friends and have an enjoyable day away from your dairy business:** While the focus of the Open Day is on technology, there will be plenty of time for you to catch up with friends. Not all of the conversations need to be about dairying. With the Munster senior hurling final due to take place on the Sunday after the Open Day, I'm sure that there will be many conversations involving hurling!

The Teagasc Moorepark Open Day is kindly sponsored by FBD.

<sup>1</sup> Bill Clinton

<sup>2</sup> Warren Buffet

<sup>3</sup> Francis Bacon