

FOCUS FARM WALK

7 Farmers - 7 Systems - 1 Day



Discover the diversity of IHFA Farms
Learn how to make your herd suit your system
See how pedigree breeding can help your herd
Meet the farmers behind excellent herds!

15th September 2023
Hosted by Kevin Flynn, Reary Herd,
Clonaslee, Co Laois



Welcome

Irish dairying is built on spring calving, grass based systems, however there is a large variation of farm systems within this.

Likewise, Irish dairying is built on the black and white cow, and the Holstein-Friesian breed also displays huge variation.

This means there is a black and white cow to suit all farming systems. The Focus Farms open day allows us the opportunity to see the effect of high quality cows working in various systems.



We selected a number of top IHFA herds, across the country based on production, fertility, classification and profitability as examples of the variety of farmers our memberships includes. We have some of the countries and indeed the worlds best farmers and their stories deserve to be told. So this year across our Journals, social media, media partnerships and now this in person event we have been sharing these farms management styles and breeding plans, to give an insight into the many different ways of farming. This events purpose is to show you that each system can be different and individual and still be successful and profitable. Infact, it is down to these farmers planning their herds and ways of farming to match their circumstances that makes them a success! And the common theme across all these farms is that they are thriving with pedigree cows – these animals can be selectively breed to match whatever level of input and output you desire for optimisation of each individual farm set up. IHFA is here to help guide our members as they grow and improve their herds and we hope this event will prove enjoyable and beneficial to all of you here today.

IHFA offers a range of services including full herd grade up to pedigree, classification, registrations, advertising, catalogue services and much more. The IHFA team will be delighted to help you with any queries today so please come and speak to us at any stage.

Finally a huge thank you must go to each of the seven farmers and their families who have taken part in this series, they have been generous with their time, transparent with their information and practises and really positive about helping us run a successful event. Thank you in particular to Kevin and Martina for facilitating today and giving us access to their farm. We look forward to continuing this series with new herds into 2024.

The QR code below will take you to a catalogue of the herd



Laurence Feeney, IHFA CE

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laurence Feeney', written in a cursive style.



Kevin Flynn, Reary Herd

Our host farmer Kevin farms with his wife Martina under the Reary herd prefix established by Kevin's late father Bill in 1974, the milking herd was moved to this site in 2008 as Kevin sought out a better grazing platform and compact site. The Norah family has been incredibly prolific for the Reary herd and were some of these first cows in the pedigree herd. Over 670 Norah's have been registered in the herd, and 170 Poppy's which branched from the Nora's - you will see many of these cows in the herd today. The Norah's consistently classify highly and encapsulate Kevin's ideal type of cow - moderate stature with great chest and rump width, nice slope to rump, robust with a solid udder and excellent feet and legs. There are currently 54 EX classified cows and 111 VG's in the Reary herd.

While the Reary herd don't have far to walk on the milking block Kevin knows the importance of good "wheels" on a cow to ensure they last. And last they do in Clonaslee, with an average parity of 3.9 cows have long productive lives here. A great measure of that is the number of animals in the herd with exceptionally high lifetime solids production - currently in the herd there are 35 cows that have produced 3000 - 4000 kgs solids combined and 61 cows with over 4000 kgs solids combined produced in their lifetime to date.

Nitrogen use efficiency (NUE) and nitrates is something farmers can't ignore and Kevin demonstrates a very good NUE of 46% for a high producing herd, current nitrogen units/ha is 228. The national average currently stands at 25% NUE. There are a number of factors that help Kevin achieve this, namely the high solids output per cow, the fact that concentrate input is efficient for this output and careful fertiliser management.

A common theme emerges when speaking to Kevin - planning and targets. Everything that is done in Clonaslee is done with purpose - to improve milk components, to maximise fertility or to make daily farming life easier. In terms of managing costs Kevin is very happy with his use of IFAC's planning and management tools. Milk price is beyond the control of farmers but it is important to know your costs and how you can adjust these in response to milk and other input pricing. Kevin's current feed costs make up just 30% of costs per kg of milk produced.

FARM PERFORMANCE

2022 Figures - Milk Recording 305d	
Cows	178
Calving Interval	372 days
Milk Yield kgs	9644
Fat kgs (%)	381 (3.95)
Protein kgs (%)	334 (3.46)
Total Solids kgs	715
Conformation Av.	85.7
Stocking Rate	2.51
Lifetime Value/day	€3.34
Average lactation	3.9



Reary Norrah 233 EX 93

WHY THIS SYSTEM?

- Aiming for uniformity across the herd
- New farm location since 2008 - better land quality, less fragmented, longer grazing season
- Infrastructure/building costs covered with minimum borrowing
- Land suited to a high output animal

HOW WE FARM

FEEDING

- 1.4mt conc. feed per cow
- Buffer with maize & beet
- Fueling the cow to perform

BREEDING

- Small team of bulls for uniform calves
- Want bulls +0.10 for solids
- Strong emphasis on type
- Yamaska; Perseus and Praser
- 100% Sexed semen on heifers
- 60:40 Calving split - labour & grazing

MANAGEMENT

- Use IFAC management tools for planning - helps to know the unknown for the year ahead.
- N - use efficiency at 46%
- 61 cows in herd on >4000kg solids

2023 Latest EBI for milking herd and calf crop

	EBI	Milk	Fertility	Carbon	Calv	Beef	Maint	Mgmt	Health	Milk kg	Fat kgs	Pro kgs	Fat %	Pro %
Cows	134	64	34	-12	29	-3	4	2	15	295	11.6	11.3	0.00	0.02
Calves	182	88	57	-13	36	-4	0	0	18	342	16.8	14.3	0.06	0.05

Paudie & Sean Brennan, Suttonsrath Herd

Paudie runs a herd of 110 spring calving cows in Co.Kilkenny supplying Tirlán under the Suttonsrath Herd prefix. His son Sean studied Agricultural Science in UCD, after which he worked with Tirlán . Sean finished his time there this year and is settling into full time farming alongside Paudie. Also helping out at the farm in Jenkinstown are sons Donal and Stephen and wife Dymphna. Sean is very involved in selecting bulls for the farm and also keeps a close eye on fertiliser and slurry application, his time in UCD and Tirlán helping him keep up to date with agricultural advances and new technology. Averaging 6,380 litres per cow with solids tipping 530kg this is a balanced herd that is consistently delivering in terms of components, classifications and strong EBI value.

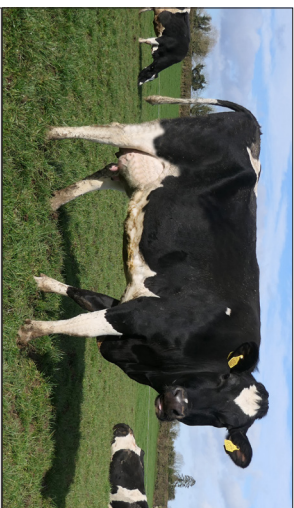
Paudie uses high EBI bulls on his farm, but he believes good conformation scores and classifications of dams is very important in producing a good calf and future milking cow for the herd. Paudie favours bulls whose dams are classified excellent, if the bull dam was classified as a heifer she would need to be 83 or 84 points and 88 or 89 if a 3 year old. This focus on EBI plus classification has resulted in an impressively uniform herd of medium size cows with udders that last the test of time. Within the herd itself Paudie has 6 EX classified cows, 26 VG's and 46 GP's.

Fertility is very high on the farm with a 90% six week calving rate and only 10 weeks of AI every spring. And cows repeating outside this will be picked up by the stock bull. Most importantly the Brennans calve early in January and February to make best use of their ability to turn out cows to grass early in the year. There is no sexed semen used on the Brennan farm at present and Paudie is happy to keep it this way as conventional semen is providing him with more than enough high-quality female replacements to maintain the herd. Smart investments have been made on the farm in recent years to increase cubicles and install a new 16 unit swing over parlour which they started milking in during the spring of 2021. The changes have made a great difference to both the cows and Paudie and his family in running the farm.

Paudies EBI is increasing with every new generation of calves - this years calf crop average €263 and crucially are balanced across milk and fertility, thus proving high producing dairy cows can also boast great fertility!

FARM PERFORMANCE

2022 Figures - Milk Recording 305d	
Cows	110
Calving Interval	364 days
Milk Yield kgs	6900
Fat kgs (%)	312 (4.52)
Protein kgs (%)	246 (3.57)
Total Solids kgs	558
Conformation Av.	81.4
Stocking Rate	2.3
Lifetime Value/day	€3.34
Average lactation	2.9



Suttonsrath Louise 1637 VG 85

WHY THIS SYSTEM?

- Land dry, suited to early grazing so calve from mid January
- 100% Spring calving - value break from milking
- Utilise building on farm, frogmented land zero grazed - want labour efficiencies
- Building farm & herd for next generation

HOW WE FARM

FEEDING

- 11mt conc. feed per cow
- Zero grazer utilises land further away
- Also keeps grass quality high - premowing and cleaning out paddocks

BREEDING

- 100% Conventional semen
- Compact calving - 90% in Jan and Feb,
- Breeding policy - EBI bulls, focus on dam (type & production), bull dam ex if can, milk 200+, positive percentages

MANAGEMENT

- Rear bull calves on farm - strong calves key
- Investment in parlour and facilities to make farming easier
- Investment in new parlour to make farming easier

2023 Latest EBI for milking herd and calf crop

	EBI	Milk	Fertility	Carbon	Calv	Beef	Maint	Mgmt	Health	Milk kg	Fat kgs	Pro kgs	Fat %	Pro %
Cows	224	68	106	3	40	-5	9	2	3	129	11.1	9.5	0.11	0.09
Calves	263	88	123	4	43	-8	10	1	3	112	14.4	11.6	0.17	0.13

Patrick Pentony, Gallrua Herd

Patrick operates a split calving herd of 80 cows under the Gallrua Herd Prefix in Co.Louth. Patrick's wife Aisling and son Ronan help on the farm, Ronan is currently studying agriculture at Ballyhaise. 2023 was a difficult year for grazing in Drogheda, the herd didn't get out full time until the end of May. The farm has always been wet with difficult soils so Patrick is well versed in selectively grazing at the beginning of the season to preserve ground conditions, while still meeting the herds nutritional demands. The herds calving pattern is also designed to not overburden the land with demand for grass in the spring – 50 cows calve in the spring time and 30 more in the autumn, usually out at grass. This also helps Patrick manage his calf rearing as the batches of calves are more spread out throughout the year.

Patrick is a fantastic example of how grading up to pedigree status can lead to a stellar pedigree herd – he began milk recording in 1990 and engaged the IHFA services to grade up the herd over time. The Margaret family which are numerous in the herd today trace back to the original herd. Patrick values the service provided by the IHFA classifiers for identifying strong and weak aspect of the herd to work on, classification day is always enjoyable and a chance to appreciate the good stock bred on the farm. Patrick sees a strong correlation between classification and the quality and functionality of the stock.

Overall Patrick looks for a balanced cow that is easy to manage and productive. Bull selection helps with this, Patrick would aim for bulls around +200kg milk, positive for fat and protein and with good fertility. He would also place emphasis on linear traits – chest width, rump angle and teat position in particular. Patrick is a firm believer in the importance of dam Classification if using young bulls, ideally dams should be VG or higher he feels, otherwise you don't know what you are getting in terms of functionality of the cow. The breeding policy is always evolving on the farm, of late emphasis on stature and angularity has diminished. Patrick's attention to detail in his breeding has produced a robust, uniform herd with good overall fertility and health.

There are 3 EX classified cows in the herd currently, one of these cows Gallrua Margaret 22 has produced 5 daughters during her 9 lactations with an average calving interval of 366 days. Strong classifications carry through the entire herd with 18 VG animals and 27 GP.

FARM PERFORMANCE

2022 Figures - Milk Recording 305d	
Cows	67
Calving Interval	382 days
Milk Yield kgs	6326
Fat kgs (%)	273 (4.32)
Protein kgs (%)	226 (3.57)
Total Solids kgs	500
Conformation Av.	83.0
Stocking Rate	1.92
Lifetime Value/day	€2.60
Average lactation	3.1



Gallrua Margaret 22 EX 91

WHY THIS SYSTEM?

- Split calving to suit grazing & calf facilities
- Spreads workload while son at college
- Bought pedigree stock from prominent herds & graded up rest of herd
- Wet farm - careful grass management
- Learned from pedigree information & classification scores to improve herd

HOW WE FARM

- FEEDING**
- 1.2mt conc. feed per cow
 - Buffer feed silage from Sept to extend grazing

- BREEDING**
- Can't just rely on figures - bull dams type crucial. Bulls +200kg milk, positive %
 - Chilton, Motion, Nappavalley & Wimbleton.
 - 100% Conventional, price & results reliable

- MANAGEMENT**
- Built a system that works - aim to get a bit more out of winter milk.
 - Walk grass weekly
 - Records key - Milk recording & pedigrees so you know what you are breeding
 - Classification helps with herd uniformity
 - Trouble free, healthy, fertile herd

2023 Latest EBI for milking herd and calf crop

	EBI	Milk	Fertility	Carbon	Calv	Beef	Maint	Mgmt	Health	Milk kg	Fat kgs	Pro kgs	Fat %	Pro %
Cows	173	68	54	-8	39	-2	6	4	12	312	13.1	11.7	0.02	0.02
Calves	221	86	79	-7	41	-2	4	3	16	323	15.7	14	0.06	0.05

Gearoid Maher, Killuragh Herd

Farming under the Killuragh herd prefix since 2011 Gearoid runs a herd of 80 pedigree Pure Friesian cows which are uniquely suited to the land type in Cappamore. Farming on very heavy clay soil the average grazing season would range from 200 to 240 days. The cow was going to be the engine of the farm and had to suit this land type and the Pure Friesian breed offered that. With a low stocking rate the cull cow has a huge value as do the bull calves, and the pure Friesian breeding means Gearoid always has a market for his stock. The longevity of the breed has shone through with a number of the first cows Gearoid purchased remaining mainstays in the herd to this day - now in their 10th lactations!

Gearoid and his family held this year's Pure Friesian Open Day. A highlight of the herd is the high level of solids production they have reached off marginal land while being minus for milk on the EBI system. There are heifers bred from the Pure Friesian clubs bulls that are averaging 5,600kgs milk and they need a relatively short dry period before coming back stronger as second calvers - Gearoid finds they can put on too much condition if dried off early. Fertility is strong in the herd with a calving interval close to 365 days and a 4% empty rate, submission rate to first service is consistently over 90% and conception rate to first service around 70%.

Currently there are three EX cows 23 VG cows on the farm. There are eight cows of 8th lactation and older in the herd, all of which are highly classified. An excellent example of pedigree animals that have it all - fertility, health and longevity. Gearoid emphasises that the cows and cow type are key to the farms success. He believes the pure Friesian hugely underrated as a breed in the country and looking at this high producing, highly fertile, low maintenance herd its hard to argue with this belief!

Like all farmers Gearoid is aware of the effects farming practises can have on the ecosystem and works conscientiously to protect waterways from any farm run off or chemicals. In terms of NUE and nitrates Gearoid wont need to make any changes to his herd size as he is currently operating at 51% NUE and a N stocking rate of 157 units N/ha. Gearoid has invested in multi-species swards, reduced N application and all slurry is spread using low emission slurry spreading (LESS). Gearoid has used selective dry cow therapy when drying off cows over the last number of years, in 2022 only 10% of cows received antibiotics at drying off.

FARM PERFORMANCE

2022 Figures - Milk Recording 305d	
Cows	78
Calving Interval	376 days
Milk Yield kgs	6794
Fat kgs (%)	290 (4.27)
Protein kgs (%)	244 (3.59)
Total Solids kgs	534
Conformation Av.	82.7
Stocking Rate	1.59
Lifetime Value/day	€2.41
Average lactation	4.2



Killuragh Maudmount EX 90

WHY THIS SYSTEM?

- Heavy land - need small powerful cow
- Generations before milked Pure Friesian
- Focus on sustainable production
- Wanted high value cull cow & bull calf
- Established herd from scratch - pedigree and good families important
- Good story of Irish Dairying to tell

HOW WE FARM

FEEDING

- 700 kg conc. feed per cow
- Buffer with beet
- Multispecies swards - cows like them and no N spread

BREEDING

- Low maintenance, fertile, long lasting cow
- Good udder & conformation
- Want milk and protein from bulls
- Pedigree bulls from Pure Friesian herds

MANAGEMENT

- 100% Spring calving as no winter milk bonus
- 75% 6 week calving rate - not aiming for higher to balance labour demands
- Cow welfare at core - ample cubicles & feed space, limit walking distances,
- Limited N protect waterways & biodiversity

2023 Latest EBI for milking herd and calf crop

	EBI	Milk	Fertility	Carbon	Calv	Beef	Maint	Mgmt	Health	Milk kg	Fat kgs	Pro kgs	Fat %	Pro %
Cows	192	9	118	21	18	-1	18	1	7	-95	0.6	-0.1	0.08	0.06
Calves	205	18	117	21	28	-3	17	0	8	-101	2	0.8	0.11	0.08

Robert Shannon, Ballydehob Herd

Robert farms under the Ballydehob prefix, originally established by his father Billy. Robert and his wife Shirley run a split calving herd of 92 cows in Co. Cork with their son Stephen and daughter Sarah. Robert has long focused on maintaining good milk hygiene with an average SCC of 71 for 2022 and maintains a tight calving interval at 365 days with the herd split calving 50:50 spring and autumn/winter.

Cow families have always been key to the herd with the Trixie, Patsy and Mary lines particularly successful over the years. Ballydehob OJ Trixie EX 94 5E (pictured overleaf) is in her 13th lactation and has produced 9 daughters with a calving interval of 357 days. There are more than 50 descendants from the Trixie family in the herd currently. This family also produced the young sire Ballydehob Jota with over €300 EBI and good type figures. From the Patsy family Ballydehob St Louis Patsy EX90 3E has been incredibly prolific for Robert both in terms of milk & daughters. In her 6th lactation she has produced six daughters from just 7 straws with a calving interval of 361 days, and is scanned in calf again for autumn this year from a single service of sexed Nortonhill R2 D2. Robert has built a herd of trouble-free, fertile, highly productive animals through very precise careful management and breeding.

Robert looks for a bull that is positive in fat and protein percentages and positive for milk, or minorly negative at least. Type is incredibly important in his mind and always selects for good udders, feet and legs, width through the chest and nothing too high in the pins. Robert has seen over the years that these are functional traits that determine whether a cow will last in the herd or not for multiple lactations.

As Robert uses a lot of imported bulls he stresses the importance of checking their statistics in their home country as well as their converted EBI statistics as sometimes they can come across poorly. This strategy clearly works as there are 17 EX, 30 VG and 22 GP cows in the herd this year. The cows have the production to match as 23% of the current herd have produced over 3000kgs of solids in their lifetime to date. What's really great to see is that this high production is done without a diet feeder in the yard and an average of just 1.8mt concentrate in the diet. This high efficiency in turning feed into milk and solids partly explains how Robert is operating at such an excellent Nitrogen Use Efficiency of 61% with 208 units N/ha.

FARM PERFORMANCE

2022 Figures - Milk Recording 305d	
Cows	74
Calving Interval	358 days
Milk Yield kgs	9706
Fat kgs (%)	431 (4.44)
Protein kgs (%)	355 (3.65)
Total Solids kgs	786
Conformation Av.	85.8
Stocking Rate	2.29
Lifetime Value/day	€4.03
Average lactation	2.8



Ballydehob OJ Trixie EX 94 5E

WHY THIS SYSTEM?

- Limited milking platform
- High EBI - demand for bulls Ballydehob Adam, Jota, Mystic 2544, Ringo
- Best utilisation of on farm facilities
- Bonus winter milk scheme from Carbery
- Maximise production from spring calvers

HOW WE FARM

- FEEDING**
- Maximising grass in the diet
 - 1.8mt conc. feed per cow. Winter diet - wholecrop wheat, top up in parlour

BREEDING

- Functional cows for longevity in herd - good udders, legs & feet
- Want bulls + for solids % and solids kgs
- Breeding decisions made on genomics, type and cow families
- Imported bulls - important to check figures in home country
- Next gen. of heifers from Mystic, Prince, Praser, Omega P, Conway, Alta Lawson

MANAGEMENT

- Simple system maximise grass quality & quantity
- Contract rearing heifers

2023 Latest EBI for milking herd and calf crop

	EBI	Milk	Fertility	Carbon	Calv	Beef	Maint	Mgmt	Health	Milk kg	Fat kgs	Pro kgs	Fat %	Pro %
Cows	227	83	95	-2	40	-10	6	3	13	166	14.1	11.6	0.13	0.1
Calves	220	107	79	-11	43	-18	1	2	17	228	19.3	14.8	0.18	0.12

John Galvin, Doonmanagh Herd

John runs the Doonmanagh Herd, currently standing at 82 cows, in Lispole, Co.Kerry along with his wife Mary and family. John is a big proponent for pedigree breeding and has seen the benefits of careful breeding and selection over the years. Pedigree records and breeding from the highest performing families in the herd has resulted in a herd with excellent longevity, the average parity currently stands at 3.7 with 19 Doonmanagh cows currently in their 6th lactation or greater.

John has found EBI a very useful tool in improving the herd over the years and in achieving his breeding goals. The average EBI of the herd in 2023 is €236 for the cows, €257 for the yearling heifers and €269 for this year's female calves, showing an improvement in the overall EBI with each generation. This strong EBI performance combined with well classified animals has led to great success for the Doonmanagh herd in the Kerry Holstein Friesian Club's herd competition over the years. "We've taken part in the herds competition since 2002 and it's something that I have found hugely rewarding and beneficial. Participation in the competition and learning from judges and other herds over the years has helped build the herd to where it is today" says John.

John placed in the Top 50 IHFA EBI herds for 2023 which was a fitting reward for the care he has given to improving the genetic value of his animals in recent years. Doonmanagh LHZ Sunflower was awarded the Highest EBI Cow Classified EX/VG award at this years IHFA Open Day, she is classified EX90 4E and her EBI stands at an enormous €397. There are 7 EX, 28 VG and 45 GP cows in the herd at present and John feels lie classification are always a good measure of where the herd is at in terms of quality and longevity. 18 cows in the current herd have produced over 3,000kgs solids across their lactations which is hugely important for profitability of a herd.

John has also had eight bulls sold into AI over the last number of years which is a source of great pride, and a sign to him that EBI is really benefitting the herd and the animals he produces. The most notable is Doonmanagh Seville, who has over 40,000 progeny registered. Doonmanagh Paulson is the newest star to emerge from the herd with over €330 EBI and positive type scores.

FARM PERFORMANCE

2022 Figures - Milk Recording 305d	
Cows	82
Calving Interval	382 days
Milk Yield kgs	6989
Fat kgs (%)	297 (4.25)
Protein kgs (%)	262 (3.75)
Total Solids kgs	559
Conformation Av.	83.4
Stocking Rate	2.22
Lifetime Value/day	€3.05
Average lactation	3.5



Dam of Doonmanagh Seville

WHY THIS SYSTEM?

- Short grazing season,
- High rain fall, long distances walking
- Uses EBI Sub-index to improve specific faults - final EBI value not the focus
- Graded up herd based on interest is breeding & added value of pedigree
- System has gotten multiple bulls into AI

HOW WE FARM

FEEDING

- 15mt conc. feed per cow
- Careful grass management, grazing ends by night Oct, high quality silage needed

BREEDING

- Team of bulls - matches to cows needs
- Focus: Increase volume, solids, udders, legs and feet

MANAGEMENT

- Changed to lower N fert,
- DNA pilot programme increased EBI
- compact calving (feb is main month)
- Munster Health Programme
- Kerry breeders club very rewarding
- Classification key - shows weak & strong points
- Built for next generation to take over

2023 Latest EBI for milking herd and calf crop

	EBI	Milk	Fertility	Carbon	Calv	Beef	Maint	Mgmt	Health	Milk kg	Fat kgs	Pro kgs	Fat %	Pro %
Cows	236	81	104	0	42	-5	8	1	5	167	13.2	11.7	0.12	0.1
Calves	269	105	113	-5	44	-7	4	2	12	210	19	14.4	0.18	0.12

Farrell Scully, Choshull Herd

Farrell and his wife Anita milk 60 spring calving cows under the Choshull Herd Prefix in Ballymote, Co. Sligo. EBI has taken the guess work out of breeding decisions for Farrell, from pedigree records, classification results and milk recording records he can identify the best cows in the herd. Careful bull selection then helps generate even better daughters. Farrell will use the best bulls suited to his system, not just selecting bulls from the Top EBI list or one AI company. The bulls selected must have good EBI, high reliability, easy calving and ultimately produce a solid, robust cow that is trouble free for her productive life. This tried and tested system has worked fantastically for Farrell allowing the herd grow from 10 cows in his father's time to the 60-strong herd we see today.

The land around Ballymote is quiet fragmented and open to the elements, so animals have to carry themselves on good feet and legs, as well as being solid and sturdy to really thrive. This focus on sturdy stock has produced a really strong mature herd – 37% of the cows are currently in their 4th or greater lactation

Farrell's EBI averages are higher than the national averages for all lactation groups and his calf crop continue to improve year on year – the 2022 calf crop stood at €236 and the 2023 calves soared past that value to €281. Farrell has seen the value of the EBI in both the milk tank and in the value of his stock and it has really helped him with making breeding decisions. Farrell sells on a number of bull calves and heifers every year and it is very easy to find customers for the strong, high EBI calves he breeds. For this reason Farrell currently uses all conventional semen as he is also not looking to increase the herd size so sufficient replacements come from conventional straws. It is something he may look to in the future however and then use more easy-calving beef straws to really get the most out of every calf born on the farm.

Classification has been a hugely useful tool to Farrell over the years, the visit from the classifier is always looked forward to, and Farrell holds the knowledge and advice from the classifiers in very high esteem. Choshull RPA Curlew EX90 is the highest classified cow in the herd but she is in good company with 12 VG and 24 GP cows currently in the herd also.

FARM PERFORMANCE

2022 Figures - Milk Recording 305d	
Cows	54
Calving Interval	368 days
Milk Yield kgs	6107
Fat kgs (%)	268 (4.39)
Protein kgs (%)	221 (3.62)
Total Solids kgs	489
Conformation Av.	82.6
Stocking Rate	1.7
Lifetime Value/day	€2.52
Average lactation	3.3



Choshull RPA Curlew EX90

WHY THIS SYSTEM?

- Fragmented marginal land
- Grass based system with minimum concentrates
- Value in bull calves - repeat customers, no need for sexed semen currently
- Herd expanded from 10 cows to 60 in this generation

HOW WE FARM

FEEDING

- 850 kg conc. feed per cow
- Early grazing this year, helps keep feed costs low

BREEDING

- Picks bulls best suited to herd from range of AI companies
- Ballinroe Xaar, Cappouniac Aramax, Olcastle Casper, Barrackhill Reuben
- Easy calving beef straws on cows that replacements wont come from

MANAGEMENT

- Additional labour units to manage work-load
- Milk hygiene and health focus - SCC <100
- Calves reared on farm - roughly 9,500 litres of milk fed during the year

2023 Latest EBI for milking herd and calf crop

	EBI	Milk	Fertility	Carbon	Calv	Beef	Maint	Mgmt	Health	Milk kg	Fat kgs	Pro kgs	Fat %	Pro %
Cows	207	62	86	5	39	-6	12	2	6	98	11.3	8	0.12	0.08
Calves	281	82	128	10	45	-8	14	2	9	111	14.7	10.4	0.18	0.12

Inspired by our Pedigree famers here today?

Whats stopping you from grading up?

Generations of non-pedigree Holstein Friesians
Consistent breeding records
Milk recording

Want to add value & secure the future of your herd?

Take the first step to grade-up today!

Call field officer Donal Carey on 087-7922576
to find out how to achieve
pedigree status for your herd

Or enquire with our office staff at 023-8833443



Upcoming Events:



FIELD 2 PHOTO COMPETITION

 Saturday 28th October

 10.30am - 4.00pm

 Gurteen College, E53 TP93

- CLIPPING • SHOWMANSHIP
- WASHING • PHOTOGRAPHY

SIGN UP USING THE LINK BELOW!



Prize Schedule 2023



Hallow Atwood Twizzle 1181
Supreme Champion National Dairy Show 2022

Friday 13th - Saturday 14th October 2023
Green Glens Arena, Millstreet, Co.Cork

IHFA would like to sincerely thank the Focus Farmers and their families for taking part in this years event and coverage throughout the year. Keep up to date with all IHFA & YMA Events through our website and social media sites.

Make the most out of your IHFA Membership!

At IHFA we are dedicated to assisting our members in developing their herd, improving their genetics and maximising their farm profits.

We can help with advertising of sales, promotion of herds and much more - please reach out to the office for more information

Check out the IHFA website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for a range of the posts and information we can share

Services & Events:

- Catalogue production
- Advertising
- Social media support
- Open days
- Field Evenings
- Registrations
- Classifications
- Grade Up
- YMA Events

enquiries@ihfa.ie
Tel: 023 8833443
Scan QR code to IHFA.ie!





GENETIC DIVERSITY SUITABLE TO ALL DAIRY FARMING SYSTEMS!

**CLASSIFICATION/LINEAR SCORING
PROVIDES AN INDEPENDENT, UNBIASED
ANALYSIS OF COW CONFORMATION**

CONFORMATION ✓ INCREASES COW VALUE
CONFORMATION ✓ IMPROVE HERD QUALITY
**CONFORMATION ✓ ENHANCES BREEDING AND
MARKETING DECISIONS**

HOLSTEIN FRIESIANS ARE...

- **MOST EFFICIENT CONVERTERS OF FORAGE TO MILK SOLIDS**
- **BACKED BY RELIABLE SCIENTIFIC DATA**
- **GENETICALLY DIVERSE TO SUIT ALL DAIRY FARMING SYSTEMS**