

SHEEP 2018

Pre-booking is essential as places are limited and tickets will be issued on a first come basis.

Members are welcome to bring 1 non member friend at members rates if they wish.
(You need to ring the office or make a postal booking to avail of this new offer).

Book _____ member(s) at €35 each.

Total: € _____

Book 1 friend at €35.

Total: € _____

Book _____ non member(s) at €70 each.

Total: € _____

Cheque enclosed: € _____

ATTENDING DELEGATE CONTACT DETAILS

NAME (DELEGATE 1): _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

NAME (DELEGATE 2): _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

DISCUSSION GROUP DEAL (for groups of 10+ members) :

€35 per head for discussion groups of 10+ members who book and prepay in full before Wednesday 9th May (strictly no late applications accepted after this special offer date). Please email: secretary@irishgrassland.com to apply.

- A) Booking online www.irishgrassland.com
- B) Posting this form and your cheque to: Registrations, IGA Office, Cookstown, Kells Co. Meath.
- C) Phone 087 9626483

Conference fee includes attendance, copy of the conference proceeding, bus transfers to and from farm, refreshments and dinner. Please note that as part of the IGA initiative to attract new members, the conference fee for non-members also includes one year's FREE membership to the IGA for all new direct debit memberships.

So, if you are thinking of attending then book today and don't miss out on these excellent offers!

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SHEEP CONFERENCE AND FARM WALK

22ND MAY 2018 TIPPERARY



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Programme for the day

Venue: Horse and Jockey Hotel

Date: 22nd May, 9.30-5:00pm

9.30am Registration, Tea and Coffee

Morning Session

10.30am Welcome & opening of sheep conference
Jan Jensma President of the Irish Grassland Association

10.40am **Session 1: Sheep production making the most of available resources**

Chairman: *Ciaran Lynch IGA Council Member and Teagasc*

- Future Potential for the sheep industry
Darren Carty, Irish Farmers Journal
- Sheep Ireland: Progress to date
Kevin McDermott & Eamonn Wall
- Improving flock performance - you can only manage what you can measure
Mathew Blyth, Didling Farms, UK

Discussion

12.30pm Lunch will be provided for all delegates

Afternoon Session

Chairmen:

Ronan Delany IGA Council Member and Beef/Sheep Farmer

Brian Nicholson IGA Council Member and Sheep Farmer

1.30pm Bus will transfer all delegates to and from the host farm (no parking on farm please, bus transfers only)

2.00pm Farm walk on farm of John Large

Topics to be covered

- Farm overview
- Flock performance & breeding
- Grassland management
- Economic performance

4.30pm Depart farm by Bus

5.00pm Arrive back at Horse & Jockey Hotel

Speaker Profiles: Session 1

Darren Carty, Irish Farmers Journal



Darren Carty is a livestock specialist with the *Irish Farmers Journal*. His work covers all aspects of sheep production with a strong focus on markets and technical production. Growth in the national sheep flock is ongoing and this has underpinned a sharp rise in sheepmeat production. Processing dynamics are also changing with throughput

more closely aligned to a mid-season production system. At the same time, processing dynamics are also evolving with growth in exports of value-added or boneless sheepmeat products to a rapidly changing marketplace. This presentation will look at further possible changes in the sector and what steps farmers can take to best prepare and protect their production system.

Kevin McDermott and Eamon Wall, Sheep Ireland



Kevin and Eamon are the programme managers for Sheep Ireland and are based in Bandon, Co. Cork. Sheep Ireland has been in operation since late 2008, and has founded the Irish sheep breed improvement

programme to help identify and promote the most profitable sheep genetics in the country. Kevin and Eamon will discuss the main milestones achieved over the first ten years of the programme and reveal what the future may hold for Irish sheep breeding.

Mathew Blyth, Flock Manager, Didling Farms, West Sussex UK



Mathew is the flock manager for Didling farms since 2004. The unit carries some 1000 ewes mainly Llyen, Llyen cross, Aberfield and Mule ewes. The system incorporates a combination of grassland, plantain, chicory and red clover leys. Mathew has adopted the mantra that you can manage what you can measure. Through embracing

technology, particularly the use of EID, he has sought to improve efficiency in the flock. Mathew will discuss flock management, involvement with various trials and industry initiatives as well as the improvements made during his tenure with the flock.

Farmer Profile: John Large



John is living in Gortnahoe with his family, located just inside the borders of Co Tipperary. The farm encompasses three blocks of ground equating to an 80ha operation. John has always adopted a progressive approach to new initiatives helping drive the sheep industry forward. John is one of the Central Progeny Test (CPT) flocks working with Sheep Ireland and was

one of the original participants in the programme since it began in 2010. Aside from breeding initiatives he has embraced the grazing challenge having previously hosted one of the Teagasc Grass10 Programme sheep walks.

Sheep system

The sheep system makes up the main part of the farming enterprise, running a closed flock which comprises of 630 mature ewes and 160 ewe lambs that are also joined. Stocked at approx. 12 ewes per hectare, with all progeny excluding replacements taken to finish this is a high output system. As part of the CPT Programme all the mature ewes are AI'd. In total four different ram breeds Texel Suffolk, Charollais and Belclare were used on the flock. All ewe lambs are also joined with a key focus on the farm ensuring that these lambs reach a target weight of 48 kg at joining. The focus on ensuring ewe lambs reach their target weight has been paying dividends, pregnancy rates for this group this year are 86.5 % with those pregnant carrying on average 1.24 lambs.

A challenge posed by having such large numbers lambing at one time is the need for sufficient amounts of grass at turnout. John has focused efforts to ensure sufficient ground is rested from October on to have reserves built up for spring. Increasing the amount of divisions on the farm and investments in fencing infrastructure has aided in this process. Achieving high levels of performance from grass is key for this flock, with the high stocking rate good levels of performance are needed to meet drafting targets.

Beef system

The beef system is based on a 35 cow autumn calving suckler herd. Replacements for the suckler herd are purchased. To further keep the grazing system and resources streamlined all bull calves from the herd are sold as weanlings in the spring. The heifers are carried over to the following year and finished off farm. Good grassland management is central to the beef system in order to achieve performance. This system is operating at 2.4 lu per hectare achieving an output of 774 kg per hectare.