

ICSA Protest at ABP Rathkeale



ICSA members led by Seamus Sherlock and Michael Moore, along with general secretary Eddie Punch, gather outside ABP Rathkeale ahead of protest. See page 4 for more.

Stand up and fight

Are you sick of losing money on beef?

Are you thinking about giving up sucklers?

Are you frustrated that you don't get Quality Assured bonus payments on cows, over 30 month cattle, on bulls, on cattle too fat or too thin, on cattle that have too many movements?

Are you outraged that the QAS scheme has been manipulated to destroy the mart trade for heavy cattle because of a false interpretation of the 70 days residency requirement?

Does it sicken you to know that Irish farmers have lost €168 million in 12 months due to price cuts even though the UK consumer is paying the same or more in shops and even though the sterling/euro exchange rate movements alone would support a higher price to Irish farmers?

Eddie Punch
General Secretary

We can complain and curse the factories/supermarkets or we can do something. The time is now. Factories and supermarkets have boosted their profits through their emphasis on the Quality Assurance Scheme while farmers have been treated like mugs. Farmers endure the hassle of a Bord Bia inspection and all the extra paperwork and effort

that it entails. Yet even though 90% of cattle going into meat plants are from Quality Assured farms, only 25% of cattle get a Quality Assured bonus. Somebody is coddling you and you need to shout stop.

That's why ICSA want to bring farmers together to shout stop. We have to hit them where it hurts. The one vulnerable spot is the Quality Assurance Scheme. Factories have built contracts with various customers on the back of

the QAS. We didn't have a problem with that- sure farmers have gone the extra mile to facilitate this- but we can no longer collaborate with a system that is being used and abused to screw us.

The message we need to send out loud and clear is: No fair play for farmers- no Quality Assurance Scheme.

However, we know that individual farmers are too vulnerable to do this on their own. So the plan

is that we all sign up to pulling the plug on the Quality Assurance Scheme. But it will be on the basis of "All for one, one for all". That means that no individual farmer will be asked to pull out of QAS on his/her own. We want all farmers who are prepared to jump collectively to sign up to the ICSA petition. Not on your own, but together.

So stage one is to collect names and herd numbers.

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President's Address

Patrick Kent - President, ICSA



In the three months since the last Drystock farmer, I had hoped to see some relief for our besieged beef sector. Instead what we have seen is continued pressure from factories and retailers to keep prices down.

You can read more about ICSA's continued call for a regulator for the beef industry, a key element of our policy, elsewhere on this page.

ICSA has calculated that price-cutting by meat factories over the past 12 months has cost Irish beef farmers a cumulative €168 million. These price cuts have not been passed on to

consumers, so it is clear that processors and supermarkets must be lining their own pockets, using Quality Assurance and the Quality Payment System as the means to do so. ICSA is therefore calling on all farmers to withdraw from the Quality Assured Scheme. Our demands are laid out on the adjoining page, and I would urge all farmers to sign our petition and show processors and retailers that we will no longer accept their bully-boy tactics.

Certainly the beef roundtable forum has provided little in terms of solutions to the beef crisis so far, and I must question whether it will be able to. The Minister must bring

retailers to the table to defend their policies.

Speaking of the Minister, I noted with interest and some disappointment the addition of Defence to his portfolio. Is it any wonder that the Minister seems unable to get to grips with the beef crisis when he is busy working on the Golan Heights issue?

Other serious concerns such as farm safety education for children and commonage issues also feature in this issue and will, I am sure, be of interest to our readers.

ICSA to keep pressure up for a regulator

ICSA is to continue its campaign for a regulator for the beef sector. "Last year, we had the horsemeat scandal, but no prosecutions," said beef chairman Edmond Phelan. "Have we learned anything from the beef tribunal? The manipulation of the supply chain by processors and retailers has resulted in an extra €168m loss to farmers over 12 months, with no change to UK retail prices."

Key issues for the regulator include:

- Investigating the practice of factory owned & controlled feedlots
- Ensuring consultation with farmers' representatives on pricing and specs
- Introducing transparency in retail profits & publicising excessive profiteering at the farmers' expense
- Ensuring that state-sponsored Bord Bia QAS is not used and abused by factories to drive down price
- Adjudicating on the justification for 30-month price cuts, new weight limits for bulls & other arbitrary spec changes
- Ensuring that there is no cartel when it comes to prices paid to farmers.

Current structures have been ineffective when it comes to dealing with these issues. The time has come to have a regulator at arm's length from the Government, just as there are taxi, communications and airline regulators.

SPECIAL BREEDING HEIFER EVENT BTAP QUALIFYING EVENT HOSTED BY ICSA

**WEDNESDAY 1ST OCTOBER 6.30PM
CARRIGALLEN MART, Co. LEITRIM**

**HEIFERS ON DISPLAY & PRESENTATIONS
ON SUCKLER GENETICS, CALVING
& PROFITABILITY BY:**

CHRIS DALY ICBF
ARTHUR BREDIN PROGRESSIVE GENETICS
OLIVER CROWE CC AGRICULTURAL CONSULTANTS
EDDIE PUNCH ICSA

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ICSA - Tackling the Beef Crisis Head On

- ICSA was the only farm organisation to take an outspoken view on the need for prosecutions in the wake of the horse meat scandal
- ICSA is the only farm organisation to call for a regulator to tackle uncompetitive practices in the meat industry - manipulation of pricing, factory-controlled feedlots, transparency over margins made by processors and retailers and blocking sudden

changes in pricing systems and specs for beef cattle

- ICSA has called for EU wide legislation to block meat processors from also controlling or owning feedlots
- ICSA is calling supermarkets' bluff on the need for under 30 month beef - demanding to see independently verified research
- ICSA has pointed out that while Bord Bia boast that over 90% of cattle come from QA farms, only 1 in 4 animals get the QPS bonus
- ICSA has called on all farmers, farm organisations and marts to withdraw co-operation with the Bord Bia QA Scheme,

unless there is movement on key beef issues by Nov. 1st

- ICSA calculates that €168m that should have gone to farmers was swallowed up by factories and retailers between July 2013 and July 2014, while the price consumers paid rose!
- ICSA has lobbied politicians and civil servants North and South of the border to deliver workable solutions on cattle movements and beef labelling
- ICSA has begun a series of protests outside meat factories

For more, visit www.icsaireland.ie/news/beef-crisis

Stand up and fight -

No fair play for farmers means no to Quality Assurance Scheme

continued from page 1

These names will not be supplied to any meat plant or to Bord Bia. They will be made available to an independent adjudicator whose job will be to confirm numbers. When we have sufficient numbers to collapse the Quality Assurance Scheme then we will jump together. If at any time you want to change your mind you can do so and we guarantee to respect your wishes.

However, we have got to face the reality that unless we take drastic action, we will go on getting screwed.

We will withdraw the threat if we get results on the following:

- A Quality Assurance bonus to be paid on all Quality Assured animals.
 - No more discrimination on over 30 month cattle
- Fair play for marts with an end to the residency and four movements requirement
 - A realistic age and weight spec for high quality continental suckler cattle
- Changes to spec and pricing systems can only occur through negotiation with farmer representatives and with adequate lead in times for farmers

How do I support the ICSA action?

All farmers are welcome to support us.

Simply fill in the attached form and send it to us.

Alternatively sign up online by visiting www.icsaireland.com



ICSA believes farmers should no longer co-operate with a 'quality' system that is used to drive down prices and undermine beef farmers everywhere.

We want all farmers to sign up to ICSA's petition and collectively show the factories and retailers abusing the system that without changes, "No fair play for farmers means NO to Quality Assurance Scheme"

If you support our petition, please complete this form and return it to ICSA, 3 Gandon Court, The Fairgreen, Portlaoise, Co. Laois. The petition will also be available on our website, www.icsaireland.ie

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Herd Number: _____



***Your details will not be supplied to any meat plant or to Bord Bia. They will only be provided to an independent auditor for confirmation of the number of responses**

ICSA Protests at Meat Factories

Limerick and West Cork ICSA branches recently organised separate protests at ABP in Rathkeale and Bandon respectively to highlight the ongoing beef crisis. According to Limerick's Seamus Sherlock, the objective of the protest was to put pressure on meat factories and to raise awareness of the issues, not to prevent farmers from selling their cattle. "This was a protest: not a picket," he said. "No farmer wanting to deliver cattle into the plant was impeded in any way. It was encouraging that a number of farmers, who were not ICSA members, also took part in the protest, during which leaflets were handed out to members of the public and other farmers." Limerick chairman Michael Moore concurred with this, saying "Farmers have been screwed by meat factories and it's time to stand up and be counted."

Meanwhile in Bandon, there was a similarly positive response, and West Cork chairman Dermot Kelleher said he was encouraged by the turn-out. "The fact that so many busy farmers were willing to take the time to come and join our protest shows just how concerned they are about the current situation. The abuse of the Quality Pricing System by meat factories, including the imposition of artificial restrictions on age, weight and movements must stop now."



ICSA Suckler Chair Dermot Kelleher



Seamus Sherlock

ICSA appoints new Press and Communications Officer

Tracey Kennedy joined ICSA in June 2014, and was formerly a secondary school teacher. A native of Killeagh, in County Cork, where her family was involved in sheep and cattle farming, she studied at UCC and has Masters degrees in both English and Education. She was involved in the management of the Leaving Certificate Higher Level English examinations for a number of years before moving into the field of communications. Tracey served for three years as PRO for Cork GAA, winning a McNamee Award for Best Website in 2013, and developed strong links



with the media during that time. She has also been a member of the GAA's National Communications Committee since 2012, and has extensive experience in social media and communications strategies.

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There is a grant available to help purchase these alarms. It is available to all those who are 65 years & over, who meet the criteria. The grant is available through local community groups who are registered with the Dept Environment. They can tell you where your nearest group is - phone 01-8882997, Community & Voluntary Section, SAS grant.

As an Irish owned company, established since 1984, with state of the art monitoring centre, based in Midleton, Co. Cork, Alertline Ltd., can help you with obtaining an alarm, if you do not meet the criteria, or as a community group, should you wish to register with the Dept. We are here to help in any way we can. Our service is very much customer based, with highly trained monitoring & installation staff. Please feel free to call us at any time @ 1890-224422 Our new product to the market, The Mobile Personal Security Alarm, is perfect for the farming community, forestry worker or indeed anyone working on their own. It is worked on a mobile phone SIM card, has a GPS locator, two way speech & is small enough to be carried on the person. Once activated, the contact details, plus any relevant medical info, will be shown on screen, in the monitoring centre. Our staff can then speak directly to the client & if required, access location, in order to get help to them quickly. This is so important in the event of an accident. This could help to save a life - your life! Why not find out more about the product. Alertline Ltd., can help.



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News Briefs Compiled by Tracey Kennedy

ICSA DISCUSSES NOMAD CATTLE & OTHER ISSUES WITH MICHELLE O'NEILL

ICSA officers have met Northern Ireland Agriculture Minister Michelle O'Neill president Patrick Kent later described the discussions as productive and positive. "We welcome Michelle O'Neill's interest in the ongoing beef crisis," said Mr. Kent. "ICSA took the opportunity to highlight to the Minister the issue of so-called nomad cattle, which is a very serious concern for our members. The Northern Ireland live export trade has always been a key aspect of the Irish beef industry, and the artificial barriers to this trade now being put in place by meat processors cannot continue."

"The issue of cross-border cattle exports is one of many difficulties facing farmers in the beef sector, and the Minister's interest in resolving these concerns was clear. We look forward to ongoing positive interaction with her in the future."

MONITORED PERSONAL ALARMS AVAILABLE FOR OLDER FARMERS

In the wake of a wave of rural crime, ICSA rural development chairman Billy Gray has advised older farmers to consider applying to their local community group for a personal alarm under the Seniors Alert Scheme.

"Subsidised monitored personal alarms are available to all those aged 65 or over who meet the criteria of the scheme and have a landline

telephone," said Mr. Gray. "Community groups have been issued with grants to cover the costs of purchasing and installing the alarms, and the recipient only has to pay the yearly monitoring fee of approximately €80."

"These alarms provide great security for older people or older couples living alone, as the alarm is monitored twenty-four hours a day and if you have any concern for your own safety, whether it's an intruder or an accident, all you have to do is press the button and there's someone at the end of the line to help."

"Most farmers would be aware of their local community group, but for anyone who isn't, a full list of groups and contact details covering the whole country is available to download on the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government website at <http://www.environ.ie/en/Community/SeniorsAlert/PublicationsDocuments/FileDownload,26537,en.xls>. Your local GP, public representatives, Gardaí, clergy etc. would also be able to help out with contacts."

ICSA CALLS FOR INCLUSION OF FARM SAFETY MODULE IN PRIMARY CURRICULUM

ICSA president Patrick Kent has called for health and safety education to be included in the primary school curriculum, with a particular emphasis on farm safety for children in rural areas.

"What lesson is there that is more important



Michelle O'Neill and advisor Liam Lappin with ICSA's Patrick Kent and Edmond Phelan

than how to stay alive?" asked Mr. Kent. "There is room in subjects like Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) to include a module on health and safety, and in rural areas, this could be focussed on farm safety. Even in urban areas, there are children who go out to visit friends or relations on farms, and such knowledge would also be very beneficial to them. Children, along with older farmers, are most at risk when it comes to farm accidents, and the younger they become aware of these issues, the better."

"Formally teaching young children about safety issues would also have wider benefits," continued Mr. Kent. "The voice of a child pointing out that something is dangerous will have far more impact on a parent than all the DVDs and courses available. We must start with the very youngest if we are serious about reducing farm accidents and fatalities through education, and ICSA is calling on Minister Coveney to explore this with the Minister for Education and Skills as a matter of urgency."

VETS TO PROVIDE FREE DOG MICROCHIPPING



ICSA sheep chairman Paul Brady is a strong advocate of microchipping of dogs, and has welcomed the news that vets around the country will be offering this service free during the month of September, in association with Dogs Trust and National Chipping Month. Details of participating vets from: <http://www.ncm.ie/participants/>

TEAGASC FARM SUCCESSION CLINICS

In its free farm succession clinics, which start in September, Teagasc will provide a number of professionals – accountants, solicitors

and Teagasc experts on succession to answer families' questions on succession. The individual consultations, which are free, are part of half-day events that are due to start on September 9. For a full list of clinics, see www.teagasc.ie

ICSA WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

For updates on all ICSA activities, make sure you are regular visitor to our website, www.icsaireland.com. Livestock prices are updated weekly, and you'll also find news, photos, details of upcoming events and much more. Check out our farm safety section for a comprehensive selection of videos, and all our membership benefits are outlined in detail. All policy submissions and archived editions of the Drystock Farmer can also be downloaded from the website.

For up-to-the-minute news as it happens, follow us on Twitter @ICSAIreland, or find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/ICSAIreland](https://www.facebook.com/ICSAIreland)

ICSA's Exclusive Package of Membership Benefits

TO JOIN ICSA PLEASE CONTACT BELINDA AT 057-8662120 OR VISIT US AT THE NATIONAL PLOUGHING CHAMPIONSHIPS (STAND NO. 335)

€75 off Zurich Farm Insurance with Sparrow Insurances

Zurich, one of Ireland's leading insurance companies, has recently launched a leading Farm Insurance product here. Sparrow Insurances is a 100% wholly owned Irish Insurance Broker with offices based in the midlands, including Portlaoise, Thurles, Nenagh and Roscrea. Sparrow is committed to delivering excellent customer service and to dealing with all insurance queries promptly and efficiently.



The offer: Zurich Farm Insurance through Sparrow Insurance Brokers are offering ICSA members a €75 voucher and 10% protection discount which is in addition to any deal negotiated on a Zurich farm insurance package or Protection Policy with Sparrow Insurance brokers.

€100 Hearing Aid Discount with Hidden Hearing

Hidden Hearing is Ireland's premier professional provider of hearing healthcare in the private sector with a national network of over 65 branches and clinics. Over the past 25 years Hidden Hearing has worked hard to develop a reputation for offering world-class hearing services and lifelong support for patients. Every Hidden Hearing audiologist is accredited to leading international standards and is a member of the Irish Hearing Society (IHS) or Irish Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists (ISHAA).



The offer: Hidden Hearing are offering ICSA members €100 off any Hidden Hearing Aid and a free wax removal consultation located at their many clinics nationwide.

White's of Wexford Hotel Offer

White's of Wexford is one of Ireland's leading 4-star hotels, uniquely located in the very heart of historic Wexford. Just a two hour drive from Dublin, the hotel is within easy access of Rosslare Euro port and Wexford Train and Bus Station – ideal for touring the South East, golfing, shopping and exploring the breathtaking sandy beaches for which this area is renowned.



The offer: White's are offering ICSA members €50 off a midweek B&B or €25 off weekend B&B when booking a minimum stay of 2 nights.

€75 off Full Healthcheck with Irish Healthcare

Healthcare is the leading Health Screening Provider in Ireland, operating from the Blackrock & Galway Clinics. Their health screening programmes are the most comprehensive in Ireland as they are designed to meet the requirements of your age group and your susceptibility to certain diseases or conditions depending on your time of life.



The offer: Irish Health Care are offering ICSA members €75 off a full comprehensive health check (Cardiac, Respiratory, Abdominal & Rectal, Muscular – Skeletal, Neurological, Skin, breast & vaginal examination for women and for men a full prostate examination).

Join the growing number of farmers speaking to Sparrow Insurances about the Zurich Farm Insurance Product

Waterford farmer and ICSA Beef Chairman Edmond Phelan spoke with Sparrow Insurances and switched to Zurich this year and hasn't looked back. "I get the same level of cover with Zurich as I used to get with FBD, and I saved approximately €500", says Edmond. A huge bonus for him was the fact that he was also able to include three younger drivers in his motor insurance premium at a very reasonable rate. "Some insurance companies just don't

want to know about younger drivers, but Zurich was very accommodating."

"Some of my land is under forestry, and people may not be aware that Zurich also insures this," continues Edmond. "I have my farm, the two family cars, all my machinery and my stock covered and the price was highly competitive."

Of course it's not all about price, and Edmond is also very

complimentary of the service he received from Sparrow Insurances. "I was treated very well in all my dealings with them, and every concern and query I had was answered. Switching providers can be a big decision and you have to be certain that you are comparing like with like, and I was left in no doubt that I was making the right choice. This was my first year with Sparrow Insurances and Zurich, but I'll certainly be returning to them next year."



Edmond Phelan,
ICSA Beef Chairman



"I got a great deal with Sparrow Insurances and saved a considerable sum on my insurance. The advice and service I received was excellent and overall I am delighted I made the move to Sparrow's".

James Murphy, Carlow.



"Sparrow Insurances provided excellent service and I am very happy with my decision to move. I made good savings on my premium and obtained additional cover and I am very happy with the advice I received from Sparrow's".

Conor Deely, Galway

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County Focus: Farming in North Cork

MARGARET LEHANE

Margaret Lehane is a full-time farmer near Kanturk. She has 80 suckler cows, while husband Dermot operates a pig unit, and Margaret also helps out there when required.

Margaret calves her cows early, in December and January, mainly because she likes to get them out to grass as early as possible. "I love to have a calf that's strong enough to start eating grass in April," she says. "Grass is the cheapest and most efficient beef production method, and my calves are out eating grass for a full six months before

I think about weaning." Her aim is to produce a minimum of one calf for every cow each year, as if this does not happen, she is at an immediate loss.

Despite her obvious love for what she does, Margaret is seriously considering leaving the suckling sector due to the current lack of profitability. "It's very disheartening to be producing prime beef, top quality, under 16 months, fully Quality Assured and yet to have no say at all in the price you get at the end of the day." She highlights the lack of support for the suckler farmer compared to other sectors, particularly when it

comes to negotiating price, and feels that ICSA has a role to play in changing this. "Producer groups are all well and good, but it's difficult to maintain unity, and it's in the buyers' interest to keep farmers divided," she says. "Consumers are being brainwashed into thinking they should be able to buy very cheap beef, producers are being brainwashed into believing that steaks have to be a certain size, the animal must be a certain age and so on. These are all inventions to keep the price down. ICSA members must unite to send a strong message to processors and retailers that this is no longer acceptable."



Margaret Lehane



Robin Smith

ROBIN SMITH

Farming 150 acres near Mitchelstown, Robin Smith is a former ICSA beef chairman whose farming activities are divided equally between tillage and cattle finishing. Difficulties in the beef trade in recent years have forced him to move from high-quality continental beef to dairy breeds, where costs are lower and, in the current climate, there is not much difference in the returns. "For quite a number of

years now, my single farm payment has been higher than my income from farming. It's very hard to motivate yourself when you are effectively working for nothing," says Robin. "I haven't sold any finished cattle myself yet this year, but I've heard of many farmers losing up to €300 per head. This is simply not a sustainable situation and unless you can make a margin on what you're doing, you have to stop and look at it."

"The Quality Assured

Scheme has become a stick to beat farmers with," he says. "I was trying to produce good quality cattle and get the Quality Assured bonus, but you go to the factory to be told that this one is so many kilos over the maximum weight, or this one has too many movements, and so out of a load of maybe fifteen cattle, you could have six or seven that don't qualify for the bonus, and the profit on those animals is gone."

Robin is pessimistic about the future for drystock farming unless there are changes to market structures. "The time and effort I put into farming should at least guarantee me the average industrial wage of €28,000 per annum, and presently, it's nowhere near that. We're facing declining income from single farm

payments and the only way this can be made up is in profits. It's getting to the stage where I could double my income if I leased my land to neighbouring dairy farmers instead of farming it myself. How can that be right?"

Robin agrees with ICSA's call for a regulator for the beef industry, and feels that this would be one step towards improving the situation. "The amount of cattle in factory-owned feedlots continues to be a worry, and would not be accepted in other

jurisdictions," he says. "When factories own and control so many cattle, they can also control the market. Another solution to the situation would be to introduce a control on the amount of profit that retailers can take from fresh produce. Ultimately, the real power lies with the supermarkets, and this is something that needs to be examined at EU level. Vulnerable producers need to be protected from the whims of the multinationals if there is to be any future for the Irish beef industry."



JIM HORGAN

Married to Catherine and with two sons, John (14) and James (12), Jim Horgan is a part-time farmer near Ballyhea. "My main occupation is buying cattle for the local Dawn Meats factory at Charleville, so I get to see many different types of farms and farmers as part of that work," says Jim. "I also finish a few cattle myself which allows me to keep my hand in the pot, so to speak."

Jim sees an uncertain future for drystock farming unless supplies are tightened. "Either farms will have to get much bigger, as has happened in the pig industry for example,

or you will have part-time or hobby farmers for whom the farm is not their main income. If you oversupply the market, the buyers are in control, so a balance must be found between killing enough cattle, maintaining prices for farmers and keeping retail prices at an affordable level."

He is keen to highlight the importance of supporting and educating farmers in cost-effective production methods. "It's all down to management. The timing of feeding is crucial, as are aspects like dosing, provision of minerals and so on. While it's very difficult to generalise, farmers need to be more aware

of how to produce good beef in the most cost effective manner for their particular land type, but some simply don't have the resources or the knowledge to do this."

Timing is also vital when it comes to selling cattle, says Jim. "We must be prepared to sell our animals when they reach the optimum weight and fat levels, even if that means they have not reached 30 months, because once they get too fat, they are costing you in penalties."

Jim is also concerned about the aging farming population. "The age profile of farmers today, particularly in



Jim Horgan

the drystock sector, is a huge concern. Older farmers tend to be more resistant to change and to new ideas, but with so few younger entrants, it's difficult to see how change can come about. Dairy farmers, have to adapt very quickly as they are selling their

product every day, whereas the drystock farmer is only selling once a year and may not see the need for change as quickly. Farming is market-driven like all other businesses, and if we don't adapt to market requirements, we're in trouble."

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Revised Regulations for Agricultural Vehicles

During July, ICSA was briefed by Justin Martin, Senior Engineer with the Road Safety Authority, on incoming changes to the Agricultural Vehicle Regulations, which will come into effect **on January 1st 2016**. These revisions are being introduced following a comprehensive review, including a public consultation, undertaken by the Road Safety Authority (RSA) over a prolonged period in 2008-2009 which examined the current legislation, policy and practice relating to the use of agricultural vehicles on public roads. In this article, Policy Officer Geoff Hamilton summarises the main changes.

Firstly, it is important to note at this stage that these regulation changes **will only apply to farm vehicles which are to be used on public roads**; they will not apply to machinery which never leaves the farm holding. Secondly, the majority of correctly maintained tractors already comply. Tractors that do not comply are likely to need only minor

remedial works carried out such as fitment of a flashing amber beacon and/or a replacement manufacturer's plate indicating their design axle weights and maximum permitted towable masses. Trailers are also likely to comply, but, due to varying construction standards, some may need remedial work carried out if they are intended to be used at higher weights and speeds (19 tonnes / 40km/h).

Any changes will be restricted to the following 4 categories:

- Braking Standards.
- Lighting & Visibility Standards.
- Weights, Dimensions & Coupling Standards.
- Plating & Speed Rating Requirements.

Braking

Different minimum Braking Performance Requirements will be established for tractors capable of no more than 40km/h, and those capable of higher speeds. More powerful braking systems will be required for agricultural vehicles

operating in excess of 40km/h. Most of the correctly maintained tractors which have come into use in the past 30 years already meet these requirements. Regarding trailers, two main categories will be established based on speed ratings and Design Gross Vehicle Weights (DGVs).

Lighting & Visibility

Agricultural tractors and self-propelled agricultural machines must be equipped with full lighting systems (including side lamps, head lamps, rear lamps, stop lamps, direction indicators and number plate lighting) at all times and not only during lighting up hours (some exemptions will be put in place for vehicles built before January 1st 1980). Vehicles must also be fitted with a flashing amber beacon, activated at all times when the vehicle is being used in a public place. There are also some changes to the lighting requirements for trailers, such as rear reflective markings and right-side marker lamps, the latter



Patrick Kent, Edmond Phelan, Jimmy Cosgrove (ICSA) with Justin Martin (RSA)

depending on the overall length of the vehicle-trailer combination.

Plating & Speed Rating

Trailers operating at weights exceeding 19 tonnes or at speeds exceeding 40 km/h will require fitment of both an authorisation (i.e. a national weights and dimensions plate) and a speed disc. The Regulations will also require that the fitment of authorisation plates can only be carried out by trailer manufacturers and their authorised distributors.

Weights, Dimensions & Coupling

New national weight limits are being introduced. These will enable tractor and trailer combinations which are unplated to continue in use at limits which are safe for such vehicles, i.e. combinations of agricultural tractors and trailers, where either of them is unplated, will have their maximum towable mass capped at 3 times the tractor's unladen weight. Plated tractors and trailer combinations will benefit from being

able to operate at higher weight limits of up to 24 and 34 tonnes for tandem and triaxle agricultural trailers respectively that meet certain additional requirements; i.e. they must be plated, they must be fitted with a flexible suspension system, they must be fitted with flotation tyres for operation at 10 tonnes per axle in the case of a tandem axle trailer or 9 tonnes per axle in the case of a triaxle trailer, and finally they must be fitted with a steered or steering axles if they have an axle spacing of 1.8 metres or greater. Exemptions from compliance with the revised national weight limits are being provided for certain types of interchangeable towed equipment such as slurry tankers, manure or fertiliser spreaders and grain chaser bins.

Need more information?

Log on to the RSA website, www.rsa.ie, or contact the RSA Vehicle Standards Division directly on 096 25014 or via email at agvehicles@rsa.ie. Alternatively, visit the RSA stand at the Ploughing Championships.



**Remember: ICSA is not funded by levies.
Your membership is the only money we take from you.**

Commonage farmers issues must be resolved

Am I my brother's keeper?

CSA rural development chairman Billy Gray has insisted that no commonage farmer can be refused access to the GLAS scheme due to the decisions of other shareholders. "The requirement for 50% of shareholders or shareholders with more than 50% of the commonage area to sign up to the plan may work in theory but ICOSA is convinced there will be cases where this does not work out. In such circumstances, we have to ensure that the farmers who want to do what is required are not excluded."



Mr Gray said that the concerns of hill farmers had to be given more weight in the strategy for Commonage management. "The track record of bureaucrats has not been good. Farmers have taken the blame for the state of the hills even though the

reality is that EU policy has consistently got it wrong in terms of the hills. The ewe premium was the cause of the original over-grazing and the introduction of de-coupling would have solved that problem without any need for the ridiculously bureaucratic commonage de-stocking plans in the early noughties. These plans then led to commonage land getting out of control. This is just another effort by Brussels to impose solutions from top down rather than taking a more consultative approach with the people who actually put sheep on the hills."



However, Billy Gray welcomed the clarification that the Pillar one payment would not be affected by GLAS participation or non-participation or with maximum stocking rates set out under a GLAS plan. "We welcome the fact that the only condition applying to getting a Pillar 1 payment will be a minimum stocking rate of 1 ewe per 1.5 ha on commonage ground or lower where the environmental conditions require it. Nonetheless, there is a potential problem around the need to keep a commonage in good agricultural and environmental condition (GAEC) and we would also say here that a farmer cannot be held responsible for the shortcomings of other shareholders."

ICOSA also pushed for ongoing consultation between the Commonage Appeals Committee and the farm organisations. "This was readily accepted by the committee chairman Joe Healy. However, we need the Department to take a flexible approach

to ensure that no commonage farmer who wants to be in GLAS is left out."

There are also legitimate concerns as to how the proposals to have one planner per commonage will work out in practice. On the one hand, it is self evident that having more than one planner would be inefficient and will lead to un-necessary costs. Yet farmers on a commonage will potentially be clients of several planners.

On the other hand, it is likely that some planners will be dubious about doing a plan for commonage where there is a fundamental uncertainty about whether the plan will be accepted by all or indeed by any of the shareholders. In such circumstances, the question is who, if anyone, will pay the planner?

ICOSA plans to hold meetings in coming weeks with affected hill farmers and would welcome any views from farmers affected by the proposals.

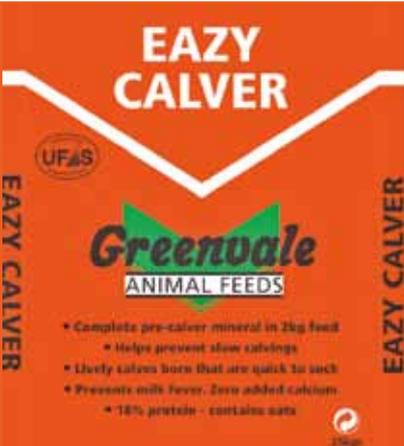


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Sheepdog Trials

MARTIN MURPHY, WHO IS BASED NEAR BANDON IN CO. CORK, PROVIDES A HIGHLY-SPECIALISED TRAINING AND OBEDIENCE PROGRAMME FOR BOTH WORKING DOGS AND DOMESTIC PETS.

"I mainly train sheep and cattle dogs but I also take on dogs behavioural problems and so on," says Martin. "People give me the dog and I take it in here for a week for assessment, during which I introduce them to the sheep. If I feel there is potential or room for improvement, I will keep the dog longer, but if not, I send it back. Every animal is different, but a week is usually long enough to assess potential."



Martin got into sheepdog training through a neighbour of his, and has been in the business since 199. "It can take up to 12 months to train a dog fully for sheepdog trials, but for your average working dog, six to eight weeks is generally enough. Of course, there is a role for the owner too – you can train the dog but if the farmer doesn't have an understanding of the psychology of the animal and how to treat it properly, it's a waste of time. Training any dog is a complex process as the dog must learn respect and discipline from the very beginning, and dogs who have developed habits like chasing cars seem unable to break away from this."

Martin Murphy can be contacted at 087-7434930.

Introducing Zwartbles!

Zwartbles originated in Holland and the breed was first imported into the UK in 1986. In 2005, the breed arrived in Ireland, with the first lambs born in 2006. ICSA member



Timmy Kelleher (pictured at World Sheep Shearing Championships in Wexford with Mervyn Sunderland and president Patrick Kent) is one of the pioneers of the breed in Ireland, and speaks very highly of them. "For ease of management and maternal traits, there is nothing to touch them," he says. "The lambs are hardy and there's no problem lambing outside, while the ewes have enough milk to rear triplets."

Zwartbles are tall, elegant black sheep with an uninterrupted distinctive white blaze from poll to chin, two to four white socks and undocked tails with a white tip. With a big frame and good conformation, the skeletal structure of the breed makes for easy lambing. A prolific breed, Zwartbles have many characteristics considered desirable for cross breeding including milky ewes and a fast growth rate.

To find out more about Zwartbles contact Francis Lyons, South of Ireland Zwartbles chairman (086-2676697) or Timmy Kelleher (085-7810742).



IRISH CATTLE AND SHEEP FARMERS' ASSOCIATION



Visit ICSA at the National Ploughing Championships

23rd-25th September
Ratheniska, Co. Laois

Stand: 335 Row: 23



See the extensive ICSA action on the beef crisis

Sign our Quality Assurance Scheme protest petition

Discuss the future of the suckler, beef and lamb sectors

Enter our farm insurance prize draw

Find out about our exclusive member benefits

Meet the ICSA National Executive working hard for you

LPIS Overclaims - War if they try to impose retrospective penalties while Department is way behind on appeals

The LPIS overclaims issue is set to hot up again with news that the Minister is now considering applying retrospective penalties on those who were hit with overclaim penalties last year.

This will impose severe hardship on some of the farmers concerned who are still trying to recover from the hit of penalties that ranged from a few hundred euros to 100% penalties.

The potential for retrospective penalties being applied to payments due in the next month or so (DAS in late September, SFP in October) is particularly frustrating in view of the fact that many of the farmers have appealed but have not heard anything from the Department yet.

"There has been no update on figures in relation to these appeals since June 24th," said ICSA president Patrick Kent. "With only 3,854 cases finalised, that leaves more than 7,000 farmers in limbo, and it's likely that the cases which have been resolved were the less complicated ones. Moreover, the Minister makes no reference at all to the status of over 2,500 appeals that have neither been finalised nor referred for verification visit - where are these cases now? There is no way that this work can be completed by the end of 2014 ICSA is now calling on the Minister to clarify the position in relation to these

appeals and to do everything in his power to expedite the process."

In response to a Dáil question on June 24th, Minister Coveney revealed that 10,173 appeals had been received, of which 3,852 had been finalised, with a further 3,464 referred for verification visit. 179 had been referred to the Appeals Committee for consideration and this figure was expected to increase in tandem with the number of verification visits finalised.

ICSA suckler chairman and West Cork chair Dermot Kelleher has said that farmers on marginal land feel that they have been targeted unfairly. "If Brussels wants to wipe out farmers on marginal land, they should have the honesty to come out and say it. Almost all farmers with significant overclaims are in disadvantaged areas - that says it all.

Meanwhile, a group of concerned farmers in West Cork is actively pursuing the possibility of a legal challenge to the penalties with the aid of Bantry solicitor Brian Harrington. If the EU really does care about the environment and has a concern for farmers on marginal land, legal action should not be necessary but unfortunately every possibility has to be explored given that the survival of some of these farmers is in doubt.

"For the Love of Farming - farm safely"!

Pat Griffin, HSA Inspector

I've worked with many industries, some considered far more dangerous than agriculture, such as sea fishing, underground mining, quarrying, explosives users, yet I consider farming more dangerous than most. This is not because of the inherent dangers or risks involved with working in agriculture itself but because of the general acceptance of risks and accidents in farming.

Our sympathies go out to the families, friends and communities of those 22 persons fatally injured already this year and to the 176 lost to farm accidents over the last decade. Sadly, farmers dying in accidents is often a consequence of how they have farmed all their lives, working too hard, too long hours, struggling to get the work done watching the weather, without help when it's really needed, some taking shortcuts for whatever reason, or doing work that would best be left to a contractor or other professional

such as a trained mechanic, vet or roofer.

The rules say that children under 7 years are not allowed on any farm vehicle and for good reason. Children under 7 don't recognise or see risks, they don't anticipate sudden movement or sudden stops and are prone to falling and being struck by machinery.

The Farm Safety Partnership has put a lot of time and effort into putting the Farm Safety Code of Practice together which aims to help farmers manage safety on their farm. Everyone involved in agriculture has a part to play in improving on farm standards that will prevent death, injury and ill-health. But most of all it's about each farmer being self-critical and taking personal responsibility and actually making changes every day in every job to make things safer. For the love of farming - farm safely!

The code of practice and other advice can be found at www.hsa.ie or at www.farmsafely.com



ICSA Connacht/Ulster Vice-President John Flynn, Norma Rohan (Embrace Farm) Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine Simon Coveney and ICSA President Patrick Kent at EMBRACE Farm Accident Remembrance Service. Pic: Roger Jones

Farm Safety - Use the Code



Book Training with Teagasc or ACA

Complete it Online at www.farmsafely.com



ICSA Suckler Farm Walk

ON SEPTEMBER 6TH, ICSA ORGANISED A SUCKLER FARM WALK HOSTED BY NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER MARGERET LEHANE AT HER FARM NEAR KANTURK, CO. CORK.

With 70 cows, mainly Limousins, on 130 acres, Margaret's farm is widely regarded as one of the best suckler farms in Munster, and according to ICSA suckler chairman Dermot Kelleher, the visit was highly informative. "Margaret has a fantastic herd of cattle, and her systems are excellent. It's always very useful to see how someone else does things, especially as efficient a farmer as Margaret."

The visit comprised a tour of the calving and housing facilities, along with the female and male sections of the herd, which Margaret keeps in separate locations. She is currently preparing for weaning, and with bull beef a key area of her enterprise, those who attended the walk were very interested in seeing

her handling facilities.

"The calving and handling facilities on this farm are very well-developed, without huge expense," said Christy Kelleher, a member of ICSA's National Executive. "It was very interesting to see how cleverly existing farm buildings had been converted into calving pens, rather than having to build them from scratch."

Margaret Lehane herself is a great believer in farm visits and discussion groups, as they allow the sharing of ideas. "One of the characteristics of cattle-rearing is that there are probably no two farmers who do things the same way, and we all have something to learn from each other."



Margaret Lehane takes questions from suckler chairman Dermot Kelleher



High calibre Limousin cattle on Margaret Lehane's farm



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PEDIGREE

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	PGD: Free Town Benign
	MGS: Grianan Firecracker
DAM: Corlismore Echoe 591	MGD: Ballinveney Echoe

- Bred by JJ Farrell, Co. Longford.
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- The Bull the Pedigree Breeders have been waiting for.
- Power, Muscle & Style.

Thrunton NOSTRADAMUS TUT



PEDIGREE

SIRE: Maerdy Location	PGS: Maerdy Forum
	PGD: Clavering Uta
	MGS: Moncur General
DAM: Thrunton Icicle	MGD: Thrunton Emma

- TUT Progeny display exceptional growth and good muscling.
- Easy Calving.
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ICSA visits Teagasc Moorepark

ICSA national executive members visited Teagasc Research centre in Moorepark, Co Cork recently to get a comprehensive overview of the research programme there.

Ending of Milk Quotas

The context was set by Pdraig French of Teagasc who said that world consumption projections for 2020 show demand for dairy products increasing by 80m tonnes whereas an optimistic projection is for Irish production to increase by 2m tonnes. This theme was taken up by Laurence Shalloo who outlined the details of dairy expansion. The projection is for national milk output at farmgate level to increase from

5.4 million litres to 7.4 million litres by 2020, produced by 16,500 dairy farmers (currently 17,500) who will milk an average 83 cows supplying an average 450,000 litres of milk per farm.

What is the impact of this for the drystock sector? According to Emer Kennedy, dairy farmers will increasingly seek to contract out the rearing of their replacements which could potentially be an alternative enterprise for beef farmers who don't wish to gamble and lose money on beef. In addition, the extra dairy cows are expected to produce an extra half million beef x dairy calves.

On contract rearing, the key message is that farmers need

to understand their costs before they venture into this business. Payment should be monthly and other issues include bonuses for meeting weight and in-calf targets, protocols for dealing with mortality and disease risk management.

Breeding

Donagh Berry gave an overview of breeding potential from genomics. He compared what is happening now with sucklers with the progress made in dairying over the past 10 years. He admitted that there was a lot of debate about the ideal suckler cow. His comments about a more fertile, more milky, lower cost cow were well received. When he somewhat tongue-in-cheek said that it could be an Angus x Jersey, the jaws dropped. However, his key point was that there was too much focus on breeds and not enough on heritable traits.

Other areas covered on the visit included the clover experiment, presented by Michael O'Donovan and Mike Egan, and the heavy soils programme covered by James O'Loughlin.

Thanks to Teagasc

ICSA would like to thank Teagasc Moorepark for a most informative day, especially Moorepark head Pat Dillon and Michael O'Donovan who set up the event and the presenters on the day: Pdraig French, Laurence Shalloo, Donagh Berry, Emer Kennedy, Mike Egan and James O'Loughlin.

VISIT TO TEAGASC GRANGE

ICSA is now planning a visit to the Teagasc research centre in Grange on September 19 where the focus will be on the economics of the suckler and beef systems. More details from the ICSA office.



Mike Egan (Teagasc) shows a clover paddock to the ICSA group at Moorepark

Important ICSA BTAP Event in Carrigallen Mart - October 1st

Cavan chairman Hugh Farrell, with assistance from National Executive members in Cavan and Monaghan chairman Eddie Graham, has organised a significant BTAP-qualifying event. This 'Special Breeding Heifer Event' is to be held on Wednesday 1st October at 6.30pm in Carrigallen mart, Co. Leitrim.

On the evening, there will be a showing of exclusively 3½ to 5 star heifers, which will be available for sale at the end of the event. There will also be a series of talks on genetics,

breeding, calving, profitability and the overall suckler industry by a number of speakers, namely; Chris Daly (ICBF), Arthur Bredin (Progressive Genetics), Oliver Crowe (CC Agricultural Consultants) & Eddie Punch (ICSA).

The evening denotes an important landmark for ICSA, being the first BTAP event to be approved for hosting by ICSA. The Association hopes that it will be the first of many such valuable branded events across the country.

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