



IRISH GRASSLAND ASSOCIATION

"to advance the knowledge of good grassland management in Irish Farming"



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Fertiliser Value of Soiled Water/Dilute Slurry for Grass Growth

Paul Murphy and Denis Minogue, Teagasc Animal and Grassland Research and Innovation Centre, Moorepark

Fertiliser N (CAN) prices peaked at €352/tonne in 2008, more than one and a half times the price just of two years ago. Such high mineral fertiliser prices, the price instability seen in recent times and the expected future increase in fertiliser prices have highlighted the need to minimise mineral fertiliser N use and increase overall N use efficiency in grasslands. One critical element in achieving this goal is to make good use of all available organic N sources on-farm, and to account for these sources in nutrient management plans. Adopting such a strategy has not only agronomic benefits for the farmer in cost savings, but also contributes to minimising environmental impacts which are coming under increasing scrutiny due to public pressure, national legislation and commitments, and market demand for "greener" products. Soiled water/dilute slurry is one of these potential on-farm nutrient sources, particularly on dairy farms. Soiled water is produced on every Irish dairy farm through the washing



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down of milking parlours and holding areas. This water contains faeces, urine, parlour washings and spilt milk. Like slurry, soiled water contains nutrients that are potentially available for grass production, so that land application can supply some of the fertiliser requirement for grass growth. Indeed, many farmers report a grass growth response following soiled water application. However, little is known of the quantities generated and their nutrient content or fertiliser value. Currently, most farmers treat soiled water as waste and apply it to grassland as a means of disposal, without realising the value of its nutrient content.

To assess the volumes generated and nutrient content of soiled water, sixty dairy farms were surveyed across 18 counties over a year. Approximately, 10,000 l of soiled water were produced per cow per year. On average, this contained 587mg/l N, equivalent to 0.6kg/m³ N, in contrast to the 5kg/m³ N widely assumed for cattle slurry. Roughly a third of this N is rapidly plant-available NH₄-N and the balance is mostly organic N. Applied at the maximum legal rate of 50,000l/ha, this would supply 10kg/ha of available N (8units/acre), potentially providing between ca. 20 and 70 % (depending on stocking rate and time of year) of the recommended available N

for a single fertiliser application to grazed swards. The average P content was 80mg/l and K was 568mg/l. A 100-cow farm, then, might be expected to produce 1000 m³ annually, supplying 600kg of N, 600kg of K and 80kg of P. Therefore, soiled water represents a potentially significant source of nutrients on-farm. However, quantities and concentrations varied widely and this presents a challenge for effective nutrient management.

Grass plot trials at Moorepark, Co. Cork, indicate that soiled water has significant N fertiliser replacement value for grass production (Figure 1). On average, across three application rates (15, 22, 30kg N/ha) grass DM yield response in the growing season (April-September) to soiled water application was 85% (+/- 25%) of the yield response to mineral fertiliser N as CAN. Therefore, soiled water would appear to have a high fertiliser replacement value and it may be beneficial to incorporate N in soiled water into farm nutrient management planning. In contrast, slurry has typically been found to have a DM yield response of only 15 to 50% that of fertiliser N, depending on season, application rate and other factors. N availability from soiled water may be greater than from more concentrated slurries due to more rapid infiltration and, therefore, decreased ammonia losses. Therefore, soiled water can potentially replace some of the mineral fertiliser requirement on dairy farms.

Yield response to both soiled water and fertiliser N application was greatest for applications from May to August, as would be expected as this is the time of peak grass growth potential and N requirement. The most efficient use of soiled water N is therefore likely to occur in these months and application at these times will likely increase overall farm N use efficiency.

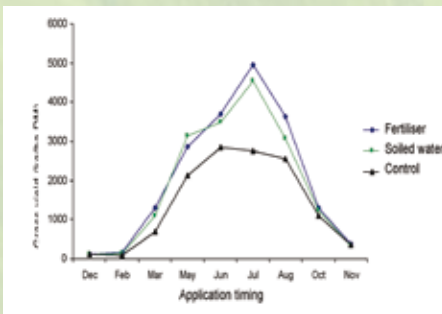


Figure 1. Grass yields (at 8 weeks) from plots receiving soiled water were close to those from plots receiving mineral fertiliser N (CAN) at equal application rates of total N.

Maura Callery joins the IGA as new office Manager



Irish Grassland Association is delighted to announce the appointment of Maura Callery as the new office manager for the association. From a farming background, Maura lives in Kells, Co.

Meath. She has extensive experience in customer relations, finance and event management having worked for 12 years in the Ulster Bank, Navan, as a regional mortgage manager. During this time, Maura also worked on a part-time basis with well-known Meath Veterinary Surgeons Smith & Foley, where she was responsible for telephone support, accounts and office management. Commenting on the appointment, Andrew Cromie, president of the IGA, noted that “Maura joins us at a time of great opportunity for the Grassland Association, as we seek to grow our membership, through the provision of better services to farmers and the wider industry. With her commitment to customer-service, I have no doubt that Maura will play a key role in helping us

deliver and expand the Grassland and Profit message over the coming years”.

In making the announcement, Andrew also paid tribute to the outgoing office manager, Mary-Clare French; “Mary-Clare has given outstanding service to the Association over the past three years and has been instrumental in overseeing many of the new developments that are now available to our members, including direct debit membership, IGA website, quarterly newsletter and the lifetime achievement award. On behalf of the council, I would like to wish Mary-Clare all the very best for the future, as she concentrates on her family and farming interests”.

*Deirdre Hennessy, IGA Council Member,
Mary-Clare French and Andrew Cromie IGA
President*



We welcome your comments and suggestions on how we can make the Irish Grassland Association more informative and interesting to our members.

Please update your records with our new phone number 087 9626483 and our new address Cookstown, Kells Co Meath

Email: secretary@irishgrassland.com

Web: www.irishgrassland.com

Meet our new Regional Development Officer Team



Ann-Marie Flanagan, Geard McBrien, Andrew Cromie, IGA President, Donal Callery

Following on from the successful appointment of Donal Callery's as a Regional Development Officer in the North East last summer, the Irish Grassland Association (IGA) is pleased to announce the appointment of 2 new Regional Development Officers. These are Anne Marie Flanagan, Kilkenny and Gerard McBrien, Portlaoise.

Commenting on the appointments, Andrew Cromie, president of the IGA noted; "The objective of the Regional Development Officer team is to develop a closer working relationship with our current members and also to promote the benefits of membership to potentially new members. As an organization, we have seen at first hand the benefits of having a local presence (based on Donal Callery's appointment in the North East) and this has given us the confidence to extend the team into other areas of the country. We have also looked to create real value for members by introducing a new grass measurement kit, which is complimentary to all new members and available at a greatly discounted rate of €40 to current members. It is through initiatives such as these that the IGA are confident we will achieve our mission statement of achieving more profit for farmers through better use of grassland management".

The Irish Grassland Association team for 2010 are as follows;

Donal Callery, Kells, Co. Meath

Donal is well known to farmers throughout the

country, especially in pedigree Limousin and Charolais breeding circles. Since starting with IGA in summer 2009, Donal has doubled IGA membership in the North East, with the "Managing your Finances" meeting in November being the highlight of his regional program last year. Donal will continue his work with the IGA in 2010, with a number of events being planned for later this year.

Gerard McBrien, Coolrain, Co Laois.

Gerard grew up on a suckler and sheep farm in Corlough, Co Cavan. He is now farming in partnership with his wife Marcella at Derryduff, Coolrain, Co. Laois (Marcella is also a REP's planner in Co Laois). He completed the farm management business course with the Farm Apprenticeship Board in 2002. During this time he worked with both dairy and beef farmers. Gerard and Marcella have a suckler herd and also a small sheep enterprise. They are starting a major reseedling programme at the end of this year with a view to increasing suckler numbers and increasing margins from a grass based system. Measuring grass and completion of a grass wedge is key to the decisions made on the farm. Through membership of Portlaoise 3C discussion group, Camross Macra and GAA club, Gerard is very well known in the Midland's region. Gerard was part of the team that represented Co Laois at the All Ireland Farm Skills competition last year. Speaking after his appointment, Gerard said "Having been a member of the IGA for a number of years, I have seen at first hand the major benefits that are to be gained from being part of such an

organization". Gerard will promote these benefits to farmers throughout the Midlands and West of Ireland.

Anne-Marie Flanagan, Tullaroan, Co. Kilkenny.

Anne-Marie Flanagan is a native of Co Roscommon but now dairy farming with her partner, Brian, and their three young children in Tullaroan, Co. Kilkenny. She studied Ag Science at UCD, before moving to New Zealand for a period of 4 years, where she worked for 2 years as a farm advisor and 2 years in a joint management position of a 700 cow dairy herd. Since returning home from New Zealand in 2007, Anne-Marie and her partner have developed a 150 cow dairy unit on a green field site in Kilkenny, with plans to increase to 200 cows next year. Anne-Marie is a keen believer in measuring and monitoring; "if you don't measure it, you can't control it". Whether it is grass, animal weights or farm financials, she believes the more information gathered, the more informed will be the subsequent decision. Anne-Marie is passionate about dairy farming in Ireland and sees it as a great career choice for young people. As long as they are positive and hard working, the rewards will be there. She believes that networking with positive, like-minded people is of huge importance in farming and that's where being a member of the Irish Grassland Association can be a huge asset to farmers. Commenting on her appointment Anne-Marie said "I am looking forward to getting out there and meeting farmers and helping them to connect with others and progress their businesses". Anne-Marie will promote these benefits to farmers throughout the Midlands and South East areas.

New IGA Grass Measurement Kit.

As part of the launch of the new IGA Regional Development Officer team, the IGA is pleased to introduce its new IGA Grass Measurement Kit. The kit contains:

1. Grass Clippers
2. Quadrant
3. Soil Thermometer
4. Spring balance scales
5. Pocket sized laminated "quick guide to paddock cover"
6. How to get started information brochure



This kit (or an IGA body warmer) is free for all newly recruited members who sign up by direct debit. The kit can also be purchased (by IGA members only) at a greatly discounted price of just €40. Delivered nationwide for only €8 Kits are available to purchase from any our Regional Development Officers:

Anne-Marie Flanagan:

annemarie@irishgrassland.com 087 9156411
Upper Tullaroan, Tullaroan, Co Kilkenny

Donal Gallery:

Donal@irishgrassland.com 086 2108168
Cookstown, Kells, Co Meath

Gerard McBrien:

Gerard@irishgrassland.com 087 7990179
Derryduff, Coolrain, Portlaoise, Co Laoise

Discussion Groups.

Our Regional Development Team are particularly keen to meet with farmer discussion groups. Therefore if you are involved with a group and would like to know more about the IGA and more specifically about our new grassland measurement kit, then please feel free to contact any of our regional development officers or the IGA office. We would be delighted to meet with your group.

For more details on the work of the Irish Grassland Association and also becoming a member please visit our website on www.irishgrassland.com or you can contact the office directly on 087 9626483 or email secretary@irishgrassland.com.

IGA NEW STUDENT MEMBERSHIP PACK

The Irish Grassland Association has just launched a new student package for young members. As part of the student package, students will be given their first and second year's membership to the IGA for €20. In addition all new student members will receive a free IGA gym sports bag.

The IGA welcomed a group of second year dairy students from Clonakilty Agricultural College to the IGA Dairy Conference earlier this year. As part of the day, students were asked to submit a 400 word summary on the key messages they received from one of the four sessions; (1) Grass, (2) Mastitis, (3) Milking Infrastructure and (4) Planning for the Future. The students also needed to include an explanation of how they are going to put messages into practise on their home farms. The overall winners of the student competition were Brian Buckley, Liam Clifford and Brendan Holland.

Brian Buckley is from Glenville Cork and has 90 spring calving cows at home this year. The Buckley family intend to expand cow numbers in the future and will stick with a Friesian type of cow.



Photo Left to Right are, Brian Buckley, Liam Clifford, Andrew Cromie (IGA Predisent), Brendan Holland and Michael Donoghue (Teagasc)

Liam Clifford is from Killarney Co Kerry and has 28 Ha's available for grazing in 1 block. They are currently milking 60 spring calving cows, with plans to expand up to 80 in the next 1-2 years. Focus for breeding will be on milk solids and fertility rather than milk volume.

Brendan Holland lives in Ballinhassig Co Cork and has 90 Ha's at home and is milking 100 cows. They keep all the calves through to beef and have a small tillage enterprise on the farm. In the future they plan to further develop the dairy and beef enterprises.

IGA Student Conference – First Ever!

The IGA are looking to strengthen relationships with all third level students studying agriculture nationwide and plan to host more student focused events in the future, the next of which will be the inaugural National Student Conference this Autumn, which will be dairy focused for 2010. This initiative is being led by IGA council member Dr Bridget Lynch, UCD,. Any students (or colleges) wishing to receive more information on the conference (or the IGA student membership offer) should please contact Bridget at bridget.lynch@ucd.ie or alternatively contact the IGA office or any of our Regional Development Officer Team.

Session 1 Pushing stocking rates on wet and dry farms *By Liam Clifford*

I found this to be one of the most worthwhile discussions at the Irish Grassland conference. Both of the speakers, John Cahalan and the Hyland brothers were very positive and optimistic on the future of dairy farming in

this country. They were at the conference to find out how far they were going to push their stocking rate and increase profit per hectare. John Cahalan is farming near Nenagh, Co. Tipperary on a very wet farm. As he said on the day, "on one side of the ditch they are cutting turf and on the other side I manage to grow lush green grass." He is currently stocked at 2.4 cows per hectare and hopes to push this up to 3.05 cows/ha in 2010. In 2009 he utilized 10.1 tonnes DM/ha. In 2010 he hopes to utilize more grass depending on weather. With some meal feeding he hopes to comfortably increase stocking rate. He is also a firm believer in on/off grazing with plenty of entrances to paddocks and using top quality round bales in periods of shortage.

The Hyland brothers are farming on a very dry farm in Co Laois. They are currently stocked at 2.8 cows/ha and are hoping to increase this to 3.5 cows/ha. They are currently producing over 11 tonnes DM/ha and they hope to push this to 13 t/ha in the next few years. Last year they fed 283kg of meal to cows. The Hylands have come from milking 130 cows just under nine years ago and this year they hope to milk 400 cows. The Hylands have to make three family incomes and they only own 70ha and the rest is on long term lease. Their aim is to produce as much milk solids per hectare as possible and to do this they will possibly have to breed a more compact, efficient cow such as the Jersey cross.

At home we are also on a very dry farm. Currently the farm is only stocked at 2 LU/ha. This is definitely not what the farm is capable of carrying. We have no idea on what amounts of dry matter is being produced per hectare but hopefully we will this year and we will be able to make the necessary changes to improve on it. Over 60% of the farm has been reseeded over the last three years and last year the

farm was soil sampled. This showed a lot of deficiencies, especially potassium and ph was low in some paddocks. All of these practices are essential to try and produce high levels of grass per hectare. Like the Hylands farm our farm will have to be capable of producing two incomes and after listening to the Hylands I think this is very possible.

Session 2

Mastitis - Successfully Managing a National Problem

By Brendan Holland

Mastitis is a huge problem, it can be cured by two ways, treatment or self cure. Dairy animals can become infected by the environment, milking machine, milking routine etc. Clinical mastitis is visible (eg you can see the cow's udder is swelled) but sub clinical is invisible and there might be no change in the udder. Along with mastitis the somatic cell count (SCC) in the milk will rise. Having high SCC can lead to many problems eg culling cows, not supplying high quality milk and even getting penalized if SCC is too high. Every dairy farmer should be to have a SCC around 200,000 or if possible even lower. If this can be achieved a bonus will be paid to the farmer. For some farmers penalties are not the problem but high SCC can be very stressful.

At the conference we heard from Tom Barron a dairy farmer who had a lot of trouble trying to control his high SCC which was far too high. He formed a team which included the vet, milking machine technician, Teagasc advisor and himself to solve the SCC problem. Solutions were hard to come by but they all expressed their feelings and actions were taken. For example culling old cows with high SCC, wearing gloves, machine servicing, pre-dipping, drying off individual quarters,

milk recording, and milking mastitis cows last. Gradually the SCC started to drop. Tom learnt that it was no good in keeping old cows with high SCC, he was only raising the SCC and making no profit.

For my home farm to avoid high SCC we wipe the cows teats before milking and we teat spray after milking. We wash the clusters after a mastitis cow is milked. When cows are being housed the cubicles are cleaned and limed twice a day to prevent spreading. I think milk recording is the key to success, we are doing it now for the last 3 years and it gives us great information on each individual cow. We milk record four times a year which supplies us with great information throughout the year. We pay around a €1000 for the year and it's well worth the money because the data you get back is priceless. In my opinion I think every dairy farmer should be milk recording.

Session 3

Milking Infrastructure and Farm Layout

By Brian Buckley

To me this was the most interesting part of the conference as it was something which if made simple from the start could change the way a farmer works on a day to day basis. It is also something that could be improved on my home farm.

Road Layout

Speaker Michael Murphy outlined the system which they operate in New Zealand as being very simple with the best example being good roadway design. By keeping things simple eg a 90 degree bend is not allowed this improves cow flow. Cow flow is also helped by having a good road surface. Good design and with

a good surface is something which I could definitely improve on my home farm as all roadways are not up to standard.

Milking Parlour

There were a few simple steps which were outlined to greatly improve the cow flow at milking;

- Have a straight run into the parlour i.e. continue the pit back 4 or 5 feet so cows will be lining up for the next row at milking which is a problem in my parlour as the back cow is at the back of the shed.
- Having enough light so the cow does not have to walk into a sudden light change.
- Do not close in the parlour if possible so the cow does not feel trapped in by walls etc.
- By having a good exit out of the parlour it means cow flow is not delayed when a line of cows are milked. This is a problem in our parlour as cows have to turn a 90 degree bend to exit.
- Having good simple drafting is essential to speed things up at milking. It does not have to cost a lot and can be as a simple gate at both sides which can be opened from the pit and can save a lot of work.

Summary

After listening to this session of the conference it made me think of how I could improve this in the future on my home farm. I could improve on all of the above points but would have to start building on a green field site as my farmyard is very compact and would not be able to fit a new parlour on the existing site that would match all of the above. Something that I hope I get the opportunity to do in the future.

IGA at Sheep 2010 in the Lyons Estate



Caroline Kelly and the boys (Baltinglass) at the IGA Stand at Sheep 2010 in the Lyons Estate



Ciara Ella and Michael Doran (IGA council member) at the IGA stand at Sheep 2010

Call to our IGA Stand at the Tullamore Show, Sunday 8th August.

IGA/UGS tour of AFBI Loughgall Plant Breeding Centre

The Ulster Grassland Society organised a visit to AFBI's Loughgall Plant Breeding Centre on Wednesday 5 May 2010 and the UGS President extended an invitation to Irish Grassland Association members to join UGS members on the visit.

The Loughgall grass breeding program has a long and proud history in its field, with well know varieties such as Tyrella, Navan and Dunluce all having been bred at the station. Looking to the future, Dr David Johnston, AFBI Loughgall noted that "in the future, it will be important to have grass varieties that are well suited to local management practices and climatic conditions". The visit showcased a broad spectrum of the grass breeding effort including new research on varietal selection, disease resistance and improved nutritional value.

Other aspects of AFBI's research programmes on show were silvo-pastoral systems, white clover for local use, in addition to joint work with AFBI Hillsborough on the evaluation of sheep breeds and suckler cows.



IGAmembers Eoin, John and Gertrude Keane
Birr Co Offally at the IGA tour to
AFBI loughgall.

Other work at the Centre includes:

- Mushroom research
- Apple research & development
- Short rotation coppice
- Agroforestry
- Potato Breeding



Grass, breeding and marketing the focus of the IGA Sheep Conference & Farm Walk 2010



Dr. Seamus Hanrahan, John Kelly, Ciarán Lynch and Dr. Andrew Cromie IGA President

The Irish Grassland Association recently held its 2010 National sheep conference and farm walk on the farm of John Kelly, Stratford upon Slaney, Co Wicklow, with a conference afterwards at the Killerig Resort Hotel, Killerig, Co Carlow. The event was kindly sponsored by Mullinahone Co-op and Sheep Ireland Ltd.

The event was a huge success with some 150 people attending. The morning included a visit to the farm of John Kelly, an excellent farmer with a passion for sheep farming and for his future in the industry. John currently farms some 330 adult ewes and 100 replacement ewes, with plans to increase numbers by 50% over the next 2-3 years. He also plans to increase weaning rate to 1.6 lambs per adult ewe let to the ram. The farm is very focused on labour efficiency, with only 0.5 labour units devoted to the sheep enterprise, and to grassland management, with grass playing the major role in the diet of both the adult ewes and lambs on the farm. Indeed John indicated on the day that no concentrates were fed to any adult ewes or lambs before September last year, by which time 75% of lambs on the farm had been drafted. John is also a keen member of the Teagasc Better Farm sheep program.

The afternoon part of the event was equally impressive, with an outstanding line-up of speakers for the conference.



Pat Donnellan and Thierry Pabiou, Sheep Ireland, presented the latest genetic indexes from Sheep Ireland, based on data from both pedigree and commercial sheep flocks, including the new central progeny test system. Pat and Thierry indicated that the new indexes would be available in late June and urged sheep farmers to use the indexes when purchasing rams this Autumn.



Dr. Tim Keady, Teagasc, Athenry, outlined the latest results from Teagasc sheep research, in which lambs were finished on a range of diets including grass, concentrates, typhon and chicory. The results from this work clearly underlined the value of grazed grass as the most profitable option for prime mid season lamb production.



Dr Seamus Hanrahan, Teagasc, Athenry, drew on his 35 years of experience in sheep research to present a compelling paper on opportunities for improvements in technical efficiency at farm level. Seamus's messages were clear - there is huge scope for farmers to improve the profitability of their sheep enterprises through basic technology uptake, e.g., breeding, grassland management and new technologies such as EID.



Denis Carroll, sheep farmer and secretary of the Ring of Kerry Quality Lamb Group, presented their groups experience of direct selling lamb to the public, including the opportunities and the pit-falls. The group were recent category winners in the JFC Innovation awards, run by the Irish Farmers Journal and Teagasc.

Their story struck a chord with many sheep producers, as they seek to find new ways of increasing the value of their lamb crops.

Once again IGA were delighted to have Mullinahone Co-op as one of its sponsors for the event. Commenting on the event, Liam Egan, Mullinahone Co-op applauded the IGA for putting on such an excellent offering for farmers; *“Once again we are delighted to be associated with the running of the conference, which is our sixth year of being involved. The IGA sheep conference is always forward looking and this year was no different”*. Likewise, Pat Donnellan, Sheep Ireland Ltd, paid tribute to quality of the conference and farm-walk; *“The fact that the conference was so topical, with new messages in sheep breeding, finishing and marketing, made the event so interesting and educational to all pedigree and commercial sheep farmers”*.





Dr Sean Flanagan recipient of the Irish Grassland Association Lifetime Merit Award for 2010

At our recent sheep conference, the IGA honored Dr Sean Flanagan with its Lifetime Achievement Award, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the Association. Here we publish the citation received on Sean, from IGA council member Dr Tim Keady.

“For his outstanding contribution to the Irish Grassland Association, being the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer for 30 years of its 60 years existence, a council member for 39 years, and for his leadership in research and technology transfer for sheep production, particularly grassland management, I wish to nominate Dr. Sean Flanagan for the Irish Grassland Association Lifetime Merit Award 2010”

Dr. Tim Keady Teagasc Athenry & IGA council member

Sean Flanagan was the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer for the Irish Grassland Association from 1969 to 1999, during which he was ably assisted by his wife Madeline. Whilst being the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer he served with 32 different presidents. As Honorary Secretary and Treasurer he was responsible for:

- Organising four council meetings annually
- Presenting the financial accounts at the annual general meetings
- Organising sheep, beef and dairy conferences
- Organising study tours including visits to Germany, United Kingdom (11 visits), France, Netherlands and the USA
- Liaised with, and organised joint meetings with, other foreign societies including the International Grassland Congress, European Grassland Federation, British Grassland Society, British Society of Animal Science, Ulster Grassland Society and Fermanagh Grassland Club. For many of these joint meetings he served as the Hon. Secretary of the Organising Committees
- Secured corporate membership for the Association
- Actively promoted the Association by producing brochures and press articles

Sean joined the AFT Sheep Research Centre at Creagh, Co. Mayo in 1960 following graduation with a B. Agr. Sc. (Hon) from UCD. Subsequently he completed his PhD at the University of Edinburgh in 1964. On his return to AFT, Creagh, he continued his research work on classification of the characteristics of hill and lowland wools. In 1970 Sean was assigned to the Animal Husbandry Department at Creagh undertaking research and technology transfer on over wintering ewes, either on forage crops or housing, and on early lamb production. In 1973 Sean was instrumental in the planning and development of facilities and implementation of research programmes, on a new 240 ha leased research farm at Belclare, Co. Galway. In 1978 he set up the Blindwell Field Station at Tuam to evaluate whole farm systems of sheep production, including tillage, which became a focal point for technology transfer for sheep production until 1992. Also in 1985 he was assigned extra responsibilities as Farm Director of the new Research and Development Sheep Unit at Knockbeg, Co. Carlow, undertaking research work on impact of grassland management, handling facilities, housing, early lamb production, improving labour efficiency, extended grazing and finally year round grazing on the performance of the ewe flock. Knockbeg provided a focal centre in the East of Ireland for sheep research and technology transfer. Sean retired in 2005 shortly after organising a Sheep Conference at Greenmount College, Co. Antrim jointly hosted by the Irish Grassland Association, Ulster Grassland Association and the British Society of Animal Science. During his career Sean addressed the Irish Grassland Association Conferences on 7 occasions.



“For me, growing up and attending Irish Grassland Association events from approximately 10 years of age, Sean Flanagan was the Irish Grassland Association as he was central to each event, not only in the organisation but also in the running of the actual events and keeping them to time”

Therefore it is an honour to nominate Dr. Sean Flanagan for the Lifetime Merit Award for 2010 as he was the ‘corner stone’ of the Association for over 30 years during which time he undertook the thankless position of Secretary and Treasurer, for no financial reward, and for his major contribution to research and technology transfer on all aspects of sheep production.

Yours sincerely,

Timothy W. Keady

Dr. Tim Keady

Teagasc Athenry



Photo Right: Dr. Sean Flanagan along with his wife Madeline

Date for your diary



Announcing details of the upcoming Irish Grassland Dairy Summer Tour that will take place in Charleville Park Hotel and on the Farms of Fiachra, Mary & Aidan Liston, Croom & Pat & Olive Weeks, Killfinnane on Tuesday 27th July 2010. Included in the photo are Pat Burns ACC Bank, Aidan & Fiachra Liston, Host Farmers, Philip Donohoe, IGA Vice President and Robert Phillpott, ACC Bank.

The much anticipated and hugely popular Irish Grassland Associations' Dairy Summer Tour for 2010 will take place in south county Limerick on Tuesday 27th July. The Charleville Park Hotel will act as the event centre, as it is easily accessed from all routes and provides ample car parking. All those attending should check in at the hotel from where they will be bussed to the host farms.

Once again we have lined up two excellent farms for this event. Pat and Olive Weeks farm near the village of Kilfinane where they are currently milking 120 cows. The herd consists of approx 75% Jersey cross cows. At the moment this farm is in an aggressive expansion phase and on the day we will evaluate the different options that were (and are) available to Pat and Olive. In addition, the visit will be an excellent opportunity for farmers

to see a mature herd of Jersey cross cows, as Pat and Olive have been breeding to Jersey for some 8-10 years

The second farm is that of Aidan Mary and Fichara Liston from Croom in County Limerick. This father and son team milk 180 cows on their attractive, well laid out farm, focusing on a simple labour efficient system. Unlike the Weeks this farm is coming to the end of an expansion phase and we hope to answer questions such as how far can you push stocking rate without negatively affecting profit? Both farms are herd health conscious and take a proactive approach to same.

And if that wasn't enough, visitors will get to see financial performance (from their profit monitors) as well as their current management issues such as breeding and grassland performance. All in all a great day is promised.

Date for your diary

IGA Beef Confernece and Farm Walk

The Irish Grassland Association will hold its annual beef conference and farm walk will be held in the Woodlands Hotel on Tuesday, 31 August 2010. The beef conference in the morning will feature two sessions:

Session 1: Suckler beef production – new opportunities

Session 2: Efficient finishing of beef cattle

Speakers will highlight advances in herd health management, animal breeding and efficient finishing strategies. Farmer speakers will outline the benefits of the adoption of new production technologies in advancing their farming systems.

The Duggan Family in Coolfin, Portlaw Co. Waterford are the hosts for the farm visit portion of this years' Irish Grassland Association Beef Conference. John and Anne Duggan are farming with their son Paul run a 100 cow suckler herd of Limousin cross cows, bred to some of the top Belgian Blue AI and also his own stock bulls with all of the progeny sold on the live export market at 9 to 11 months of age. Replacement heifers are bred to a Blonde bull. As well as breeding the Duggans put a huge emphasis on top grassland management and keeping costs low. This farm visit is an ideal opportunity for visitors to see for themselves what potential there is in aiming to produce for the upper end of the live export market.



Paul & John Duggan



Grasses for the future

14th - 15th October 2010

A Grass Breeding and Evaluation Conference titled 'Grasses for the Future' hosted by Teagasc will be held in Cork on Thursday and Friday, 14 and 15 October, 2010. This conference provides a unique opportunity for grassland stakeholders – grass breeders right through to farmers - to discuss the grassland traits required to improve livestock production systems and to participate in strengthening progress in the grassland sector.

Day one will take place at the Silversprings Hotel, Cork and will have four sessions. In Session 1 Dr. Michael O'Donovan (Teagasc) will outline production system requirements from grazed grass (for dairy, beef and sheep) and Dr. Pete Wilkins (IGER) will update on the current status of grass breeding. Alan Stewart (New Zealand) and Pat Conaghan (Teagasc) will outline priorities for breeding and grass breeding technologies in Session 2. In the afternoon grass evaluation methodologies and practical implications of grass seed variety selection, use of seed mixes and reseeding will be discussed.

Day two of the conference will take place at Moorepark Conference Centre. A workshop in the morning will provide a unique opportunity for all stakeholders in the chain from grass breeder to farmer to discuss their priorities for grassland and seek to influence the future advances in variety development. Two site visits focusing on delivering the advances generated by grass breeding to the industry will take place to the Department of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Crop Variety Evaluation Site at Ballyderown Farm and Teagasc Moorepark's Grassland Research Programme following the workshop.

For further information see www.teagasc.ie/events.

**Please save our new office number onto your mobile phone:
Tel: (087) 9626483**

**Email: secretary@irishgrassland.com
Web: www.irishgrassland.com**

OPENING HOURS: Tuesday & Thursdays: 9am to 5pm

