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**YOU CAN REGISTER AND AVAIL OF THE ABOVE
DISCOUNTED RATES IF YOU REGISTER AND PAY
BEFORE FRIDAY 17th JULY.**

To avail of this offer:

- Make a prepaid booking online www.irishgrassland.com
- Post this prepaid booking form and your cheque to: Discounted DAIRY Registration, IGA, Cookstown, Kells, Co. Meath

SUMMER TOUR FEE INCLUDES:

- Attendance at Dairy Summer Tour
- Copy of the proceedings
- Refreshments on arrival and packed lunch
- Bus transfers between farms
- Please note that as part of its initiative to attract new members the conference attendance fee for non-members also includes one year's FREE membership to the Irish Grassland Association worth an amazing €60! (This offer is available for all new d/d memberships only)

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

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Tickets
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€30
see discount panel

Dairy Summer Tour

28th July 2015
Galway

A roadmap through expansion



Sponsored by



PROGRAMME FOR THE DAY

- 8.30am** Registration at O'Deas Hotel Loughrea town centre (signposted on all approach roads to Loughrea). Breakfast rolls and tea/coffee for everyone who arrives before 8.30am
- 9.10am** Depart by bus to first farm
- 9.30am** Arrive on first farm
Opening address by Paul Crosson
Irish Grassland Association President
- 11.40am** Depart by bus to Hotel
- 12.00** Lunch at O'Deas Hotel
- 12.50pm** Depart by bus to second farm
- 1.20pm** Arrive on second farm
- 3.30pm** Close of Dairy Summer Tour
- 3.40pm** Depart by bus to Hotel



**NOEL
O'TOOLE**

Noel O'Toole, a past winner of the prestigious Dairy Farmer of the Year Competition, farms a milking platform of 41 hectares in Killimor, Co. Galway. Noel has been a committed grassland farmer for many years and his unflinching focus on increasing grass production and utilisation from his farm is a key driver of his success. Through improvements in grassland management the output of milk solids per ha has increased

by 32% in the past eight years with a staggering 1585 kg MS/ha produced in 2014. This increase has been driven by increased stocking rate with output per cow remaining similar over that period of time. Last year Noel milked 160 crossbred cows at a stocking rate of 3.85 cows/ha on the milking platform. The 41 ha milking platform is capable of supporting the herd throughout lactation with surplus bales harvested being used for buffer feeding when deficits arise. Winter feed consists of a combination of bales made on outside blocks and also purchased bales, this system has allowed Noel to achieve an excellent output per ha while maintaining a low cost base. Regular grass measurement and budgeting have allowed Noel to match his stocking rate to the grass growing potential of the farm over time with an impressive 13.1 t DM/ha utilised in 2014.

Noel believes strongly in breeding a cow that suits his system instead of changing the system to suit the cow. He has been focused on breeding robust animals that can graze in all conditions and can achieve a compact calving pattern with minimal inputs. The herd, originally black and white, were crossed with Jersey sires to produce crossbred animals, and in recent years crossbred sires have been used extensively. Herd fertility is excellent with a six week calving rate of 89% and a 25% replacement rate.

This farm visit will provide delegates with a unique insight into a highly profitable grass based system and is a must see for anyone who feels restricted by access to land.



**HENRY
WALSH**

Henry Walsh Farms on a 76 ha milking block just outside Oranmore in Co. Galway. The soils are free draining and Henry has developed his system of farming to exploit this advantage fully. The herd has expanded from 160 cows in 2012 to 196 cows last year and 240 cows are being milked in 2015. This rapid expansion has brought challenges in terms of infrastructure and labour but critically it has not impacted on efficiencies with high levels

of performance being achieved throughout the expansion process. A lack of winter housing during phases of expansion forced Henry to develop a wintering system that is flexible and cost effective. Unlike the conventional approach of importing winter feed and providing winter accommodation on the home farm, Henry prefers to export the stock instead. Combinations of different out wintering systems with different crops have been used in the past but Henry's preferred system is grazing deferred grass. The outside blocks are cut for silage in mid-August to achieve a clean sward; they are then grazed in rotation by a combination of young stock and dry cows over winter. This system has allowed Henry to expand rapidly while minimising his spending on housing and infrastructure. Milking facilities will, however, become an issue in the near future with the 16 unit parlour coming under pressure with the additional cow numbers.

The herd EBI is €169 with a mixture of Friesian, Jersey and Norwegian Red genetics. In the mid 2000's the original black and white herd was crossed to Norwegian Red and Jersey sires as part of the Moorepark crossbreeding trial. Henry was extremely happy with the crossbred cows and how they performed in his system. In recent years he has been using Jersey and "black and white" sires to breed three way crossbred cows. The herd performance is impressive, producing 430 kg MS/cow from 450 kg of concentrate per cow and the herd has an 85% six week calving rate.

The Walsh farm is an excellent example of how rapid expansion can take place with minimal impact on efficiencies once investments are prioritised clearly and money is invested in areas that will yield a high return. This visit will be of particular interest to those planning large scale expansion in the coming years.