

SHEEP 2019

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

Members are welcome to bring 2 non member friends at members rates if they wish.
(You need to ring the office or make a postal booking to avail of this new offer).

Book _____ member(s) at €35 each.

Total: € _____

Book _____ friend/s at €35 each.

Total: € _____

Book _____ non member(s) at €70 each.

Total: € _____

Cheque enclosed: € _____

ATTENDING DELEGATE CONTACT DETAILS

NAME (DELEGATE 1): _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

NAME (DELEGATE 2): _____

NAME (DELEGATE 3): _____

DISCUSSION GROUP DEAL (for groups of 5+ members) :

€35 per head for discussion groups of 5+ members who book and prepay in full before 9th May 2019, (strictly no late applications accepted after this special offer date). Please email: office@irishgrassland.ie to apply.

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

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

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

Photographs will be taken at all events and occasionally published.

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Irish Grassland Association

SHEEP CONFERENCE AND FARM WALK

23rd May 2019
KELLS, CO. MEATH



Sponsored by



Programme for the day

Venue: Headfort Arms Hotel Kells
Date: 23rd May 10am - 4:15pm
10am Registration, Tea and Coffee

10.30am Morning Session

Welcome & opening of sheep conference Ciaran Lynch, President of the Irish Grassland Association

Session 1:

Chairperson: Fiona McGovern, Teagasc and Irish Grassland Association Council Member

A European Union perspective to Irish family farming,
Mairead McGuinness, MEP

Designing a handling unit?

Advice on what works and doesn't work.

Miriam Parker, Livestock Wise, UK

Session 2:

Chairperson: Darren Carty, Irish Farmers Journal and Past Council Member of the Irish Grassland Association

Panel Discussion

Labour use efficiency and demand on sheep farms.

- John O'Connor, Teagasc Kildalton,
- Darrell Meehan, part-time sheep farmer, Co. Westmeath
- John Bell, sheep farmer Co. Westmeath

12.30pm Lunch

1.30pm Depart from hotel for Farm Walk

2.00pm Afternoon Session

2.00pm Farm walk on the farm of John Brady

Topics to be covered

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

4.15pm Close of event

Speaker Profiles: Session 1

Mairead McGuinness, MEP



Mairead hails from Ardee, Co Louth and is currently the first Vice-President of the European Parliament. Mairead studied Agricultural Economics in UCD before becoming editor of The Farming Independent and presenting RTE's Ear to the Ground. She was elected as an MEP in 2004 and is now a member of the parliaments Agriculture and Rural Development, the environment Public Health and the Food Safety committees.

Miriam Parker, Livestock Wise, UK



Miriam is an Agricultural science graduate who has specialised in animal production, welfare and handling systems. Are we making the most of our handling facilities? Miriam will outline the science behind handling unit design and provide us with specialist advice on building or renovating handling units for sheep production systems. She will discuss the varying types of handling unit design outlining the positive and negative aspects of each, depending on your specific production system.

Panel Discussion

This year this segment of the morning session will be devoted to a panel discussion on labour demand and use efficiency on sheep farms and how sheep farming can be the perfect complement to your off farm employment. The discussion will highlight the opportunities and challenges which are faced by sheep farmers regarding labour demand on the farm. Each of our three panellists will give an overview of their involvement in the sheep industry and their personal experience in relation to labour efficiency on sheep farms. We will look at how employing shared labour or availing of agricultural student placements can facilitate greater labour efficiency and alleviate stress associated with busier periods.



John O'Connor
Teagasc Kildalton



Darrell Meehan
Sheep Farmer



John Bell
Sheep Farmer

Farmer Profile: John Brady



John farms just outside Navan in Co. Meath. The farm currently has over 1100 mature ewes and 250 ewe-lambs which are all mid-season lambing. John also contract rears 50 dairy replacement heifers, finishes 50 Friesian bulls & fattens 60 cull cows. Over the previous two years his sheep production enterprise has had a weaning rate of 1.43 and 1.35 lambs per ewe in 2017 and 2018, respectively, which is comparable to the national average achieved across the country.

John firmly believes that having good grazing infrastructure will enable you to get the most out of both grass and labour efficiency on the farm. He fully embraces the grazing challenge having previously hosted one of the Teagasc Grass10 Programme sheep walks. Paddocks are a key feature of John's grassland management system. He aims to close paddocks from the 3rd week of October each year which ensures that there is enough grass available at lambing so ewes do not have to be meal fed in the spring. On the main grazing block there are 32 paddocks with an average paddock size of 5ac (2ha) which works really effectively to ensure optimum grassland management. At the moment the remainder of the farm is in larger divisions however the aim is to subdivide these in order to facilitate management. Currently, both the 5ac paddocks & the larger divisions are further subdivided with temporary fencing when required throughout the main grazing season. This has facilitated the production of good quality silage on the farm where silage quality has averaged 72DMD over recent years.

Rather than putting in roadways the decision was made to include two paddocks in the centre of the main grazing block. These two long narrow paddocks are now used to channel livestock into the handling unit which makes it easier to move both cattle & sheep from the surrounding paddocks to the centrally located handling unit.

John is working full time on the farm and has also employed one full-time employee. John is fully of the opinion that 'whether you have 100 or 1,000 ewes you need a good handling unit for the safe, timely & efficient completion of tasks. John has a centrally located handling unit, which will be visited as part of the farm walk. The unit is multi-purpose and handles both cattle & sheep. Recent instalments have included a batch footbath that will hold 25 ewes. In addition to the fixed handling unit there is also a mobile handling unit used on the farm however future development plans include building second fixed handling unit on a 58ac (24ha) out-farm.

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Chairman:



Mairead McGuinness, MEP

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Programme for the day

Session 2:



Panel Discussion

Chaired by Darren Carty, Irish Farmers Journal

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