

## Registration

Pre-booking is essential as places are limited.

Book ..... x Op 1 €40 each / Day 1 only Total: €\_\_\_\_\_

Book ..... x Op 2 €60 each / Day 2 only Total: €\_\_\_\_\_

Book ..... x Op 3 €90 each / Day 1 and 2 Total: €\_\_\_\_\_

Cheque enclosed: €

### ATTENDING DELEGATE CONTACT DETAILS

NAME (DELEGATE 1): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME (DELEGATE 2): \_\_\_\_\_

NAME (DELEGATE 3): \_\_\_\_\_

### TO REGISTER

- Make a booking online [www.irishgrassland.ie](http://www.irishgrassland.ie)
- Post this booking form and your cheque to:  
IGA, Cookstown, Kells, Co. Meath
- Call the office on 087 9626483

### DISCUSSION GROUP DEAL

Members rates apply for discussion groups of 10+ members who book and prepay in one payment in full before Monday 12th June. Contact the office by emailing [office@irishgrassland.ie](mailto:office@irishgrassland.ie) or calling 087 9626483 to make your booking. (Strictly no late applications accepted after this special offer date).

## IGA Dairy Extravaganza Booking Options

**OPTION 1: DAY 1**  
€40 per member

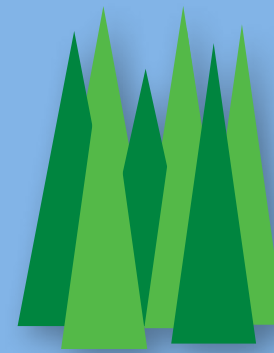
Farm A and Steak BBQ Night

**OPTION 2: DAY 2**  
€60 per member

Farm B and Farm C

**OPTION 3: DAY 1 & 2**  
€90 per member

Farm A, Farm B and Farm C  
and Steak BBQ Night



# Irish Grassland Association

## DAIRY EXTRAVAGANZA

17th & 18th July

REGISTRATION LOCATION IS KELLS, CO. MEATH

**3 Farm Walks and a Summer Steak BBQ  
for IGA members over 2 days**

# DAY ONE 17th July - Farm Walk + Steak BBQ

4.00pm Free Admission Farm Walk. Meet at Cassidy's farm A82YP57  
6.30pm Steak BBQ night at the Headfort Arms Hotel Kells Co. Meath

## FARM A



Mark Cassidy

Mark Cassidy is farming in Kells, Co. Meath. The Cassidy farm has calved 390 cows in 2023. The farm is a spring calving crossbred herd which produced 509Kgs of milk solids per cow in 2022. The farm is 153Ha, with a milking platform of 115Ha. The EBI of the herd is €207 and has a 6-week calving rate of 83%. Heifer calves are contract reared and have been done so by the same farmer for the past 6 years.

Mark returned home to full time farming in the mid 1990's. At that stage the farm was milking 40 cows and supplying a liquid milk contract. The farm has grown considerably in recent years, and it has done so maximising the use of grazed grass in the diet. Mark started measuring grass in the mid 2000's, and the farm while affected by drought last year, grew 12.8t DM/ha.

The farm can be best described as a labour efficient farm. Good structure, defined roles and a recognition of the importance of work-life-balance are key to the farm. It was Mark's time abroad, before he returned to full time farming in Ireland that shaped his farming philosophy and how he would set up his farm for the future. Having worked on farms in the Netherlands and in New Zealand he got to witness first-hand the benefits of a structured work week and the importance of work life balance for staff, who would return refreshed after their weekends away from the farm.

Mark has two full time staff on the farm David and Sarah, who have both been with him for the past two years. There is additional support at calving for c. 10 weeks and relief milking is provided by students.

A staff meeting takes place every Tuesday on the farm where priority items for the week ahead and items of note are discussed. Sarah and David have defined roles on the farm with each undertaking one milking per day. The farm has standard operating procedures (SOP's) in place for all farm activities which are contained with the farm manual. The farm manual is to support all staff on the farm, to outline how tasks should be completed on the farm and to ensure there is no ambiguity.

Mark is always looking into ways of incorporating technology to streamline the system on his farm. Anything that will enable him or the team working on the farm to carry out their tasks remotely or with the use of automation is an area of interest to him. Mark sees the advances in technology as a way to continue to improve his farm and make it a nicer, easier and smarter place to work.

# STEAK BARBECUE



€40 PP

Booking essential

[www.irishgrassland.ie](http://www.irishgrassland.ie)

087 9626483



HEADFORT  
ARMS HOTEL

BED AND BREAKFAST

Single €89pp Twin €65pps

Triple €53pps Quad €47pps

Call 046 9240063 and quote IGA

# DAY TWO 18th July - Dairy Summer Bus Tour

Come on our bus tour when we cross over the Meath border into Cavan  
9.20am Reg with breakfast roll at Rockfield Hse Kells Co Meath A82V9D5

## FARM B



Owen Brodie

Owen Brodie is farming with his family in Cavan on the shores of Lough Ramor. Owen finished school in 1985 before attending Ballyhaise Agricultural College where he completed his Green Cert. He returned home to farm full time in 1989 at the age of 21. At that stage the farm was milking 30 Pedigree Friesian cows supplying a winter milk contract, there was a cheese production facility on the farm as well as 100 sows. The Brodie's were farming 28ha, 20ha of which could be described as good quality.

In the interim period, additional land has been bought and rented, roadways upgraded and the parlour upgraded from a 6 unit initially to a 12 unit and now a 24 unit. Today Owen is farming a total of 77ha, 20ha of which is rented and has a milking platform of 58ha's. He milked 205 cows in 2022.

Owen has been contract rearing out his heifers for 12 years, and he is in a long term arrangement with the one farmer rearing the heifers for the entire time. There is one full time person employed on the farm in addition to support at calving time.

Land type on the farm is a mix of dry and heavy land. In the early 90's Owen started to measure grass, and put a focus on extending the grazing season. Overall there was 13.8 tonnes of grass DM/ha grown across the whole farm in 2022. Owen has started to incorporate clover into his reseeding programme to reduce his reliance on chemical fertiliser and this will be discussed further on the day.

To coincide with the increased focus on grass, Owen quit winter milk production and began spring calving in 1994. Owen put a big emphasis on cow type to align with the introduction of the A+B-C milk payment system which has paid off for him. His ideal cow is a 550kg, fertile and crossbred cow. The EBI of the herd is €210 with €46 from milk and €91 fertility. Owen's cows produced 518Kgs of milk solids in 2022 at 4.7% fat & 3.78% protein. Feed input per cow was 1.1t. Fertility performance in 2022 was excellent with a calving interval of 373 days and an 89% 6-week calving rate.

The Brodie farm is an excellent example of a farm achieving high levels of performance under more challenging conditions. As mentioned before, some of the land type is heavy. The farm is long and narrow, with some of the grazing platform over 2.3km from the parlour with steep roadways for the cows to travel on. To access different parts of the grazing platform, cows have to cross two roads, and to access one of the fields cows walk along the road. Land is fragmented, with limited access to additional land in the area to support growth. In this context the growth and performance of the Brodie family farm over time is even more impressive.

## FARM C



David Brady

David Brady is farming in Co. Cavan. The Brady Family business consists of both a Dairy and Poultry (free-range eggs) business. David returned home to farm with the initial focus on the poultry side of the business. At the time his parents Brian and Daphne were milking 30 cows. Steady growth over the years has developed the dairy business to a milking herd of 110 cows carried on the milking platform of 40ha (2.75 LU/ha), the support block of 30ha carries the replacement stock and silage ground. The poultry enterprise (between 2 houses and 15,000 hens) is managed in conjunction with David's brother Kieran. David's wife Rachel and their 3 children Eoghan, Daniel and Kate all give time to the farm.

The main focus for the visit will be on the dairy enterprise but we will discuss how labour is integrated effectively between it and the poultry business. The EBI of the herd is €212 with €63 from milk and €98 fertility. David's cows produced 541Kgs of milk solids in 2022 at 4.44% fat & 3.63% protein and a SCC of 94K. Feed input per cow was 1.2t. Fertility performance in 2022 was excellent with text-book KPI's of 363 day calving interval, 82% 6-week calving rate with 100% of the heifers calved at 24 months. David's key focus had been on driving milk solids production through a combination of breeding for fertility and kilos of fat & protein using high EBI genomic sires while also a key focus on cow selection.

In 2015 David joined the Teagasc Heavy Soils Programme and the Irish Farmers Journal Dairylink programme. At this time David also began grass measuring and began the steady improvement in grassland productivity and grass utilisation on the farm. The key areas of grassland management we will discuss with David in July will be land improvement and his approach to drainage, the major emphasis on soil fertility, reseeding clover incorporation and grazing infrastructure to achieve high levels of grass utilisation.

David will highlight his 'grass before cows' approach to steady expansion, his approach to managing the growth capability of the land and the appropriate stocking rate for his system. Central to this has been David's attitude to testing the boundaries of what is possible on a farm with challenging soils types in a high rainfall area while also dealing with land fragmentation. David has adapted a successful system of grass production and utilisation, producing grazing swards of high quality on a consistent basis. Overall, we look forward to hearing how David and his family have evolved and developed a successful, profitable farm and what the key priorities for future developments will be.