

BOOKING FORM

Book _____ member(s) at €80 each. Total: € _____

Book _____ new member(s) offer at €160* each. Total: € _____

* new members pay €160 when booking event tickets. They will get a €40 refund when the IGA receives an approved signed Direct Debit Form.

Cheque enclosed: € _____

ATTENDING DELEGATE CONTACT DETAILS

Name (Delegate 1): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Name (Delegate 2): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Book online www.irishgrassland.ie (Quickest method)

CONFERENCE FEE INCLUDES:

- Attendance at event 9th January
- Proceedings QR code
- Refreshments at 9am sharp
- Hot dinner, dessert with Tea/Coffee
- Membership* to IGA up to November 2026 (for all new dd members)

STUDENT DEAL: €50pp (RRP €160). Please email to apply office@irishgrassland.ie (From your college email domain, with the name of your lecturer, course, and college).

DISCUSSION GROUP DEAL €120pp (RRP €160). Please email to apply office@irishgrassland.ie. For groups of 10+ members who pay in one bank transaction. You can also avail of free membership to the IGA up to November 2026 (for all new dd members).

IGA DAIRY CONFERENCE

Friday 9th January 2026
(Book with IGA)

9.00 am	Registration with refreshments on arrival
9:45 am	Opening Address: Vincent Griffith, IGA President and Dairy Farmer
S1	Industry Overview, Making the most of our strengths for what's ahead in 2026 Chair: Aidan Brennan, Irish Farmers Journal
10.00am	Laurence Shalloo Teagasc
S2	Growing 14+Tonnes of grass – how can this be done consistently? Chair: John O'Loughlin IGA Council Member and Grassland Agro
11.45am	Michael O'Donovan Teagasc John MacNamara Dairy Farmer Kevin Moran Dairy Farmer
12.45pm	Hot Lunch
S3	Preparing for investment, financing opportunities & building-in resilience Chair & Speaker: Donal Whelton AIB Bank
2.15pm	Christopher Cahill Dairy Farmer Farmer and Cavan Grassland Consultancy David Fogarty & Katie O'Toole Dairy farmers in partnership
4.00pm	Conference Close Liz Duffy IGA Council Member Event Chairperson and Teagasc



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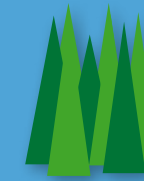


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**Irish Grassland
Association**

DAIRY CONFERENCE & SOCIAL NIGHT

Growing Profit from the Ground Up



**8th & 9th January 2026
CHARLEVILLE PARK HOTEL**



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IGA SOCIAL NIGHT & GALA DINNER

Thursday 8th January 2026
7.30pm sharp (Book with hotel)

Paul Hyland, IGA Past President & dairy farmer will be hosting our after-dinner chat

Michael Ward is a civil engineer by profession and now farmer. He owns one third of the 'Ward and Burke Group' that built €500m worth of municipal infrastructure in Canada, USA, England and Ireland in 2024. They employ over 1,600 skilled people, hiring and training mainly young graduates and apprentices from farming backgrounds. He owns Kilbegnet House Farm in Creggs County Roscommon where he operates a 500 cow dairy herd with his share farming partner, Andrew Clarke. He grew up on a mixed dairy, beef and sheep farm which he inherited with his brother aged 16. After completing his leaving cert he farmed for two years before going onto study at UCG. After graduating he rented his farm and emigrated to England to work as a contractor. For the past 35 years he has lived between England and Ireland and in the past 4 years has resumed farming.



**B&B €60pp double / €110pp single
Dinner €55pp. Table of 10 only €500**

Group name / Corporate logo
can be displayed on table
Professional photos can be taken of groups
Book with the hotel direct **063 33700**

Conference Overview

With grass being the foundation of a profitable, resilient, and sustainable dairy business. Our 2026 Dairy Conference is all about unlocking the full potential of pasture to power productivity and profitability. The first session will focus on a review of 2025 and what industry challenges lay ahead. The theme of the second session is 'Growing 14+ Tonnes of Grass' and how this can be done consistently. The last session will have a financial focus where we'll discuss preparing for investments and financing opportunities. These last two sessions include a farmer led panel discussion where five farmers will share their real experiences and lessons from managing successful grass-based dairy enterprises.

At the heart of the conference is a line-up of forward-thinking dairy farmers who've built profitable careers by focusing on grass. We are delighted to bring you open and frank discussions with our panels of farmers who really do walk the walk when it comes to grass-based dairy farming. Hear their journeys — from the challenges of starting out to the lessons that made the biggest difference on their farms.

Chairpersons



Aidan Brennan
Dairy Farmer and
Irish Farmers
Journal



John O'Loughlin
IGA Council
Member and
Grassland Agro



Donal Whelton
AIB Head of
Agriculture, Food
& Fishing

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Dr Laurence Shalloo: Laurence qualified from UCD with a BAgSc in 1999, and he went on to complete his PhD in 2004 on the development and use of the Moorepark Dairy Systems Model to analyse institutional and technical changes in dairy farming. He joined Teagasc in 2004 and is currently head of the animal and grassland research and the innovation programme at Teagasc. Laurence kicks off the conference with a comprehensive look back at 2025—reviewing what the year taught us and identifying the key industry challenges we face in 2026. This session isn't just about reflection; it's about setting the stage for action. Laurence will discuss market trends, policy, financial and environmental factors that will shape the dairy landscape for 2026. This session will be chaired by Aidan Brennan, Dairy editor in the Irish Farmers Journal and promises to be a lively and engaging debate as we start out the new year.



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Dr Michael O'Donovan: Michael is head of the grassland science department at Teagasc, Moorepark. He graduated from UCD with a degree in Agricultural Science in 1995, after which he completed his masters in 1998 and a PhD in 2000. He leads a grassland research programme on innovating pasture-based dairy production systems, focusing on grazing management, incorporating clover into grazing systems, and oversees the Pasture Profit Index and PastureBase Ireland. Michael has over 25 years of experience in grassland research and has been instrumental in developing tools and technologies that enhance grass utilisation and profitability on Irish dairy farms. He coordinates the PastureBase Ireland programme, which underpins national efforts to improve grazing efficiency and herbage production. Widely published and an active collaborator across international grassland networks, Michael plays a key role in bridging scientific research and practical application for the benefit of farmers and industry. His work continues to shape Ireland's direction in pasture-based livestock systems.



John MacNamara: John alongside his wife, Olivia, farm in Knockainey Co. Limerick, with their four children, Caoimhe, Conor, Ailbhe and Padraic, who all contribute to the running of the farm. He is milking 220 spring calving dairy cows on a 76 ha milking platform with another 38 ha on the outside farm which is 6 miles from home for silage and heifers. John is also the chairman of Teagasc's Grass10 programme. John places a huge focus on grass production which is been achieved through excellent grassland management, maintaining optimal soil fertility, the incorporation of clover through consistent reseeding and over-sowing and aligning chemical nitrogen use. In 2025 the farm produced >15 t DM/ha, feeding less than 550 kg of concentrates per cow with 165 kg of chemical N/ha spread, all while maintaining production at over 520 kg of milk solids/cow, with farm growing >14.8 t DM/ha of grass on average over the previous 5 years. John's aim is to run an enjoyable, profitable, efficient, sustainable dairy business, while also enjoying a good work-life balance.



Kevin Moran: Kevin began farming in 2013 when he leased his uncle's 40 ha farm in Caherlistrane, Co. Galway milking 72 cows. Kevin is now farming 105 ha with 260 cows in a spring calving grass-based system. Kevin runs a simple system with two full-time labour units, with a clear focus on milk solids from grazed grass while maximising profit in both an environmental and economically sustainable manner. Kevin has placed a huge focus on improving and maintaining soil fertility on the farm over the last number of years, which has resulted in producing 15 t DM/ha on average over the past 5 years, with 16 t DM/ha grown with 560 kg MS/cow in 2025. This has all occurred while reducing chemical fertiliser inputs to < 180 kg N/ha over the past 4 years, by incorporating white clover into the grazing swards on his farm. Clover not only offers environmental advantages to farmers, but also a financial return through increased animal performance and fertiliser savings.



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Donal Whelton: Donal is AIB Head of Agriculture, Food & Fishing. Originally from a dairy farm in Barryroe West Cork, Donal holds a BAgSc degree from UCD and is a qualified financial advisor. Donal joined AIB in 2000 and began his career in the bank's commercial lending department before joining the AIB agri team in 2005. Having led the AIB southern agri team, Donal was appointed to his current position in 2021.



Donal will chair a panel discussion with three forward-thinking dairy farmers — David Fogarty, Katie O'Toole and Christopher Cahill who have built successful, profitable careers by embracing grass-based systems. This panel will answer pressing questions like: How do you build a solid business plan based on grass? What investment strategies can improve farm resilience? And how can you access funding to take your farm to the next level?

Katie O'Toole and David Fogarty

This duo operate a 500-cow jersey/friesian cross spring-calving dairy enterprise as part of a partnership on a fully leased farm near Kilkenny city. The aim is to build a system that prioritises simplicity, grass utilisation, and long-term business sustainability. Neither come from farms but both studied Ag Science at 3rd level and spent time farming in New Zealand. Katie completed her master's and worked with Teagasc before opting to go farming full time. David managed farms after coming home from New Zealand and gained valuable experience. They set their sights on farming together and went about finding a suitable opportunity. Important factors were scale, existing infrastructure, business model, potential returns, location and the people they were going to be working alongside. Cantwellscourt ticked a lot of the boxes and they took over the running of the farm in August 2024. It has been a steep learning curve but an enjoyable experience so far, say Katie and David.



Christopher Cahill: Christopher hails from Co. Cavan where he picked up his Grá for dairying while helping on his uncle's 45 cow dairy farm. He completed the UCD dairy business degree, and subsequently a master's degree in sustainable agriculture. He spent 2013 working in New Zealand where he encountered the concepts of share farming and contract grass measuring services. Following this Christopher worked with Lakeland Agri for 6 years as an animal nutritionist and gained a huge wealth of experience in this role. In 2021, with help from Macra's Land Mobility Service, Christopher formed a farming partnership with Tony McCormack, a dairy farmer from Co. Westmeath where Christopher provides the cows and labour, while Tony provides the land and infrastructure. Christopher is also the director of Cavan Grassland Consultancy Ltd, a company he established to provide grassland measurement and management services.

