



Certified Irish Angus Beef Schools Competition



KEPAK

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS



On behalf of the Irish Angus Producer Group and our processor partners, ABP and Kepak, I wish to welcome you to this very special event.

We are honoured and privileged to have had the opportunity to work with these students, their schools, teachers and families over the past two years. We are astonished at the level of enthusiasm and appetite for learning about agriculture and in particular, the production of Certified Irish Angus Beef.

The effort that all of these students have gone to in the rearing of their calves and in the promotion of Certified Irish Angus Beef, along with the in-depth research and reports they have completed is astonishing. This reflects the commitment and effort of their school, teachers and parents to a full and complete education.

To our partners, ABP and Kepak, I wish to thank you most sincerely for your support and help in this project.

We hope this has been a memorable experience for all of the students that have taken part and wish you the very best of luck in the future.

Tim Dunne

Chairman



ATHLONE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ATHLONE, CO. WESTMEATH



Jack Connaughton, Sarah Muldoon & Louise Payne were asked to report on how farm standards influenced the performance of the animals on the farm,

the health & safety of the people who worked on the farm and how general farm organisation made life easier for everyone involved.

Animal Welfare is not only a key component in the production of livestock. It is something that all family farms care deeply about. Few farmers are happy if their animals are in discomfort of any kind and strive in every manner to ensure their animals have the happiest of lives.

The group attended a number of Teagasc events where they gained a greater understanding of the impact of sick animals on the farm, the farmer and the animals themselves. The vet, Martin Kavanagh, helped them understand not only the cost implications, but the implications on the farmer, those operating the farm and on the animals themselves of having sick days.

They gained an understanding of how farmyard layout, ventilation and general management assisted in ensuring the animals had the least stress and the maximum comfort in their lives. They assessed the benefits of rubber mats to increase the comfort of the lying area for the animals.



Through attending events such as the Irish Angus Youth Development Programme and the Health & Safety Authority event at Tullamore Show, they gained an insight into the simple measures that could be taken on farms to improve farm safety.

Working in close contact with the host farmer, Pat Harrison, on whose farm their Angus cattle were reared, they established a farm safety system by making sure that shovels, yard brushes and other farm utensils were stored in a specific place and easily noticed when missing. They also worked with Pat and his family on creating awareness among his young grandchildren about the dangers on the farm. They used the Teagasc booklet "Stay Safe of the Farm with Jessie".



During Farm Safety Week, Monday 24 – Fri 28 July 2017, they used their contacts through their local primary and post-primary schools to emphasise all the hazards on farms from operating machinery through to working with livestock. They followed this through on their return to school and gave farm safety awareness talks to the TY students and their Ag Science class.

They found that simple measure on the farm and simple discussions among farm family members help avoid minor accidents and in some cases, can save people's lives.

CBS THE GREEN, TRALEE, CO. KERRY



Darragh O'Brien, Michael Scanlon and Darragh Regan come from a school with a history of excellence in sport. These sport enthusiasts were given the job of explaining the benefits of Certified Irish Angus Beef in our diets.

Advised and helped by their close friend, Sean O'Donoghue, who had been involved in the Certified Irish Angus Beef Competition the previous year but had not been lucky enough to win the calves, this group of non-farmers were determined to show how boys from an urban background could adapt to farming.

They made a decision early on that they would invoke the assistance of the entire school in this promotional activity and that they would take on the role of middle management in organising their fellow students to maximise the amount of ground that could be covered. They engaged a number of primary schools in their area through a number of art competitions to help develop a mascot.



They hosted an Angus Day in their school where they invited all of the local primary schools that had taken part in the art competition and their own school to a mega barbeque. Certified Irish Angus burgers were served, compliments of the local Tesco store along with local Lee Strand Milk. A combination of the quality of the produce produced locally and the health benefits of this kind of food in providing high quality protein to young athletes was explained to all. Using social media, they expanded this key message beyond their local area and schools. They also participated in an event in Castleisland Mart.

Overall, they utilised the resources of the entire school population to increase the understanding of the benefits of red meat in a healthy, balanced diet. Their teacher, John Mike Fitzgerald, ensured that the Angus calves had a good and happy life on his family farm. The boys are extremely grateful to their teacher for assisting them in this opportunity.

ST. BROGAN'S COLLEGE, BANDON, CO. CORK



These two robust young farmers, Mark Shorten and Conor Lehane, hail from the heart of dairy and beef farming in Bandon, Co. Cork. They were given the subject of

proving that Angus cross was the most suitable for the modern day dairy farm and these Freisian cross Angus calves offered a great opportunity for a beef finisher.

As their families have deep roots in the Bandon area, they became involved in a number of local initiatives from which they explained directly and indirectly the benefits of the Angus breed. They used the awareness of their involvement in this competition and part of the value of their animals to support local charities, both within their school and wider community. They hosted a Certified Irish Angus Beef night on 4 May 2017 to which they invited 85 guests to a dinner party of Certified Irish Angus Beef with all of the proceeds of the evening going to the West Cork charity, Cancer Connect. They raised €1,600 on the night.



Their charity work brought them to the attention of the Gardaí who decided to award them the West Cork Garda Youth Award. This involved a reception evening where they once again highlighted the benefits of the Angus breed to the farmers within their locality.

As they progressed through the competition, they continuously recognised the support their school community had given them and when they had harvested the value of their Angus calves, they recognised that support by donating €500 to the West Cork Rapid Response Unit and €500 to their school to be used for students who needed counselling or who had mental health issues.



They attended numerous agri events in their local marts, co-op, political events and farmer socialising events at which they gave in-depth details of how the Angus breed could benefit many of their farming colleagues. They coupled this production system with the substantial Angus bonuses that are available through our processor partners in their area.

Social Media information containing blogs, interviews and newsletters helped not only to make the lads household names but also the cattle. An interview they conducted with Alan Jagoe, European Youth Farmer's President, which they published on social media is an informative and encouraging interview for young people as they prepare for a career in Irish agriculture.

RICE COLLEGE, WESTPORT, CO. MAYO



Ciaran Calvey, James Treacy & Stephen Walsh have grown up in the heart of farming and tradition in the shadow of Croagh Patrick. Their pride for the area they come from is

outstanding and as a result, they were asked to investigate how the production of Angus cattle on marginal land in the west of Ireland enhances the farming system and the quality of the beef.

Much of the land in the west of Ireland requires particular attention and its capabilities are known best by the families who have farmed it for generations. Farming in this environment is challenging but for those who have had generations of experience of its limitations, they are able to adapt to its shortcomings.



The lads set about using their five Angus calves to explain how Angus beef production in their area is most suited to the land type and return the greatest profit with the least challenges for the farmer. Their experience and research taught them that the hardiness and temperament of Angus cattle is hugely suitable to not only the land but to the, in



the main, part-time farmers that operate this land. By attending events such as the Irish Angus Youth Development Programme, the Irish Angus Elite Cattle Sale and a number of local events, the lads were able to explain the advantages of Angus to neighbouring farmers.

At the Remembrance Ceremony at the Michael Davitt Centre in Straide, Co. Mayo, the birthplace of Michael Davitt, founder of the Land League, they explained how this very precious land could be utilised best by producing Angus cattle. Coupled with drawing information from their fellow participants in the competition, they explained the benefits of the Certified Irish Angus bonus and how earmarking the farm's production for certain times of the year maximises the return to the farmer.



The lads finished their project off with a stern warning of the rural decline that they feel is happening within their area. In their opinion, it is important that a system of commercial farming is maintained and supported by the Government and the industry in order to ensure that viable communities remain strong in the west of Ireland. Participation in this project and the awareness it has brought to their community has helped to some extent in regenerating a sense of pride among family farms.

COLÁISTE TREASA, KANTURK, CO. CORK



Aoife O'Leary, Chloe Cottrell, Máire O'Donoghue & Aoife O'Connor from both farming and non-farming backgrounds were tasked with the challenge of helping farmers understand

the value of planning their production to maximise their return.

The girls initially set out individual goals which varied from developing their knowledge of farming to assisting in their Ag Science studies to learning a skill set that would assist their parents in the management of the family farms. They decided early on that they would include in their studies how maximising the output of a farm could increase efficiency across the entire spectrum of the farm from labour to output to maximising the profit of the end product.

Labour

From a labour point of view, the girls wanted to show how modern mechanisms could assist in reducing labour and increasing the efficiency and performance of the animals. To do this, they approached Frank Murphy from Glen South Farm who is a successful businessman, yet runs a large beef enterprise on a family holding in Banteer with the help of farm manager, Áine Sweeney. They asked Frank if he would allow them to rear the calves on his farm using his robotic feeding system.



Output

This robotic feeder drives efficiency in terms of animal performance by maximising the weight gain achieved as a result of feeding the precise amount of feed on a number of occasions throughout a 24 hour period.

Maximising Profit

With a huge focus on the time of year the animals were slaughtered, the girls ensured that they qualified for the highest level of bonus. This in turn drove the overall value of the animals at the end. Their studies showed that the majority of farmers in their area did not know how the bonus system could be used to maximise the end price.

They set about creating a number of initiatives to help farmers clearly understand when the Certified Irish Angus bonus was at its highest and how with simple changes to on-farm production systems could return a substantial increase in the price per kg paid for the animals. They took their initiatives to a number of local marts and farmers events such as machinery shows to help the farmers understand how this pre-booked bonus works.

They attended a number of Macra events to explain to young farmers of the future how time spent on planning and organisation delivered dividends. The girls were very lucky to have the assistance of the Murphy family and Áine Sweeney in Glen South Farm to carry out their research.





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