CERTIFIED IRISH ANGUS

SCHOOLS COMPETITION 2021



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INTRODUCTION

On behalf of Certified Irish Angus and our processer partners, ABP and Kepak, I wish to welcome you to the virtual final of the Certified Irish Angus School Competition.

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, particularly their efforts during the Covid 19 pandemic. 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 who have taken part and wish you the very best of luck in the future.

Tim Dunne

Chairman



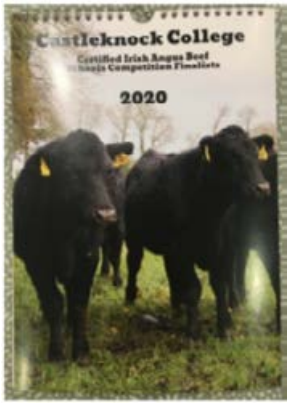
CASTLEKNOCK COLLEGE

Although the school is in Dublin 15, Castleknock College is in the unique situation of having the only farm located within the M50 based around their school grounds. While a large number of the students come from an urban background, Iarla Nolan, Josh Lovely and Jordan Greiner all had a connection to farming which helped them focus on their topic **"The benefits of eating beef as part of a balanced diet"**.





The students identified that animal welfare, carbon footprint and the nutritional qualities of beef were some of the main topics that consumers consider when including beef as part of their diet. They suggested practical steps that farmers could take such as silvopasture, which is the integration of planting trees and grazing pasture in one area, in an effort to reduce on-farm carbon footprint and make extra income as well.



In keeping with the proud sporting tradition associated with their school, the boys conducted interviews with Irish and Leinster rugby player, Devin Toner, and Tipperary hurler, Noel McGrath, on including beef in an athlete's diet. The conversations were both based around what opinions a professional athlete had about what they include in their diet. Do they recognise the Certified Irish Angus Beef logo? Do they look out for Irish products and would they join the competition if they were in school today?



The boys decided to finish the rearing of their calves on the Guinness' farm adjacent to the college, so the whole school population could see the cattle. This created a great buzz in the school and an atmosphere of curiosity among all the students.



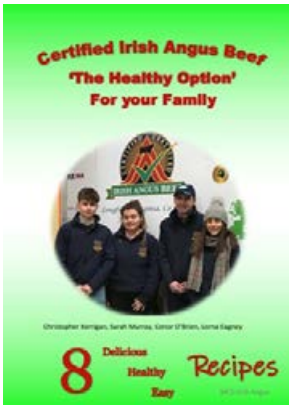
MOATE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Sarah Murray, Lorna Eagney, Conor O'Brien and Christopher Kerrigan were given the topic of **"Maximising the Benefit of Membership of Certified Irish Angus Producer Group"**.

The students hit the ground running by attending local marts and agricultural shows across the country from Tullamore to Balmoral where they chatted with farmers about their knowledge of the Angus breed and Certified Irish Angus Producer Group. They continued their learning journey on the benefits of Angus production through to processing by visiting ABP Nenagh and Kepak Kilbeggan production facilities. They learned about the supports that are offered to farmers through Blade Farming and Beef Twenty 20 schemes and why farmers decided to take part in either of the schemes.



With the help of local food blogger, Nessa Robins, the students published a cookery book "The Healthy Option for your Family". They organised a visit to their local Tesco in Tullamore where the store manager gave them an overview of the various cuts of meat on offer and what products proved popular with customers. They left copies of their recipe booklet at the meat counter for customers to take home and try some of the tasty recipes themselves.





The group was keen to give back to the community and attended the launch night of "Hooves 4 Hospice" which is a campaign to raise vital funds for the Midlands Hospice Building Fund. The MC on the night was Ear to the Ground presenter, Ella McSweeney with guest speakers Michael Duignan and Charlie Redmond who spoke of their experiences. The students were so inspired, they donated the proceeds of one of their calves to "Hooves 4 Hospice" which came to the value of €1,200. www.h4h.midlandhospice.ie





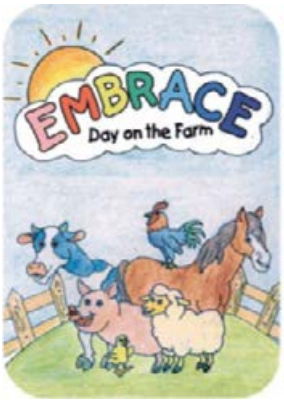
SLIGO GRAMMAR

Emma O'Gorman, Sarah Cunningham, Rosie Wright, Laura West, Genevieve Cox and Rebecca Harte focused on the topic of **"Improving Irish Angus Genetics and the Benefits"**.

The girls started their research by visiting the University of Limerick and Dovea Genetics where they learned the scientific and practical aspects involved in animal breeding. They learned the need to understand how each aspect impacts on the other and to ensure one doesn't undermine the other's characteristics and genetic traits.



In Dovea Genetics, they were given a tour of the facilities including practical demonstrations of how AI straws were produced. They gained an understanding of the merits of some of Ireland's best Angus bulls. They learned how the Euro-Star Index helps farmers to adapt their breeding programmes in a way that maximises the benefits to the farmer from the natural characteristics of the Angus breed.



One of the main promotions of the group was writing and illustrating a children's book explaining the benefits of the Irish Angus breed and the processes of farm to fork in a child friendly way. The story book explains a day in the life of a farmer. The girls read the story book to local primary school children and were overwhelmed with the positive responses they got. During lockdown, they emailed a copy of the book to local primary schools which proved hugely successful with teachers and students.



The girls took part in a very successful Mental Health Week. They followed this up by promoting #feelgoodfriday on Instagram, posting a positive mental health story every Friday. They shared a photo which made them happy and tagged friends to encourage them to get involved. Since they couldn't meet anyone in person, they decided to use Instagram to educate their followers on Angus genetics where each of the team explained a different topic and how it benefits the farmer.





ST ALOYSIUS COLLEGE

This group had no farming experience before entering this competition but Leah Buckley, Kelsey Hourigan, Helen Savage, Emily O'Donovan & Rachel O'Gorman got stuck into working on the topic of **"Communicating with the Consumer & Producer"**.

The girls started their journey by talking to consumers in Tesco, Midleton where they found low levels of consumer awareness of the process that beef takes before it lands in store and the knowledge of Certified Irish Angus Beef. They used this as an opportunity to promote Certified Irish Angus Beef to their local community.





In an effort to educate consumers, they created an app called 'Angus Adventures'. The app focused on the daily tasks of a farmer to inform consumers of the hard work that goes into getting Certified Irish Angus Beef from farm to plate. The app is a fun game where the player has their own Angus animal that needs to be fed, dosed, watered, washed, brushed etc. The app also includes facts and information about the Angus breed and the sponsors of the competition.



The students wanted a distraction from the negative news on Covid-19. They decided to promote maintaining a positive attitude by learning a new skill every day to keep the mind active. With a huge increase in home cooking during lockdown, they shared delicious meal ideas using Certified Irish Angus Beef. Each team member picked a different meal and demonstrated the method and recipes through social media.

As part of Ag Mental Health Week the group chatted with Ben Ryall who suffered a life-changing injury in a farm accident in 2006. Ben now acts as a spokesperson for the farm safety charity Embrace Farm and explained how fatigue and farmers overworking themselves is a major cause of accidents.





ST LOUIS KILTIMAGH

James Cunnane, Nathan Hession, John Connaughton, Ava Charlton & Orlaith Gilmartin researched the topic **"How Environmental Challenges can be Coupled with Farming Traditions"**.



The group began their journey by organising a fundraiser for their local SVP by selling tickets to name their calves. They entered a stall in the Kiltimagh Christmas market to promote their fundraiser and sell raffle tickets. This proved



to be a very valuable experience where they chatted with locals about cattle prices, Done Deal, factories, new machinery, and most importantly suckler farming and its importance in rural Ireland. They learned the value of face to face conversations for farmers when marts closed during lockdown and the effect this had on the farming community locally.



The students attended the Teagasc National Beef Conference to learn about new research and technical advice beef farmers need to know. They learned about the changing landscape of beef in Ireland, particularly in relation to the improvement of EBI, the role of suckler farming, grass based systems and their environmental impacts. As well as coming away from the conference with excellent technical knowledge, they were lucky enough to win one of the prizes up for grabs, a voucher for a veterinary surgery worth €60!

Back in school, the group continued their hard work with Foróiges Big Brother Big Sister programme, where Fifth Year students mentor First Year students. They educated the First Year classes about the competition and all they had learned from taking part. They created a leaflet for the students on the practical changes a farmer could make to improve the sustainability on the farm.













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