

Travel to Learn



The Beef Supply Chain in the Republic of Ireland

Eight Yorkshire Beef farmers travel to the Irish Republic to walk the beef supply chain, learn from key players and see new technology, including Carcass Scanning (VIA) in action.

Summary

Organised by Eblex (a Farexchange Partner), this two day tour of Ireland was run in conjunction with Dunbia. Topics covered included current research in beef finishing, including feeding, housing and genetics on farm, visits to Carnaross Livestock Market, Dunbia's abattoir at Navan and the Irish Beef Research Centre; followed by plenty of networking opportunities over dinner.

The challenge

The beef supply chain is particularly challenging and never more so as increased costs of production diminish already tight margins. Looking at new methods of improving farm efficiency, reducing costs and producing animals of a consistently correct finish should help ensure a viable and sustainable domestic beef supply chain.

How we helped

At Carnaross livestock market the group enjoyed a tour with John Tevlen, the Mart Manager, who talked knowledgeably about buying patterns and the type of stock required for various outlets.

At Dunbia (Slane) the group were able to gain greater knowledge of the Visual Image Analysis (VIA) method of electronically scanning carcasses to determine classification. The potential use of this technology not simply to classify carcasses but to predict lean meat yields (excluding fats, bone and other tissues) and even meat quality is vast. It also offers the ability to tailor specifications more precisely to niche markets, opening up new opportunities for beef farmers. Other innovations, such as the clipping of cattle on the kill line, were also explained.



"This was a well balanced tour showing many aspects of beef farming in Ireland. There were many ideas relevant to the way we farm back home, and I feel this knowledge will help to make my farming better and my profitability greater"

Yorkshire Beef Farmer

The Teagasc Grange Beef Research Centre has played an important role in improving the productivity of Irish beef production. The group saw research into the use of slats in cattle housing, residual feed intake trials, working with woodchip corrals and had a tour of the suckler demonstration unit.

The final day took in a tour of Richard Bourn's commercial beef unit at Ballinasloe, one of Dunbia's biggest suppliers.

The outcome

The group talked to some of the key players in the Irish beef industry and gained new insights into how new research can be applied to their own farms. The use of new technology in particular was brought into clear focus as the farmers understood how it may change the way they produce cattle as it inevitably becomes more widespread.

Farexchange is supported by:



Delivery Partnership:

