

Editor: Amy Quinn

Welcome to May's Newsletter

Ciarán Carroll



Welcome to the May edition of our monthly newsletter. With pig feed prices under pressure, producers are still anticipating a much needed lift in pig price. The rise in European prices in recent weeks is welcome, as is

the recent warm weather which should see increased demand for pig meat for the barbecue! It's important to stay positive and focus inside the gate on what we can control.

As mentioned last month, we held our fourth annual Pig Research Dissemination Day series at the Horse & Jockey Hotel and Ballyhaise Agricultural College in late April where over 200 people attended. Our research team and students gave a thorough overview of current and upcoming projects and generated a lot of discussion. A full report on the day is provided in this newsletter and Laura Boyle's article focuses on how we can apply learnings from the presentations on our farms.

As the final reports from the Lean Principles project are submitted we look forward to seeing what was learned by the 30 pilot farms and how it can be applied across the sector. The feedback has been very positive so we are hopeful that a new programme will be supported in the near future.

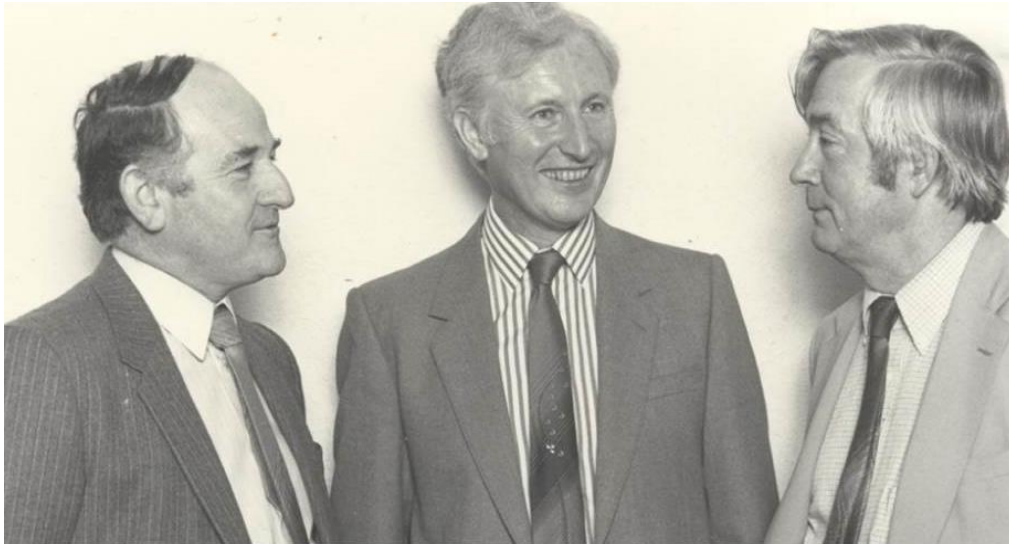
We had a new addition to the PDD team this month, with Louise Clarke joining the Advisory group. Louise, will be based at the Teagasc Office in Ballyhaise Agricultural College and we wish her well.

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Jim O'Grady – Forefather of Irish Pig Research

Ciarán Carroll & Brendan Lynch



It was with great sadness that we heard of the passing of our friend and former colleague, Dr. Jim O'Grady last month. A proud Tipperary man, Jim was appointed to the new Moorepark Research Centre (part of the new agricultural research institute to become known as An Foras Talúntais) in 1959. Because of the close linkages between pigs and milk at farm level at the time, it was decided that pig research should be located at the same campus as the dairy research centre. He was given the task of developing the facilities and programme that would provide the vital technology for what was to become an internationally competitive pig production sector. The industry he was asked to service was dramatically different to that of today. There were around 120,000 pig producers in Ireland producing a national output of well under a million pigs. Jim was joined by technicians Tom Gardiner and Sean Scanlon and the trio led the pig research effort for much of the next decade.

Jim oversaw the construction of an 80 sow farm with farrowing pens and dry sow accommodation on straw with individual feeders. A strategic programme was drawn up aimed at providing the technologies on housing, feeding and fertility that would revolutionise the Irish pig industry over the following decades.

Initial experiments concentrated on feeding pregnant and lactating sows. Realising that the Moorepark herd was too small for statistically reliable studies he instigated collaborative work with several research centres in the United Kingdom. Over the following decade Jim O'Grady became world famous as an expert on sow nutrition and management.

Another major experiment was undertaken on pig housing, comparing the Jordan, Solari and Danish houses and in 1968 Moorepark was one of the first farms in the country to fit individual stalls for pregnant sows to ensure that sows got their allocated feed and to make the working

conditions much easier for the stock person. This research generated real benefits for pig farmers and was vital in underpinning the development of a highly commercial pig sector. In the late 1960's Jim further strengthened the pig research team with the recruitment of two new scientists, Tom Hanrahan and Brendan Lynch. This enhanced expertise led to a massive expansion in the research programme and the generation of a bank of information, particularly in the area of feeding and nutrition, that led to dramatic improvements in the efficiency of pig production at farm level. We saw the introduction of separate pregnant and lactating sow diets, a technology that was rapidly adopted at farm level and by the mid-1970s Ireland was a world leader in sow productivity.

In the late 1960's Jim, with Tom and Brendan (both of whom had spent time studying at the University of Illinois), developed what was to become known as the "Moorepark Diet", which became the standard diet for finishing pigs and, while improved by substitution of some of the barley by wheat, which has higher energy content, it remains the benchmark diet today.

The quality of research work at Moorepark and the collaboration with other research institutes led to the development of a wide network of international contacts. In 1970 Jim travelled to Canada for a year-long fellowship at the University of Edmonton. His participation in the British Society of Animal Science (BSAP) and the European Associations for Animal Production (EAAP) opened several doors in Europe, North America and Australia. In recognition of his contribution, Jim later became President of BSAP and President of the Pig Committee of EAAP.

Though Jim eventually moved on from Moorepark, to Grange Research Centre in 1984 and subsequently to IAWS, his grá for pigs and pig people never left him. He regularly came back to visit Moorepark to see what research was being carried out, and was always willing to offer advice and guidance. He served his time as an excellent Chair of the Teagasc Pig Stakeholder Group and up to last year was an annual attendee at our Annual Pig Farmers' Conference. We were very fortunate to have Jim with us last year at the official opening of the new Pig Research Facility here at Moorepark, at which one of the highlights was the airing of the RTE "On the Land" production from 1964. You can find the full programme on the Teagasc YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACW6PjA3r20>

More recently Jim attended a memorial mass for the three researchers from Moorepark who tragically lost their lives in the Tuskar rock plane crash in 1968. A very heavy burden for their families, but also for their work colleagues in such a small place as Moorepark was at that time. It was fitting that Jim addressed those at the memorial service, his last few public words, only a short 2 weeks before his passing.

It was a pleasure and an honour to know Jim, the forefather of pig research in Ireland, a renowned scientist nationally and internationally, and a true gentleman. In tribute to Jim, staff and retired staff performed a guard of honour at Kilcrumper Cemetery, Fermoy where Jim was laid to rest (at his request, because it was on Moorepark land). He will be sadly missed. Our thoughts, prayers and sympathy go to his family and friends. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a ainm dílis.

Overview of the 2018 Teagasc Pig Research Dissemination Days

Amy Quinn



Another successful Teagasc Research Dissemination Day series took place on April 24th & 25th in the Horse & Jockey Hotel and Ballyhaise Agricultural College. The event was very well attended with over 200 people over the two days with many questions and much discussion following the presentations. An outline of each of the presentation is provided in this article.

DIGIPIG

John Moriarty, a Masters student supervised by Amy Quinn, was first up and gave an overview of the DIGIPIG project looking at the use of visual and digital tools for knowledge transfer in the pig industry. The DIGIPIG project will be familiar to many producers as over the past 12 months John has conducted a number of focus groups with the pig discussion groups and the QQI level 5 courses. These focus groups allowed John to determine to most popular tools, content and delivery methods. The three most popular tools were; videos, infographics and factsheets. The topics of farrowing and lactation, research/trial work and

husbandry skills were the most popular and the favoured delivery methods for the tools were social media, the Teagasc pigs' website and the Teagasc pigs' newsletter. To investigate further a sample of five tools were developed, 2 videos on teeth grinding and an event promotion video, 2 factsheets on the value of colostrum and split suckling and an infographic on the national pig herd performance figures for 2016. These tools were evaluated by the same focus groups with 98% of respondents rating the tools as "good" or "very good" and 99% would encourage colleagues or employees to use the tools. A number of recommendations for tool improvement were also collected. Currently verified templates to create videos, factsheets and infographics are being created based on the results of the study for future tool development and roll out to the pig industry.

PathSurvPig

The PathSurvPig project will be familiar to many as it has been on-going on commercial farms and

slaughter plants over the past few years. Maria Rodrigues da Costa, a PhD student supervised by Edgar Garcia Manzanilla, who has been involved in collecting much of the data, presented some of the main factors affecting efficiency in Irish pig farms based on a cross-sectional study of 72 Irish pig farms. It was conducted to assess biosecurity, use of medicines, management and feeding practices. Maria's presentation concentrated on the slaughter data whereby two batches of pigs from each participating farm were inspected at slaughter to assess lung lesions (health status) and to collect blood samples from October 2017 to March 2018. With more than 30,700 pigs assessed at slaughter and an average of 156 plucks (lungs, heart and liver) assessed per batch, factory checks revealed an overall farm prevalence of 15% of pleurisy, 14% of pneumonia with an average surface affected of 6% and 15% of scars. Additionally, farms had an average prevalence of 9% of pericarditis, and 25% of milk spots on the liver. The results suggest that research and work in the area is required to improve pig health. Factory reports and benchmarking figures for antimicrobial use, production performance, health and biosecurity have been prepared to inform the farmers, PVPs and advisors how their units compare to others. These reports are being presented to participating farmers over the coming weeks.

AMURAP

Following on from Maria, Lorcan O'Neill also supervised by Edgar Garcia Manzanilla presented preliminary results from the AMURAP project on the use of antibiotics in Irish pig farms. Over the past few months Lorcan has been collecting data on antimicrobial use data from 67 farms. He was able to obtain data on the total use of antibiotics

in feed, water and injectables for 2016 on the farms visited and found that the average use of antibiotics in mg/kg of liveweight sold was 91 mg/kg and in mg/PCU was 132mg/PCU. Interestingly this level is lower than for some EU countries, such as the UK for but higher than other such as Denmark or the Netherlands, however there is only limited data available from some countries and none from others but it's important to remember that you can't manage what you don't measure so this study will provide the Irish baseline for further improvement in antimicrobial usage reduction. This data also indicated that 89% of antimicrobials used were administered through the feed. Lorcan outlined the next stages of the project which looks at collecting data from PVPs and mills to compare with the results obtained to date and additionally the project will also look at the relationship between the levels of antibiotic use with the levels of antimicrobial resistance. We look forward to seeing these results at the next Research Dissemination Day.

WelPig

Alessia Diana, who has just recently completed her PhD under the supervision of Laura Boyle, presented the findings from one of the trials from the WelPig project. In this study 1,016 pigs were tagged and followed from birth until slaughter with the movement of all animals tracked. At transfer between each stage each pig was individually weighed and examined for welfare lesions. Pigs were then retrospectively classified into 3 production flows according to the time they spent in each production stage (flow 1= normal i.e. followed predicted unit flow, flow 2=pigs delayed by 1 week and flow 3=pigs delayed by >1 week). Very interestingly the study

found that flow 3 pigs had poorer growth rates, increased welfare lesions and increased health issues in the factory suggesting delaying pigs from the normal production flow is detrimental to their growth, health and welfare. However it also found that lesions were also an issue for flow 1 pigs (i.e. normal flow pigs) perhaps the result of high growth rates and lower space allowances.

OPTIPIG

Oceane Schmitt, one of the PhD students on the from the OPTIPIG project, presented the results of 3 experiments looking at management strategies to optimise piglet survival; 1) giving small piglets an energy boost at birth, 2) using nurse sows to rear extra piglets and 3) artificial rearing of piglets. Unfortunately giving small (<1.1 kg) piglets a 2ml energy boost (commercial product or coconut oil) at birth, did not increase blood glucose concentration, survival and growth. In the nurse sow experiment, piglets from large litters either remained with their mother or were fostered at 1 day old onto a nurse sow either 7 or 21 days into lactation. Importantly the piglets moved to nurse sows were the heaviest piglets from the litters but the subsequent weaning weights were the same meaning that fostered piglets did not keep their birth weight advantage during lactation. The study also found that there was increased fighting for teats in litters reared by nurse sows that were later in lactation (fostered at 21 days lactation) than in early lactation (fostered at 7 days lactation), indicating that the difference between piglets' age and nurse sow's stage of lactation has a role. Finally Oceane presented the data from the artificial rearing trial which found that piglets artificially-reared in a Rescue Deck® from 7 days-old until weaning were lighter than sow-reared piglets with a 5-day delay in reaching slaughter weight

and the welfare of artificially-reared piglets was reduced during the artificial rearing period (25 days-old) and but higher post-weaning (both 69 and 100 days-old), compared to sow-reared piglets.

ENTAIL

There has been a recent increased focus on the challenge of rearing pigs with intact tails in the EU. Keelin O'Driscoll's presentation on rearing pigs with intact tails to slaughter based on the experiences to date in the Moorepark Pig Research Facility therefore not surprisingly sparked a lot of questions and debate. In the initial study with long tailed pigs, pigs were provided with spruce posts or a rubber floor toy, along with either a standard or a high fibre diet. The incidence of tail biting outbreaks was extremely high with 22/48 pens having one outbreak and 4 pens having 2 outbreaks. The fibre content of the diet did not affect the number of outbreaks nor did the type of enrichment provided. It was clear from the results of this study that this level of tail biting is unacceptable. A different angle was taken for the next study which was a 'proof of concept' study whereby a large number of enrichment types were provided to see if it was even possible to rear undocked pigs in our system. Twelve pigs were housed per pen with 8 enrichment items per pen. This study was a success as there was no tail biting outbreaks, however it was emphasised that this is not a commercially viable option, it was after all a test to see if it was possible to raise intact pigs in this system, and it was. Keelin then presented the preliminary results from the on-going project which follows on from the last study by reducing the enrichment available to pigs. Unfortunately by 7 weeks post weaning

there had already been 5 outbreaks. These studies highlight the challenge of rearing pigs with intact tails and emphasise the fact that it's not all down to enrichment.

PIGZYME

Alberto Torres-Pitarch, a PhD student on the PIGZYME project supervised by Peadar Lawlor, gave an overview of a review and analysis carried out on available studies on the use of feed enzymes as a means of increasing feed efficiency in grower-finisher pigs. A systematic literature review was conducted using an on-line database. The enzymes included in the literature search were xylanase, xylanase+ β -glucanase, mannanase, protease, cellulase and α -galactosidase. The review found that gain to feed improved in 56 studies, remained un-changed in 47 and deteriorated in 12 of the studies due to enzyme supplementation. It also found that gain to feed was improved when diets were supplemented with mannanase or a complex of enzymes. The review revealed the gain to feed response to enzyme supplementation was influenced by dietary energy and protein level. When enzymes were supplemented to low density diets, the gain to feed response was increased compared to high density diets. An overview of three PIGZYME experiments was then provided.

WETFEED

Peadar Lawlor presented the results from one of the WETFEED project studies looking at the effect of feed form and delivery on grow-finisher pig growth, feed efficiency and carcass quality. Pigs were fed either meal or pelleted feed either dry,

wet/dry or liquid fed for 63 days from 34kgs with growth and feed intake being monitored. Pigs fed the pelleted diet had increased average daily gain, improved FCE and a heavier live weight at slaughter compared to those fed meal. Liquid feeding increased feed intake and growth to slaughter but worsened FCE. Dry feeding resulted in a superior FCE compared with all other methods of feed delivery, especially liquid feeding.

New Projects

Edgar Garcia Manzanilla and Laura Boyle both gave an overview of the 2 new projects that are set to start in the coming weeks. Edgar's project ZincO will look at the effect of therapeutic ZnO on the pig microbiome, resistome and immune system and will also look at strategies to face ZnO withdrawal. Laura's project, SowWeanWel will look at the implications of chronic stress in gestating sows for sow performance and welfare and for the resilience of her piglets to stress and disease.

More Information

More details on the projects presented, including the presentations from the two days, as well as details on other on-going projects are available on the "Current Projects" section of the Teagasc Pig website at:

<https://www.teagasc.ie/animals/pigs/research/research-current-projects/>.

Additionally a copy of the proceedings is currently available at:

<https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/publications/2018/Pig-Research-Dissemination-Day-2018.pdf>

Simple Steps to Stopping Tail Biting Have Added Benefits for Overall Pig Health

Laura Boyle

The paper presented by Keelin O'Driscoll at last month's Research Dissemination Day series (RDD) was the most discussed one since the RDD started a few years ago. The presentation, outlined in the previous article, detailed the experiences to date from Moorepark from three trials in the ENTAIL project with pigs with intact tails. Despite the wide range of strategies used in the experiments, the trials failed to show a commercially viable solution to prevent tail biting in undocked pigs. As many producers pointed out, tail docking is the best way to prevent tail biting in current production conditions and to stop tail docking would create an animal welfare issue. So in complete agreement with the sentiments expressed at both meetings: we cannot and should not, abruptly stop tail docking. At least not until we get on top of the problem of tail biting in our docked pig population.

In spite of widespread (+99% of pigs) tail docking on Irish pig units findings of the PIGWELFIND and PathSurvPigs (PSP) projects reveal that about 2% of Irish slaughter pigs have severe tail bite injuries involving partial or total loss of the tail. The equivalent figure for the same injuries in Finland is also 2% but in long tailed (i.e. undocked) pigs where the risk of tail biting is much higher. So how are they achieving this? There are a few relatively simple steps we can take to make some fast progress in this area. The benefit of these changes will also go beyond tail biting because respiratory disease (especially pleurisy) and tail biting share many of the same risk factors so progress in addressing both issues (and the

related issue of antibiotic use) can be made simultaneously.

Many people are alarmed at the high space allowances (0.9m² from 65kg) required to manage long tailed pigs in Finland. This may be too extreme. Nevertheless there is general agreement that improvements in born alive combined with challenges in acquiring finance to expand housing means that many Irish units are at the limit when it comes to stocking density. This is not only constraining growth potential but is also contributing to disease problems. Everyone knows how overcrowding not only facilitates the transmission of pathogens but also acts as a stressor suppressing the pigs immune system so that they are more susceptible to disease. At the RDD Maria Costa provided compelling data, detailed in the previous article, on the prevalence of lung pathologies found in slaughter pigs from 72 Irish farms. Edgar Garcia Manzanilla and Lorcan O'Neill's work on the AMURAP project documenting antibiotic use on those same farms (also presented at the RDD) also pointed to disease problems that if addressed could easily reduce antibiotic use. Clearly, irrespective of tail biting, husbandry changes are required to address the problem of respiratory disease and the associated antibiotic use. The fact that antibiotic use was not associated with better growth rates on the high usage farms suggests that in some situations antibiotics may be concealing some management and housing issues.

Several economic analyses show that introducing more sows in the cycle before the capacity of the unit has been increased is not a good strategy for growth and results in a higher percentage of pull-outs (or 'Flow 3 pigs' as described by Alessia Diana in her RDD presentation). In some cases the increase in litter size should actually be accompanied by a reduction in sow numbers to maximize kg meat per sow per year. At the RDD Alessia Diana showed us that 10% of the pigs on one unit were 'pull-outs' which being >10kg lighter than 'normal flow' pigs at slaughter likely cost much more to produce than they made in the factory. In fact that research, which was conducted as part of the PSP project indicates that most 'pull-outs' are actually being 'pulled-through' the production cycle requiring considerably more time and labour than they are worth. The additional space provided by reducing sow servings would not only reduce the proportion of poor-thriving pigs on the unit (because disease challenges would be reduced) but would also potentially free up space (and time) to facilitate better care of pigs that require more attention (e.g. low birthweight pigs). It would also be easier to ensure that pigs returning from the hospital or which were sick are maintained in a separate 'flow' so they do not contribute to the re-circulation of disease through the healthy, thriving population. There is a very good chance that such improvements would cancel out any perceived losses associated with a reduction in numbers of pigs produced.

Often the problem of 'pull-outs' is related to and being compounded by repeated re-mixing of pigs. As I outlined in my talk on chronic stress in sows, aggression related to re-mixing is a major stressor. Unsurprisingly then it is a risk factor not alone for tail biting but also for pleurisy in

slaughter pigs. Re-mixing actually starts at birth with piglets being cross fostered repeatedly and often too late. Recommendations are that it should be done as young as possible, though not less than 12 hours old so they have time to consume their own mothers colostrum, and then only once. Cross fostered piglets experience aggression at the udder and often miss out on nursings. Every time a piglet is cross fostered it has to go through this which is why the risk of mortality is higher for piglets subjected to repeated and/or late cross fostering. Once pigs are weaned they are regularly re-mixed between and sometimes within production stages. Mostly this is because of our desire to create 'peas in a pod' or as Michael McKeon puts it, the 'evenitis disease'! Nature dictates that there is bodyweight variation within all groups such that the majority of the animals are in the middle and a minority are at the lower and higher ends of the weight scale. As we all know there is no beating nature. No matter how often you re-group your pigs to reduce bodyweight variation this bell shaped population distribution dictates that the same spread will occur. Of course very small piglets should be kept together at weaning so they can be given more attention. Otherwise efforts should be made to keep litters together as much as possible at weaning and once the groups are created do not re-mix them again! Best to grade at slaughter and never, ever to re-mix the pigs remaining once the 'tops' are removed. Again space constraints mean this may be happening on some units.

There are many other changes that can be made to reduce the risk of tail biting and improve pig health. A biosecurity check such as described by Edgar at the RDD is an excellent way of finding out where other improvements are required. I

suggest starting with the problems of overcrowding and repeated re-mixing and documenting your efforts (dates, times, steps taken). This information combined with records of outcomes related to tail biting (e.g. no. of tail biting outbreaks, no. of biter and bitten pigs pulled from pens, treatments for tail biting, deaths/condemnations due to abscessation etc.) will provide you and your PVP with the evidence to support your need to continue tail docking at least in the short term until you start to see improvements. In relation to lung health there is good news in that a pig AMPM project was recently approved for development by DAFM. We will collaborate with DAFM in developing the

system to document respiratory pathologies of relevance to pig production through the Teagasc and MII/IFA funded PLFpigCarc project (introduced at last year's RDD). Producers supplying two factories will hopefully start to receive information on lung health of their slaughter pigs within the next 18 months. Ideally carcass tail lesions should also be recorded as is routinely done in most other EU countries on the basis that you cannot manage what you don't measure! This would provide producers with the easiest way of benchmarking the effects of management and housing improvements on their unit on tail biting behaviour of pigs.

The Consumer & Pigmear Labelling

David Clarke

There has been heightened focus over the last number of years on traceability of the food we eat. Traceability is defined as the ability to trace a food, feed, animal or a substance through all the stages of its production, processing and distribution. In a survey conducted by "Love Irish Food's" out of 1,000 domestic shoppers 95% wanted "country-of-origin" labelling on their products, while 87% tried to buy local products when possible. With over €3 billion in food and drink products imported into Ireland every year, it is frustrating that many brands do not clearly state the source of origin on the item. Irish consumers clearly want to know where their food comes from, and should be easily able to identify and choose an Irish product with confidence.

The problem seems to lie in packaging and labelling, a lot of companies may try to imply country of origin with an Irish sounding name or

Irish style branding even though the product may not be of Irish origin.

According to EU laws and Regulation 178/2002 all food businesses must have a traceability system in place. This sounds promising, but the regulation is loose in its description of what is required. As a minimum, food producers are required to document what ingredients they receive and the origin. Although this information is recorded it is not always divulged to customers. Not all foods are obliged to carry the country of origin on the packaging, currently only uncooked beef and veal, raw poultry meat from a non EU countries, fruit, vegetables and honey must carry the country of origin. Additionally when labels are in place they can often do more harm than good by adding to the confusion, for example, if a product has a label "product of Ireland", it

doesn't mean the product was produced in Ireland necessarily, this product is potentially sourced elsewhere, and only processed and packaged in Ireland.

What can we trust?



If you want to be 100% positive what you are buying is it's important to be informed. The Bord Bia quality assurance mark on a product is definitely one to trust. Bord Bia independently inspect a product at every stage of production, farmers are also inspected regarding animal health, welfare and traceability. So as a customer you can be sure what you are buying is authentic and of excellent quality. In a recent survey by Bord Bia it was shown that 90% of Irish consumers recognise the quality mark on food products. Meanwhile, 73% of Irish consumers surveyed stated they are willing to pay a premium of up to 10% to guarantee they are buying an Irish product.

There are over 47,000 producers and 120 processors and packaging companies currently certified members across all the Bord Bia quality assurance schemes, providing a wide range of products to choose from including; pre-packed beef, lamb, pork, bacon, cooked ham, rashers, turkey, chicken and duck. You will also find it on eggs, fruit, vegetables and potatoes.

Adding further strength to the Bord Bia quality assurance logo as an indicator of country of origin is the IFA DNA Certified Programme. It allows for the scientific assessment of the origin of pigmeat products. The IFA, partnered with IdentiGEN, use a scientific and reliable process to determine the origin of the meat using DNA to verify the exact origin of products which now forms part of the Bord Bia quality assurance programme. The way it operates is that all Irish breeding boars are DNA sampled to generate a DNA database. Both the IFA and Bord Bia collect samples for testing from retailers, butchers and the catering industry that are labelled as Irish and these samples are checked against the DNA database to ensure correct labelling.

The Love Irish food logo is another logo you may come across and was set up in 2009 and aimed to support Irish producers and help customers to make an easy choice when purchasing Irish manufactured food and drinks. The Love Irish food logo on a product guarantees that the product is manufactured in the Ireland and that the brand uses ingredients from Ireland, however only where these are available.

All products should have clear and informative food labels stating the origin of the food in order to make an informed purchasing decision. Our overall aim as producers and consumers should be to safeguard the future of food and drink manufacturing in Ireland however it is important to acknowledge that food imports are important to the Irish economy. However, customers need to be better informed regarding the origin of the products they purchase coupled with strict enforcement of labelling regulations, perhaps even tighter regulations in fact.

Arrivals & Departures

Last week Louise Clarke took up her role as Specialised Adviser with the Pig Development Department. Louise will be based in Ballyhaise Agricultural College. Louise graduated from Agricultural Science in UCD in 2013 and has recently completed her PhD on “The effects of feed quality and feed additives in pig nutrition” under the supervision of Prof. John O’Doherty in UCD. We would like to wish Louise well in her new role.

In the same week Joana Pessoa arrived in the PDD from Portugal. Joana is a veterinarian with a particular interest in veterinary public health and she will work with Laura and Edgar on the PLFpigCarc project for the next 4 years. Again much of this work will be conducted on commercial farms where we will install cough monitors. The health (focusing on respiratory disease) and welfare of pigs will be followed through the production cycle and their lung pathologies will be scored at slaughter. This project aligns well with recent developments in DAFM where a pig AM PM project was recently sanctioned and which aims to improve recording of meat inspection findings and feedback of such information to pig producers. We wish Joana all the best of luck with her research!

Last week the PDD said goodbye to two Walsh Fellows. Alessia Diana submitted her PhD thesis entitled: “A Holistic Approach to Exploring the Link between Pig Health, Welfare and Antibiotic use on Irish Pig Farms” to UCD. Many of you will have met Alessia during the course of her 4 year research program on the WelPig project as she conducted much of her research on commercial farms. Alessia also interviewed many of you to establish stakeholder attitudes to antibiotic use

and perceptions about pig welfare. She will be missed by the PDD for many reasons but especially for her fantastic Italian cooking! We wish Alessia well in defending her PhD thesis later in the summer and on her future career.

Susan Dudley also submitted her MSc. thesis titled “Evaluation of nutritional strategies to assist the reduction of feed costs in pig production” to UCD and has now completed her research with Teagasc. Susan worked under the supervision of Peadar Lawlor and Edgar Garcia Manzanilla in Teagasc and Professor John O’Doherty of UCD. We are delighted that Susan will be joining Kiernan Milling in the near future to keep her outstanding work going. We would like to wish Susan all the best in her new role.

New Masters Position Available

The Irish Pig Health Society has provided funding of €1,500 towards a MRes position, which will be jointly run through Teagasc and UCC. This masters project will be the first study into the management of sows and piglets in free-farrowing crates here in Ireland, and applications are now welcome. Further details are available here: <https://www.teagasc.ie/about/research--innovation/postgraduate-fellowships/other-postgraduate-opportunities/>

Student Success

PhD Walsh Fellow Jen-Yun Chou attended the Vet School Research Student Day in the University of Edinburgh and presented a poster “Is it possible to rear undocked pigs on a fully-slatted floor with multiple slat-compatible enrichment and does enrichment variety matter?” from the Entail project. She was awarded the runner-up prize, congratulations Jen.

Pig farm managers course

The Teagasc PDD is still enrolling for the Level 6 course in Pig Farm Management, commencing in September on a part-time basis of generally 2 days per month for 12 months. This course would be extremely valuable for current or future pig farm managers. The course is almost at capacity so please email amy.quinn@teagasc.ie if you or any of your staff are interested in enrolling.

EU PIG

EU PIG is a Europe-wide network developed to improve the connection between pig producers and the latest science, husbandry techniques and technologies and is made up of a consortium of 19 organisations from 13 member states in Europe. The Best Practice Grand Prix identifies ambassadors for best practices that address eight selected challenges. The first best practices winners for 2017 along with videos, photos, 360° photos and detailed explanations are now available on the EU Pig website: <https://www.eupig.eu/best-practice>

Talamh Awards 2018

Talamh Awards 2018 is the new annual smart agriculture and rural awards scheme launched in partnership with the RDS and designed to recognise the success, tenacity and dedication of the Irish agriculture and rural sector as a key contributor to the Irish economy. The Awards are structured around the main areas of Irish

agriculture and rural enterprise, the key focal point being three distinct strands of sustainability; environmental sustainability, commercial sustainability and community sustainability. Entries will have to demonstrate initiatives, innovations and developments that contribute to all three strands of this criterion.

The Awards are open to agricultural businesses and rural-based enterprises of all sizes and types across the island of Ireland and are free to enter. Entries will be judged on merit, regardless of company size, and according to these key criteria:

- Successful and sustainable business
- Strength and ambition of ideas
- Innovative concepts and approaches
- Courage, strategy and determination
- Positive engagement benefiting the sector

More information on the various awards and how to apply can be found on the awards webpage (<http://talamhwards.ie/>).

Danish Pig herd census

The Danish pig census shows that their herd is growing again after a few years of reduction/stagnation. The Danish sow herd in April was up 3.4% to 1.27 million sows and the pig herd was up 4.1% to 12.73 million head. Of particular note is that the current number of farms (3,226) has reduced by 50% in the last 10 years.

For More Information

This newsletter was edited by Amy Quinn, Pig Development Officer, Teagasc Moorepark, Fermoy, Co. Cork. For more information on any of the newsletter content please contact Amy at amy.quinn@teagasc.ie



Please visit our website at www.teagasc.ie/pigs/