



ACORN Independent Merchants Sponsor the Irish Grassland Association's Beef Conference & Farm Walk in Tipperary on Tuesday 8th July

The six members of the ACORN Independent Merchant Group are:

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ACORN Independent Merchants are delighted to be associated with this year's Irish Grassland Beef Event. ACORN's motto is 'Fuelling Efficient Farming' and this event will do just that - promoting top grassland management with the objective of optimising animal performance at pasture.

Delegates will register at 1:00pm at the Ballykisteen Hotel, Limerick Junction, a few miles from Tipperary town on the Limerick road, and from there will be brought to the nearby Teagasc Research Farm.

Dr. James Humphreys runs a dairy herd at 2.2 cows/hectare (1 cow per 1.12 acres) in Teagasc Solohead, and will outline how they optimise animal performance from a grass/clover system. Achieving high daily liveweight gains consistently throughout the grazing period of over 1 kilo on beef farms requires excellent pasture management. Maintaining high nutritive value grass in swards is the key, and James and Dr. Alistair Black (Teagasc Grange) will advise us, and more importantly, show us, on the day how this can be achieved.

Fertiliser is an expensive farm input but spread judiciously continues to deliver a good economic return in terms of grass growth. ACORN Merchants, in particular in the last two years, are finding a good deal of interest amongst livestock farmers in incorporating white clover into existing and new swards (reseeds). This is primarily driven by the high cost of fertiliser, and also by the selection of clover as one of the biodiversity options in the supplementary measures of REPS 4, attracting a payment of €30/ha (€12/acre), on a maximum of 40 ha (100 acres). On most beef farms, increasing the white clover content in good quality, productive, ryegrass pastures will pay.

In comparison to grasses, white clover has:

1. Higher digestibility and protein
2. Higher leaf:stem ratio
3. Lower dead material
4. Supplies its own nitrogen

Over a number of years, research studies at Teagasc Grange have recorded additional liveweight gains of between 5-10% from grass/clover swards. These trials clearly demonstrate that well managed, white clover based swards, receiving only 50 kg N/ha (40 units N/acre) in spring are capable of producing the same animal output as ryegrass swards getting 200kg N/ha (162 units N/acre). However there are additional costs and management skills required in establishing and maintaining a high clover pasture. It is a waste of money establishing clover if the correct management is not applied to maintain it.

The afternoon's practical session on July 8th will be followed by an evening conference which has an excellent line up of speakers. We have international speakers from both New Zealand and Scotland; a leading Irish economist will review the Irish beef industry and propose how it could be driven forward; while the final paper will examine the global demand for beef in the medium to longer term.

This is a 'MUST ATTEND' event for beef farmers who are looking to grow their business profitably. ACORN Merchants invite you to attend the IGA Beef Conference and Farm Walk on Tuesday, 8th July.

A Booking Form is available from Mary-Clare French, Secretary of the Irish Grassland Association (Tel: 1890 843442) and from ACORN Independent Merchants (Tel: 086 7739730) or from your local ACORN Merchant.

Note :There is a discounted fee for this event for farmers who are already IGA members or for those who choose to sign up as members of the IGA.

Chairman: Mr. Denis McDonnell (Joint MD McDonnell Bros.)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. Pat Ryan (MD Liffey Mills)

Spokesperson: Mr. Pat Murphy (General Manager, ACORN) Tel: 086 7739730