



PARTNER FOR BETTER



Advantage
BEEF PROGRAMME

This is the Advantage Beef Programme

Building a secure, sustainable business model for beef farmers and their families

- Our Advantage Beef Programme was created to assist in improving the environmental and economic sustainability of our family farm suppliers whilst building relationships through advice and support.
- It provides greater assurances to farmers through four key enterprise drivers: best-in-class genetics, process efficiencies, a guaranteed minimum base price and valuable supports.
- The Programme’s inclusive terms allow dairy, beef and suckler farmers to join.
- Together our aim is to strengthen relationships between dairy and beef farmers.

Since 2014 the ABP led integrated farming scheme, Blade Farming, has proved extremely successful. The advantage beef programme is a continuation of this, putting it into action on a much larger scale throughout Ireland in partnership with industry bodies and beef farmers

ADVANTAGE BEEF PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

- Develop an integrated beef supply chain at scale
- Provide a transparent pricing model that delivers more security and mitigates economic risk for beef farmers of all production systems
- Combine ABP’s genetics research findings and farm practices to increase on farm efficiencies and help farmers meet sustainability targets
- Reduce average carbon footprint of participating cattle through genetics, animal health, nutrition and grassland management
- Improve the relationship between dairy and beef farmers to create a win-win situation for both enterprises.

What cattle are eligible?

We believe flexibility is important to allow the greatest number of farmers to avail of the benefits the programme offers. Our all-inclusive terms mean dairy, beef and suckler farms are eligible to join.

PARTICIPATION IS SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:

- Animal must be purchased from a Bord Bia Quality Assured herd
- Animal must be reared all of life in a Bord Bia Quality Assured herd (All of life in an Advantage Beef Programme herd not required)
- All breeds are eligible with the exception of Jersey cattle or beef cattle with 12.5% Jersey breeding/any other extreme dairy breeds
- Includes cattle sourced from the dairy and beef herd
- Steers and heifers must be a minimum 6 months (182 days) on the finishing farm
- Maximum of 1 movement (2 residencies)
- There is an exception of 1 extra movement for animals that have been reared in a contracted rearing system. It must be an ABP approved rearing farm and calves must be moved onto the finishing farm before reaching five months of age
- Minimum of 20 cattle per finisher herd
- Steers, heifers and young bulls
- Suckler bred young bulls (under 16 months) will be prioritised over dairy bred bulls. All bulls entering the Programme will be considered on a case by case basis

Programme Pricing Structure

The Programme’s pricing structure is outlined below.*

- A Sustainability Bonus of €0.20/kg will be paid on all Programme cattle meeting scheme requirements
- All prices are in addition to the relevant Quality Assurance (QA) Bonus
- All prices are in addition to the relevant Angus and Hereford breed bonus
- All cattle will be paid on the average quoted price (AQP) for steers and heifers of the 7 ABP plants on the week of slaughter on the grid

- By way of verification, the AQP will not diverge by more than €0.05/kg from the AQP for all of the listed plants in the country as published in the Irish agri media
- Contractual obligation made to the farmer by ABP on bonuses and minimum base price for animals meeting spec

**Pricing structure will be reviewed on an annual basis.*

The first integrated beef scheme in Ireland to pay a Sustainability Bonus to farmers

Working with farming families to deliver more on farm efficiencies for all beef production systems

Key Programme Requirements

Animal Breeding & Genetics

ABP has been conducting industry leading research in animal breeding and genetics since 2014 on its Demonstration farm with data from over 5,000 animals. Results have shown that animals from higher genetic merit sires produce 46kg more carcass weight at the same age. This equates to an increase in profit of over €200 per animal. This programme puts these results into action, combining cutting edge science with practised farming methods to deliver more security for beef farmers.



SIRE MUST BE RECORDED FOR ALL ANIMALS

- Calves bought without a sire recorded in marts or direct from farm can enter the Programme if they are genotyped



Using scientific research, a minimum genetic merit standard will be set out to improve on farm performance and reduce environmental impact.

For animals to qualify for the Programme and receive the Sustainability Bonus, a minimum genetic merit standard will be required for all animals born from 2023 onwards.

- Minimum genetic merit standard will differ for dairy and beef sourced cattle
- All eligible calves must have a known sire recorded on the AIMS registration system
- **2023/2024 born animals**
All beef calves bred from the dairy herd must be bred from a beef bull with a minimum beef sub index of \geq €35 within their DBI index and must be genotyped and pedigree registered to be eligible for the Programme
- **2025 born animals**
All beef calves bred from the dairy herd must be bred from a beef bull with a minimum beef sub index of \geq €60 within their DBI index and must be genotyped and pedigree registered to be eligible for the Programme

- **2026 born animals**
All beef calves bred from the dairy herd must be bred from a beef bull with a minimum beef sub index of \geq €70 within their DBI index and must be genotyped and pedigree registered to be eligible for the Programme
*We hope to move to Commercial Beef Value (CBV) in the coming years
- All beef calves bred from the beef herd must be bred from a beef bull 4 or 5 stars within the Terminal or Maternal Index, within or across breed, and must be genotyped and pedigree registered
- We aim to increase the minimum animal breeding standards as more beef bulls with high genetic merit become available as the Programme progresses. This will further improve the economic and environmental sustainability of our Programme cattle and provide even greater benefits to all farmers.



Sustainability Measures



To participate in the programme, farmers must be involved in one of the below environmental or biodiversity schemes. Additional environmental or biodiversity schemes may be included following the introduction of the new CAP.

- ACRES
- SCEP
- National Beef Welfare Scheme
- Reaps Scheme
- Soil Improvement Programme
- Dairy Beef Scheme

In addition to being a member of one of these schemes, the criteria below are also required:

- Must have a farm Nutrient Management Plan
- Animals will only receive the Sustainability Bonus and minimum price if they are within their carcass type, age and specification
- Must complete an AgNav plan with their ABP Liaison Officer

MANAGEMENT & FEED

Requirements regarding management and feed are outlined below. Farmers are free to purchase feed from a supplier that suits them best so long as it is from a UFAS or Bord Bia approved mill.

- Regular weighings, these feed into ICBF (minimum 1 weighing per lifetime, these scales are available from Coop)
- All feed records to be recorded and made available to ABP on request
- All feed must be purchased from UFAS or Bord Bia approved mills
- Nutrition guidelines are developed by industry experts
- All participating farmers will receive animal nutrition guidelines

ANIMAL HEALTH & WELFARE

A proactive approach to animal health and welfare is key to ensuring better outcomes and minimising use of antibiotics. Requirements are outlined below in line with the Bord Bia Quality Assurance (QA) Standard.

- Animal remedies to be recorded throughout the animal's life including vaccines, antibiotics and health incidence
- All animal remedies on record to be made available to ABP on request
- Farmers must have animal health plan developed in conjunction with their vet
- All participating farmers will receive guidelines on animal health and welfare including vaccination programmes



Sharing expertise and delivering better outcomes for both the dairy and beef sectors

DAIRY AND BEEF FARMER COLLABORATION

Collaboration between dairy and beef farmers is a key driver behind the Programme. We believe that both sectors must work in partnership to ensure the sustainability of both dairy and beef farmers. Together we're sharing expertise to deliver better outcomes for both dairy and beef farmers.

Our aim is to reach a greater uptake of sexed semen, using better beef bred bulls on the dairy herd balanced for ease of calving, gestation and carcass quality. As a result, dairy farmers will benefit by having a guaranteed outlet for their calves.

ADVISORY & FARMER SUPPORT

Beef farmers within the Programme are provided with a dedicated advisory and support team. This support will be provided by the ABP farm liaisons officers. Our experts will support you every step of the way to:

- Ensure cattle are slaughtered younger through better genetics, nutrition and health
- Promote best practice in areas such as water quality, environmentally friendly farming practices and improved biodiversity on farm

CARCASS SPECIFICATION

HEIFER (SUCKLER BRED)	230-400kg carcass weight
	2+ to 4+
	Under 26 months
HEIFER (DAIRY BRED)	230-380kg carcass weight
	2+ to 4+
	Under 24 months
STEER (SUCKLER BRED)	270-420kg carcass weight
	2+ to 4+
	Under 28 months
STEER (DAIRY BRED)	250-400kg carcass weight
	2+ to 4+
	Under 26 months
YOUNG BULL	280-420kg carcass weight
	2+ to 4+
	Under 16 months
Must agree with factory site prior to purchase	

ALL PROGRAMME CATTLE TO RECEIVE SUSTAINABILITY BONUS FOR:

CARCASS CONFORMATION GRADE FROM E TO A P	Target is a P+ grade or greater
	Fat score 2+ to 4+

Farmers will receive an additional SBLAS Quality Assurance payment. There is also a Breed Bonus as per Hereford Prime and Angus Producer Group carcass specification.

Testimonials

“The Advantage programme is worth over €8,000 a year to us. The liaisons are always on hand to offer advice - I can ring them to chat about soil or silage sample results anytime.”

JIMMY MADIGAN

Jimmy Madigan is farming in Ballyhale, Co. Kilkenny with his wife Anne-Marie and four children. The farm consists of tillage, forestry and a herd of 90 autumn and spring calving suckler cows across 190 acres of grassland.

The herd is split 50/50 autumn and spring calving with the Autumn cows calving in Aug-Sept and the spring cows in Jan-March. Jimmy uses A.I. on all heifers and the earliest bulling cows to obtain replacements and 2 terminal Charolais stock bulls are run with the rest of the cows.

Almost all males are finished as U16 young bulls, with an additional 40 bulls purchased to finish alongside his own stock. 2022 born bulls had an average carcass weight of 403kg, averaging a U-3- at 15.6 months. Heifers are finished at 19-22 months and averaged a R=3= at 332kg.

Jimmy hosted the IGA Beef Farm Walk in 2022 which showcased his excellent grassland management skills, clover usage and ability to produce top quality silage. All the criteria required to achieve the above average carcass weights mentioned above.

“I wasn’t weighing cattle before joining the Advantage programme, it is a great benefit to see how cattle are doing as weanlings, yearlings and finishing stock. I was ticking all the other boxes for the programme.”

TOM COSTELLO

Tom is running a calf to beef and tillage enterprise outside Croagh, Co. Limerick where 120 calves are reared each year. Alongside the calf to beef system Tom also grows Spring and Winter barley which is used on farm to create diets for youngstock and finishing cattle.

It is predominantly Friesian, Angus and Hereford on farm which works well as the AA and HE finish earlier at 20-21 months and the Friesians later at 24-25 months. In 2023 Tom had an average carcass weight of 299kg for his FR steers at 24 months, averaging an O=3+. These carcass weights are achieved through excellent grassland management on farm leading to high liveweight gains throughout their lifetime.

Tom cuts his own silage on farm with a wagon, this gives him the ability to cut when the grass is at the correct stage and in ideal weather conditions. Achieving excellent silage quality on farm is extremely important as all animals are growing/finishing stock – average DMD's of 75-76% are regularly achieved on farm.

Key Criteria

To receive the sustainability bonus, farmers must meet the below criteria:

CHECKLIST

✓	Animal must be reared all of life in a Bord Bia Quality Assured herd.
✓	Maximum of 1 movement (2 residencies) *Exception for contract reared animals.
✓	Sire must be recorded for all animals.
✓	Sire of animals must meet genetic merit criteria. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Suckler bred animals: Sire must be 4 or 5 star within/ across breed on replacement or terminal index.Dairy bred animals: Sire must have beef subindex of €60 for animals born in 2024/2025. Sire must have beef subindex of €70 for animals born from 2026 onwards.
✓	Animals are permitted to have a maximum of 12.5% Jersey breeding.
✓	Animals must be a minimum of 6 months (182 days) on the finishing farm.
✓	Minimum 1 weight per lifetime logged on ICBF.
✓	Involved in one of the environmental schemes listed on page 12
✓	Farmers must complete an AgNav plan within 2 years of joining the programme.
✓	Animals must meet carcass specifications listed on page 15

Our locations



1. ABP Bandon Kilbrogan, Bandon, Co. Cork, P72 NC86 Tel: +353 (0)23 884 1184	2. ABP Cahir Kilcommon Cahir, Co. Tipperary, E21 D588 Tel: +353 (0)52 744 1444	3. ABP Clones Teehill Clones, Co. Monaghan H23 HP21 Tel: +353 (0)47 51 223	4. ABP Nenagh Grange, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary E45 WN93 Tel: +353 (0)67 46 100
5. ABP Rathkeale Holycross, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick V94 PK75 Tel: +353 (0)69 64 111	6. ABP Slaney Ryland Lower Bunclody, Co. Wexford, Y21 E1T6 Tel: +353 (0)53 937 7155	7. ABP Waterford Christendom, Ferrybank, Co. Waterford, X91 KN63 Tel: +353 (0)51 832 501	

Advantage

BEEF PROGRAMME

Kilcommon, Cahir, Co.Tipperary,
E21 D588, Ireland

T: +353 (0)52 744 1444

E: advantagebeefprogramme@abpireland.com

abpireland.com

