

PRESS RELEASE

Dairy Beef 500 join forces with Animal Health Ireland's CalfCare Programme for on farm events in January 2024

Dairy Beef 500, a Teagasc campaign focussed on maximising the potential of beef production from the dairy herd will link up with the annual AHI CalfCare roadshow on calf health and management for the first time in January 2024.

CalfCare events aim to keep farmers informed of best practice husbandry and management practices to deliver best performance from calves in their care. Rearing healthy calves has always been the focus of CalfCare events and 2024 will be no different but for the first time, a new dimension will be introduced as beef farmers rearing dairy beef calves will host some of the events. While the door has always been open to beef farmers rearing calves to attend the events, and many have, they have generally been assumed to be focussed on rearing of dairy calves. Through the addition of some beef farms, it is hoped that even more people will attend these events to get an update on the fundamentals of good calf rearing and management in advance of the 2024 calving season. Both beef and dairy farm performance is built on the foundation of good calf rearing and all farmers rearing calves are encouraged to attend to prepare for 2024 rearing period.

Speaking in advance of the launch of the schedule of events Pearse Kelly, Head of Beef Knowledge Transfer said 'dairy beef system performance starts the day the calf is born and the attention to detail of the dairy farmer is an important element in the performance of the beef farmer, however, equally so, dairy beef farmers have to pick up the baton once the calf transfers to their farm and follow best practice in calf rearing to achieve the targets that underpin successful dairy beef operations'. Pearse continued by saying that he welcomed the opportunity to link with the very successful CalfCare series to deliver events in 2024 and encourage dairy beef farmers to attend their closest event whether being run on a dairy farm or on a beef farm as the content delivered will be the same regardless of the host farm function.

Joe Patton, Teagasc Head of Dairy Knowledge Transfer said that the integration of both teams to deliver the events emphasises the importance of the calf rearing process to both farming systems. The value of a good relationship between the dairy farmer and the beef farmer should not be underestimated, it is essential that dairy farmers do their utmost to produce calves that have enhanced profitability potential and look after them well up to the point of transfer from the farm to ensure the success of the dairy beef farmer's operation. Their success is important to the dairy farmer due to their dependence on them to buy the calves they produce.

Alan Dillon, DairyBeef500 campaign coordinator says, "These farm events are extremely important dates in the calendar for both dairy farmers and dairy calf to beef farmers in terms of refreshing their skillset on calf rearing". Getting young calves off to the best possible start in life over the

rearing period is essential to the business of calf rearing. Holding the events on both dairy and beef farms highlights the common skills and knowledge required by both sets of farmers which are similar in nature.

Finally, David Graham, CEO at Animal Health Ireland, said “AHI welcomes the opportunity to link with Dairy Beef 500 in the delivery and content of these events, reflecting the increasing interdependence of the two sectors as they work together to maintain an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable cattle sector”.

Details of the events and their locations will be announced shortly.

ENDS