



TEAGASC PHD WALSH FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY

"Effect of floor type and space allowance on performance and welfare of finishing beef cattle"

Ref: Walsh Fellowship Number 2018005

Background

Space allowance and floor type have been identified as two critical points regarding the welfare of housed beef cattle (EFSA, 2006a; 2006b; 2009; 2012; EU Welfare Quality® project, 2009), yet there is currently no EU directive defining the housing conditions for finishing beef cattle. The majority of European beef production systems generally consist of an eight month grazing season followed by a four month winter housing period. The duration of the housing system may be even longer as is the case with finishing bull systems. Irrespective of the system used, beef cattle will spend a significant proportion of their lifetime indoors; therefore, the housing system will influence their overall performance and welfare. In this project (RMIS 0344), the combined effect of the space allowance per animal, the presence of slatted flooring with and without rubber mats, environmental conditions on the welfare and performance of beef cattle will be quantified. Behavioural, physiological and immunological responses of finishing beef cattle will be quantified during and following housing for a 5 month winter period. A series of studies will 1), evaluate the effect of floor type (rubber mats versus slats) and space allowance (3.0 and 6.0 m²/hd) and 2), compare fixed and allometric indoor space allowance on slats on the welfare and performance of finishing beef cattle.

Information for applicants:

Applicants will have, or expect to obtain a high honours grade in a biological science degree (e.g., Agricultural Science, Animal Science, Veterinary Medicine). The successful candidate will be expected to register with the School of Agriculture and Food Science, University College Dublin for a 4-year Ph.D. degree. The successful candidate should be highly self-motivated and be prepared for laboratory work and periods of field work. A full driving licence is also required.

Award

The PhD Fellowship is a joint research project between Teagasc and the National University of Ireland, at Dublin. The student will be based, in the first instance, at the Animal & Grassland Research and Innovation Centre (AGRIC), Teagasc Grange, Dunsany, Co. Meath, and will be registered at UCD, working under the supervision of Dr. Alan Kelly, in association with Teagasc supervisors (Dr Bernadette Earley, Dr. Mark McGee, Dr. Edward O'Riordan). Periods of work will be undertaken at UCD. The Fellowship will start as soon as possible after 1st of October 2018.

The value of the 4-year fellowship is €22,000 per annum. The successful applicant will be required to pay a postgraduate registration fee of approx. Euro €6000 p.a. (EU students) or approx. €9,000 p.a. (non-EU students).

Further Information/Applications

Teagasc Supervisor:
Phone +353 46 9061166

Dr. Bernadette Earley, AGRIC, Teagasc, Grange, Dunsany, Co. Meath, Ireland.
email: Bernadette.earley@teagasc.ie

UCD Supervisor:
Phone +353 (0) 1 7167682

Dr. Alan Kelly, School of Agriculture and Food Science, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland.
email: alan.kelly@ucd.ie

Application Procedure

Submit an electronic copy of Curriculum Vitae with the names and contact details of two referees, and a letter of interest by email simultaneously to:

Dr. Bernadette Earley
Dr. Alan Kelly

Bernadette.earley@teagasc.ie
alan.kelly@ucd.ie

Closing date: 1st May 2018.