Teagasc PhD Walsh Fellowship Opportunity

“The welfare of dairy cows in grass-based systems”
Reference: WF 2016020

Background
Dairy cow welfare is becoming an issue of increasing importance globally. It is imperative to ensure the welfare of Irish dairy cows is of a high standard for ethical reasons, to optimise cow productivity, and to maintain a positive image of Irish dairy production to address growing consumer concerns. Dairy herd expansion post-quota abolition has the potential to increase risks to dairy cow welfare, as a result of larger numbers of cows per farmer and a lack of infrastructure. It is vital that the issue of cow welfare is addressed proactively so that herd expansion may be achieved without compromising dairy cow welfare. The aim of this project is to investigate the current welfare status of Irish dairy cows in grass-based systems, establish risk and protective factors for dairy cow welfare, and develop strategies to improve the welfare of Irish dairy cows. The successful PhD candidate will work as part of a collaborative team, which includes internationally renowned experts in the field of animal welfare, and will have access to some of the best (experimental) facilities for grass-based and confinement dairy systems research. The student will have the opportunity to develop his/her skills in a broad range of areas, including animal welfare assessment, data management and analysis, writing and publishing peer-reviewed scientific papers, and networking with experts in the field. The student will also have the opportunity to attend and present research findings at (inter)national conferences. This position will allow the candidate the opportunity to work at Ireland’s leading agricultural research organisation, attain a PhD from one of the top-ranked Universities in the world, to gain a skillset and qualification which will equip them for a wide variety of future careers, and to significantly contribute to the improvement of dairy cow welfare in Ireland.

Requirements
Applicants must have at least primary honours degree, but preferably an MSc degree in a suitable area (Veterinary Medicine, Animal Sciences, or Biology), and must have experience of and be comfortable working with dairy cows. Experience in the area of animal health and welfare, data processing, and data analysis is an advantage. Knowledge of the dairy industry is desirable. The applicant should be self-motivated with the ability to work both independently and as part of a team. The candidate must be proficient in both written and spoken English. A full driving licence is required.

Award
This PhD Fellowship is a joint research project between Teagasc Moorepark, Co. Cork, Ireland and the Animal Production Systems group of Wageningen University, the Netherlands. The successful candidate must be willing to travel between the Teagasc Research Centre at Moorepark and Wageningen University to accomplish both academic and research objectives. The successful candidate will be registered at Wageningen University. The fellowship will commence as soon as possible after 1st September 2017. The fellowship funding is €22,000 per annum and includes University fees of up to a maximum of €6,000 per annum and is tenable for 4 years.

Further information
For informal enquiries and further information regarding the position, please contact:
Dr. Muireann Conneely (muireann.conneely@teagasc.ie)
Dr. Eddie Bokkers (eddie.bokkers@wur.nl)

Application Procedure
Applicants should submit an electronic copy their Curriculum Vitae and a letter of interest detailing their motivation, qualifications and experience to:
Dr. Muireann Conneely (muireann.conneely@teagasc.ie)

Closing date: 5pm 22nd June 2017