

Progress Report as of 3rd December 2019 on Implementation of Irish Beef Sector Agreement, 15 September

Strand 1

No	Action Agreed	Lead	Timeline	Update
1	Establishment of a Beef Market Taskforce.	DAFM	Q4 2019	Taskforce Established, Chairperson appointed. First meeting 3 December 2019
2	The introduction of a new in-spec bonus of 12c/kg for steers and heifers under 30 months in the categories of grade O- and fat score 4+, which currently do not qualify for any bonus.	MII	Q4 2019	Confirmed. Implemented on resumption of processing following 15 September 2019 Agreement.
3	The immediate introduction of a new bonus of 8c/kg for steers and heifers aged between 30 to 36 months, which meet all non-age related existing in-spec criteria, and which up to now have not received any bonus.	MII	Q4 2019	Confirmed. Implemented on resumption of processing following 15 September 2019 Agreement.
4	An immediate increase of two-thirds in the current in-spec bonus for steers and heifers, from 12c/kg to 20c/kg.	MII	Q4 2019	Confirmed. Implemented on resumption of processing following 15 September 2019 Agreement.
5	The in-spec 70-day residency requirement will be reduced to 60 days on the last farm.	MII	Q4 2019	Confirmed. Implemented on resumption of processing following 15 September 2019 Agreement.
6	Bord Bia will develop a beef market price index model based on 3 components: cattle price index, beef market price index (retail and wholesale) and an offal price indicator, which will be introduced week commencing 16 September.	Bord Bia	Q4 2019	Launched 18 November 2019. Available on the Bord Bia website: https://www.bordbia.ie/farmers-growers/farmers/prices-markets/beef-market-tracking/ PWC retained to verify figures. Market update as standing item on BTF meeting agenda agreed.

7	An immediate scientific review of the Quality Payment Grid by Teagasc; the first stage of the review, a desktop analysis of the pricing structure of the grid on the basis of meat yield/conformation, to be completed by end October.	Teagasc	Q4 2019	Teagasc have completed first stage of the review and this will be presented in detail at the next BTF meeting.

Strand 2

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8.	Independent review of market and customer requirements, specifically in relation to the four in-spec bonus criteria currently in operation in the Irish beef sector.	DAFM	Q4 2019	Request for Tender for these reports was circulated on Wednesday 6th November, with a deadline for receipt of Tender Responses of 12 noon on Thursday 5th December. This will enable award of the tender before end of 2019.
9.	Independent examination of the price composition of the total value of the animal, including the fifth quarter, along the supply chain. The results will inform future actions as necessary. The beef industry will co-operate in providing data.	DAFM	Q4 2019	Request for Tender for these reports was circulated on Wednesday 6th November, with a deadline for receipt of Tender Responses of 12 noon on Thursday 5th December. This will enable award of the tender before end of 2019.
10.	Summary of competition law issues as relevant to the Irish beef sector.	DAFM	Q4 2019	Request for Tender for these reports was circulated on Wednesday 6th November, with a deadline for receipt of Tender Responses of 12 noon on Thursday 5th December. This will enable award of the tender before end of 2019.

11.	Provide additional detailed price reporting on the Beef PriceWatch App	DAFM	Q1 2020	DAFM committed to adding minimum and maximum prices to the Beef Pricewatch App in early 2020.
12.	EU experts will be invited to brief the Task Force on the expanded EU meat market observatory methodology.	DAFM	Q1 2020	DAFM committed to engaging with DG Agri in early 2020 to invite relevant experts to brief the BTF.
13.	Key retail customers will be invited to brief the Task Force on their market requirements.	DAFM	Q2 2020	DAFM proposed to progress this action following the independent studies and publication of reports, however, some members requested this action be carried out sooner. Retailers will be invited to the next meeting.
14.	The Task Force will examine transparency models in other jurisdictions.	DAFM	Q2 2020	DAFM confirmed it will progress this action following the independent studies and publication of reports.
15.	A consultation process will be launched shortly on the transposition of the Unfair Trading Practices (UTP) Directive, including consideration of the requirement for an independent regulator.	DAFM	Q4 2019	A consultation process on the transposition of the Unfair Trading Practices (UTP) Directive has commenced: https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/customerservice/publicconsultations/ The closing date for submissions is 13 December 2019.
16.	DAFM will report its carcass classification inspection results on a regular basis.	DAFM	Q4 2019	From January 2020 DAFM will report on its Beef Carcase Classification inspection results, on a bi-monthly basis, on the Department Website. Each bi-monthly report will have a cumulative total accumulating previous data back to the start of the year and include information on carcass conformation and Fat accuracy percentages and bias. A report for the 12 months of 2019 will also be published.

17.	An expert report on mechanical carcass classification will be published in the near future.	DAFM	Q4 2019	The expert report on mechanical carcass classification review has been published: https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/farmingsectors/beef/ModificationTrialReport231019.pdf
18	An appeals system for manual grading factories is being introduced.	DAFM	Q1 2020	DAFM will communicate the details to the manual grading facilities An appeals system for manual grading has been introduced and communicated to the relevant processors It was agreed to have a presentation at the next BTF meeting from the relevant DAFM experts on items 16, 17 and 18.
19.	FSAI and DAFM will ensure strict enforcement of EU labelling laws.	DAFM	ONGOING	DAFM confirmed this is ongoing.
20.	DAFM to engage with potential Beef Producer Organisations and provide guidance on the application process.	DAFM	ONGOING	DAFM is proactively engaging with several potential beef Producer Organisations and providing guidance. The first beef PO was approved by DAFM in Sept 2019 & second one in Oct 2019. DAFM agreed to engage further with ICOS on the role of Co-ops and with the IFA on issues raised, with a view to a fuller discussion on POs at the next BTF meeting.
21.	Live exports are a critical outlet to improve competition in the sector. DAFM is committed to a continued strategic focus in facilitating and developing this trade on a sustainable basis, taking account of stringent animal health and welfare standards.	DAFM	ONGOING	In 2018 live cattle exports increased by over 30% compared with 2019 and live cattle exports to end October 2019 were up 20% compared to the same period in 2018. New Certificates have been agreed with Egypt and Algeria. Minister Creed led a trade mission focused on live exports to the Netherlands in 2019 and a mission to Algeria and Egypt is planned for 2020. Members queried a proposal to increase the floor area per calf in transportation, asked DAFM to reconsider the proposal and requested a written update. A written update has issued from DAFM.
22.	DAFM and Bord Bia are actively engaging with the EU	DAFM, BB	ONGOING	DAFM is working closely with Bord Bia, who are engaging with Commission in advance of submitting a PGI application, with a view to having as inclusive a PGI as possible.

	Commission on the development of a Protected Geographical Indication for Irish beef.			
23.	Bord Bia will further intensify promotional activity for Irish beef across key EU markets and China.	BB	ONGOING	Bord Bia allocated an additional €400k for beef promotion in 2019. This has focused on Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and China. Bord Bia received an extra €1.1M for 2020, and this has been allocated to beef and lamb. €1M of which has been allocated for promotional activity in China.
24.	Review of hot & cold weighing system	Teagasc	Q1 2020	Teagasc has carried out a literature review and concluded that the Irish average of 2% is in line with global averages. The factors for this were outlined in an oral presentation.
25.	Meat industry to confirm that the base price at individual plant level applies to all steers and heifers regardless of age or breed.	MII	Q4 2019	Confirmed 15 th September 2019. Any individual cases where breaches are claimed should be notified direct to MII for referral.
26.	No change in weight limits without a minimum of four months' notice to the farmer.	MII	Q4 2019	Confirmed by MII. Any individual cases where breaches are claimed should be notified direct to MII for referral. MII to report current specs and weight limits.
27.	Farmers have the right to access their carcass images.	MII	Q1 2020	MII in discussion with DAFM as regards the mechanism. Timescale to be revised to Q1 2020.
28.	Lairage weighing service will be provided on request, which may incur a nominal charge.	MII	Q1 2020	No requests to date. Timescale to be revised to Q1 2020, to allow further progress. MII confirmed happy to engage with ICBF and others on potential uses for any data collected.

29.	Written confirmation of terms of sale, where requested.	MII	Q4 2019	Confirmed by MII.
30.	Farmers can opt out of the insurance scheme for animals delivered to factories.	MII All Stakeholders	Q4 2019	Confirmed by MII. Any individual cases where breaches are claimed should be notified direct to MII for referral. In relation to Actions 25 -30, it was agreed that once all actions are in place, this should be publicised so farmers are aware of their options.
31.	Blockades and protests will be removed immediately and all parties to this agreement will ensure that this happens.	FARM BODIES	Q3 2019	Implemented.
32.	Thereafter, beef processors undertake that all legal proceedings against farm organisations and/or individual farmers will be withdrawn in relation to this matter.	MII	Q3 2019	Implemented.
33.	Parties agree that any future disputes that arise should, in the first instance, be brought before the Beef Market Taskforce, in order to maintain the integrity of the Agreement.	FARM BODIES, MII	ONGOING	Commitment re-iterated.

Additional Stakeholder Points from August meetings.

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34.	Stakeholders agreed that additional funding for targeted direct support for suckler cows is required as a priority.	DAFM	ONGOING	<p>€85 million provided nationally in targeted schemes to support sustainable beef farming in 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45M for BDGP • 40M for additional supports to Beef – yet to be allocated – BTF members asked to submit any proposals by 16 December 2019.
35.	Stakeholders agreed that in the context of Brexit, support is urgently required to ensure that effects on all farmers producing beef are mitigated.	DAFM	ONGOING	<p>In the event of a ‘No Deal’ Brexit the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform has confirmed that the Government will provide a ‘No Deal’ contingency fund to support our most vulnerable sectors, with up to €650 million available overall, to be activated in tranches as the full impacts of Brexit emerge.</p> <p>First tranche of No Deal Brexit supports to be €110m</p>
36.	Stakeholders agreed on the need to fully fund CAP and protect its share of the EU Budget, and to ensure that the current level of direct payments to Irish beef farmers is protected.	DAFM	ONGOING	DAFM will continue to lobby for the strongest possible CAP budget and continued support at EU level.
37.	There was a demand from the stakeholders that the Irish Government should seek the invocation by the EU of the WTO safeguard clause to reduce the level of beef imports from third countries. Furthermore, it	DAFM	ONGOING	DAFM will continue to lobby for continued support at EU level.

	should be ensured that imports which do not meet the same stringent standards as EU producers are banned.			
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