Welcome to the 2017 Winter Digest. It has been a whirlwind year for our members involved in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, environment and food science with external factors such as Brexit, CAP and FoodWise2025 continuing to shape our industry. We certainly live in interesting times!

One of our greatest assets as an industry is the human capital potential of our graduates. Developing this human capital through various events, initiatives and networking opportunities will continue to be a priority for the ASA. I would like to congratulate the young graduates who recently joined the ASA and would encourage all members to welcome this new cohort, who are the future of our industry, and urge them to attend events and actively participate in the association.

Following on from a very successful careers forum we look forward to the upcoming mock interviews with UCD and WIT and continuing our mentoring programme and career development events for recent graduates in the spring.

The ASA will continue to monitor and respond to agricultural policy changes such as the CAP consultation process and Nitrates Action Program on which the ASA recently made submissions.

Kerry and our Sheep Masterclass were unfortunately impacted by severe weather conditions and had to be cancelled. Both events have now been rescheduled for early 2018.

Brexit is on everyone’s radar and makes us acutely aware of the interdependency of our industry with our closest neighbours. In the spring, ASA will host a joint event with our Northern colleges in NIAS. There are many other events planned for the New Year including the ASA International trip to Brussels and technical master classes in sheep, dairy beef and tillage organised by Council members along with our retired member event. I hope you all will attend some of these activities in the coming year.

I would like to congratulate Mary Delaney on a very successful year as president and on delivering a highly successful conference and banquet. I would also like to thank our sponsors whose support is crucial to the running of our voluntary professional organisation throughout the year.

ASA is fortunate to have a dynamic council that helps guide the association, implement the strategic plan and deliver events with the support and coordination of our ASA Manager Valerie Abbott. I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new council members, our new treasurer, secretary and vice president.

Wishing all our members a successful 2018.

Aidan Cotter receives ASA Distinguished member award

At the ASA President’s Banquet, Aidan Cotter, former CEO of Bord Bia was presented with an ASA Distinguished Member award. A long-standing member of the ASA, Mr Cotter was honoured for his dedication, commitment and immense contribution to the Irish agri-food industry during his almost 40-year career. This award was kindly sponsored by AIB.

Dates for your diary

ASA Sheep Masterclass
17th January

ASA Dairymaster Event
1st February

UCD Mock Interviews
13th February

WIT Mock Interviews
2nd March

ASA Technical Dairy Event
21st March

ASA International Study Trip
Brussels including European Parliament
May 2017

A message from the ASA President
ASA Vice President

Amii McKeever was elected as Vice President of the ASA at the Annual General Meeting in September 2017. Amii is the Channel Manager of Glanbia Connect, Glanbia's farmer facing online communications portal. She joined Glanbia in 2017 following 10 years as the executive of IFAs intensive agriculture committees. She graduated from UCD with a BAgSc in 2003, a Masters in Animal Science in 2005 and a diploma in Strategic Growth from Smurfit Business School in 2013. She is also a member of Ceres, the women in agri-business leadership network. Amii studied the 'Impact of vertical integration in the supply chain on primary producers' as part of a Nuffield Scholarship in 2011 and is a board member of Nuffield Ireland where she heads up the communications portfolio. Speaking about her election as Vice President Amii said, ‘It is a great honour to represent Agricultural Science graduates as part of the ASA Council. I am very passionate about supporting our members to develop their skills to communicate positive messages in support of our industry, considering the many challenges that we face as a sector’. Amii is also a proud Tipperary supporter who lives in Kilkenny (enough said!) and can be found on Twitter @amiical.

ASA Council 2017 – 2018

- President - Derrie Dillon, Marcra na Feirme
- Vice President - Amii McKeever, Glanbia
- Past President - Mary Delaney, Glanbia Ireland
- Treasurer – Siobhan Walsh, WIT
- Secretary – Seamus O’Mahony, Dairygold Agribusiness
- Niamh Bambrick, Glanbia
- Tommy Boland, UCD
- Niall Brennan, Alltech
- Brendan Corcoran, HSBC
- Bryan Docey, AIB
- Pat Farrell, Irish Farmers’ Association
- Padraig Foley, Irish Farmers Journal
- Al Grogan, ex Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine
- Suzy Kavanagh, EAEC Ltd
- Ted Massey, Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine
- Greg McAnenly, Grant Thornton
- Roberta McDonald, Aurivo
- George Ramsbottom, Teagasc
- Julie Roche, Brady Group
- Willie White, Irish Agricultural Science Teachers’ Association

ASA Council - Meet our new members

Niamh Bambrick
Ruminant Business Manager, Glanbia

Niamh is from a family farm in Co. Kilkenny and graduated from UCD in 2016 with an honours BSc Ag degree specialising in animal and crop production. She went on to join Glanbia’s graduate programme progressing to become a Tillage Business Manager and more recently, Ruminant Business Manager. Niamh has gained broad experience in the areas of crop agronomy and animal nutrition through her work with Glanbia. Niamh represents both undergraduates and recent graduate’s needs on the council. Niamh continues to farm part time on the family farm in Kilkenny.

Tommy Boland
Associate Professor of Ruminant Nutrition in UCD

Tommy Boland is currently Associate Professor of Ruminant Nutrition in UCD with responsibility for Sheep Production. From a farming background in Co. Wexford, Tommy completed a B.AgSc and PhD specialising in mineral nutrition of sheep in 2001 and 2005 respectively. Tommy’s teaching and research interests centre on improving the sustainability of pasture-based ruminant production systems with a particular focus on methane emissions, nitrogen excretion and multispecies swards. A frequent contributor to ASA events, this is Tommy’s first year on council.

Niall Brennan
Irish Poultry Manager/ European Biogas Project Manager, Alltech

Niall Brennan is currently working as a project manager for Alltech, looking after both Irish poultry and European biogas ventures. A county Louth man, Brennan grew up on a dairy farm, which fuelled his passion for the agri-food industry. Niall graduated from University College Dublin (UCD) with a bachelor of agricultural science specialising in dairy business. In 2012, he was the proud recipient of a travel scholarship to New Zealand, where he spent six months working on a 2000 cow herd. He is also currently undertaking a part-time master’s degree in industrial biotechnology through Aberystwyth University in Wales.
Upcoming ASA Events

ASA Technical Dairy Event
The ASA will host a dairy technical briefing for members on Wednesday 21st March 2018. The event will start at 9.30am with registration at the Teagasc Conference centre, Ashtown. A strong line-up of speakers will update members on market prospects for the enterprise during the year ahead. Speakers confirmed to date include: Brendan Horan from Teagasc, who will review the latest research on grass-based milk production, and Karina Pierce from UCD who will present a summary of the first two years performance of the high production systems herd at the UCD farm at Lyons Estate.

A light lunch will be provided after the morning session and in the afternoon, delegates will drive to the Lyons Estate where three breakout workshops will take place. The afternoon workshops will focus on areas such as nutrition and grazing management of the herd, breeding management and bull selection and topical herd health issues such as selective dry cow therapy.

ASA Dairymaster Visit
ASA members are invited to an exclusive members event visiting Dairymaster Global HQ in Tralee, Co. Kerry on 1st February. This event was originally scheduled for November but was unfortunately cancelled due to severe weather conditions. Dairymaster is a world leader in dairy equipment manufacturing with customers in over 40 countries operations in Ireland, the UK and USA. In recent years Dairymaster has won numerous Innovation Awards worldwide including at the three largest agricultural exhibitions in the world. This visit is a fantastic opportunity for ASA members to meet the team at Dairymaster hear updates on their current activities and research and will include a rare opportunity to visit the factory floor.

Thank You We wish to extend our deep gratitude to the following ASA council members who retired from the ASA Council this year: Neil Keane, Alltech and former ASA President; David Bourke, Comex McKinnon; Aoife Byrne, UCD; Monica Gorman, UCD; Ellen Standish, Teagasc; Sean Crummy, World Wide Sires Ireland and Julian Hughes, Hughes Agriculture. ASA Council members give their time on a voluntary basis and we are most grateful for their dedicated service to the association.

Greg McAnenly
Accountant, Grant Thornton
Greg is a chartered tax advisor and accountant with Grant Thornton. Since joining Grant Thornton he has been a member of the agri-food team and works with both corporates and individuals at all stages of the agri-food chain from farm gate to processors and distributors. Greg is originally from a beef farm in Monaghan. He graduated in 2012 with a BAgrSc in Food and Agribusiness Management from UCD.

Roberta McDonald
Aurivo Farm Profitability Coordinator
Roberta has been based in the North West of Ireland as coordinator of the Aurivo Farm Profitability Programme since 2013. After graduating from UCD, she completed a PhD from UCD and Teagasc Moorepark on the development of New Entrant Dairy Farms and Farmers. In 2016 Roberta was awarded a Nuffield scholarship, studying the topic: Innovative Disruption of Farmer Development Programmes. Roberta is a founding member of Ceres, the women in agri-business leadership network.

Willie White
Agricultural Science Teacher
Willie White is a full-time Agricultural Science teacher in St Peters College, Wexford and a part-time beef farmer. Willie graduated with a BAgrSc (Animal and Crop Production) in 2003 and Higher Diploma in Education 2004 from UCD. He is currently PRO of the Irish Agricultural Science Teachers Association (IASTA). He has also worked for a number of years as both a practical and written examiner with the State Examinations Commission.
On Friday 8th September 2017, more than 400 delegates from the Irish agri-food industry gathered in the Killashee House Hotel, Naas for the annual ASA conference ‘The Future of Agri-Food’ which celebrated 75 years of the association.

The conference was officially opened by Phil Hogan, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development who said that the UK needs to take responsibility for finding a workable solution to Brexit which is already having a negative impact on the value of Irish agri-food exports. He also said that farmers who are the ‘boots on the ground’ need to do more to be part of the solution in dealing with climate change.

There were a number of lively sessions on the day including Global Trade: Navigating a Changing Environment which featured contributions from Ambassador Darci Vetter, Former Chief Agricultural Negotiator under the Obama administration and Food Wise 2025: Achieving Ireland’s Agri-food Ambition, which saw the keynote address delivered by Aidan O’Driscoll, Secretary General, DAFM. Mr. O’Driscoll provided an update on the industry’s ambitious targets for 2030.

The event also featured an engaging Executive Chair interview between Eoin Lowry, Agri-business Editor with the Irish Farmers Journal and Jim Bergin, CEO Glanbia Ireland who warned that the current record price for butter was “unsustainable” and was causing severe challenges along the supply chain. The afternoon saw two sessions on specific sectors Dairy and Beef. The Dairy Outlook: An International Perspective session featured representatives from two of the world’s leading dairy co-operatives, Professor Nicola Shadbolt, Director of Fonterra Cooperative, New Zealand and Jeroen Elfers, Director of Corporate Affairs, Friesland Campina. The final session of the day focused on Irish Beef: The Global Opportunity and heard contributions from Tara McCarthy, Chief Executive, Bord Bia; Niall Browne, Chief Executive, Dawn Meats and Rowena Dwyer, former Chief Economist, Irish Farmers Association.

There was much lively discussion and debate throughout the day with panel discussions and questions from the floor. Presentations from the day are available online at www.asaireland.ie/conference2017

Instrumental Industry Support

A total of 57 companies and organisations from across the agri-food sector supported our conference and banquet in 2017. This level of industry support is a measure of the status in which the event is held as a premium discussion and networking forum for the sector. We are grateful to all our industry partners whose support enabled us to host an event with such a high calibre of speakers from across the globe.

We are especially thankful to FBD Insurance, our long-standing conference partner and to Bord Bia, our banquet partner. Our conference session sponsors were Alltech, Deveenish, Glanbia Ireland, Goodbody, HSBC and Kerry. Special thanks also to the Irish Farmers Journal, our media partner, to Dawn Meats for the sponsorship of the ASA Presidents Golf Day and to Grant Thornton for their sponsorship of the pre-banquet reception. Vital support was also provided by state, semi–state and private industry bodies. This demonstrates the broad reach of the ASA and the esteem in which it is held. To all our sponsors we gratefully acknowledge your support and thank you.
ASA Banquet and Conference 2017

ASA Banquet welcomes almost 600 industry guests

The pre-conference banquet welcomed almost 600 industry leaders to the Killashee House Hotel. This black-tie event, supported by Bord Bia, provides a unique occasion for members of the agri-food sector to network and celebrate our industry and is now regarded as the premier event within the industry annually. Results from a survey carried out by the ASA showed that 78% of guests were in attendance to network with industry colleagues. Guest speaker on the evening was renowned broadcaster, businessman and former Minister for Agriculture, Ivan Yates.
Where in Ireland are you originally from?
I am originally from Bandon, Co. Cork. I grew up on a dairy farm and we also had a small herd of pedigree Aberdeen Angus. Presently though, the Angus have gone to make way for an expanding dairy operation.

What prompted you to study Ag science?
From early on when thinking about college, Ag. Science was always topping the list. Learning and applying science and business to an industry that you have a life-long connection with was always appealing. I also knew a few local lads that had gone to Dublin to pursue Ag. Science so after a quick chat with them and hearing glowing recommendations, any hesitation was gone.

Where did you study and what did you specialise in?
I got my BAgSc from UCD (2007; Animal and Crop Production) and then got a PhD in Quantitative Genetics, through UCD, while based at Teagasc Moorepark. Growing up, Dad always put huge emphasis on picking the right bulls for breeding and would have us trawling AI catalogues, and later the ICBF lists, comparing breeding values. In parallel, breeding show winners, or attempting to at least, carried similar selection approaches. These hands on experiences got me interested in the science of animal breeding and genetics.

Describe your career path after college
After I graduated, I joined the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF) as a geneticist. I had worked with ICBF on and off through my undergrad during summer and Christmas holidays etc. I had spent 6 months at Colorado State University during my studies and found huge benefit in being immersed in the agri-food industry in a different country. So, after I graduated and even though I was enjoying ICBF, I slowly looked for opportunities to do it again. One came up in Canada, a 2 year contract, and 6 years later, I’m still here! My career has always involved statistical genetics and animal breeding but the forms in which it exists change slightly and 6 years later, I’m still here! My career has always involved statistical genetics and animal breeding but the forms in which it exists change slightly and 6 years later, I’m still here! My career has always involved statistical genetics and animal breeding but the forms in which it exists change slightly and 6 years later, I’m still here! My career has always involved statistical genetics and animal breeding but the forms in which it exists change slightly and 6 years later, I’m still here! My career has always involved statistical genetics and animal breeding but the forms in which it exists change slightly and 6 years later, I’m still here! My career has always involved statistical genetics and animal breeding but the forms in which it exists change slightly and 6 years later, I’m still here! My career has always involved statistical genetics and animal breeding but the forms in which it exists change slightly and 6 years later, I’m still here! My career has always involved statistical genetics and animal breeding but the forms in which it exists change slightly and 6 years later, I’m still here! My career has always involved statistical genetics and animal breeding but the forms in which it exists change slightly and 6 years later, I’m still here! My career has always involved statistical genetics and animal breeding but the forms in which it exists change slightly and 6 years later, I’m still here! My career has always involved statistical genetics and animal breeding but the forms in which it exists change slightly and 6 years later, I’m still here!

Describe your current role
My current role is the Director of Scientific and Industry Advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. My current role is the Director of Scientific and Industry Advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. My current role is the Director of Scientific and Industry Advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. My current role is the Director of Scientific and Industry Advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. My current role is the Director of Scientific and Industry Advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. My current role is the Director of Scientific and Industry Advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. My current role is the Director of Scientific and Industry Advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. My current role is the Director of Scientific and Industry Advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. My current role is the Director of Scientific and Industry Advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. My current role is the Director of Scientific and Industry Advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. My current role is the Director of Scientific and Industry Advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. My current role is the Director of Scientific and Industry Advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. My current role is the Director of Scientific and Industry Advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. My current role is the Director of Scientific and Industry Advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. My current role is the Director of Scientific and Industry Advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. My current role is the Director of Scientific and Industry Advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta.

What are some of the biggest challenges facing the agri Industry in Canada?
The challenge to reduce the environmental pressure from food production is huge. Whether those environmental pressures, and the metrics by which they are measured, are correctly quoted or not, the face of agriculture here is becoming somewhat environmentally negative. This is exacerbated by the growing distance of a younger generation from the farm, the growing unfamiliarity of the urban population with agricultural practices and the effect social media has on magnifying false facts. Other challenges include the presence of agricultural practices that introduce trade barriers e.g. growth hormones and quota, the global issue of AMR and in this province, labour shortage.

ASA Sheep Masterclass
The rescheduled ASA Sheep Masterclass, sponsored by Irish Country Meats, will take place in UCD Lyons Farm on 17th January. The masterclass will focus on topical issues and the most up to date research relating to Sheep Breeding. Late pregnancy nutrition, Store lamb finishing, Animal Health and Mineral nutrition. Speakers include Dr. Fiona McGovern, Prof. Michael Doherty, AnneMarie Crowley, Prof. Tommy Boland and Prof. Michael Diskin. The full programme is available online at www.asaireland.ie/upcomingevents. This event was sold out and was postponed due to weather. If you could like to attend please contact the ASA Office.
ASA Young Member Activity

ASA MENTORING PROGRAMME

Call for Mentors

The ASA offers a voluntary mentoring service for members with more than five years work experience and who wish to progress their career to the next level. We are currently looking for experienced mentors who have been working in the industry for more than ten years to become a mentor to younger members of the association. If you are interested we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact the ASA office for more information.

ASA Mock Interviews

Each year to help prepare undergraduates for entering the workforce, the ASA host mock interviews with final year students in UCD and WIT. Over 150 students were interviewed last year by a panel of ASA members. The ASA is always looking for interviewers to assist in this process and would be grateful of any ASA members who would consider volunteering this year. The process should take approx a half day and provides huge benefit to our young members. If you would like to participate please contact the ASA Office. Dates for 2018 are: UCD – 13th February, WIT – 2nd March.

ASA UCD Careers Forum

4th Year UCD Students attend the ASA Careers Forum

The annual ASA UCD Careers Forum, chaired by Derrie Dillon, ASA President, took place in UCD on 13th November. This important event provides useful advice for graduates as they prepare to leave college and enter the workforce. Nearly 100 fourth year ASA BAgSc Students were in attendance to hear from speakers on the evening including Stan Lalor, Grassland Agro; Jane Kavanagh, Teagasc; Elaine Farrell, IFA; David Owens, Farmer and ex Bord Bia and James Taylor, Irish Farmers Journal. All of the speakers are past graduates and shared their personal experiences of how they started out in their career, challenges along the way, lessons learnt and how they have ended up in where they are today.

PWE Bursary 2018

The ASA is delighted to once again partner with the Irish Farmers Journal to award four travel bursaries to third year students in UCD who are undertaking the professional work experience (PWE) abroad. The bursary was launched in November and received a large number of applications. The winners are: Matthew Lang, Sligo who will travel to New Zealand; Michael Delaney, Tipperary who will travel to Canada; Mairead Fox, Westmeath who will travel to Missouri, USA and Michael Kean, Mayo who will travel to Idaho, USA.

Two bursaries were also awarded to third year students in WIT supported by the Irish Farmers Journal, Seedtech and Glanbia. The winners were Ailish Osbourne, Kildare who will travel to New Zealand and James Waters, Sligo who will travel to Ohio, USA. We look forward to reading about their experiences on farmersjournal.ie.
SPONSOR THANK YOU
The ASA would like to thank all our loyal sponsors for their continued support once again in 2017 enabling us to continue to deliver important services for the benefit of our members. We are extremely grateful for all the support that we receive which allows the association to continue to grow and deliver.

MEMBER THANK YOU
We would also like to thank all of our members for their continued support of the ASA. We are proud to now have in excess of 1800 members which is growing each year and is testament to the importance of the association within the industry. We look forward to seeing you again in 2018. If your membership is due for renewal we would ask you to contact the office to make the necessary arrangements for payment.

ASA Membership Renewal – Special Offer
Change to renewing your membership by Direct Debit and receive reduced membership of €80 for Year 1.

ASA Member Benefits
ASA members are reminded that you can avail of a range of member benefits details of which are listed on the ASA website: www.asaireland.ie/membership

Special offers includes a 10% discount* on Bed and Breakfast rates at two Irish FBD Hotels and Resorts; Faithlegg House Hotel and Golf Resort and Castleknock Hotel and Country Club and preferred rates for Spanish properties. *Subject to T&C’s.

CAP UPDATE
Following a survey of its members, ASA made a substantial submission on the new CAP. ASA now welcomes the proposals detailed in the latest EU report on the future of food and farming and the fact that DAFM is planning a consultation process with the industry on its proposals. In particular, the report recognises the challenges facing agriculture particularly the low profitability of many enterprises which results in a high proportion of income for many farmers coming from EU payments. The report also places emphasis on the need to encourage the entry of younger farmers into farming. Ensuring, as proposed, that support is targeted to genuine farmers who are actively farming should help to encourage the transfer of land to younger farmers. This is critically important if European citizens are to continue to have access to safe, high quality, affordable and nutritious food into the future.

The objectives detailed in the report clearly highlight how ASA members can continue to play a vital role particularly in such areas as:

- Fostering a smart and resilient agricultural sector where emphasis is now placed on ensuring that support is targeted to genuine farmers many of who will need advice on the latest technological developments to ensure viability.
- Meeting environmental and climate objectives.

ASA in its CAP submission raised concerns on the design and implementation of the current greening measures and are pleased to see that this is recognised and that each member state will now have more flexibility in devising measures best suited to its particular circumstance. It is also noted that climate change has become an even more urgent priority under CAP and this again presents challenges to the industry in how best to manage at farm level. Research and innovation are highlighted as being critical in meeting the new CAP objectives and in addressing citizens’ concerns regarding a sustainable agriculture.