

The Killeely-Dromkeen Dairy Discussion Group was formed in 1992 following a farm walk organised by Tim Ryan, Teagasc Advisor, on the farm of Garret Barry in Herbertstown. The walk was facilitated by Allistar Rayne, a New Zealand Dairy Expert on secondment to Teagasc. In time, Dairygold Co-Op came on board with funding for group facilitators. Over the years, the local Teagasc Advisors (Paul McCarthy), Dairygold Representative (Pat O'Brien) and Group Facilitators (John Dunworth & John Maher) played a key role in keeping the Discussion Group relevant and active. Former group Chairmen were Robert O'Dea, Martin Stapleton and Andrew Gow.

The purpose of a Discussion Group is to create a forum for 10-20 farmers to share their knowledge and to work together to advance and develop their expertise and capabilities. The main topics covered are:

Financial-Budgeting and Profit

Grassland-Grass measuring, Grass Budgeting, Re-seeding

EBI (Economic Breeding Index)-Herd improvement, Bull selection, Replacements

Compact Calving-Heat detection and submission rates

Being involved in a group helps the farmer to increase their knowledge base and to develop their personal and business skills. It contributes to running a successful farm business by unlocking the potential of the members' farms. The Group helps farmers to feel less isolated in challenging times.

The group meets once a month for 2 hours. The meetings rotate around the members' farms in Pallasgreen, Oola, Cappamore, Killeely, Emly, Murroe and Herbertstown. Occasionally, the group travels to other farms and to the research centre in Moorepark.

Over the winter months, evening meetings are held and speakers are invited to talk on different subjects e.g. investments, shares, A1. Sometimes courses are held during the winter e.g. First Aid, Life coaching, Grass Measuring & Budgeting. The Group also has a social aspect to it. Wives and partners attend the annual Christmas night out.

Today, the Killeely-Dromkeen Dairy Discussion Group has 14 active members farming a variety of land type and milking on average 80 cows. The Group activities are greatly assisted by our Teagasc Advisor, Aileen Walsh, and the Group Facilitator, Tom Downey. Our Dairygold Rep is Seán Ryan. New members are always welcome.

