

Join Kansas Dairy for Annual Meeting March 31-April 1



Join the Kansas Dairy Association and the Kansas Dairy Commission for Annual Meeting in Manhattan. Listen to speakers, participate in tours, attend a social and trade show, and find out what Kansas Dairy is doing for you. Rooms at the Best Western, Comfort Inn and Bluemont Hotel. Contact Stephanie Eckroat for more details or to RSVP.



Meeting at Stanley Stout Center | Manhattan Kan.

Irish Dairy Industry Affects Global Supply

By Jill Seiler

For Irish dairy farmer Tim O'Leary, milking cows has been the only thing he has wanted to do. And with 10 generations of ancestors before him being involved in dairying, you could say it is the family business.

Now O'Leary is preparing to hand the operation over to another generation as his 25-year-old son Colm joins the family farm. The O'Learys milk 130 Jersey-Holstein crossbreeds in County Cork, Ireland near Blarney. They are a pasture dairy and seasonal milkers, calving all of their cows within a few weeks in February. Tim O'Leary is the former deputy president of the Irish Farmers Association and is a member of Dairygold's Co-operative committee.

O'Leary believes having his son involved in the operation is



COURTESY OF AUDREY SCHMITZ

Tim O'Leary gives a tour of his farm to K-State College of Agriculture students on November 21, 2016.

possible because of the lifting of the milk quotas by the European Union in 2015.

"It is exciting to have Colm back on the farm because he has such energy,"

O'Leary said to a group of K-State agricultural communications students during a study abroad trip to Ireland over Thanksgiving break. "Before the quotas were lifted, the farm would not have supported Colm and he would have to work in the city."

The O'Leary's farm grew by 35 percent this year, with plans of adding another 20 cows next year to reach 150. And the expansion does not stop there. Colm's BHAG, big hairy audacious goal, is to have 1,000 cows by 2030.

What is happening at the O'Learys is occurring all over Ireland. The dairy industry in Ireland has increased by 55 percent in the last five years and is expected to grow by another 50 percent by 2020 according to the World Trade Centre Dublin.

For Ireland, which exports 40 percent of its dairy production, this means finding more foreign markets for its milk.

The result of the lifting of the quotas was increased milk supply but not increased demand resulting in low milk prices worldwide. This period of low prices will prove to thin the number of producers, but O'Leary believes that farmers like himself will be able to survive now because they can increase milk production to get through the tough years unlike before under milk quotas.

O'Leary is concerned that if prices do not improve too many of the farmers will be forced to quit, which could be problematic for rural Irish communities. O'Leary hopes that farmers will be able to work with lawmakers to get support during years with low prices so that they can continue to operate and support the local communities.

"Consolidation is inevitable, but milking cows has always been the most profitable thing to do and it is an engine in rural Ireland," O'Leary said.

Ten agricultural communications and journalism students from K-State visited Ireland on a faculty-led study abroad trip over Thanksgiving break. They visited a variety of farms and Irish landmarks like the Blarney Castle pictured to the right.



The O'Leary's milk twice a day in their open air barn that is partitioned to be part milk parlor and part bed-pack area for the cows. The parlor can fit seven cows on each side of the pit.



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