Completed
In progress
To be commenced
Ongoing

Progress Report as of 10 March 2021 on Implementation of Irish Beef Sector Agreement, 15 September 2019

Strand 1

No	Action Agreed	Lead	Timeline	Update
1	Establishment of a Beef 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 presented the first stage of the review in detail at the 9 Jan 2020 BTF meeting. The final scoping study was presented at 9 March 2021 BTF meeting.
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**~~ **Delayed due to COVID-19**	Tender was awarded to Grant Thornton. Progress report issued to BTF members in May 2020. Grant Thornton provided an update to the BTF in June 2020 with a further update given in September. The draft report was presented in December. Final report was presented at 09 March 2021 meeting.

Strand 2

No	Action Agreed	Lead	Timeline	Update
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~~ **Delayed due to COVID-19**	Tender was awarded to Grant Thornton. Progress report issued to BTF members in May 2020. Grant Thornton provided an update to the BTF in June 2020 with further updates given in September and December. A final update was given at March 2021 meeting and finalised report is due in April 2021.
10.	Summary of competition law issues as relevant to the Irish beef sector.	DAFM	Q4 2019	Tender was awarded to Grant Thornton. Progress report issued to BTF members in May 2020. Grant Thornton provided an update to the BTF in June 2020 with a further update to be given in September. This report was completed in December 2020.
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. DAFM IT are currently developing the solution and it was published in early September.
12	EU experts will be invited to brief the Task Force on the expanded EU meat market observatory methodology.	DAFM	Q1 2020	Scheduled seminar in Ireland by DG Agri for March 2020 was postponed due to guidelines on the management of Covid-19. To be rescheduled. New date TBC
13.	Key retail customers will be invited to brief the Task Force on their market requirements.	DAFM	Q2 2020	Retailers attended BTF 9th Jan 2020
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	The process of transposition for the UTP directive is underway. A new authority as provided for in the Programme for Govt in 2020 will look at this as part of its remit.

16.	DAFM will report its carcass classification inspection results on a regular basis.	DAFM	Q4 2019	A schedule of regular reporting has been put in place

17.	An expert report on mechanical carcass classification will be published in the near future.	DAFM	Q4 2019	The expert report on mechanical carcase 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	Appeals system introduced and notified to relevant processors
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 have had initial engagement with ICOS on the role of Co-ops in the co-operative structure
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	Ongoing task and written updates provided on specific issues raised.
22.	DAFM and Bord Bia are actively engaging with the EU Commission on the development of a Protected Geographical Indication for Irish beef.	DAFM, BB	Q4 2020	DAFM have submitted an application, with agreement of the BTF, to the EU Commission for an Irish grass fed PGI. A monitoring group will be established in the event that the PGI is granted.

23.	Bord Bia will further intensify promotional activity for Irish beef across key EU markets and China.	BB	complete	In the light of the market disruption caused by COVID Bord Bia has revised its promotional programme across key European and international markets. This included a switch to online promotional activity aimed at consumers that shop at supermarkets selling Irish beef. A revised plan for each market has been developed to focus on strong utilisation of the network of chefs that actively use Irish beef to have them act as the first line of promotion - through their social media channels. In China much of the focus over recent months has been promoting Irish beef through the e-commerce channel which has seen a dramatic increase in sales. This provides the opportunity to build the profile of Irish beef with Chinese consumers. As the foodservice sector recovers in China a sustained campaign focusing on the channel will be rolled out.
24.	Development of Suckler Brand	Bord Bia	Ongoing	Bord Bia commit to providing up to €6 million over the next three years for the development of a suckler specific brand. A stakeholder monitoring group has been established.
25.	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 15th 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 the processor for investigation. MII committed to encouraging plants to report current specs and weight limits.
27.	Farmers have the right to access their carcass images.	MII	Q1 2020	Pilot mechanism put in place in February 2020 and circulated by DAFM to the members of the Beef Taskforce

28.	Lairage weighing service will be provided on request, which may incur a nominal charge.	MII	Q1 2020	MII have indicated that this is not completed due to prioritisation of other beef sector agreement items, additional work created by the ongoing public health crisis and lack of indications of demand from farmers.
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

No	Action Agreed	Lead	Timeline	Update
34.	Stakeholders agreed that additional funding for targeted direct support for suckler cows is required as a priority.	DAFM	ONGOING	The BEEP-S (Beef Environmental Efficiency Programme - Sucklers) 2020 was launched on 9th March with a closing date of 15th May.

				The Beef Finisher Payment launched on 19th August will provide income support to all beef farmers who finished animals from 01/02/20 to 12/06/20 as this was the peak period of market disturbance due to the COVID-19 pandemic
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	The potential impact of a no deal Brexit has thankfully been avoided with the EU-UK deal in December 2020. Overcoming administrative and customs barriers on beef and other products going to and from the UK is now the focus and the Government and DAFM are monitoring and assisting with this. Supports have been provided in 2020 in the context of Brexit including the recent launch of the €100 million EI scheme for capital investment in the meat and dairy processing sector, which will support industry to invest in product and market diversification.
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 should be ensured that imports which do not meet the same stringent standards as EU producers are banned.	DAFM	ONGOING	DAFM will continue to lobby for continued support at EU level.