

PRESS RELEASE

02 November 2022

51/22

Prospects for sustainable agriculture take centre stage

THE Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) recently joined with industry partners to deliver two major agricultural conferences which brought future prospects for agriculture and animal health to the fore.

The first conference to take place was hosted by Animal Health and Welfare Northern Ireland (AHWNI) at the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick. LMC chief executive Ian Stevenson joined a broad spectrum of industry representatives at the event.

Ian said, “AHWNI’s 10th anniversary conference placed a real focus on improving animal health as a core pillar of sustainability. LMC was delighted to sponsor the conference which was well attended by key industry figures and animal health professionals including private vets and government.

“A key part of the sustainability improvement journey is improving productivity and resilience in livestock production systems and reducing waste. The conference heard from Dr Philip Skuce from Moredun that pushing for optimal animal health could improve herd economics by up to 10k per year based on an average suckler herd in Scotland. We often hear about the potential for agriculture to reduce its greenhouse gas footprint through breeding for reduced emissions and feeding for reduced emissions but the importance of animal health in reducing emissions is generally unquantified.

“Poor growth rates, poor feed conversion efficiency, mortality and morbidity and involuntary culling are all critical considerations from an animal health perspective. The importance of dynamic health planning involving expert advice from your vet, herd specific risk management measures, knowing the disease status of your livestock and participating in programmes to eradicate disease are essential components in sustainable animal health.”

A wider look at prospects for agriculture swiftly followed with farmers and industry stakeholders invited to attend the ‘Outlook Facing UK and NI Agriculture’ conference at the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown. The conference took the form of a free half-day event, organised by the Irish Farmers Journal in association with LMC and leading UK farm consultancy firm, the Andersons Centre.

LMC chairman Gerard McGivern welcomed attendees as he took to the stage to open the event. Following this Michael Haverty, senior research consultant and partner at the Andersons Centre delivered an informative presentation, outlining topical issues within the arenas of finance, policy, trade and land use. Referencing his analysis Michael explored the impact that the conflict in Ukraine is having on markets and outputs. Then turning to discuss input costs, Michael suggested that it is likely current pressures will continue to be felt by farmers on the ground as we move toward 2023 with ‘agflation’ running well ahead of general inflation indicators.

Having heard detailed market and sectoral insights, attendees were then invited to interact with a panel discussion. Michael was joined on stage by LMC chief executive Ian Stevenson and Phelim O'Neill of the Irish Farmers Journal.

Commenting on the event Ian said, "LMC was delighted to sponsor this timely agricultural conference. Valuable insights on future prospects for our industry were articulated clearly, giving all in attendance a detailed overview of the future landscape for agriculture toward the end of 2022 and into the early part of 2023.

"Conferences and events such as these are important platforms to share knowledge and exchange and gather information, all of which is crucial in helping inform decision making. LMC continues to place great importance on effectively communicating valuable information from such events with our stakeholders."

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Photo caption

001 – LMC chief executive, Ian Stevenson

Notes to Editor

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