



# Farming Connect Management Exchange

Neil Davies

Ireland

Cattle Housing Design

*1/3/2020*

## 1 Background

I farm sheep and beef cattle on our family farm in Llangammarch Wells. We live in a rather high rainfall area of Wales, and therefore cattle must be wintered indoors, which is expensive. I currently rear and finish 150 Angus cattle per year. My main reason for going to Ireland was to find a more cost-effective method of winter housing cattle other than straw.

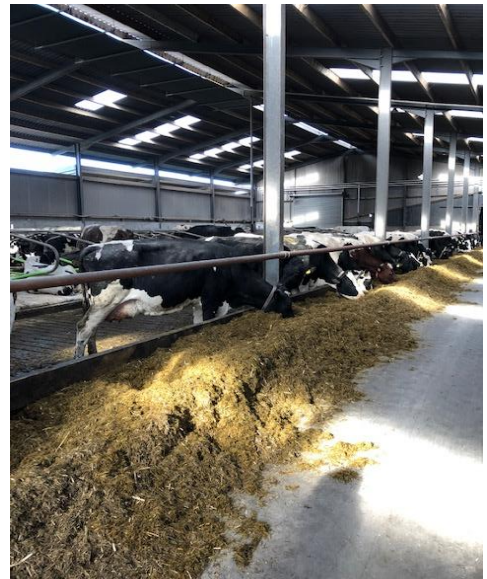
## 2 Itinerary

During my visit to Ireland, I was very fortunate to visit a lot of very good cattle sheds and meet some very interesting farmers. I visited eight different slatted floor cattle sheds, and every shed was slightly different, and had good and bad points. But one thing became very clear: this was what I needed on my own farm.



## Woolsey Concrete

On my first day in Ireland, I visited Woolsey Concrete, where I was able to have a tour of their factory and see how they make the concrete slats, before visiting three farms to see their products in use.





## Easyfix

I liked the idea of having rubber matting on top of the slats for animal comfort. I then visited Easyfix where the rubber matting is designed and made. They showed me around their factory before taking me to see the mats on-farm.



## Keenan

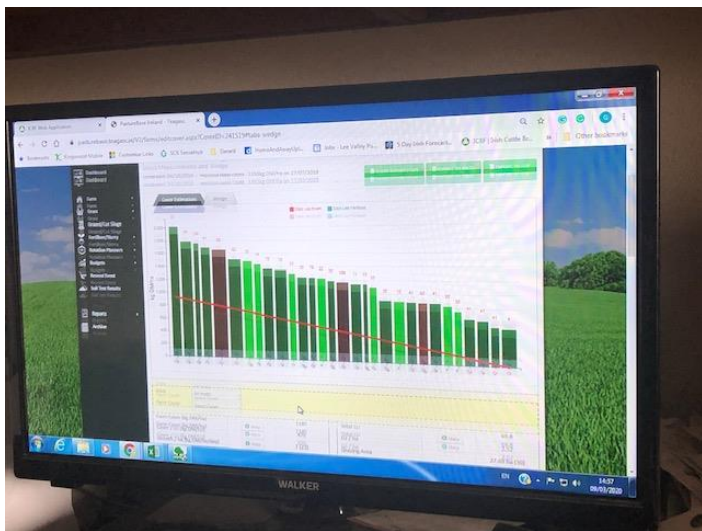
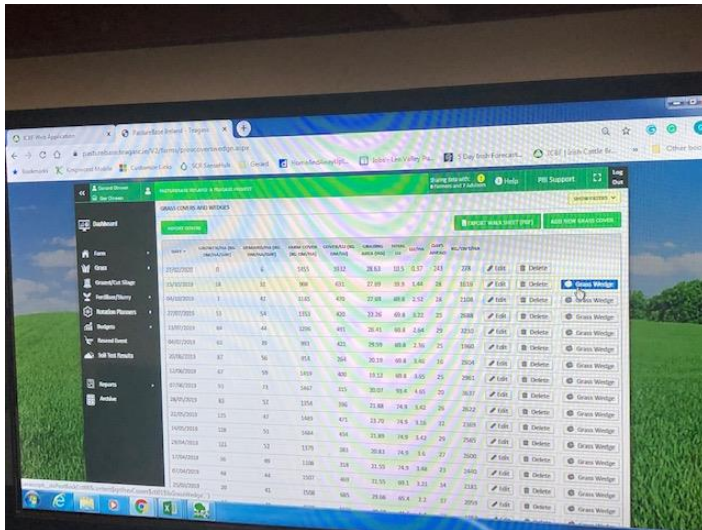
I also visited the Keenan factory, where I learnt about their Mecfiber mixer wagons and the benefits of feeding TMR to livestock. I had a very detailed tour of the factory, where I learnt about the different stages involved in designing and making their feeders, along with the history of the company.





# Gerard Dineen

Following a presentation that Gerard had done for Farming Connect in the past, I was very keen to visit his farm during my time in Ireland, with Gerard winning the beef farmer of the year award in 2018; whilst visiting him, it was evident why. I learnt a lot about data recording, attention to detail, and how he makes a living out of his suckler herd on his 100 acre farm.



## Teagasc

On my final day in Ireland, I visited Teagasc Research Centre, where I had a tour of their farm and saw some very interesting trials that they had ongoing. They had an excellent cattle setup with some of the best sheds I had seen on my visit to Ireland, along with a high-tech air operated handling system.





## Next Steps

Since returning from Ireland, I have put all of this into practice and converted my own straw-bedded cattle shed into a slatted floor shed, which I can use to house my cattle through the winter and fatten cattle in the summer with no bedding cost. This has made a massive difference to the profit of my cattle business, as I would not have been able to continue farming beef cattle on this farm using straw bedding. I have also bought a Keenan feeder!

