

## TEAGASC PHD WALSH SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

### *"Strategies to improve welfare of unweaned calves undergoing long-distance transportation within the EU"*

Walsh Scholarships Ref Number: 2021006

#### **Background**

The welfare of unweaned dairy calves undergoing long-distance transportation in the EU is an issue of growing concern. Currently in Ireland, up to 250,000 unweaned mostly male dairy calves are exported every year to destinations in the EU, where they enter commercial veal rearing systems. The journey involves transportation on specialist livestock vehicles for a minimum of 24 continuous hours, during which calves must spend prolonged periods without feed or water, which may be stressful and negatively impact their welfare. Stress may also arise during the pre-transportation period as a result of removal from a familiar environment, loading and unloading, and mixing with other calves at assembly centres. It is therefore necessary to investigate methods of transporting calves that may have the potential to improve their welfare on long journeys. The aim of this project is to investigate strategies that will improve the welfare of calves undergoing long-distance transportation. This will include investigating the effects of pre-transportation diet and identification of strategies to improve the resilience of calves during transportation. The successful PhD candidate will work as part of a collaborative team, which includes internationally renowned experts in the field of animal welfare, and will have access to some of the best (experimental) facilities for grass-based and confinement dairy systems research. The student will have the opportunity to develop his/her skills in a broad range of areas, including animal welfare assessment, data management and analysis, writing and publishing peer-reviewed scientific papers, and networking with experts in the field. The student will also have the opportunity to attend and present research findings at (inter)national conferences. This position will allow the candidate the opportunity to work at Ireland's leading agricultural research organisation, attain a PhD from one of the top-ranked Universities in the world, to gain a skillset and qualification that will equip them for a wide variety of future careers, and to significantly contribute to the improvement of calf welfare.

#### **Requirements**

Applicants must have an MSc degree in a suitable area (Veterinary Medicine, Animal Sciences, or Biology), and preferably have experience of and be comfortable working with dairy calves. Experience in the area of animal health and welfare, data processing, and data analysis is an advantage. The applicant should be self-motivated with the ability to work both independently and as part of a team. The candidate must be proficient in both written and spoken English. A full driving licence is required.

#### **Award**

This PhD Scholarship is a joint research project between Teagasc Moorepark, Co. Cork, Ireland and the Animal Production Systems group of Wageningen University, the Netherlands. The student will be based at the Teagasc Research Centre, Fermoy, Ireland and will be registered at Wageningen University, working under the supervision of Dr. Eddie Bokkers and Dr. Kees van Reenen in association with Teagasc supervisors (Dr. Muireann Conneely and Ms Niamh Field). The successful candidate must be willing to travel between the Teagasc Research Centre at Moorepark and Wageningen University to accomplish both academic and research objectives. The Scholarship will commence as soon as possible after 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021. The scholarship funding is €24,000 per annum and includes University fees of up to a maximum of €6,000 per annum and is tenable for 4 years. Initially the PhD Scholar is appointed for a period of 18 months. Continuation of the appointment for the additional 30 months will be based on a performance evaluation.

#### **Further Information/Applications**

For informal enquires and further information regarding the position, please contact:

Dr. Eddie Bokkers ([eddie.bokkers@wur.nl](mailto:eddie.bokkers@wur.nl))

Dr. Kees Van Reenen ([kees.vanreenen@wur.nl](mailto:kees.vanreenen@wur.nl))

#### **Application Procedure**

Applicants should submit an electronic copy their Curriculum Vitae and a letter of interest detailing their motivation, qualifications and experience simultaneously to both supervisors listed above.

#### **Closing date**

12 pm, Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021. Interviews will take place during week 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021.