

Raheenarran Herd

Hosts Pure Friesian Open Day

Bryan and Gail Daniels & family, Raheenarran Herd will host the Pure Friesian Club Open Day on June 6th. The 300 cow pedigree registered Raheenarran herd is a top performing spring calving herd backboned by Friesian breeding, making excellent use of grazed grass farming at over 900 feet above sea level. The annual Co-op performance report identifies the top benchmarks achieved;

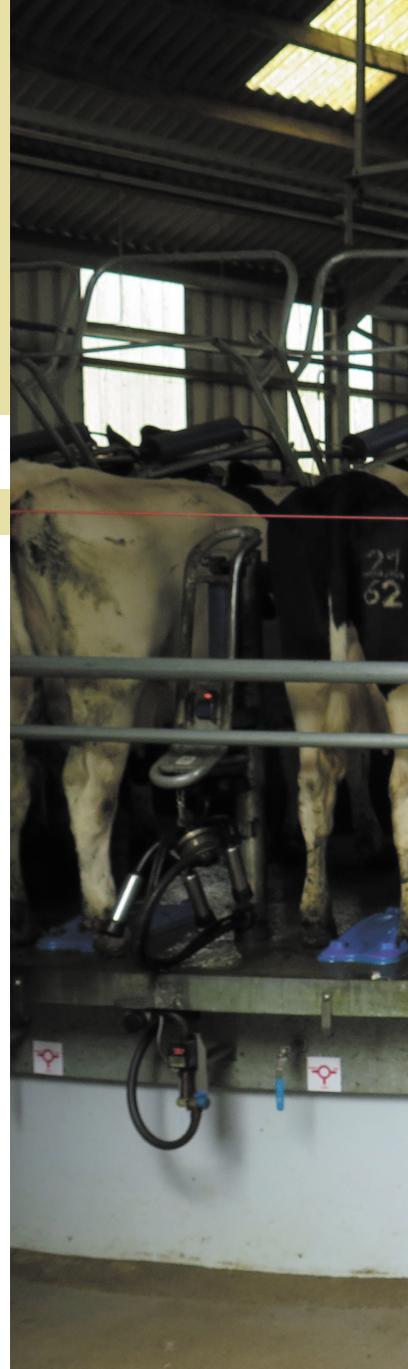
- 422kgs milk solids delivered per cow
- 3.66% protein (top 10%)
- 38.9 cent/litre milk price (top 10%)
- 365 day calving interval (top 10%)
- 90% six week calving rate (top 5%)
- SCC 71 (top 5%)

Cow type to suit the farming system and management practices to harvest the optimal return - in terms of both herd productivity and grazed grass - are the cogs driving performance. Bryan recognises that the Black & White breed provides ample genetic diversity, variation and proven performance. He carefully identifies and selects the genetics to suit the system.

Grazed grass is a fundamental pillar of efficiency. Thirty five grass measurements were recorded last year. Annual grass growth exceeded 17 t/DM/ha with some fields growing 22 t/DM/ha. This is tremendous performance given the challenging topography of farming at over 900 feet above sea level. Fresh calvers were turned out to grass on January 20th this year. Silage ground is grazed twice prior to closing in the spring. The aim is to make three cuts of quality silage per year all as pit silage. This tremendous grass growth and utilisation

in addition to quality silage production provides for an annual supplementation rate of 400kg/cow.

Having taken over the farm from his parents at the age of 19, Bryan immediately identified dairying as the enterprise to drive the best return, and the Friesian cow as the best vessel to achieve this. The herd was graded up using the IHFA service with pedigree status achieved quickly, thanks to the records maintained. The strength of cow families was evident from the outset and the power of maternal breeding, generation after generation, has allowed for herd expansion from within. Cow numbers today are treble the size of the herd when starting out. Prominent cow families include Audrey, Discovery, Dairine, Bloom, Aileen, Bridie and Polly.



Gail and Bryan with children Toby and Shannon alongside herdsman Andrew Doyle



Raheenarran BGC Dairine 2 VG85

Lifetime yield 4,045kgs milk solids, 4.44% fat, 3.53% protein in eight lactations. She has tremendous fertility, calving in February with her first and calved again in February with her 8th. She is the dam of Raheenarran Mr Jingles (ZJJ) a Catlane Spitfire son bought by NCBC.



Raheenarran RVJ Bina now in her 8th lactation. 4.84% fat and protein to 3.71%



Raheenarran CZF Breda in her first three lactations she has averaged 457kgs milk solids/lactation (305 days)



Raheenarran Hylke Breda VG87, Bull Mother, dam of RHS Raheenarran MEB Sochar and RVJ Raheenarran BCG Sochar



Raheenarran CZF Discovery 2 with protein to 3.82%

Her Blackisle Glenalby son named BCG Sochar (RVJ) was purchased by Dovea. Currently he has over 4,000 Irish milking daughters and also has milking daughters recorded in Australia.

Another son, Raheenarran Bod, was retained as a service sire for the herd and he has bred some very nice and consistent daughters. He has featured in previous IHFA Journal listings of high genetic merit pedigree sires bred from VG/EX dam and grand-dam. He has high PTA's for fertility. Recognition of the breeding prowess of Hylke Breda continues with the two most recent bulls selected for AI descending from this flagship cow. Mr Jingles (ZJJ) is a great grand son and Mr Potter (FR4133), born in 2016, is a further generation on.

These top cow families will feature in a celebratory sale of heifers as part of the Open Day on June 6th.

There has been considerable interest from AI organisations in the herd genetics. Raheenarran MEB Sochar (RHS) was the first bull to enter AI and was purchased by NCBC. Sired by Morbeker Bas, his evaluation now includes 1,029 Irish milking daughters in 372 herds. His dam, Raheenarran Hylke Breda VG87, proved to be a popular attraction as a Bull Mother. She scored EX92 for legs & feet and this functionality score captured her longevity, lasting in the herd for 14 lactations. In total she produced over 6,000kgs milk solids with protein to 3.98%. Her dam was by Gornal Barney and the cow family was recognised during the herd grade up.

The ability of the Friesian to last with inherent good fertility is such that herd empty rate is typically between 7 - 11% per year. This provides for a positive culling policy with up to 10% voluntary cull every year. 100% AI is used in the milking herd. Owing to the fact that bulling heifers graze an outfarm, two stock bulls are used during the breeding season to ease labour demand. Genomic testing is carried out on the top quartile every year to aid data-based breeding decisions. In recent years, surplus heifer calves have been sold on the farm to repeat customers who are very happy with their purchases. Bryan points out that the sale of stock has been a benefit as it simplifies the system and lessens the demands on labour during the very busy spring period. Also adding to stock sales and boosting income is the sale

of 4-5 pedigree registered bulls for breeding each year.

Cows are milked through a 44-point rotary parlour installed by DeLaval at the end of 2016. This was a key infrastructure investment as the herd expanded and provides for further efficiency of labour. The bulk of the new installation was facilitated within the previous parlour such that the level of building extension was kept to a minimum. Innovation in design is evident throughout the farm, especially with the provision of “cow steps” to streamline the walking of the cows up and down steep slopes along the paddock road network. The total area farmed is 139 hectares with a milking platform of 112 hectares.

Bryan and Gail are a hard-working team, dedicated to the success of the farm and attaining key annual benchmarks of success. This teamwork and appetite for growth helped bring about an increase in cow numbers from an initial 90 in 2007 up to 300 this year, mostly achieved through organic growth. The Friesian breed, with some recent usage of high EBI Holstein Friesian, has been the focal point around which Bryan and Gail achieved their goals. For those looking to increase

cow numbers this herd is testament to the importance of the Black & White breed in delivering performance. The graph upwards has been helped by Bryan’s parents and family with herdsman Andrew Doyle and other farm staff contributing along the way.

“The Holstein Friesian is the proven breed with the genetic diversity and variation to suit different farming systems” is a key message for the breed and this herd bears out that message. The Open Day is a unique opportunity to view the Raheenarran Herd to find out more from Bryan and Gail. Bryan has an active presence on social media and uses Twitter, especially as an education forum and also to exchange views. He can be followed at @bryanjdaniels.

Located near Kilmoganny, the farm is 15 minutes from the M9 motorway via Junction 10. Traffic from Clonmel and Kilkenny use the N76 and follow directional signs for Kilmoganny. Eircode R95 P202.

All are welcome to attend on June 6th.

