

Droimeann CAP Proposal 2021

To begin, the Droimeann Cattle Society would firstly like to acknowledge and thank the Department of Agriculture for the hugely important role they have played in both financial and administrative ways up to this point. Since our establishment in 2016 we have had a number of milestones and each of these milestones could not have occurred without the assistance and guidance the Department of Agriculture has given us. Their guidance has been vital in our attempts to reach our goals as a society up to this point. Without this support we have received from the Department of Agriculture we would not be where we are today, their assistance has allowed us to grow and develop to the position we are at currently and for this we are extremely grateful.

We as a group feel that the new CAP reform offers us, the Droimeann Cattle Society, an opportunity to further grow and develop in the way we have done in recent years. We are seeking aims that will help to cement our place in the Irish farming landscape for generations to come. While also helping our members to continue to build up their herds in accordance with the values and aims of our society.

Native Breed Stance

The Droimeann Cattle Society received official Native Irish breed status in early 2020 so as a group we feel like we are being held at an unfair disadvantage in comparison to the other native Irish breeds, eg: Kerry, Irish Moiled and the Dexter, who have been established officially for decades. It is an issue for us currently, as we are unable to receive any payments under the current schemes for keeping and breeding native Irish cattle presently. Therefore we feel that this must be amended going forward to help our society to expand. While we are aware of the importance of all the native breeds and support them on their journeys we feel that our position is a much more vulnerable one and therefore should be treated accordingly.

Many people have expressed an interest in joining the society as they see the positive impacts that Droimeann Cattle can have, as they excel in aiding to make a positive impact in the eco-systems where they are farmed. They have a low environmental impact and we feel that this is one of their huge advantages as they will help to maintain fragile ecosystems and habitats that other big continental breeds would be unsuitable for. The breed has the ability to thrive and prosper in high nature value farming in areas, in a huge range of settings proving their worth in helping to develop biodiversity in the landscapes they are farmed in.

New members however are currently deterred from joining the society by the lack of a GLAS payment or a suitable alternative is deterring prospective members from joining the society. In a lot of cases these people end up purchasing alternative native Irish breeds which is a blow to us and our attempts to expand our overall population of cattle and members across the country.

We strongly feel that this is hindering our society's ability to grow and develop into new areas of the country with new members.

Our aim is to have Droimeann Cattle in as many different areas and counties as possible by encouraging new members who have an interest in rare breeds to join our society and breed Droimeann Cattle.

These members may help to breed up new bloodlines in our society and help to ensure the survival of the breed going forward but currently it is not materializing in such a manner, the opposite in fact is true. We rely on new members to help vitalise the group and to also ensure that the overall population of cattle is increased and thus ensuring the breeds survival into future generations.

Current Herd Numbers

As per the United Nations Farm and Agriculture organisation's report in 2020 Droimeann Cattle breed were classified as critically endangered.

In order to breed up a viable population of animals we have had to set up a grading up system whereby animals were allowed into the herdbook once they were sired by a PBR Droimeann bull. This measure has allowed us to breed up a viable population of animals without having to worry about inbreeding.

The value of the grading up system cannot be stressed enough and therefore we must insist that any payments that may be made to the breeding females must be made available to all animals in all the sections of our herdbook.

Currently we have 305 breeding females split up into the different sections of our herdbook.

Pedigree - 12

Section A - 29

Section B - 78

Section C - 71

Section D - 115

Each of these animals have helped save the breed from certain demise, and therefore they should all be valued accordingly.

Importance of Bulls

We as a society feel that the importance of a breeding policy is hugely beneficial to the society's attempts to grow the breed going forward.

We feel that a payment of €400 per bull will be an incentive for breeders to keep their own bull for at least nine months of the year. This is a measure that will help to encourage more members to buy their own bull for their herd, it will help to stop the rotation of bulls between herds. This will help build genetic diversity in the overall population of animals and lessen the impact of inbreeding in all herds across the country.

To ensure that the department is grant aiding genuine members who have the breeds best interests at heart we would encourage that only breeding females that are bred to a PBR Droimeann bull each year may be eligible to receive any grant aid.

We feel that this request will help to boost the survival and prosperity of the Droimeann Cattle Society and breed into the immediate short term future. It will help to ensure that the breeds population numbers are increased by genuine members who are breeding the cattle to a standard set by the Department of Agriculture and the Droimeann Cattle Society's breeding policy.

This aim is to ensure that only breeding females that are bred by a PBR Droimeann Bull each year can be grant-aided. This will increase the number of genuine breeders who have an active interest in the development of the breed going forward. While at the same time, helping to deter people from buying breeding females and breeding them with a continental bull as these animals will be of no benefit to the society going forward.

No Cap on Herd Size

Recently the Droimeann Cattle Society was officially recognised as part of Ireland's intangible cultural heritage. This announcement highlights the importance of the breed to the cultural history of this country.

Therefore any farmers who are breeding Droimeann Cattle should be exempt from any proposed capping of a suckler herd going forward. This is necessary as these cattle are part of Ireland's cultural heritage. Genuine farmers who are willing to breed these animals should not be curtailed in their attempts to do so, thus ensuring that the breed is brought back to a viable population and that it is saved for generations to come.

No reference year for entry into any scheme going forward as is the case currently.(this currently prevents breed development and new entrants therefore leading to no growth in overall population.

Society Members

To maximize the benefits for all parties, the Department of Agriculture and the Droimeann Cattle Society, we would strongly advise that any grant aid only be given to farmers who are fully paid up to date members, who have their herds of cattle fully aligned with the Droimeann Cattle Society's breeding programme.

We feel that this will have a huge benefit to the society's breeding programme as it will help boost population numbers in a controlled and appropriate manner, by working with members who have the breeds best interests at heart.

If there are any queries regarding the status of a given applicant we can verify with our records so that there will be no confusion as to farmers receiving monies that they may not be entitled to.

It will also help save the Department of Agriculture as they will only be grant aiding farmers with herds who are fully aligned with the Droimeann Cattle Society, and who are more importantly farming to a set of standards set by the Department of Agriculture to help boost genetic diversity for the future of the breed society on their holdings.

If there are any further queries or information needed on the matter please contact me by email and I will assist you in any way that I can.

