



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Spending Review 2021 – Beef Environmental Efficiency Programme – Sucklers (BEEP-S)

Anthony Cawley and Charlie Banks
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
November 2021

Spending Review 2021 – Overview, Aims & Objectives



Overview

- The Irish Beef sector produced 633,000 tonnes (€2.3bn) accounting for 16% of Irish Agri-Food exports in 2020.
- However, there are challenges in terms of profitability of primary producers and environmental pressures.
- BEEP-S is intended to address these as well as animal health & welfare outcomes, by encouraging the use of animal health and performance data to inform farm-level decision-making.
- Participants were paid on the basis of costs incurred and income foregone to weigh suckler cow/calf pairs, as well as to complete optional animal health & welfare actions, to promote best practices in animal & herd management.

Aims and Objectives

- This paper examines the preliminary trends of BEEP-S to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the scheme to date to expand the evidence base and inform policy-making.
- Specifically, the spending review paper aims to:
 - Evaluate BEEP-S in terms of its objectives, as well as its alignment with policies and other schemes;
 - Analyse data on funding, applications, cross-participation, adoption of measures and compliance levels;
 - Establish early indications of outputs from the scheme to date to determine if preliminary trends are in line to deliver the intended impacts in the medium-to-long term.

Spending Review 2021 – Key Findings



Key Policy Relevant Findings

- 25,880 farmers received payments totalling €41.08 million for participating in BEEP-S in 2020, with nearly 98% of applicants opting for at least one optional measure beyond the mandatory weighing measure
- Compliance was generally high, with 95% of applicants receiving funding for weighing, but the application success rate for faecal egg testing was relatively low (79%) compared to vaccination (92%) and meal feeding (90%).
- There was a high level of cross-participation between BEEP-S and both its pilot (87%) and BDGP (85%)
- Estimates, based on a stable herd and compared to a scenario without BEEP-S, indicate economic value of c. €51.5m can be generated at 2030 through BEEP-S measures due to iterative, cumulative and permanent gains
- This value accrues to additional animal selection accuracy from access to data on performance metrics; further benefits will materialise from improved technical efficiency and animal health & welfare outcomes.

Recommendations

- Continue to build the National Herd Dataset and integrate with other sustainability metrics to inform farm decisions
- Incorporate the principles of BEEP-S alongside BDGP in an integrated approach, as both are complementary in improving the national beef herd through permanent cumulative gains.
- Improve the communication of the benefits of the vaccination option to ensure a greater level of uptake, and likewise to improve the compliance rate for faecal egg testing.
- Build on the evidence base by incorporating silage quality metrics, and/or the use of optimum level of crude protein content in meal feed, to enhance these performance-based metrics further.