

CAP Rural Development Division  
Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine  
Agriculture House  
Kildare Street  
D02 WK12



08/10/2019

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am an organic farmer farming in West Cavan, [REDACTED] I am farming on marginal lands and had conventional sucklers for a number of years, it was not economically viable to keep conventional sucklers on my land because of their overall weight and demand for top quality range grass and foder. The housing period was also very long, with calves normally being sold in September and cows going into the shed in early October. This was resulting in a seven month winter and concentrates having to be fed to supplement fodder.

A decision had to be made to either spend a considerable amount of money to try and drain land, or switch my farming system. In 2017 I sold off all my conventional cattle and bought in Dexter cattle. On this basis I am writing to yourselves to look for extra support to allow me to build and develop the national Dexter and my own herd.

The Dexter cattle tick all the boxes for me in relation to my land and in relation to the national environmental plan.

1. Dexter cows weigh from 300kg – 450kg at adult weight so are easier to carry on marginal land. My Dexter cattle can now remain at grass till mid to late November and would be back to grass in mid March. This has major economic benefits to me but more importantly huge environmental benefits as this means less inputs related to the winter housing period.
2. Dexter cows and their progeny will thrive on marginal lands, so permanent pasture with old grasses and a mixture of plant species suit these cattle. They are less selective grazers.
3. Dexter cattle are grass fed and the only market for them is 100% grass fed. This again has environmental benefits in relation to energy required to produce and transport concentrates.
4. Dexter cows generally calve by themselves and are very disease free. This again lends them to marginal land and part time farmers.

However in order for me to build and develop my herd to an economic level, continued support is essential. I am therefore appealing for continued and enhanced financial support for the Dexter breed under any new CAP policies.

As one of the rare breeds to Ireland its genetic pool should be retained, but as a breed suited to marginal lands and part time farmers in Ireland we should all be striving to develop the breed.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'O. Crowe', written over a horizontal line.

Oliver Crowe