



CERTIFIED IRISH ANGUS SCHOOLS COMPETITION 2025



RAISED WITH PRIDE **SINCE 1995**

FOREWORD

Certified Irish Angus, along with our processor partners, ABP and Kepak, welcome you to the final of the Certified Irish Angus School Competition 2025.

We are honoured and privileged to have had the opportunity to work with these students, along with their schools, teachers and families over the past two years.

We are in awe at the level of enthusiasm and appetite for learning about agriculture and in particular, the production of Certified Irish Angus Beef. The effort that these students have gone to in the rearing of their calves and in the promotion of Certified Irish Angus Beef, along with the in-depth research and reports they have completed is astonishing. This reflects the commitment and effort of their school, teachers and parents to a full and complete education.

To our partners, ABP and Kepak, we wish to thank you most sincerely for your support and help in this project.

We hope this has been a memorable experience for all of the students who have taken part and wish you the very best of luck in the future





LORETO SECONDARY SCHOOL, CLONMEL

Emma Carey, Sophie Dennehy, Katie Butler and Lucy Kearney from Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel choose **“Farm health and safety”** as their designated theme.

They were motivated by stories from their families and the prevalence of farm accidents. They identified the key area of focus for their research; developing a farm safety app prototype called ‘Safeguarding Our Future’. The students set about promoting their farm safety ideas via lesson plans.



They tested this idea with first-year classes in their school which fed into the creation of an educational resource pack for primary school children. As part of this pack, they had

both tactile and written resources to promote beef as part of a healthy diet. This pack also included fun, but effective games linked to safety awareness on farms.

The next step for the girls was to conduct a survey among farmers and local Agri contractors to gauge the interest in using a farm safety app. They were overwhelmed with the overall positive response. Over 40% said that they would use a safety app to test the safety knowledge of employees as part of the hiring process with a further 40% stating they would make it a yearly task for their staff.



One farmer noted that they **“would definitely use it with my employees just to refresh them on their knowledge and ensure they are always thinking safety while out on the farm.”**

One of the most successful in-school events that they ran was a coffee morning for Embrace Farm. A speaker was on hand to explain the supports available for those who have been affected by farm accidents, providing them with external support systems to help them cope with tragic accidents. They also spoke about how the Certified Irish Angus competition has helped them develop their knowledge on farm health and safety and they shared with their peers some of the hazards to be aware of when stepping foot on a farm. All money raised from this morning was donated to Embrace Farm.





MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOL, KILBEGGAN

Eoin Robinson, Jack Larkin and Shane King from Mercy Secondary School Kilbeggan focused their project on **“Applying Technology to Improve Angus Cattle Breeding”**.

Early in the competition they developed their website, [*www.angustothebefore.com*](http://www.angustothebefore.com), which acted as a central hub for their information on how farmers could use technology on their farms and use it as a knowledge hub for beef breeding.

One of the websites main features is a bull finder tool. This webpage allowed farmers to select an AI sire based on their preferred criteria. A farmer can choose the most important traits they look for in a bull and they will be presented with a list of bulls that meet these criteria. The students emphasised



the importance of using high genetic merit Angus sires for sustainable output, as evidenced by a 46kg carcass weight difference between high and low performing sire groups.

They also created the “Angus to the Fore” podcast, which promoted the Irish agricultural industry and the Angus breed. The students had 12 podcast episodes and interviewed Angus breeders like John Elliot and Niall Lynch to celebrities like former rugby international Rory Best and Ryanair CEO Michael O’Leary.



They felt that one of the most promising technologies that allows for accelerated genetic gain in the future is sexing of AI straws and they would recommend more farmers to start using this.

The students identified the basic building blocks for any of their work was interpreting data and how farmers can use data to make more informed decisions. The basis for their own websites bull selector was using the data from the ICBF database to make selection decisions easier for farmers.

SELECTABLE CRITERIA FOR FARMER TO CHOOSE FROM

Select 5 traits *

Carcass Conformation
Carcass Weight
Daily Beef Intake
Daughter Culling Interval
Daughter Milk
Replacement Index
Terminal Index
Age at Finish
Sexation

Select Colour *

Red Angus Black Angus

Sector *

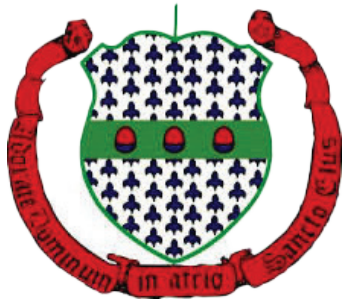
Dairy Beef

Culling Suitability *

Heifer Second Culler
Mature Cow



SCAN ME



CHRÍOST RÍ, PORTLAOISE

Sinead Slevin, Jill Sheehy and Carol Sheehy from Scoil Chríost Rí focused on **“Optimising sustainable animal nutrition for better Angus beef cattle”**.



The students investigated the use of locally sourced feeds such as fodder beet, seaweed, and local grain to drive cattle performance, reduce carbon emissions, and promote sustainable farming practices. The girls chose this topic

as they are in a part of the country where there is a mixed farming system with many tillage farmers in their locality. They felt that there could be mutual benefits for both tillage and beef farmers by working together. In rearing their cattle the girls sourced fodder beet locally. The benefits they identified were that it ensured fresher, higher-quality feed for cattle, which promotes better health and growth, furthermore it transport costs and they knew exactly where the beet is coming from. This link had a socio-economic benefit in that the tillage farmer had a

guaranteed market for their fodder and straw. The integration also boosts environmental sustainability by reducing carbon emissions, but the girls also identified two opportunities to increase the environmental sustainability for tillage and beef farmers. While they used soya hulls, they felt that there is a need for increasing a home-grown protein feed in Ireland and also an opportunity for tillage farmers to spread more slurry on the ground to reduce the amount of artificial fertiliser used and increase soil health on tillage farms.



For promotion of the competition, they held an agricultural day for the transition year students. They invited a panel of guest speakers to present at their event, to guide and influence the TY students in agricultural related careers and studies. They spoke about their experience in the competition, the steps they took to get to where they are today.





ST. CLARE'S COLLEGE, BALLYJAMESDUFF

Tara McCabe, Ellen McCaul, Bláthnaid Farrelly and Nicole Briody from St. Clare's College focused on **"The Importance of Rearing Healthy Livestock"**. Their project centered on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and the exploration of natural alternatives to improve animal health.

The students conducted a farmer survey to assess the knowledge of local farmers on AMR and its implications for livestock and human health, finding that most had not previously heard of AMR in an agricultural context. Only 1 in 10 farmers were aware that 70% of immunity is gut based. None of the farmers were using any products to improve gut health on their farm but were interested in the topic.

The group also organised a Calf Health Roadshow to share their findings and promote sustainable practices that reduce antimicrobial usage. The students researched and promoted natural alternatives such as probiotics and postbiotics to improve gut health. This event had speakers from various industries to cover all



aspects of calf health from Teemore engineering talking about shed design, JFC Agri promoting their Automatic Calf feeders and Tommy the Vet explaining ways to reduce antimicrobial use on farms.



The students came to understand that Probiotics help balance gut flora, promoting the growth of beneficial bacteria and reducing pathogens. This supplementation improves digestion and nutrient absorption and boosts immunity, reducing the risk of common diseases like calf scour.

The students recommendations from their research demonstrated increased farmer education on AMR and the importance of gut health and encouraged government funding for initiatives that promote animal health.

Quick Chat with Tommy The Vet after the Calf Health Roadshow in Cavan.

Scan the QR to have a watch!





VILLIERS SCHOOL LIMERICK

Ben Atkinson, Seán O'Brien, Simon Austin and Patrick Barry from Villiers School had a focus on **"Farmer Mental Health and Well Being"**. The students chose to research the lack of appreciation for farmers, rural isolation, and government regulations as contributing factors.

They interviewed beef, dairy, and tillage farmers to gain insights into the challenges they face, including financial pressures, long hours, and a lack of appreciation from the urban population. The group discovered that 25% of farmers in Ireland are at risk of suicide. To combat rural isolation, they started "Farmer's Fry," a monthly social gathering for farmers to meet and support each other.

The group also aimed to educate their urban school community about the hard work involved in farming to raise awareness for farming for young people and

to get them thinking about where their food comes from. They hosted a colouring competition in a local primary school in the town of Roscrea where Ben's grandparents grew up. The logos of Certified Irish Angus, Kepak, ABP and Tesco were included to inform the young students.



When they followed up with questions on each company and taught the kids about the importance of the Certified Irish Angus quality mark and what it means when they buy it in a shop. They asked the children simple questions about where beef comes from and how it get from the farm to the plate. They also had a very successful campaign headed up by Ben, a team member, who ran 60k to raise €1200 for Movember while also highlighting their topic of farmer mental health.



