

Limousin, ticking all the right boxes for quality cow finisher

Whenever I mention the name “Anthony Melvin” to farmers throughout the country the general response is “is he the cow finisher?” followed by “tis only good cows he buys”.

Anthony lives at Silverfield, Lisacul, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon, he is married to Niamh and they have two daughters, Grace and Sarah.

Anthony farms over 350 acres in different plots between his home and Athlone. “Much of the land is leased, all is good grassland, one can choose the right type of land when leasing”.

“Most of the cows I buy will spend some time in sheds and on meal. I generally keep cows from 40 to 120 days. I start them on 3-4kgs of meal and build up to 17 kgs/day. I purchase based on potential. Age or stars do not matter. Around 10% of the cows are factoryed direct off grass.

I have a weekly supply contract all year round with Boyne Valley Meats. I kill over 1000 cows a year. I purchase 30% privately and the rest at marts. Farmers know the type of cows I am interested in and will often phone me if they have some. I focus on seven marts which have the type of cows I look



for: Tuam on Monday and Elphin on Monday evening, Athenry on Tuesday, Ballinrobe on Wednesday, Castlerea on Thursday, Roscommon on Friday and Balla on a Saturday. I buy myself. I purchase most breeds, but the majority are Limousin. The majority of the suckler herd in Ireland is Limousin.

Do you see much of a difference between Limousin and other breeds? “The Limousin cull cow has great potential, they grade better than other breeds usually killing out U or R. They have excellent feed efficiency with greater conversion (especially in sheds) delivering higher kill-out %, great meat yield and are smaller boned than most other breeds. Limousin are the closest in spec to what the factories want.”

Anthony does not see any reduction in the quality of cows compared to previous years, however, he is concerned about the reduction of the suckler herd.

The main difference Anthony has seen in Limousin is they are getting quieter and are more muscled than in the past.

