



Quality focused; pleasant on the eye and delivering at the sales

The Claffey family from Ballykilroe, Ballinagore, Co. Westmeath farm 140 acres, the family run enterprise is ran by Tommy along with his wife Patrica, son Noel and daughter Deirdre. This is very much a family farm and it was noticeable the detailed knowledge everyone had of the stock and their bloodlines. Even in the kitchen pictures of the family are interspersed with pictures of their cattle's success over the years!

"I would classify the farm as dry, upland with good drainage. We have 50 suckler cows and 150 breeding ewes, predominantly Suffolk ewes running with Texel rams. We send all lambs to slaughter at 12-16 weeks trough the Longford lamb producer group. The cows are a combination of Limousin, Blues, Charolais and Simmental.

Their Limousin stock bull is Carrickmore Mickeyfinn Et, a full brother of Carrickmore Maximus Et – the record priced Irish Limousin bull who sold in October '18 at Roscrea for €38,000. Mickeyfinn was bred by John & Karol Connell, Oldcastle, Co. Meath. He is by Ampertaine Foreman and out of the famous Baileys Iceprincess. Mickeyfinn looked as well in the field in his working clothes as the day he was

purchased, he ran with 20 hand selected cows for his first season.

The Claffey's breed for the high-end market and are regular exhibitors at the Winter fatstock fair in Carrick-on-Shannon. While they have a few pedigrees, they spend many weekends over the summer showing at commercial shows.

The majority of their weanlings are sold at Tullamore mart and not surprisingly go for export. Taking a picture is very easy here given the standard of the stock in the fields.

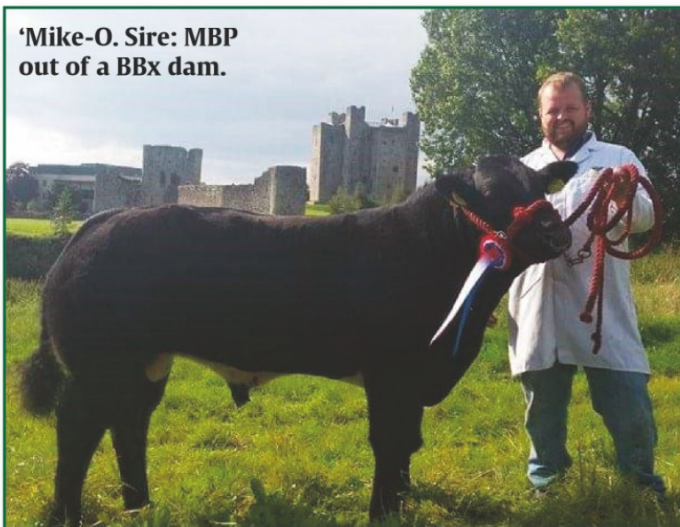
"We use a combination of AI and our stock bull. We AI around 20% of the cows. The Limousin bulls we are currently using are Elderberry Galahad, Elite Forever Brill ET, Castlevue Gazelle, Elite Ice Cream, Wilodge Joskins and Milbrook Dartangan ET. We calve down in two groups, September to November and January to March. We start housing the stock from the end of October, weather depending, as we aim to build cover for springtime grazing.

We sell the weanlings from September on. The bulls target a price around €1,100, the heifers €1,000, Our target is to average €1000 at the end of the year for

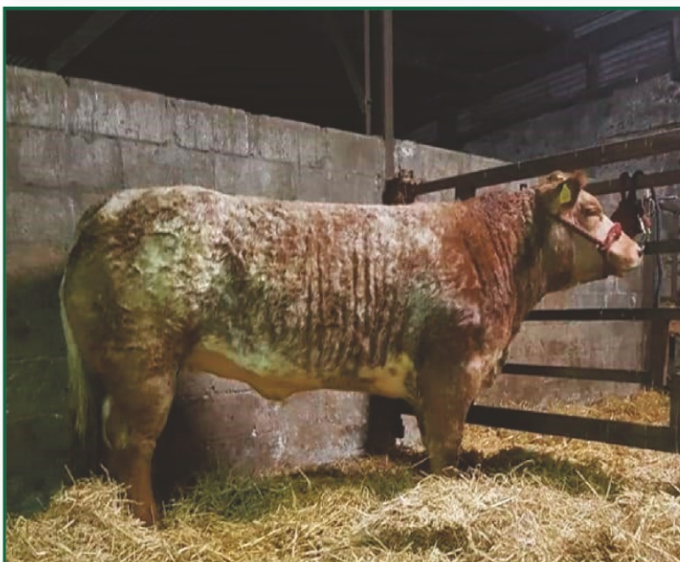


Trixie - Interbreed champion in Ennis, she was also Commerical champion and reserve interbreed in Nobber, Commerical champion and interbreed champion in Corrundulla & First prize winner in Mohill.

'Mike-O. Sire: MBP out of a BBx dam.



Cindy, a 10-month old daughter of MBP and a BBx dam was sold in Carrick on Shannon for €3,300



This excellent quality breeding heifer – Ditzzy was sold in Carrick on Shannon for €2,800

all weanlings sold, something that is not always achievable. The weanlings show good thrive with the autumn-born bull weanlings typically weighing 450-500kgs at sale and the spring-born bulls weighing around 400kgs."

The fields are divided into paddocks supporting good grassland management, which aims to reduce some of the reliance on concentrates and helps to allow excess paddocks to be removed for making high quality silage when required, cattle are vaccinated for BVD and Lepto.

"The main reason we use a Limousin bull is for his physical attributes and easy calving. We are all employed off-farm so easy calving is key. We have had Limousin bulls as part of our breeding program here for years.

Mickeyfinn is 5-star for Terminal, Carcass weights, Carcass Conformation and Daughter Milk. His replacement index recently went from 3 to 4 star so he is trending in the right direction,



these indexes coupled with his physical correctness, temperament and breeding lines attracted us to purchase him.

"We breed 75% of our replacements. The remainder are purchased mainly on appearance, but we do reference their breeding lines, we see the Limousin cross cow as an ideal suckler cow for our system given her ability to rear her calf and her temperament. We see Mickeyfinn adding to our herd's genetic gain and hopefully breeding high quality weanlings while also breeding suitable replacements."

The minute one steps into any of their fields it is obvious the Claffey's are focusing on producing quality, "Having a breeding programme focused on producing quality saleable stock" is the advice Tommy would give to any farmer in the current climate.

