



## 20 year old Limousin Galway Girl

**J**im Mahon runs a suckler herd in Kilcurriff, Cumber, Tuam, Co. Galway. He is married to Catherine and they have a son Ross and a daughter Taylor. Ross is studying Engineering in NUIG and Taylor is in secondary school. Jim jokes that Catherine is the only member of the family that does not own a pair of wellingtons!

The farm consists of 60 acres of dry limestone land. "We have 23 suckler cows, all bar two are Limousin. I run a stock bull with the herd. I purchased my current stock bull 'Cross Kerk' from Tom Feehan, Westport, Co. Mayo". Kerk is a son of Cloughhead Lord, he has a five-star Replacement index, a four-star Terminal index, and a calving difficulty of 4.1%. He also has five stars for docility, carcass weight, carcass confirmation, daughter milk and daughter calving interval. "The bull delivers on his figures, he is very quiet and very easy calving. This year we used him without difficulty on five heifers. Next year we plan to use him on eight heifers. The heifers calve down close to 3-year-olds. They are more mature and physically settled. I am a part-time

farmer and am not always here when the cows are calving. Easy calving is a top priority here."

"The cows calve from February to April. Once they are calved, they are left out to a sheltered field beside the house. I sell most of the calves as weanlings at Headford mart, I try and sell on the October bank holiday weekend. The bulls generally average €600 with their weight while the heifers average €550 with their weight. We keep a few replacements. Most of our cows are 7/8 or 15/16 Limousin so almost purebred."

The main reason we use a Limousin bull is due to his easy calving and hardy calves. We bought our first Limousin bull in 2001 from Liam Williams, a Dauphin bull. Many of your current cows go back to him. He was extremely quite and passed on this trait to his offspring. Prior to that we were using AI, mainly Limousin and Charolais, however, there was more work involved with the Charolais calves as they sometimes need a lot of help the first day or two to get sucking.





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We have one cow who has had 19 Limousin calves (9 heifers and 10 bulls) and is carrying her 20th calf. She was born on June 8th 1998, we bought her from Martin Murphy, Ballinduff, Co. Galway. At the time Martin had over 350 sucklers. We bought her on the 27th March 1999 and she had her first calf in April 2000. She has had a calf every year since. She is older than the children and like one of the family!

I contacted ICBF to get her calving history, interesting their database does not go back that far! Based on carcass data available for nine of her calves to date, her 2nd calf graded an O, 4 graded U (3 bulls and 1 heifer) and 4 graded R (2 bulls and 2 heifers). This cow has a two star Replacement index, a one star carcass weight and three stars for carcass conformation. Looking at her down the field she was definitely not showing her age with her features resembling those of a cow half her age. What a purchase.

What advice would you give to someone starting in farming today? "Think long and hard before borrowing too much money in farming, farmers are always gambling with something be it weather, prices, rising costs. There are many moving targets and margins are getting tighter.

What are the key areas that the Limousin society should be focusing on over the next 2 years? Continue to focus on docility. Proactively educate people on how to use the stars to their benefit to improve their breeding.

Calf #	Date of birth	M/F	Carcass Conformation
1	April 2000	F	
2	10 <sup>th</sup> April 2001	F	04L
3	3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2002	M	
4	11 <sup>th</sup> June 2003	M	
5	16 <sup>th</sup> May 2004	M	R4L
6	26 <sup>th</sup> April 2005	F	U-3+
7	29 <sup>th</sup> May 2006	M	U2
8	23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2007	F	R-1=
9	3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2008	F	
10	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2009	F	
11	23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2010	M	
12	5 <sup>th</sup> April 2011	F	
13	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2012	M	U=2=
14	23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2013	M	R+3-
15	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2014	F	R=4+
16	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	M	U=3=
17	23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2016	M	
18	14 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	F	
19	21 <sup>st</sup> August 2018	M	

Data supplied by ICBF