

Nuffield Ireland News December 2017

By John Tyrrell, Executive Secretary, and Geoff Dooley, Chair

2018 Scholars

In September, we selected five scholars for the 2018 scholarship programme – Tommy Heffernan, Karol Kissane, Klaus Laitenberger, Joe Lyng, and Colm O’Leary. There were almost 30 applications, and there was a three-stage selection process. These new scholars have already participated in two briefing sessions (October and December) to prepare them for their scholarship journey. There will be a further briefing with industry and policy makers before the Contemporary Scholars Conference.



2018 Scholars Klaus Laitenberger, Joe Lyng, Tommy Heffernan, Karol Kissane and Colm O’Leary with Karen Brosnan, (Nuffield Ireland Board member) following a briefing with the CEO of Ornuá, Dublin, December 2017.

Tommy Heffernan

Tommy Heffernan is a veterinary consultant based in Co. Wicklow. Married to Julie, they have four young children. He is originally from Co Kerry. After qualifying in 2002 from UCD, he located to Wicklow where he worked for 15 years in a large mixed veterinary practice. Over the last five years his main focus has been on farm animal medicine and performance. Completing a grad cert in dairy herd health and becoming a master cowsignals trainer during these years. His topic is ‘Cowsignals and people signals’ i.e. what are the signals for success in our dairy farms?

Karol Kissane

Karol grew up on a suckler farm in Asdee in North Kerry. He worked away from the farm for 10 years in Banking and Financial Services where he qualified as a Chartered Accountant and a Chartered Tax Advisor. Karol is married to Caroline and they have two young children. After taking over the farm, Karol converted it to dairy in 2013 receiving “new entrant quota”. In 2017 he calved down 100 cows and plans to calve 125 cows by 2019 at which stage the current milking platform will be fully stocked. Karol is chairperson of the Asdee discussion group. His study topic will be How do we make dairy farming attractive to the next generation?

Klaus Laitenberger

Klaus lives with his wife Joanna and children in North Leitrim. He was born in South Germany and ended up in the West of Ireland in 1999. He worked as the Head Gardener at the Organic Centre in Rossinver for seven years. He moved on to the position of Head Gardner in Lissadell House in Co. Sligo to carry out an extensive garden restoration project. He completed the MSc in Organic Farming in Scotland. Together with his wife they self-published a number of Irish Gardening Books (e.g.

Vegetables for the Irish Garden). After Lissadell he lectured at the MSc Course in Organic Horticulture at UCC and currently works as an organic farm and garden inspector for the Organic Trust. The title of his Nuffield Study is to “Evaluate the growing and marketing potential for alternative and lesser known food crops for the Irish climate.”

Joe Lyng

Joe grew up on a sheep and beef farm in Inistioge, Co. Kilkenny. He studied Food & Agri-Business Management at UCD. He completed an MSc in Food Business Strategy at the Michael Smurfit Business School, UCD. He was accepted onto the Pure Ambition Graduate Program with Glanbia, and is currently a ruminant business manager. Alongside his job with Glanbia, Joe farms at home with his cousin and two uncles. Since the abolition of quotas they have grown from 60 cows to 260, while phasing out the beef and sheep enterprises. Joe’s study will explore “Value in the market for grass-fed dairy product”.

Colm O’ Leary

Colm comes from a family dairy farm near Blarney in Co. Cork. He graduated from UCD Dairy Business in 2013 and as part of his degree Colm spent six months working on a 1200 cow dairy farm in New Zealand. He now farms in partnership with his parents. They are milking 150 crossbred cows. Colm is a member of Macra na Feirme’s Ag Affairs committee since 2016. For Colm’s study topic, he intends to explore the subject of animal welfare. As a farmer, Colm cares deeply about the welfare of his animals. Improving animal welfare on farms can play a role in improving health and profitability.

Nuffield Conference

Our Annual Conference took place in Dublin on 6th October. There were 130 delegates, including nine scholars from other countries. The returning 2016 scholars, and one 2015 scholar, presented their study reports. We also received an excellent report from the 2017 scholars about their GFP experiences, key messages and main issues that they learned. The new 2018 scholars gave a short introduction about themselves and their study topic.



Returning Scholars Tom Dinneen, Roberta McDonald, John Joyce, Maeve O’Keeffe, Peter Farrell, Ailbhe Gerrard and Ray Hunt, celebrate after presenting their study reports.

Our Keynote speaker was Tom O’Mahony, CEO of Origin Enterprises plc, which is a leading Agri-Services Group, with revenues of over €1.5 bn, providing value added services, technologies and inputs that address the requirements of primary food producers. It has operations in Ireland, UK,

Poland Ukraine and Romania. Tom provided an insight into Origin's Development, the context for their Investment Decisions, and Strategic Priorities, and gave valuable personal perspectives on Leadership.

Jim Geltch attended and addressed the conference about the work of Nuffield International, and its ambition for the future. The conference was followed by a dinner where 100 delegates and guests attended, and awards presented to two scholars (Johnny Butterly and John Finlay) to mark 20 years since their scholarship award. We also awarded an Honorary Scholarship to David Baker, to recognise his contribution to Nuffield.

GFP visit to Ireland 2017

In April, we hosted the 'Brazil GFP' group for their visit to Ireland. During the five-day visit they:

- Visited to the National Dairy Research Centre in Moorepark, Co Cork,
- Had a tour of the world renowned Coolmore Stud in Co Tipperary,
- Had a presentation on Ireland's Aquaculture industry from an expert in the sector,
- Visited a rapidly developing farmhouse cheese business,
- Met an innovative vegetable and tillage farmer (Nuffield Scholar Julian Hughes) who grows flowers, carrots, pumpkins and other cereal crops & vegetables on a 250 ha enterprise,
- Visited Scholar Kevin Nolan, Tillage farmer, who also leases other land on a long term basis (farming in total about 700 ha) and used precision technology and new methods to develop his business,
- Visited Country Crest, which is the largest grower and supplier of onions and potatoes and supplies retailers. It also has a prepared foods division.
- There were visits to the Rock of Cashel (former seat of the High Kings of Ireland) and New Grange and Stone Age monument which was built about 3,200 BC.
- Visited a brewery (Smithwicks in Kilkenny) - strictly for research purposes,
- Attended a BBQ arranged by Joe Leonard (Nuffield Board member) for meeting with local farmers and guests.



2017 'Brazil GFP' scholars visit to Coolmore Stud, Co Tipperary, with Nuffield hosts Maeve O'Keefe, Mary Delaney and Jennifer Payne.



Australian Scholars from 'Brazil GFP' in Coolmore – Cameron Kruckow, Daniel Kahl, Glenn Wormald & Brendan Hehir

Nuffield Ireland Board

Following a review of the Constitution and Governance of Nuffield Ireland, the members adopted a new Constitution in January 2017. At the same time, a new Board was elected, including new Chairman, Geoff Dooley, and Board members Karen Brosnan, Jonathan Tighe, Brian Rushe, Joe Leonard, Amii McKeever and David Murphy. Geoff Dooley succeeded outgoing Chairman Bill O’Keeffe who had filled this role since 2012.

The Board has formed four sub committees to with responsibility for (1) Scholar Management, (2) Scholar Recruitment & Selection, (3) Communications & Events, and (4) Governance, Ethos and Finance. The sub committees provide the opportunity to involve more members of our Alumni in our work, and prepares them for possible future participation on the Board.

Later in the year, at the AGM in December, Mary Webb was elected to the Board as Treasurer, to succeed Jonathan Tighe, who retired by rotation.