

ICMSA welcomes changes to Bord Bia's Sustainable Beef & Lamb Assurance Scheme.



Speaking following the launch of the new Bord Bia Beef & Lamb Assurance Scheme, the Chairperson of the ICMSA Livestock Committee, Michael Guinan, said that improvements made to the scheme, such as the helpdesk and close-out period, were to be welcomed but he stressed that all audits carried out in connection with the scheme must be consistent from the start and, most importantly, that all farmers who sign-up to the scheme need to get a financial benefit when they sell their cattle to a meat plant.

'The new scheme provides for a 'close-out period' during which farmers will have a month to rectify non-compliances detected at audit without losing their certification status. This is a very important improvement to the scheme and it's something that ICMSA fought hard to have introduced. This change should give farmers time to address minor issues without affecting their ability to claim the QA bonus when selling animals in the month after the audit has taken place. It is important that the scheme recognises practical realities and allows farmers to resolve issues within a reasonable timeframe. Furthermore, ICMSA wants to see that consistency of audits going forward which means that repeat audits must not find fault with items that were deemed acceptable 18 months previous', said Mr. Guinan.

'The most important aspect of the scheme is the recognition that it requires a considerable investment on the part of the farmer and it is essential that a quality assurance bonus is paid on all participating animals slaughtered that reflects the improved returns from the marketplace. The Beef Grid has signally failed on this point to date and this needs to be addressed', concluded Mr. Guinan.

Ends 12 April 2017.

Michael Guinan, 086-8766851

Chairperson, ICMSA Livestock Committee

Or

Cathal MacCarthy, 087-6168758

ICMSA Press Office