

Is Organic Beef & Dairy farming in Ireland a viable farming process



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Aim of the Project

To investigate what is Organic farming and involves in the Irish dairy & beef sector, produce guidelines for converting to organic farming.

- Research into what organic farming/ Agriculture is & involves.
- Research into organic dairy, beef, regulations, rules, compliance, practices, etc.
- Interview Organic Beef & Dairy farmers.
- Review Case Studies on Organic Beef & Dairy farm processes in organic farming.
- Produce guidelines for the implementation of best practice Organic farming processes.

Background

Organic farming uses natural methods of raising livestock & growing tillage. Focus of this paper is on organic farms in the Beef & Dairy sectors in Ireland.

With new rules & regulations to conventional farming, organic farming appears more beneficial.

Organic farming prohibits the use of any artificially produced products on farms such as artificial fertilisers, sprays, antibiotics & livestock feed. In exceptional circumstances or animal welfare cases these products may be permitted through derogations.

Research

Research consists of secondary & primary information. The main focus on collecting primary information from Organic Beef & Dairy farmers across Ireland.

Secondary information collected using –

- Academic journals
- Case studies
- Official Department documentation

Primary Information collected using –

- Surveys
- Interviews



Image of Dairy cows grazing

Primary research directly from Organic Beef & Dairy farmers allowed for a better understanding of Organic farming in Ireland, as it is information from real world practical experiences, farmers that know what works & what doesn't work when it comes to managing an organic farm successfully while complying with organic rules & regulations.

Results

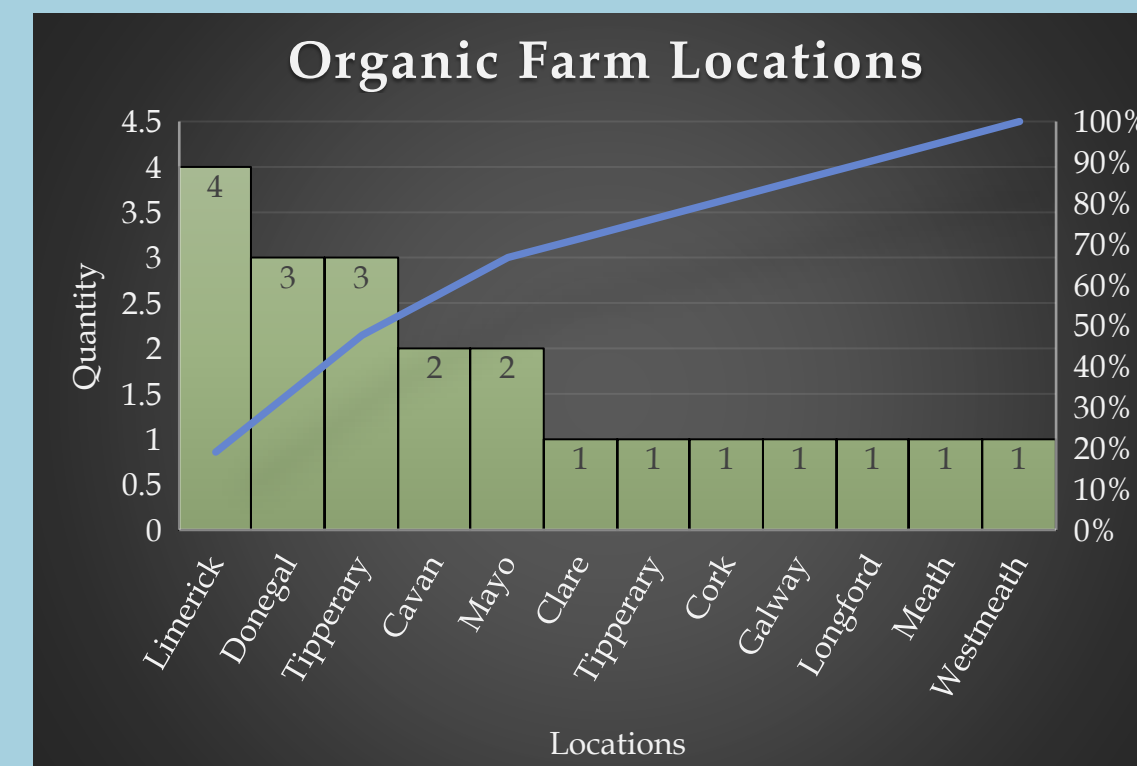


Figure 1 – Pareto Chart

Figure 1 shows locations of the 21 organic farmers that responded to the survey. Limerick, Tipperary & Donegal had the highest number of organic farms out of the above counties.

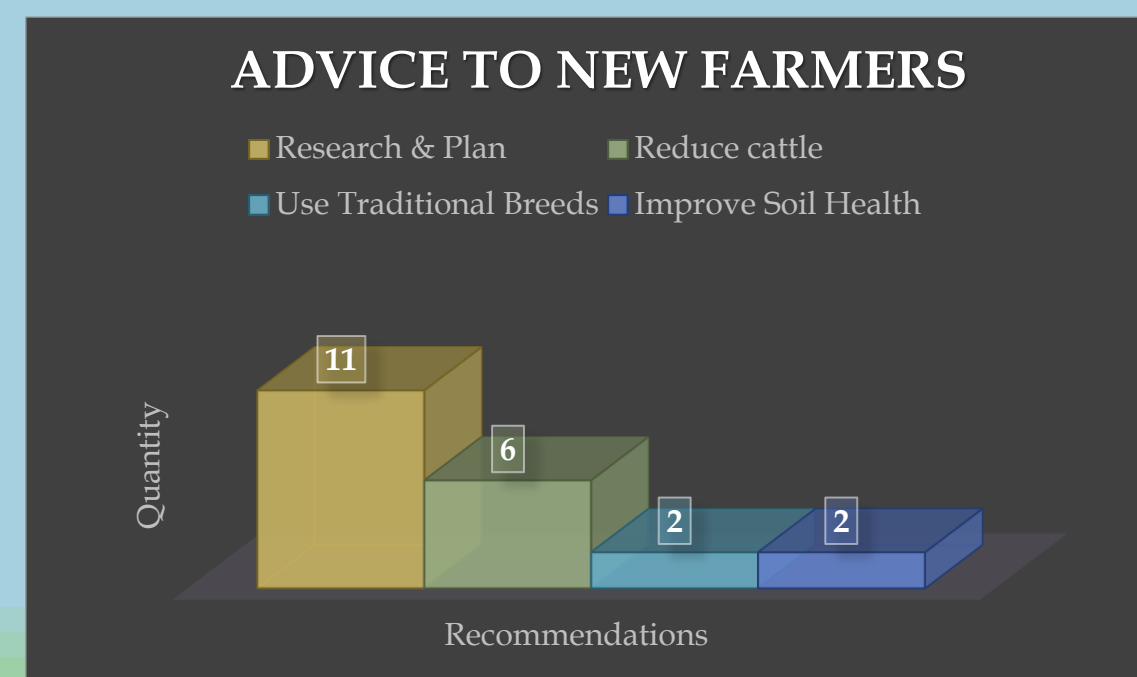


Figure 2 - Histogram

Figure 2 shows the recommendations given by organic farmers to new applicants on useful advice to use before converting to organic farming.

Interviews with organic beef & dairy farmers, were reviewed & analysed to establish what organic farming involves, benefits & opinions.

Conclusion



Image of Cattle on straw bedding

Using secondary & primary information collected throughout the project, its shown that organic beef & dairy farming can be a viable/ successful process once certain criteria/ guidelines are used, such as –

- Reduce stocking rate
- Focus on grazing & grass quality
- Apply for grants & Agri schemes
- Maintain Soil Health



Image of Suckler beef cattle

References

Organic Food and Farming Standards in Ireland Edition 2.03 (2023).