

# Growers assemble at Bretts

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Grain growers assembled at Brett Brothers in Callan on Wednesday for an open day showcasing the considerable investment and operations that are taking place within the company.

Managing director Jimmy Brett told those assembled that the company purchased 45,000t of wheat and barley directly from growers last harvest and that they had led the way on price when they paid €140/t for green barley. This grain forms the basis of the 140,000t of animal feed produced, with about 50,000t of this going as pig feed, which is over 50% native grain.

The company hopes to increase capacity to over 200,000t in the coming years. It also takes in 9,000t of oats for Flahavans annually. There are a number of



At the open day at Brett Brothers, Callan, Co Kilkenny, were Jimmy Purcell, Clonmel, Robert Raffice, Danesfort, Co Kilkenny, Jimmy Brett of Brett Brothers and Liam Aherne, Grange, Co Tipperary.

arms to the Brett Brothers business and there has been considerable investment in recent years.

The company has increased its grain handling and storage capacity from about 12,000t in the 1980s to over 50,000t today. The last grain store with 20,000t capacity was just completed in time for last harvest and can hold either dried or conditioned grain. Grain handling

capacity at the Callan site is now 200t/hour.

Bretts also produces pigs, with 1,500 sows producing 39,000 pigs per annum. The intention here is to increase this output up to 50,000 pigs per year.

Brett Brothers Ltd plans to add value and its Oakpark Foods plant in Cahir, which processes pigmeat, increased its capacity by 250% recently following a €2.5m invest-

ment. It is now selling about 3m rashers per week, much of which are exported.

Grower support and husbandry are important and Brett Brothers intends to roll out the Gatekeeper record system to all its growers shortly.

It is also actively involved in improved soil nutrition through precision farming technology and prescription nutrient application.

# No dairy access to Russia before August - Forde

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It is unlikely that Irish dairy products will be heading to Russia before August, the chairman of the Irish Dairy Board (IDB) has said.

Aaron Forde, who is also chief executive of Aurivo Co-op, told the *Irish Farmers Journal* that there would appear to be no immediate end in sight to the Russian embargo. Last August, Russia announced it was imposing a ban on the importation of all food products from Europe, Australia, Norway and the United States.

"Demand has held up well apart from Russia and China. I wouldn't plan, personally, on anything opening pre-August. We'll see what August brings," Forde said.

"The rest of the world demand has held up very, very well. Milk [production] has slowed within the EU, milk [production] has obviously slowed in New Zealand and the dollar is in the right place from a US point of view, so there are lots of reasons to be more optimistic," he said.

On the global stage, Forde is positive about the short and medium term with demand from our main markets remaining firm.

"Demand is good and sentiment is good. From an

Aurivo point of view, and an IDB point of view, product is moving and demand has held up," Forde said.

"There are maybe some particular problems in particular product categories in some areas of cheese and whole milk powders where there may be some stock around all the time but generally for the categories IDB is in and Aurivo is in, it's doing well," he added.



Irish Dairy Board chair  
Aaron Forde.

Last November, Teagasc forecast an average 2015 milk price of 27c/l while the IDB forecast a milk price of 25c/l. With prices set to end the quota era at 30c/l, Forde said positivity is building again in the sector.

"There's four or five GDTs [Global Dairy Trade auctions] in good shape and that sends a signal to the world.

"It's a little bit like a lot of my neighbours [who] wouldn't fill their oil tank at home for the last few months but when price starts to take up, people say: 'I better fill the oil tank.' Sentiment is the same in all types of markets and we're in that phase now in dairy, thankfully," Forde concluded.

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## Seed Potato Workshop

Wednesday, 4 March | 1.30pm

City North Hotel, Gormanstown, Dublin

Teagasc along with Bord Bia and IFA invite all interested to a Seed Potato Workshop at which a team of experts will be on hand to discuss all aspects of seed potato growing.

### Topics covered will include:

- Seed Production
- Disease Control (Blackleg etc)
- Planting, Harvesting & Storage
- Infield Agronomy
- Best practice guidelines
- Research posters (Virus & PCN)



  
Irish Food Board

[www.teagasc.ie](http://www.teagasc.ie)

  
Irish Farmers Association