

## **Abstract by Roberta McDonald - Characteristics, intentions and expectations of new entrant dairy farmers entering the Irish dairy industry through the New Entrant Scheme**

As part of the gradual expansion and abolition of EU milk quotas, the Irish government has approved the allocation of milk quota to a small number of new entrants to dairy production. The objective of this study was to describe the characteristics of new entrant dairy farm businesses developing within the Irish dairy industry in terms of location, planned production system characteristics, intended operational scale and expected profitability based on an analysis of successful applications and business plans to the Irish New Entrant Dairy Scheme over a 3 year period. A total of 230 applications and business plans of entrants from the years 2009 to 2011 were statistically analysed. A young and highly educated group of new farmers are using the New Entrant Scheme to enter the Irish dairy industry. Ninety three percent of new dairy entrants have at least two years of 3rd level agricultural education and have detailed plans to become relatively large scale and efficient milk producers post-EU milk quotas. Age has a significant impact on business plans and expectations of new farmers, as younger entrants have less owned resources, are increasingly reliant on additional borrowing and have higher expectations for the productive capacity of their potential farm businesses. The results indicate that quota abolition is likely to result in an increased regional bias in milk production expansion as the majority of new entrants are located within the traditional intensive milk production zones of Ireland. The success of these farms will be further assessed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods designed to gain detailed information on farm performance, as well as the farmer, and his/her experiences of setting up a dairy farm and attitudes to undertaking new technologies.