



The 9th European Conference on Precision Livestock Farming

26th – 29th August, 2019 | Cork | Ireland

Conference Speakers

George Heidgerken

George Heidgerken is the Global Head of the Strategic Business Unit Livestock at Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica GmbH in Germany.

Previous to this position, Mr. Heidgerken was the Head of the Global Animal Health business for Boehringer Ingelheim in Germany, President of the US Animal Health business for Boehringer Ingelheim and Head of the BI Animal Health business in Canada.

Over his career, he has held a number of positions in various Animal Health Industry associations; most recently, he was the President of HealthForAnimals - the global animal health industry association.

Prof. Edmond Harty

Prof. Edmond Harty is the CEO of Dairymaster, who manufacture some of the most technologically advanced products for dairy farmers worldwide with their Global Headquarters in Co. Kerry, Ireland.

He is one of the world's leading innovators in the Agri tech sector, the technology he has developed is used on many farms all around the world.

Prof. Harty's concentration is always on future possibilities, scientifically developed and proven. The level of patent applications (over 100 so far) speaks to his commitment to innovate.

He is now working on developing the digital farm of the future. He has already adopted artificial intelligence, machine learning and autonomous systems to help farmers manage their farms and make better more informed decisions, where the tacit knowledge of the farmer is combined with data from sensors and machines. This is about developing the next generation of technology that is both powerful and easy to use.

He has previously been named EY Entrepreneur of the Year. Amongst the many awards he has received, is the Parsons medal, the most prestigious engineering award from the Irish Academy of Engineering. In addition, he is an Adjunct Full Professor in the School of



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Biosystems and Food Engineering at University College Dublin (UCD) and sits on many governmental and industrial advisory panels. Innovation and new technologies are his passion in life.

Prof. Daniel Berckmans



Daniel Berckmans has a Master Degree and a Ph.D. in Bio-Science Engineering from the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium. As full professor he headed for 25 years the Division M3-BIORES (Measure, Model and Manage Bioresponses), Department of Biosystems, Faculty of Bioscience Engineering at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

The main field of research consists of real time signal analysis of humans and animals, by using technology like wearables, cameras and microphones. The focus lies on the development of real time wearable algorithms to monitor and improve the life of individuals.

During the last 20 years, the research group permanently counted 25-30 researchers who prepare a Ph.D. Daniel is worldwide considered as the spiritual father of the concept of Precision Livestock Farming and the team is recognised as a worldwide leading team in this field that has become important in the whole world. He initiated the first European Masters in Human Health Engineering (technology for healthy people), organised by four collaborating faculties at KU Leuven. Today half of the research team is working on animal applications (health monitoring, welfare monitoring, etc.) and half on human applications like intensive care unit, stress monitoring, sleep monitoring etc.

Daniel is co-author of over 300 scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals and over 400 papers in conference proceedings. He is member of several international advisory boards, visitation commissions in several European countries, and six international professional organisations worldwide.

Daniel has been a member of more than 63 Ph. D commissions in nine different countries. Written research agreements have been signed with over 48 research teams worldwide. Over 200 master students for bio-engineer have finished their master thesis in the team.

Since 1982, 19 products have been developed for the world market in co-operation with industrial partners. 20 patents have been submitted. He has coordinated several EU-projects



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with the last one counting 20 partners and a budget of 8 M euro. Daniel is co-founder of 3 spin-off companies: BioRICS NV in 2006, Soundtalks NV in 2011 and BioRICS INC in San Francisco in 2016. He legally had to retire in 2017 as a Full Professor but is still teaching at KU Leuven and doing research for 1 day/week and works 4 days/week in the spinoff BioRICS NV.

Dr Bernadette O'Brien

Dr Bernadette O'Brien is a graduate of UCC. She is currently a Principal Research Officer at Teagasc Moorepark's Animal and Grassland Research and Innovation Centre. In her current role at Teagasc, Bernadette's projects include research into innovative and sustainable systems combining automatic milking and precision grazing; increasing efficiency of traditional technologies and exploring new technology on dairy farms. Her work also focuses on strategies to ensure optimum milk and dairy product quality, specifically in relation to chemical residues. Previous research has included investigation of on on-farm labour efficiency with respect to labour input profiles, alternative milking frequencies, and milking efficiency in conventional parlours. Bernadette has also led (and been involved as PI) many successful applications for research funding to organizations such as the Dairy Research Trust; Stimulus; SFI; FIRM and the EU. She has published extensively and has extensive collaboration with the national dairy industry and international dairy research groups.

Peter Hynes



I started farming in 2010 at the age of 36.

Myself & my wife Paula run a grassbased pedigree Holstein herd grazing over 300 days a year. We expanded the herd from 50 to 180 cows in 2015 when EU quotas were removed.

Our focus is on maximising genetic gain & our herd has a Keystone contract with the National Cattle Breeding Centre. We have embraced technology on farm to reduce labour & maximise efficiency.

We won the Farmer of the Year in 2017, I am a columnist for the Irish Independent Farming supplement.



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I am an advocate for mental health awareness in agriculture. We are both ambassadors for Rugbyplayersireland TackleYourFeelings mental wellbeing campaign.

Dr Liam Hanrahan

Dairy farming in partnership with his parents in Doonbeg, Co. Clare, currently milking 180 cows. Facilitator and member of the Pasture Apprentices discussion group which spans across the Munster and midlands area focusing on improving all areas of farm technical efficiency. Teagasc Moorepark Animal and Grassland Research and Innovation Centre and UCD PhD graduate, completed his thesis titled 'Identifying factors and developing strategies to increase efficiency on Irish dairy farms', having worked with the National Farm Survey, PastureBase Ireland and the Teagasc Heavy Soils Programme. Particularly interested in technologies which increase farm labour efficiency and profitability.

David Speller



Starting with the one farm of 160,000 broilers in 2004 David has built a business that today is contract farming multiple sites and is now farming 1.6M birds at any one time.

David has always adopted new thinking to existing challenges from the start and is recognised as one of the world's leading authorities on poultry technologies and digital solutions.

In addition to farming poultry David and his company Applied are involved in extensive research and innovation projects both in the UK and internationally, ensuring that innovation and new thinking remains at the core of his business. Current projects are focused on early disease detection, microbiome management and in shed robotic platforms.

As a way of sharing his knowledge and assisting other companies globally David has established the world's only 24/7 support and optimisation centre that actively monitors and assists poultry facilities globally. The service is truly unique and is known as OPTIFarm. It



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is utilised by many poultry businesses to improve performance, support and train farm staff and monitor welfare.

Peak Gateway Business Park, Eastmoor, Chesterfield, Derbyshire UK.

Sean Coughlan

Sean Coughlan has worked for ICBF since 2002, initially working as the manager of information systems and financial controller. He took over the role of ICBF Chief Executive in October of 2012. He graduated from UCC with a B Comm (Hons) degree in 1993, completed an MBA in international business at St Joseph's University Philadelphia, USA in 1995, and achieved management accountant (CIMA) qualifications in 2007.

Prior to joining ICBF, he spent seven years with PriceWaterhouseCoopers and Anderson Consulting in the USA, Europe and Ireland.

Dr. Matthew Smith

As director of business development at Microsoft, Matthew aims to enable anyone and everyone to get actual real value from the better use of analytics over data. He does this for all industries and application areas at Microsoft but has a particular passion for enabling UK agriculture, and the UK environment more generally, to transform for the better as a result of better use of analytics. His background is in research and conservation: he worked on laying the modern foundations for how we can go about building transformative predictive models of biological systems, resulting in 75 peer-reviewed scientific articles and the world's first fully data-constrained global carbon model. This combines biological understanding, machine learning and data. Before that he worked to save species in the wild for the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and holds a BSc in Ecology and a PhD in Applied Mathematics (applied to ecology).