

**Summary of the European Holstein Judges Workshop at
Aidan Frawley's Family Farm, Co. Limerick, Ireland
16th – 18th July, 2019**

The working group was represented by Egbert Feddersen (Chair), Søren Christensen, Thierry Menard, Mark Nutsford and Tamás Sebők.

Cord Hormann (DE), Attilio Tocci (IT) and Gary Hurley (IR) were the Master Judges for Ranking; Anthony Le Trionnaire (FR) and Mark Nutsford (UK) the Master Judges for Reasons.

The following countries joined the program: Ireland – as host country, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, The Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom, all together 38 participants.

Practical Workshop at Aidan Frawley's Family Farm, Co. Limerick, Ireland

The "Ballytigue" Pedigree Registered Holstein herd is located near Bruree in south County Limerick. The milking herd consists of 120 cows with a total of 170 cows calved-in annually. The herd has a split calving pattern of 40 % Autumn and 60 % Spring. Surplus stock is offered for sale occasionally with the overall number of stock in the herd currently totalling 320. The farm extends to 260 acres (105 hectares), 190 acres (77 ha) of which is owned. Like the vast majority of Irish farms grass is the dominant crop, with grazing of quality grassland being the fundamental management advantage. Established in 2002, the Ballytigue herd has won acclaim for its quality breeding and performance. It has ranked in the top three herds Nationally in the IHFA National Herds Competition (production and inspection) the last three years in a row.

Day 1 – Dinner and Theoretical session

The first day began with a welcome drink and buffet, followed by an initial theoretical session. This comprised of a presentation by Egbert Feddersen, regarding the format of the following day and the WG's experiences at the European Show in Libramont earlier this year.

Day 2 - Practical session:

The following day was the practical session, held at Aidan Frawley's family farm in Co. Limerick, Ireland.

The practical session was organised by the IHFA and the Farm Team, bringing forward a selection of very good cows and heifers for the stock judging competition. There were two rings active at the same time. The participants were assigned into one of two groups. Each class contained six animals. The participants had been randomly assigned a group to give reasons on.

The Working group continued the policy of a yellow / red card at the Workshop. Participants were not allowed to talking with each other during a class. Otherwise it could lead to a disqualification Fortunately, no warning was necessary at the Workshop.

Firstly there was a harmonisation group of maiden heifers. After the participants judged the heifers there was a discussion lead by the Master Judges.

The competition started with a two first calver groups, followed by two second and third calver groups and finally two mature cow groups. There was then a Championship class comprising of the winners from the four classes shown after lunch. Following on from the comments received at the last workshop, some participants who scored 4 in reasons were given the opportunity to give their reasons again using the Championship cows

Following the Judging, the family was presented with a commemorative plaque and a crystal vase by Egbert Feddersen. In the evening there was a dinner at a nearby restaurant.

Day 3 - Theoretical session: Results and discussion:

The next morning started early with a theoretical session at the hotel.

The calculation of the results was based on 60% for the judging and 40% for the comments (three breakdowns: English, correctness/ terminology, general accuracy). Six classes have to be ranked, while the lowest result is taken out. To pass the workshop successfully the candidates should score at least 75% correlation with the Master Judges and reach a minimum value for reason of 5.0 from 9.0.

Egbert Feddersen summarized the previous day on farm, mentioning that some cow classes showed more variability than we had in previous workshops. This meant that there had been more discussion between the Master Judges and the participants and the results were not as good as the last workshops. Therefore the Working Group has decided to set the limit of correlation between the Master Judges and the participants down from 75% to 70% for this workshop.

23 of 38 participants passed the workshop. Torben Melbaum from Germany was the best participant at the workshop.

To get onto the European Judges Panel candidates must have successfully participated twice in a workshop.

Due to the results 10 participants will now be added to the European Judges Panel. These are

- Paulino Badiola, Spain
- Pierre Creppe, Belgium
- Bruno Deutinger, Austria
- Thomas Ender, Switzerland
- Michael Gould, UK
- Gary Jones, Ireland
- Anne Kalsbeek, Netherlands
- Guiseppe Quaini, Italy
- Jacques Roullier, Switzerland
- Zdenek Schaffelhofer, Czech Republic

All participants were given a certificate of participation.

Conclusion:

The workshop was a great success, the participants were asked to comment and give ideas for improvement. It seemed they were very satisfied that the organization, hospitality and efficiency of the Irish organisers was very good indeed.