



IFA



DOUBLE STANDARDS

Bord Bia Chair Importing Brazilian Beef

Importing Brazilian beef may well be legal. However, there is no farmer in Brazil who would meet a fraction of the standards set by Bord Bia for Irish farmers. Yet the Chair of Bord Bia is happy to purchase Brazilian beef and sell it to Irish consumers. At the same time he is constantly telling Irish farmers that they must reach even higher standards to satisfy his customers. This is total hypocrisy and double standards and has caused huge farmer anger on the ground.

Background

Bord Bia operates Ireland's Quality Assurance (QA) schemes for dairy, beef, sheep, pigs, poultry, eggs, potatoes and horticulture.

Farmers have to comply with strict requirements and are subject to **regular audits and inspections by Bord Bia**.

Farmers are frequently told by Bord Bia that **higher standards** at farm level are required to satisfy customer needs and are actively engaging with IFA seeking to introduce higher standards.

Irish farmers have been lectured for years by the Government and Bord Bia about **sustainability and carbon emissions**. Farmers are being asked by Bord Bia to sign up to a new on-line emissions measuring platform called *AgNav*.

Now the Chair of Bord Bia, with the support of Minister Heydon, is bringing beef, and possibly other meats, across the world which have multiple times the carbon footprint of Irish beef.

While Bord Bia is primarily funded by the taxpayer it also collects a **Statutory Levy from Irish farmers worth circa €6m** each year.

IFA Board Meeting Request

Upon learning of the Brazilian beef imports by Dawn Farm Foods, IFA President Francie Gorman contacted the Bord Bia Chair on Saturday, 17th January. The Chair replied that there was "nothing to see here."

IFA's President then submitted a formal request for a Bord Bia Board meeting, which was granted after a second written request.

Dawn Farm Foods

In mid-January, an image circulated on social media showing a label at a Subway restaurant stating: "Dawn Farm Foods Ltd. certified that the raw materials used in the production of the beef products supplied to Subway Restaurants in Ireland are currently sourced from **EU-approved plants in Europe and Brazil**."

Following media queries, Subway confirmed that it did not source beef from Brazil for any of its operations in 2025.

Dawn Farm Foods confirmed that while the majority of their beef supply is Irish and that 99% comes from the EU and the UK, they said that 1% is from Brazil.

On their website, Dawn Farm Foods claim that all of our products.... **'have complete farm to fork traceability'**. There is no effective traceability system in Brazil.

Dawn Farm Foods is a member of Origin Green and in fact they have been awarded **'Gold membership of Origin Green programme'**. Farmers cannot reconcile this with importing Brazilian beef.

Brazilian Beef Standards

In 2025, a team from the IFA and the Irish Farmers Journal visited Brazil. They found that there was **no effective animal traceability system**. Antibiotics were freely available over the counter and hormones that are banned in the EU were in use in Brazil.

During 2025 following an audit, the **EU recalled quantities of Brazilian beef** from a number of Member States, including Ireland. This was because they found a banned hormone in the meat. By the time this meat was recalled in Ireland it had been sold on and consumed.

What the Bord Bia Chair has said

In the Irish Farmers Journal interview (Saturday 31st January 2026 edition), Larry Murrin described the reaction of farmers as “**emotional nonsense**”.

Before the meeting, the Bord Bia Chair claimed that Dawn Farm Foods had to source beef from Brazil as it was required by customers as a contingency measure to safeguard supply.

He subsequently confirmed in an interview with the Irish Farmers Journal that Dawn Farm Foods imported no Brazilian beef in 2020, 2021, 2022 or 2023. He said they used a tiny fraction of 1% in 2024 and 1% in 2025.

The price of purchasing Irish and EU beef increased significantly in 2025. See table below.

Beef Price Comparison Average R3 Steer Price or equivalent (€/deadweight ex.VAT)					
Year	IRL	EU	UK	BRZ	BRZ as % of IRL Price
2023	4.96	4.96	5.51	2.92	59%
2024	5.17	5.18	5.91	2.77	54%
2025	7.10	6.54	7.58	3.18	45%

Bord Bia Board Meeting, Thursday 22nd January 2026

At the meeting, Francie Gorman, with the support of ICMSA President Denis Drennan, proposed removing the Chair. No vote was taken, and no counterproposal was made.

Both the Minister for Agriculture and the Taoiseach had publicly expressed confidence in the Chair ahead of the meeting, signalling their stance to the Board.

Following the meeting, Bord Bia's CEO issued a statement claiming there had been a “consensus” at the meeting that the Chair should remain in office. The statement was later amended, with the word consensus removed.

After the Bord Bia Board Meeting

IFA publicly called for Larry Murrin to resign as Chair or be removed by the Minister for Agriculture.

Meetings organised by Bord Bia to discuss updates to its Quality Assurance (QA) schemes were subsequently cancelled after the ICMSA withdrew, and IFA planned to walk out and protest outside the venue.

IFA Protest

On Monday 26th January, IFA commenced a rolling 24-hour protest outside Bord Bia headquarters in Dublin 4. For on-going updates on the protest see www.ifa.ie.

Our Message

Importing Brazilian beef may well be legal. However, there is no farmer in Brazil who would meet a fraction of the standards set by Bord Bia for Irish farmers. Yet the Chair of Bord Bia is happy to purchase Brazilian beef and sell it to Irish consumers. At the same time he is constantly telling Irish farmers that they must reach even higher standards to satisfy his customers. This is total hypocrisy and double standards and has caused huge farmer anger on the ground.

Farmers will not accept being told, “Do as I say, not as I do” by the Bord Bia Chair.

Why Farmers Are Angry

Irish farmers participating in Bord Bia's Quality Assurance (QA) schemes must comply with very demanding production standards. Failure to adhere to these standards results in Irish farmers either unable to sell their produce, receive price top-ups or participate in CAP schemes.

Farmers are repeatedly told by Bord Bia that these production standards are required by international customers and that, without them, we will not be able to secure market access.

These requirements, developed by Bord Bia in consultation with IFA and ICMSA, involve significant administrative and on-farm obligations. Bord Bia inspects each participating farm every 18 months and conducts detailed audits of records to ensure full compliance.

Farmers must maintain extensive documentation for these inspections, including:

- Records of all animal movements
- A farm safety statement
- An animal health plan
- A farmyard layout map

Before each inspection, farmers must complete a 66-question sustainability survey which seeks a huge amount of information. Many now hire consultants at significant expense to manage the paperwork and audits.

These rules are enforced to maintain Ireland's food reputation, yet now that credibility is being put at risk.

While importing Brazilian beef is not illegal, it is unacceptable given the circumstances and demonstrates clear double-standards. Brazilian meat is not produced to anything near the same traceability or welfare standards that Irish farmers must meet under Bord Bia's QA schemes – the same schemes overseen by the agency chaired by Larry Murrin.

Some have argued that importing Brazilian beef is comparable to using Brazilian feedstuffs, but this is misleading. Ireland is not self-sufficient in livestock feed while, according to the CSO, is over 700% self-sufficient in beef.