

Circular Co-Products valorisation (CirCoVal)

Tailored to the need of Irish meat processors, CirCoVal is a strategic project that will deliver the best sustainability practices to Irish primary producers. Everyday operations in the red meat industry generate huge quantities of meat co-products. These are traditionally not highly valued as prime cuts of meat and, if not disposed of or processed properly, can present a threat to the environment and human health. Despite its large scale of operation, the meat industry is reported globally to be one of the least profitable industries. Meat co-products and offal parts generated during meat processing (the so-called fifth quarter) often represents the difference between profit and loss. In its first instalment, researchers of Meat Technology Ireland (MTI) – sponsored by Enterprise Ireland and co-funded by the meat industry – conducted an extensive study into the value-potential of bovine and ovine co-products and factory wastewater. It concluded that, if processed sustainably, they could create a broad range of value-added products. This project is based on this research and is created in collaboration with MTI and industrial partners, taking into consideration the Department of Food and Marine (DAFM), Irish government, and EU strategies for the meat industry and its green transition. The project will focus on the valorisation of red meat co- products with the least value to the industry currently a source of losses to their producers - and the purification wastewater produced at the abattoirs. A number of circular processes will be developed, scaled up, and economically assessed to provide a suite of potential options for the individual producers in the agrifood sector to choose from. These processes, which will have digital controls baked in, will also be transferrable to the horticulture sector.

