

# Cultivate



CREDIT UNION Farm Finance

# Cultivate Review 2025

FARMER FRIENDLY FINANCE

## Highlights

- ✓ Average loan amount €40,924
- ✓ April was the busiest month for loan applications
- ✓ Beef farmers account for 70% of all Cultivate loans
- ✓ Stocking and working capital was the most popular loan purpose (25%)

## Average Cultivate loan hits highest level since launch

The average Cultivate loan application in 2025 was for €40,924, the highest average loan amount since launch, reflecting growing confidence among Irish farmers to invest in their farms. The typical applicant borrowed over 80 months (6.6 years), farmed circa 34 hectares, and carried an average farm debt of €151,951.

Beef farmers accounted for 70% of all applications, followed by dairy farmers at 20%.

Stocking and working capital remained the most popular loan purpose at 25%, followed by investment in farm buildings (22%) and purchasing farm equipment (21%).

The Cultivate loan is ideal for farmers looking to:

- ✓ Develop pasture infrastructure from reseeding to roadways and water systems
- ✓ Invest in new farm buildings or infrastructure
- ✓ Invest in new milking parlour equipment e.g. bulk tank
- ✓ Invest in an upgrade of their tractor or machinery
- ✓ Access working capital for periods when cashflow is under pressure

### Overall picture

€	Average loan	€40,924
€	Median loan	€34,000
🕒	Average loan length	80 months
🕒	Median loan length	80 months
🏡	Average HA owned	34
🏡	Median HA owned	26
📊	Average debt	€151,951
📊	Median debt	€93,325
€	Off-farm income	82%
📅	Busiest month	April
📅	Quietest month	November

### Top 7 reasons for a loan (where specified)

🐄	Stocking and working capital	25%
🏠	Farm buildings	22%
🛠️	Equipment	21%
🚜	Tractor	13%
🏡	Farm land	8%
🌱	Land improvements	6%
🚗	Jeep	5%

### Who accessed Cultivate loans?

🐄	Sector:	
🐄	Beef	70%
🐄	Dairy	20%
🐄	Sheep	8%
🌾	Other (pigs, tillage)	2%

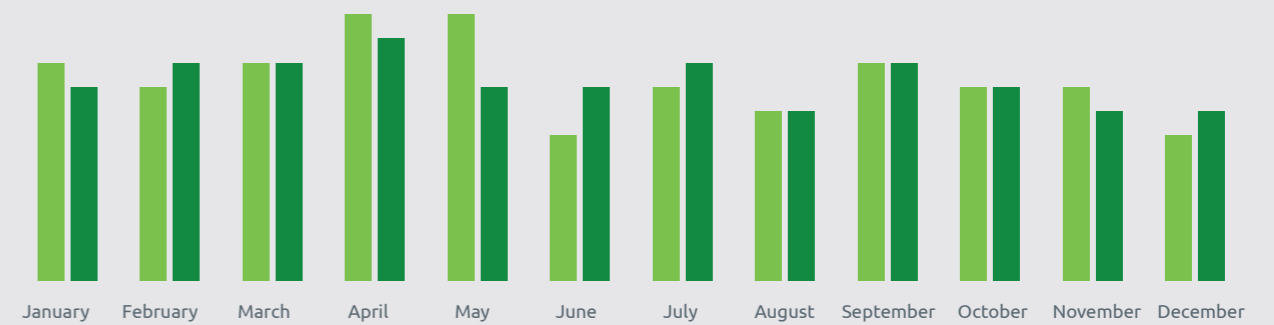


## Busiest period for loan applications

Borrowing activity in 2025 was more evenly distributed across the year compared to 2024, with monthly application volumes ranging from 7% to 10% compared to a wider 6% to 11% spread the previous year. April was once again the busiest month, accounting for 10% of total applications, while November was the quietest at 7%. This pattern of late spring activity continues to reflect the seasonal rhythm of on-farm investment, particularly for beef farmers preparing for the grazing season.

February was the busiest month for dairy farmer applications in 2025, while April remained the peak month for beef farmers.

Relative Volume of Loan Applications 2024 2025



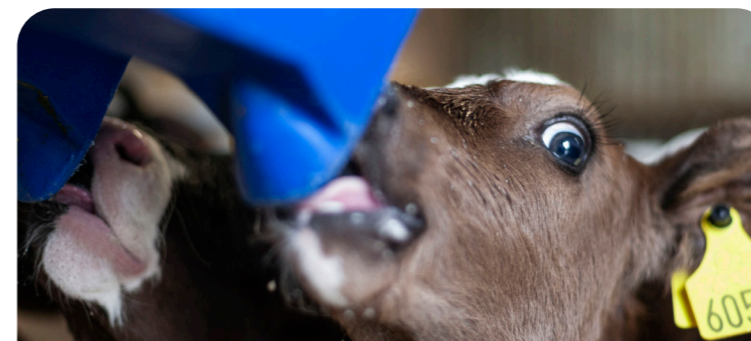
## How did the beef and dairy sectors compare in 2025?

2025	Beef 🐄	Dairy 🐄
Average loan	€37,518	€52,909
Median loan	€30,000	€45,154
Average loan length (months)	76	92
Median loan length (months)	72	84
Average HA owned	31	44
Median HA owned	24	38
Average debt	€132,739	€230,180
Median debt	€80,748	€178,533
Dairy cows (average)	N/A	87
Suckler cows (average)	13	N/A
Off farm income (yes) %	88%	61%

The average loan application from a dairy farmer in 2025 was €52,909, a 6% increase on 2024, reflecting the continued scale of investment in Irish dairy enterprises. Beef farmers averaged €37,518, with the median beef loan of €30,000 remaining consistent with previous years.

The two sectors also differ in farm profile. Dairy farmers are typically larger landowners, farming an average of 44 hectares compared to 31 hectares for beef farmers. Dairy applicants average 87 cows per herd, while beef applicants average 13 suckler cows. Off-farm income remains a feature of many beef farming households, with 88% of beef applicants reporting off-farm income compared to 61% for dairy.

Together, both sectors demonstrate a strong commitment to investing in the future of Irish farming, with Cultivate continuing to play a central role in enabling that investment.



## About Cultivate

Cultivate is a loan initiative offered by a group of credit unions across the Republic of Ireland, specifically designed to meet the financial needs of the farming community. It provides short- to medium-term finance that enables farmers to develop and future-proof their businesses with quick, straightforward access to funding.

Farmers can borrow unsecured up to €100,000 for up to 10 years at a variable interest rate of 6.55% (typical APR 6.75%) or borrow secured up to €300,000 for up to 30 years at a variable interest rate of 5.25% (typical APR 5.38%).


**Representative Example:** A 5-year Cultivate farm loan of €30,000 will have 60 monthly repayments of €587.69. Interest rate is 6.55% variable, (6.75% APR). The total cost of credit is €5,261.24. The total amount payable is €35,261.24. Information correct as at 01.04.2026.

Loans are subject to approval. Terms and conditions apply.

**WARNING:** If you do not meet the repayments on your Cultivate loan, your account will go into arrears. This may affect your credit report, which may limit your ability to access credit in the future. The cost of your repayments may increase.


All Cultivate Credit Unions are regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland

## What our farmer members say?




**"Without the Cultivate loan, we wouldn't have been able to change the genetics of our dairy herd which has helped us future proof our farm."**

Aodhagán & Andrew Smith  
*Dairy Farmers*



**"With the Cultivate loan, they offer unsecured lending, so that helps someone like me who's only a part-time farmer"**

Hillary Courtney  
*Beef Farmer*



**"The process was very straightforward and there was no collateral needed."**

Conor Kennedy  
*Beef Farmer*

Contact us [www.cultivate-CU.ie](http://www.cultivate-CU.ie) 1800 839 999