

# Rural Development Executive Council Report

## AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

### 1. Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 Update and Amendments

- At this stage most measures have already been implemented such as GLAS, ANC's, TAMS.
- Knowledge Transfer measures already have applications open for Beef, Dairy and Equine. The Sheep, Tillage and Equine KT groups are ready to be implemented.
- On Leader, the tendering process has been notified and this is advancing.
- In line with previous plans, amendments can be made once a year.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> amendment to the plan for 2015 has been lodged with the EU Commission on the 31<sup>st</sup> December last.
- Some of the amendments result from IFA lobbying particularly in relation to TAMS and Knowledge Transfer.
- At a meeting in Brussels with the EU Commission on March 14<sup>th</sup> IFA has been told that all changes are acceptable to the Commission and formal approval will be given shortly.
- IFA wants all changes to apply immediately and in the case of TAMS at the time of the next tranche on 28<sup>th</sup> March next.

The amendments are: -

#### **TAMS**

- Inclusion of grant aid for grain farmers, Rainwater Harvesting and Sheep Fencing.
- Specifically for tillage farmers. The 40% standard rate - 60% Young Farmer grant will apply to: precision farming equipment; grain stores and grain storage equipment; low disturbance tillage equipment and rainwater harvesting, storage (across all sectors).

#### **GLAS**

- Amendment to some of the specifications but no major changes.

#### **Leader**

- The inclusion of second-hand equipment for grant aid.
- Changes to administrative costs.
- Inclusion of payment advances with specific reference to fodder.
- Potential Local Action Grants (LAGS) that are successful at the expression of interest stage to run the programme in their region will get €15,000 to assist in the formulation of the local development strategy over the next 5 years.

#### **Knowledge Transfer**

- Allow farmers with 2 enterprises to partake in 2 groups – full payment of €750 for one group and 50% payment (€375) for the second group. This reduced payment will also apply to the facilitator €250 as opposed to €500.
- Allowing 2 full payments in the case of partnerships.

#### **Organics**

- To allow farmers in the old scheme to extend their contracts by up to 4 years to 2020 depending on when their contracts finish.

#### **Burren Programme**

- Adding this measure into the locally led agri-environment scheme. Previously it was a Pillar I funded scheme.

### 2. GLAS

- At the close of the second phase of GLAS on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 14,000 farmers had applied.
- Of these 7,100 are Tier 1, 4,200 are Tier 2 with the remaining 2,700 classified as Tier 3.
- IFA had demanded that all farmers who applied get into the scheme.
- However the Minister has ruled out 2,500 Tier 3 farmers. IFA made this a key issue during the recent General Election and will be pursuing this issue with the next Government.
- In total nearly 38,000 farmers will be in GLAS. 26,300 got in on the first phase.

- 1,500 farmers have qualified in the first phase for GLAS+. The number in GLAS+ in the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase has yet not been indicated.

	Tier 1	Tier2	Tier3	Total
<b>GLAS 1</b>	11,000	6,300	9,000	26,300
<b>GLAS 2</b>	7,100	4,200		11,500
	18,100	10,500	9,000	37,800

- The average payment in GLAS 1 is €4,400.
- The average GLAS+ payment is €6,500.
- The average for GLAS 2 has not yet been assessed but it is likely to be less as some of the measures changed such as Low Input Grassland Area was reduced from 10ha to 5ha and hedgerow planting was removed
- GLAS should be worth around €180m to farmers in 2016.
- Payments have already commenced on the first phase of GLAS (see Direct Payments report).
- IFA is seeking the early opening of the third phase of GLAS.
- As a result of the wet weather, IFA has secured an extension to the date to fence off water courses and riparian zone from the 31<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> July. If further changes are required, IFA will be making proposals and will be monitoring the situation as the conditions for carrying out various measures under the scheme are proving very difficult.

### 3. TAMS II

- With all TAMS schemes now into their second phase, the priority for IFA is to get approvals for those farmers who have applied for the first phase and to ensure that the processing of applications is expedited.
- Following IFA pressure, approvals are being issued for priority Dairy cases and Low Emission Slurry. Other approvals will be made shortly.
- The first tranche applicants for each scheme are as follows:

Scheme	Number of Applicants
Young Farmers	513
Dairy Equipment	1,086
AWSNSS	942
Pigs & Poultry	57
Low Emission Slurry	194
Organic Capital	191

- The second phase of TAMS II is now open and will close on March 25<sup>th</sup> next.
- IFA is seeking the inclusion of the Grain Storage and Sheep Fencing measures in the tranche.

### 4. TAMS I

- IFA has put pressure on the Department to get all outstanding payments due under the TAMS I, Farm Safety and other schemes paid without delay.

### 5. Leader

- The process to determine who runs Leader in each county is currently taking place. IFA is encouraging County Executives to be involved in the strategic plans for their areas in the public consultation process.
- In most cases the existing Leader Company has been chosen by the LCDC.
- Contracts have yet to be signed in any area.

### 6. Locally Led Agri-environment scheme

- The tenders to apply for the Locally Led Agri-environment scheme will be issued shortly.
- At a recent meeting on Hen Harriers in Killaloe attended by the Department of Agriculture, IFA is pressing for an early application process.
- The Department of Agriculture has highlighted that the areas that will qualify will be the Burren, Pearl Mussel areas, Hen Harriers, Upland Peat areas, and other areas that come forward with the proposal.
- €70m is allocated to this measure in the RDP.
- The Burren scheme automatically qualifies as they already have a scheme up and running with funding likely to more than double to at least €3m.
- IFA will be insisting that these schemes are meaningful but that in designated areas the responsibility will rest with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to have a national farm plan scheme.