

## Rural Development Executive Council Report

AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION
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### TAMS

- IFA have been putting maximum pressure on the Minister for Agriculture and the Department to get all 5,000 TAMS applications for both Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 approved without delay.
- The Department has now indicated that the following number of files have gone to the local offices for the issuing of approvals under the various schemes:
  - Animal Welfare – 851
  - Young Farmers – 453
  - Dairy Equipment – 1,024
  - Pigs & Poultry – 55
  - LESS – 156.
- Tranche 2 approvals are due to commence shortly.
- IFA has sent in priority cases for approval to the Department and these are now being dealt with.
- IFA has raised the issue of Sheep fencing which has been part of the RDP amendment awaiting approval from Brussels. The scheme has commenced from yesterday in the current tranche which is due to finish on 24<sup>th</sup> June next.
- IFA has also raised with the Department grant payment for works completed by farmers who got part approval for dairy equipment and low emission slurry end of 2015/early 2016 and who have completed the work. Payments will be made in the latter half of July.
- IFA has met the Department on changes to TAMS in the next amendment for the RDP. Proposals include:
  - Rubber slat mats
  - Field drainage
  - Underpasses
  - Feed bins for all farmers
  - Relaxation of 5-year Young Farmer rule.
- IFA will be finalising proposals in the next few weeks for the changes to come in towards the end of the year.

### GLAS

- 37,948 farmers are currently in GLAS and due a full year payment for 2016.
- Currently 26,263 in GLAS I and 11,685 in GLAS II. Of those 4,000 and 2,500 respectively are in GLAS+.
- At a recent meeting the Department indicated that GLAS III will open in mid-October and that the target will be for more than 50,000 in the scheme from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017.
- The total allocation for GLAS and which includes Organics in this year's Book of Estimates is €203m.
- Amendments can be made in the next phase of GLAS and IFA is proposing:
  - Improving payments across the wide range of measures and increasing the maximum payment of GLAS and GLAS+.
  - Restoration of 10ha limit for low input grassland.
  - Restoration of hedge-planting.

- Increasing the number of farmers who can qualify for GLAS+ in commonages and Natura areas.
- Allowing grain farmers to avail of GLAS+ where they have to put green cover in for the total farm.

### **Locally Led Agri-environment scheme**

- The tendering process is due to commence shortly for the €70m scheme over 5 years.
- Already €15m has been added to the Burren scheme.
- €35m is allocated to the Hen Harrier and Freshwater Pearl Mussel areas.
- The remaining €20m is allocated to a wide range of areas including upland areas and other designated areas throughout the country.
- Important that areas are aware of the scheme and that it is up and running from 1<sup>st</sup> January next.

### **ANCs**

- In the Programme for Government an additional €25m has been allocated for the 2018 scheme. However, IFA will be looking to have this introduced in the 2017 Budget for next year.
- The ANC review which is part of CAP has to be completed by June 2017 with implementation arising in 2018. IFA's position will be to protect existing areas and to ensure payments continue to increase.
- IFA will be meeting the Department of Agriculture and Teagasc shortly on technical aspects of the scheme.
- IFA's position will be to protect all areas, increase payments targeted low income farmers.

### **Knowledge Transfer**

- IFA has raised concerns with the implementation of the KT groups. These include some technical aspects, 20% Young Farmer rule, uptake in certain areas, payment for Veterinary health checks.
- The Department has informed IFA that the 20% Young Farmer rule is not obligatory but higher points are awarded under the selective criteria for such groups.

### **RDP amendments**

- Further amendments to the RDP will be made in 2016. This is important to ensure that additional items can be added to TAMS, GLAS and other schemes.
- Full utilisation of the €4bn allocated in the 2014-2020 RDP is of critical importance.

### **Farm Assist and Rural Social Scheme**

- As part of the review of Farm Assist and the Rural Social Scheme announced in the Programme for Government, IFA is meeting the Minister for Social Protection, Leo Varadkar in early July.

### **Pre-Budget Submission**

- The Rural Development Committee will be making a strong case for full funding for all schemes in the 2017 Budget. This is particularly relevant with the current income crisis on farms.

*Joe Brady*  
*Rural Development Chairman*

*Gerry Gunning*  
*Rural Development Executive*

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