The Irish Farmers’ Association
61st Annual General Meeting

AGENDA

1. Adoption of Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting

2. Adoption of Auditor’s Report, Income & Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet

3. Appointment of Auditors

4. Annual Report of National Committees and Commodity Sections

5. Reports from IFA Representatives on Outside Bodies

6. Address by outgoing Deputy President Tim O’Leary

7. Inaugural Presidential Address

8. Election of National Treasurer/Returning Officer *

9. Election of members of National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee *

   The following members are retiring and ineligible for re-election: Michael Keane, representing Munster, Peter Luttrell, representing South Leinster, Bernard Donohue, representing Council, Joe Brady, representing Ulster/North Leinster.

10. Ratification of IFA Representatives on Outside Bodies

11. Election of Honorary Life Members

12. AOB
   Proposed rule change re Part-Time Farmers – note attached

* Nominations for these positions must be made on the relevant forms and received at the Irish Farm Centre by the Acting General Secretary by 11am on Wednesday 20th April 2016.
Note to Executive Council on
Proposed Rule Change re Part-Time Farmers

Roscommon Co Executive has put forward a motion, which was mentioned at the 22nd March Council meeting, that the rule preventing part time farmers from holding positions in the IFA be abolished.

The current position in the IFA Rules is that the requirement to be a full-time farmer by occupation applies only to candidates for President, Deputy President and Regional Chairman. There is no such requirement for County Chairman or National Committee Chairman, or any other position.

Proposed rule change to implement the Roscommon motion
The following proposed rule change will be taken during the Ordinary Meeting on 27th April.

That the first sentence of Rule 75 (b) be deleted, ie:
“A candidate for the office of President, Deputy President or Regional Chairman shall be a full-time farmer by occupation.”

Note: it is open to the Council to consider a modification of the above proposal, for example an amendment “that the reference to Regional Chairman in the first sentence of Rule 75 (b) be deleted”. This would retain the full-time farmer requirement for President and Deputy President.

For any rule change to be made, it must be passed by a two-thirds majority of Council members at the Ordinary Meeting, followed by a two-thirds majority at the AGM on the same day.

Jer Bergin                   Bryan Barry
National Chairman            Acting General Secretary

5th April 2016
Minutes of 60th Annual General Meeting of the IFA Executive Council held on Tuesday, 27th January 2015 in the Irish Farm Centre, Dublin at 12 noon.

Attendance
Chairman: President E Downey


These minutes record the formal business of the 60th Annual General Meeting of the NFA/IFA Executive Council (43rd IFA). The AGM was followed by an ordinary meeting, the minutes of which are recorded separately.

Opening Remarks
The President welcomed the Council members, in particular newly elected officers, together with the County Vice Chairmen, County Secretaries and others, who had been invited to the two day event.

Minutes
The minutes of the 59th Annual General Meeting of the Council held on 14th January 2014 were agreed and signed by the Chairman. Proposed S Brosnan, seconded M Canning.

Adoption of Auditor’s Report and Financial Statements
Mr Kevin Sheehan, representing the Association’s auditor, Deloitte & Touche, was in attendance, as was Audit Committee Chairman Mr Martin Lenihan. A copy of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2014 had been circulated in advance of the meeting. National Treasurer J Bergin said the draft audited accounts had been discussed at the December Council meeting and he thanked the Financial Controller K Heade and his staff for their support during his term and Director of Organisation J Kelly and his team for their efforts on income.
Mr Sheehan of Deloitte referred to the auditor’s report and read a formal statement to the meeting expressing the auditor’s opinion that the financial statements gave a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Association.


Appointment of Auditor


Annual Report of National Committees and Commodity Sections

A copy of the Annual Report for 2014 of the National Committees and Commodity Sections had been issued in advance of the meeting. The President said the reports would be taken as read and any issues could be raised during the ordinary meeting. Proposed T Doyle, seconded T Cashman. Agreed.

Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies

Reports for 2014 from Representatives on Outside Bodies and Boards had been circulated with the documentation. The President suggested that the reports be taken as read. Proposed P O’Shea, seconded T Short. Agreed.

Presidential Address

The following summarises the main points of the Presidential Address by Mr E Downey, a copy of which is recorded separately.

The President said that restoring farm profitability was the top priority of the Association. This required the immediate implementation of the new farm schemes, with the early opening of GLAS, all applicants accepted and a substantial payment made in 2015; delivery on the Government’s 46% co-financing commitment, with funding of €550m per year for the Rural Development schemes, including ANCs, GLAS, TAMS, Beef Genomics and Knowledge Transfer, between now and 2020; a Government marketing and branding strategy, through Bord Bia and the Irish Dairy Board, that delivers a price premium for Irish produce; stronger regulation of retailers, to give a fairer share out of the consumer price. This must include a ban on below-cost selling and a Supermarkets’ Ombudsman to enforce fair play; unjustifiable cuts to farmers in Disadvantaged Areas must be reversed; Teagasc must do more to assist farmers. Co-ops and merchants must work harder to improve processing efficiency and cut the costs of inputs, while banks must provide access to credit at keener interest rates; a new Charter of Farmers Rights must be introduced that reduces costly and stressful administration; Innovative taxation measures to support investment, farm transfers, restructuring and new entrants must be delivered. In particular, IFA’s Phased Transfer Partnership model, which addresses the challenge of generating two incomes from one family farm must be introduced;

In Europe, the EU Commission must protect agriculture from damaging trade deals and move to break up cartel structures, which are keeping input prices such as fertiliser excessively high,

The significant record of farmers, who deliver top quality product, to the highest standards in the world was highlighted, including the €7bn in on-farm investment over the last 10 years, the 50,000 farmers in Quality Assurance schemes and 18,000 dairy farmers engaged in the Dairy Sustainability Programme. However this must lead to improved farm profitability.
Concluding, the President recognised the hard work and dedication of the officers and professional staff of the Association and the need to continue this good work for farm families.

Election of Members of National Rules Committee

Ms A Keohane representing Council and Mr P Luttrell representing South Leinster were retiring and both were eligible for re-election. The National Treasurer/Returning Officer J Bergin said the only nominations received were for Ms Keohane and Mr Luttrell and he declared them re-elected.

Ratification of Representatives on Outside Bodies

The list of representatives on outside bodies and Boards had been circulated. Proposed J Bambrick, seconded P Joyce. Agreed.

Election of Honorary Life Members

The following members had been nominated for Honorary Life Membership of the Association by their respective County Executives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Williamson</td>
<td>Cavan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Slattery</td>
<td>Clare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May McClintock</td>
<td>Donegal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Byrne</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Thompson</td>
<td>Galway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Dwyer</td>
<td>Kerry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Butler</td>
<td>Kildare/West Wicklow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Des Kehoe</td>
<td>Kilkenny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Costello</td>
<td>Laois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam Carroll</td>
<td>Laois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Ward</td>
<td>Leitrim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Gabbett</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas F Reynolds</td>
<td>Longford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colm McDonnell</td>
<td>Louth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJ Granahan</td>
<td>Mayo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemarie Smith</td>
<td>Meath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John O'Neill</td>
<td>Monaghan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John O'Brien</td>
<td>North Tipperary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Gill</td>
<td>Offaly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Finan</td>
<td>Roscommon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Padraig Mulligan</td>
<td>Sligo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Barry</td>
<td>South Tipperary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas &amp; Margaret Leahy</td>
<td>Waterford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dermot Leavy</td>
<td>Westmeath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerry Maguire</td>
<td>Wexford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telia Cashman</td>
<td>Wicklow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winifred Strahan</td>
<td>Wicklow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Agreed unanimously that all nominees be elected to Honorary Life Membership. Proposed L Ward, seconded P Gilhooley.
Agreed that on the 50th anniversary of the Farmers’ Rights Campaign in 2016/17, that all surviving veterans of the march to Dublin would be granted Honorary Life Membership.

Any Other Business

None

Conclusion

The President thanked everybody for their co-operation and support, and this concluded the formal business of the AGM.

An ordinary meeting of the Executive Council followed, during which the President paid tributes and made presentations to outgoing members of the Council, namely Longford Chairman Andrew McHugh, Sligo Chairman Eddie Davitt, Westmeath Chairman Gordon Johnston and Leitrim Chairman Pat Gilhooley, and thanked Donegal Chairman P J McMonagle in his absence.

The AGM dinner took place that evening and was attended by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny as guest of honour, Minister for Agriculture Simon Coveney and Department Secretary General Aidan O’Driscoll. The occasion also marked the retirement of Michael Treacy as IFA’s Director of European Affairs and in addition to the Treacy family, the guests included former Tánaiste Eamonn Gilmore and his wife Carol, and former IFA Presidents and Officers who had worked with Michael over the years.
The Irish Farmers’ Association

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR
THE YEAR-ENDED 31st MARCH, 2015

61st Annual General Meeting

Irish Farm Centre
Wednesday 27th April 2016
The Irish Farmers’ Association

Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2015
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<td>Special Reserve Fund Income and Expenditure Statement</td>
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<td>12 - 19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The constitution and rules of the Association require the Executive Council to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Association and the results of the Association for that period. In preparing those financial statements, it is necessary to:

- select suitable accounting policies for the Association Financial Statements and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the relevant financial reporting framework, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Association will continue in business.

The Executive Council is responsible for ensuring that the Association keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the company, enable at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss of the Association to be determined with reasonable accuracy and enable the financial statements to be audited. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.
INDEPENDENT AUDITORS’ REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE IRISH FARMERS’ ASSOCIATION

We have audited the financial statements of The Irish Farmers’ Association for the year ended 31 March 2015 which comprise the Consolidated Income and Expenditure Account, the Consolidated Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses, the Consolidated Balance Sheet, the Consolidated Cash Flow Statement, the General Fund Income and Expenditure Statement, the Special Reserve Fund Income and Expenditure Statement, the Statement of Accounting Policies and the related notes 1 to 18. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council and promulgated by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland).

This report is made solely to the Executive Council, as a body. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Executive Council, those matters we state to them in our auditors’ report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Executive Council as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the Executive Council and auditors

As explained more fully in the Statement of Executive Council’s Responsibilities the Executive Council are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements giving a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with Irish law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board’s Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Executive Council’s circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Executive Council; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2015 to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

Opinion on financial statements

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, of the state of the affairs of the Association as at 31 March 2015 and of the surplus for the year then ended.

Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm
Dublin

Date:
THE IRISH FARMERS’ ASSOCIATION
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

BASIS OF PREPARATION
The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with accounting standards generally accepted in Ireland. Accounting standards generally accepted in Ireland in preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view are those published by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland and issued by the Financial Reporting Council.

ACCOUNTING CONVENTION
The financial statements of the Association have been prepared under the historical cost convention, as modified by the revaluation of certain property assets and financial assets.

BASIS OF CONSOLIDATION
The financial statements of the Association incorporate the financial statements of all core activities and entities controlled by the Association, as outlined in Note 17, together with those of all county executives. Transactions between the General Fund and the other entities have been eliminated in the Consolidated Income and Expenditure Account and the Consolidated Balance Sheet.

The results of subsidiaries whose activities are so different from those of other undertakings included in the consolidation are recorded using the equity method in order to give a true and fair view.

The results of associates are included in the consolidation using the equity method.

INCOME
(i) Affiliation fees are accounted for in the financial year during which they are received.
(ii) All other income is accounted for in the financial year in respect of which it is receivable.

FINANCIAL FIXED ASSETS
Quoted investments are carried at market value with the movement in market value being dealt with through the revaluation reserve. Unquoted investments are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value

TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS
Fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is calculated in order to write off the cost of fixed assets, by the reducing balance method, over the period of their expected useful lives. The annual rates of depreciation are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office equipment</td>
<td>10% - 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixtures and fittings</td>
<td>10% - 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor vehicles</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GOODWILL
Goodwill arising on the acquisition of an interest in a business represents the excess of the deemed acquisition cost over the fair value of the identifiable net assets acquired. Goodwill is amortised over twenty years.
PENSION COSTS

The Association operated a defined benefit pension scheme which terminated in 2012. The scheme was administered by trustees and was independent of the Association’s finances. Contributions were paid to the scheme in accordance with the recommendations of independent actuaries to enable the trustees to meet from the scheme the benefits accruing in respect of current and future services. The Trustees have placed the scheme in wind-up.

The Association participates in a defined contribution scheme for certain employees which is funded by the payment of contributions to a separately administered fund. The assets of the funds are held separately from those of the Association. For the defined contribution schemes the cost of providing benefits is charged to operating profit as incurred.

TAXATION

Taxation comprises capital gains tax based on the disposal of shares and deposit interest retention tax (DIRT) suffered on interest income.

Deferred taxation is recognised in respect of all timing differences that have originated but not reversed at the balance sheet date where transactions or events have occurred at that date that will result in an obligation to pay more or a right to pay less tax, except from unrealised gains arising on investments which are accounted for in the revaluation reserve. Deferred tax is measured on an undiscounted basis at the tax rates that are expected to apply in the periods in which the timing differences reverse.

A deferred tax asset is regarded as recoverable and, therefore, recognised only when, on the basis of all available evidence, it can be regarded as more likely than not that there will be suitable taxable profits from which the future reversal of the underlying timing differences can be deducted.
THE IRISH FARMERS' ASSOCIATION

CONSOLIDATED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€</td>
<td>€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12,758,292</td>
<td>12,908,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPENDITURE</td>
<td>(12,250,778)</td>
<td>(11,454,885)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit/(loss) on disposal of fixed and financial assets</td>
<td>301,661</td>
<td>41,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPERATING SURPLUS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>809,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of operating surplus in associate undertakings</td>
<td>6/7</td>
<td>488,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,297,377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxation</td>
<td></td>
<td>(92,654)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RETAINED SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1,204,723</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results derive from continuing operations in the current and prior year.

The financial statements were approved by the Executive Council on ........................................... and signed on its behalf by:

) (President)
) (Honorary Treasurer)
) (General Secretary)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€</td>
<td>€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained surplus for the year</td>
<td>1,204,723</td>
<td>2,038,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement in market value of investments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>11 (3,033,891)</td>
<td>3,111,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of associate</td>
<td>11 536,163</td>
<td>123,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of associate property revaluations</td>
<td>11 998,093</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total recognised (losses)/gains for the year</td>
<td>(294,912)</td>
<td>5,274,397</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# THE IRISH FARMERS' ASSOCIATION

## CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2015 €</th>
<th>2014 €</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIXED ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible assets</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>418,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special reserve fund assets</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13,759,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial investments</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,680,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other financial assets</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4,269,957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>20,128,491</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **CURRENT ASSETS** | | |
| Debtors | 8 | 867,498 | 1,226,455 |
| Cash at bank and in hand | | 2,824,458 | 1,722,788 |
| **TOTAL** | | 3,691,956 | 2,949,243 |

| **CREDITORS: (Amounts falling due within one year)** | 9 | (4,743,973) | (4,446,396) |

| **NET CURRENT LIABILITIES** | | (1,052,017) | (1,497,153) |

| **NET ASSETS** | | 19,076,474 | 19,371,386 |

| **CAPITAL EMPLOYED** | | |
| Accumulated surplus | 10 | 12,523,134 | 11,318,411 |
| Revaluation reserve | 11 | 6,553,340 | 8,052,975 |
| **TOTAL** | | 19,076,474 | 19,371,386 |

The financial statements were approved by the Executive Council on …………………………………………….. and signed on its behalf by:

\[ \begin{align*} \text{)} & \quad \text{(President)} \\
\text{)} & \quad \text{(Honorary Treasurer)} \\
\text{)} & \quad \text{(General Secretary)} \]

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DRAFT
## THE IRISH FARMERS’ ASSOCIATION

### CONSOLIDATED CASH FLOW STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€</td>
<td>€</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NET CASH INFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES**

14          949,657          40,698

**RETURN ON INVESTMENTS AND SERVICING OF FINANCE**

- Interest received: 9,201  22,204
- Dividends and investment income received: 354,607  302,997

**NET CASH INFLOW FROM RETURNS ON INVESTMENTS AND SERVICING OF FINANCE**

363,808  325,201

**TAXATION PAID**

(1,468)  (36)

**CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND FINANCIAL INVESTING ACTIVITIES**

- Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets: (155,280)  (149,656)
- Payments to acquire investments: (1,214,120)  (2,348,830)
- Receipts on disposal of investments: 1,153,055  2,115,478
- Receipts on disposal of fixed assets: 18,497  13,700

**NET CASH OUTFLOW FROM CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND FINANCIAL INVESTING ACTIVITIES**

(197,848)  (369,308)

**INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN CASH AND BANK OVERDRAFT**

15          1,114,149          (3,445)
**THE IRISH FARMERS' ASSOCIATION**

**GENERAL FUND INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2015 €</th>
<th>2014 €</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>12,455,344</td>
<td>12,655,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>(12,250,779)</td>
<td>(11,454,886)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit/(loss) on disposal of fixed asset</td>
<td>6,308</td>
<td>(3,675)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating result</td>
<td>210,873</td>
<td>1,197,254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of operating surplus in other financial assets</td>
<td>488,202</td>
<td>637,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>699,075</td>
<td>1,834,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxation</td>
<td>(92,654)</td>
<td>(92,752)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus for year</td>
<td>606,421</td>
<td>1,741,522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investment income</strong></td>
<td>363,834</td>
<td>313,844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditure</strong></td>
<td>(60,886)</td>
<td>(56,722)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profit on disposal of financial assets</strong></td>
<td>295,354</td>
<td>44,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>598,302</strong></td>
<td><strong>302,082</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taxation</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surplus for year</strong></td>
<td><strong>598,302</strong></td>
<td><strong>302,082</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **GOING CONCERN**

The financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis. The Association had net current liabilities of €1,052,017 (2014: €1,497,153) at the balance sheet date. However, the Executive Council, having considered financing arrangements currently in place, the ability to generate cash from special reserve fund assets, likely funding requirements in the short term and given a net asset position of €19,076,474 (2014: €19,371,386), are satisfied that the going concern basis continues to be appropriate.

2. **OPERATING SURPLUS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€</td>
<td>€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>136,939</td>
<td>125,081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditors’ remuneration</td>
<td>32,500</td>
<td>32,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and after crediting:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit on disposal of fixed and financial assets</td>
<td>301,661</td>
<td>41,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment income</td>
<td>354,607</td>
<td>302,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest received</td>
<td>9,201</td>
<td>22,204</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Remuneration of senior personnel for the period April 2014 to March 2015:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General Secretary</th>
<th>President</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>295,000</td>
<td>147,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension</td>
<td>147,194</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>442,194</td>
<td>147,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the above remuneration, the General Secretary and President had company cars.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charge for year</strong></td>
<td>1,468</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Share of tax in other financial assets</strong></td>
<td>91,186</td>
<td>92,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>92,654</td>
<td>92,752</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The charge to tax arises on capital gains – at a rate of 33% (2014: 33%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factors affecting tax charge for the year:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating surplus</td>
<td>809,175</td>
<td>1,494,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating surplus multiplied by</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standard rate of capital gains tax 33% (2014: 33%)</td>
<td>267,028</td>
<td>493,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taxation effects of:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income and expenditure not subject to tax</td>
<td>(265,560)</td>
<td>(493,182)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,468</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. **TANGIBLE ASSETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Office Equipment €</th>
<th>Fixtures and Fittings €</th>
<th>Motor Vehicles €</th>
<th>Total €</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At 1/04/2014</td>
<td>526,514</td>
<td>627,353</td>
<td>102,638</td>
<td>1,256,505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additions</td>
<td>42,046</td>
<td>9,284</td>
<td>103,950</td>
<td>155,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposals</td>
<td>(1,678)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(62,200)</td>
<td>(63,878)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>31/03/2015</strong></td>
<td>566,882</td>
<td>636,637</td>
<td>144,388</td>
<td>1,347,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Depreciation:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At 1/04/2014</td>
<td>306,092</td>
<td>480,064</td>
<td>57,549</td>
<td>843,705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charge</td>
<td>79,759</td>
<td>19,920</td>
<td>37,260</td>
<td>136,939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposals</td>
<td>(559)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(51,130)</td>
<td>(51,689)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>31/03/2015</strong></td>
<td>385,292</td>
<td>499,984</td>
<td>43,679</td>
<td>928,955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Book Amount:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/03/2015</td>
<td>181,590</td>
<td>136,653</td>
<td>100,709</td>
<td>418,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/03/2014</td>
<td>220,422</td>
<td>147,289</td>
<td>45,089</td>
<td>412,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. **SPECIAL RESERVE FUND ASSETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quoted investments at market value</td>
<td>13,759,162</td>
<td>16,429,025</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quoted investments represent shares held by the fund in publicly quoted companies. The cost of these shares was €7,191,171 (2014: €6,899,873).

6. **FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unquoted Investments:</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish Farm Centre Limited (i)</td>
<td>1,619,538</td>
<td>622,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>60,882</td>
<td>67,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,680,420</td>
<td>689,936</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unquoted investments are carried at the lower of cost and net realisable value.
6. **FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS (CONTINUED)**

(i) **Irish Farm Centre Limited**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holding</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Registered Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish Farm Centre Limited</td>
<td>48.15%</td>
<td>The principal activity of the company is office rental and related services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the year, the associate undertaking recorded an operating loss of €375,865 (2014: profit of €293,920) before a taxation charge of €7,167 (2014: €37,083) and a reversal of impairment loss of €1,255,423 (2014: €Nil). The associate undertaking had combined net assets of €3,363,527 at year end (2014: €1,290,615). The carrying value of the investment in associate undertakings represents investments in associate together with a share of the associates’ profit/(loss) to date, being €1,619,538 (2014: €622,886).

7. **OTHER FINANCIAL ASSETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investment in IFA Telecom Limited</td>
<td>€4,269,957</td>
<td>€3,336,778</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The investment in IFA Telecom Limited refers to a 100% investment which is not consolidated as a subsidiary on the basis that its activities are so different from those of other undertakings to be included in the consolidation that its inclusion would be incompatible with the obligation to give a true and fair view.

The results of IFA Telecom Limited are recorded in these financial statements using the equity method. The results of IFA Telecom Limited are summarised below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turnover</td>
<td>€7,455,146</td>
<td>€7,792,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating surplus before taxation</td>
<td>€488,202</td>
<td>€637,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxation</td>
<td>(€91,186)</td>
<td>(€92,716)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed assets</td>
<td>€3,606,978</td>
<td>€3,001,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current assets</td>
<td>€1,737,623</td>
<td>€1,812,661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liabilities due within one year</td>
<td>(€1,074,642)</td>
<td>(€1,476,963)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net assets</td>
<td>€4,269,959</td>
<td>€3,336,778</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. **DEBTORS**: (Amounts due within one year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Debtors and prepayments</td>
<td>€140,051</td>
<td>€136,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accrued income and other receivables</td>
<td>€727,447</td>
<td>€1,089,784</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€867,498</td>
<td>€1,226,455</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. **CREDITORS**

Amounts falling due within one year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bank overdraft</td>
<td></td>
<td>12,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade creditors</td>
<td>209,721</td>
<td>168,194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accruals and other creditors</td>
<td>4,368,279</td>
<td>4,130,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAYE/PRSI</td>
<td>165,973</td>
<td>134,989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital gains tax</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4,743,973</td>
<td>4,446,396</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. **ACCUMULATED SURPLUS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance at beginning of year</td>
<td>11,318,411</td>
<td>9,279,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus for the year</td>
<td>1,204,723</td>
<td>2,038,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance at end of year</strong></td>
<td>12,523,134</td>
<td>11,318,411</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. **REVALUATION RESERVE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance at beginning of year</td>
<td>8,052,975</td>
<td>4,817,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement in market value of investments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>(3,033,891)</td>
<td>3,111,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of associate</td>
<td>536,163</td>
<td>123,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Share of associate property revaluations</strong></td>
<td>998,093</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance at end of year</strong></td>
<td>6,553,340</td>
<td>8,052,975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. **CAPITAL EMPLOYED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General fund</td>
<td>757,655</td>
<td>(597,507)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special reserve fund – Note 12(b)</td>
<td>14,048,862</td>
<td>16,632,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4,269,957</td>
<td>3,336,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Capital Employed</strong></td>
<td>19,076,474</td>
<td>19,371,386</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) **SPECIAL RESERVE FUND ASSETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quoted investments at market value</td>
<td>13,759,162</td>
<td>16,429,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank balances</td>
<td>289,700</td>
<td>203,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Special Reserve Fund Assets</strong></td>
<td>14,048,862</td>
<td>16,632,115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The General Fund reflects the normal activities of the organisation.

The Special Reserve Fund was established by the Executive Council in December 1985, to maintain a financial reserve for the organisation that could only be drawn down into the general fund under exceptional circumstances.

Other relates to share of operating surplus in other financial assets (see Note 7).

13. **CONTINGENT LIABILITY**

A potential capital gains tax liability of €2,053,108 (2014: €3,078,358) exists if the Association were to dispose of the quoted investments. In accordance with FRS 19 this has not been recorded in the financial statements as the Association has not entered into binding agreements for the sale of these investments at year end.

14. **RECONCILIATION OF OPERATING SURPLUS TO NET CASHFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operating surplus</td>
<td>809,175</td>
<td>1,494,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest received</td>
<td>(9,201)</td>
<td>(22,204)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dividends and investment income received</td>
<td>(354,607)</td>
<td>(302,997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit on disposal of investments</td>
<td>(295,354)</td>
<td>(44,961)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Profit)/loss on disposal of fixed assets</td>
<td>(6,308)</td>
<td>3,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation and amortisation</td>
<td>136,939</td>
<td>125,081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease/(increase) in debtors</td>
<td>358,957</td>
<td>(584,285)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase/(decrease) in creditors</td>
<td>310,056</td>
<td>(628,212)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net cash inflow from operating activities</strong></td>
<td>949,657</td>
<td>40,698</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. ANALYSIS OF THE BALANCES OF CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AS SHOWN IN THE BALANCE SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Cash flow</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>€</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash at bank and in hand</td>
<td>1,722,788</td>
<td>1,101,670</td>
<td>2,824,458</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank overdraft</td>
<td>(12,479)</td>
<td>12,479</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,940,309</td>
<td>1,114,149</td>
<td>2,824,458</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. PENSIONS

In the year end 31 March 2012 the Association closed its defined benefit pension scheme. The Association had operated a defined benefit pension scheme for its employees which exposed the employer to substantial current and future financial liabilities. Following a strategic review and consultations with members, the Association terminated its contributions to the defined benefit scheme and a new defined contribution scheme was implemented for both past and future service benefits.

As a result, the Association has no further liability to the defined benefit scheme as at 31 March 2015 (2014: €Nil) and disclosures required by FRS 17 will no longer be required. The scheme is in the process of being wound up by the Trustees.

Prior to the closure of the defined benefit scheme in 2012, the Association agreed to defined benefit scheme termination payments to supplement the value of members’ entitlements on transfer out of the scheme. At year end an amount of €350,000 (2014: €350,000) remains outstanding.

The Association now operates a defined contribution pension scheme covering certain employees. The net assets of the scheme are held in a separate trustee administered fund. The amount payable to the scheme for the year was €687,550 (2014: €615,686). The amount owed to the scheme at year end is €70,883 (2014: €73,598).

17. SUBSIDIARIES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

The Association holds investments in or has an interest in subsidiary and related undertakings as follows:

- Fresh Milk Producers Association;
- B.V.G. Trustee Company Limited;
- Irish Salmon Growers Association Limited;
- Potato Fund;
- ICHA;
- Special Reserve Fund;
- IFA Telecom Limited; and
- Irish Farm Centre Limited.
18. COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS

Comparative amounts have been regrouped/restated where necessary on the same basis as those for the current year.
Audit Committee Report to the Executive Council for year ended 31 March 2016

Audit Committee work carried out during the year:

At the instigation of the Audit Committee, management has commenced the development of a Risk Register. This involves identification of all significant risks and consideration of the controls addressing those risks. The Risk Register is a work in progress.

Internal audits were carried out to examine controls in the following areas:

- Expenditure
- Members' Subscriptions
- European Involvement Fund Levies
- Special Reserve fund

The overall conclusion were that controls were adequate albeit requiring more detailed documentation in some cases. Management has displayed a strong commitment to implementing the recommended control improvements.

At the request of the Executive Board, the Audit Committee drafted Terms of Reference for the Remuneration Committee, for consideration by the Executive Board.

Martin Lenihan
Chairman
Con Lucey Implementation Committee

Formation of Implementation Committee

- Following the report and recommendations to IFAs Executive Council by Con Lucey on structures and procedures in the Association and certain remuneration issues, Council agreed that the recommendations would go to an Implementation Committee, which will receive the views of County Executives and also consider the 250 submissions received, and bring back the recommendations to Council for debate, decision and implementation in 2016.

Committee Structure

- IFAs Executive Council decided that the Committee would include two representatives from each region namely Teddy Cashman and Andrew Dundas (Munster), Pat Hennessy and Tom Doyle (South Leinster), Andrew McHugh and Matthew McGreehan (Ulster/N Leinster), and Maura Canning and Padraic Joyce (Connacht); and would be chaired by the Deputy President in the interim.

Role of Committee

- The Committee will meet on a regular basis to discuss the recommendations set out in Con Lucey’s report, together with the view of County Executives and the 250 submissions received and bring forward recommendations to Executive Council for decision.

Recommendations

- The Committee presented initial recommendations to Executive concerning the position of General Secretary. Council agreed in principle that the position of General Secretary under the rules would be split into two independent positions: the Director General with responsibilities for all staff matters, the day-to-day running of the Association with the President and implementation of policy; and Secretary to the Association and the Executive Council with responsibilities around governance. It was noted that this decision would allow the process for recruitment of a Director General to get under way and that detailed rule changes would have to be placed before Council in due course.

Tim O’Leary
Chairman

Deirdre O’Shea
Secretary
The Irish Farmers’ Association

ORGANISATION REPORT

FOR 2015

61st Annual General Meeting

Irish Farm Centre
Wednesday 27th April 2016
Organisation

Achievements and Work Done

Membership
- A strong performance on membership was maintained. Family membership continued to support the core member base.
- The focus on signing members by direct debit remained a core priority.
- IFA Countryside & Associate membership continued to offer a range of benefits and insurance to recreational & business members.
- Membership income represented approximately 60% of operational income and supports a wide range of services for members including the local office support structure, member communications (membership card / pack, newsletters, web, social media), personal accident & legal liability insurance, voluntary officer structure and participation, the member benefits programme, member supports (direct payments, legal, credit, Pieta House) and all major activity on campaigns.

European Involvement Fund
- A solid performance across all the Association’s income channels saw financial targets achieved.
- The European Involvement Fund (EIF) income represents approximately 40% of the Association’s operational income and significantly contributes towards ensuring all farmer interests are professionally and comprehensively represented at European & International level.

Member Services & Benefits
The benefits of IFA Membership continue to significantly outweigh the membership subscription cost. In 2015, we continued to review and improve existing deals. Member Benefits include:

- Personal Accident & Legal Liability Cover with FBD
- €75 off FBD motor, home & farm insurance
- 25% off with Irish Country Hotels
- Up to €1000 discount off finance options with Seat, Skoda and Volkswagen. Skoda Ireland also kindly sponsored a Yeti commercial 4x4 as part of the IFA’s 60th anniversary
- 12% off health screening with the Mater Private
- 20% off family tickets for Dublin Zoo
- 15% off motorist fares with Stena Line
- Up to €300 off with IFAC
- 10% off global car hire and 15% off van hire with Hertz.
- Up to 50% off commission charges with Goodbody Stockbrokers
- Farm Business Skillnets programme.
- 10% off global car hire and 15% off van hire with hertz.

IFA Member Services continued to act as an annual check in with members to thank them for their membership and gain valuable feedback and insights. In addition, member services continued to review and improve the services proposition for members including:
• Exclusive savings with IFA Telecom.
• 10% off and 100 cash back with Bord Gáis Energy.
• Exclusive discounts with Vodafone.
• Successful migration of IFAT to Open Eir in order to ensure member have the best quality network service.
• Launch of fibre broadband to IFAT customers
• Increase of range of mobile handsets and discounts available to members
• Exclusive offers for new mobile customers including free handsets and one month’s bill
• New mobile price plans for members
• Exclusive mobile upgrade offers for members
• Continued Bord Gáis Energy deal: 18 months, 10% off + €100 cashback
• Improvements in telecom & broadband fault handling

Crime Prevention
Theft Stop, IFA’s crime prevention initiative, was launched nationally in 2015 in partnership with An Garda Síochána. To date almost 1500 members have registered and marked their equipment with a Theft Stop I.D. The initiative has received praise, interest and support nationwide. The benefit of marking property as a deterrent is now widely accepted as the most important first step in crime prevention. Registration with Theft Stop is free and products which facilitate the marking of property are available at www.TheftStop.ie

Member Education, Training and Development
The IFA / FBD European Scholarship educational tour visited the Austria, Slovenia & Italy. The group of 30 Irish farmers received a comprehensive overview of agriculture in the region, visiting marts, dairy and horticulture farms and beef and lamb processors and feedlots. IFA is grateful to FBD for its continued support of this initiative.

IFA provided training to the following groups:
- Executive Board
- Executive Council – New Members
- New County Chairman Training & Networking with Branch Chairs
- Young Leaders 2015
- Pre AGM Training for Branch Chairs & Secretaries
- Commodity Committees
- Discussion Groups

Priorities for 2016
• Focus on maintaining membership levels and improving the range of support services and benefits.
• Improve European Involvement Fund efficiencies and ensure each sector contributes adequately.
• Continue to develop new commercial partnerships which add value to the member’s subscriptions.
• Build on communicating channels which allow direct communications with members
• Continue the roll out of Theft stop and develop a national text alert programme in partnership with An Garda Síochana.
• Ensuring Government and the telecoms industry deliver a high speed broadband service for rural communities to enable farmers and rural dwellers access core personal and business services e.g. banking, insurance, financial.
• The IFA training and development division will continue to provide support to the leadership of the Association and to discussion/producer groups particularly in Leadership, Governance, Communications, Negotiation IT and Finance areas.

Finally on behalf of all Regional, Organisation and Member Services staff, we would like to acknowledge and thank all our voluntary officers for their help.

Jer Bergin                                   James Kelly
Chairman, Member Services                  Director of Organisation
The Irish Farmers’ Association

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015
OF
NATIONAL COMMITTEES & COMMODITY SECTIONS

61st Annual General Meeting

Irish Farm Centre
Wednesday 27th April 2016
Annual Report for 2015 of National Committees, Commodity Sections & Project Teams

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Achievements and Work Done

Cattle Prices
- Finished cattle prices increased by 8% or over €100 per head, with the average R3 steer price at €4.19/kg. Heifers at €4.32. Bulls at €4.13 and O3 cows at €3.53.
- Irish cattle price were on average 7.2% above EU prices for 2015, but 17% below UK prices for 2015. Store and weanling prices increased 10% on 2014 levels.
- Cattle supplies at the meat plants were back 83,000. Carcase weights increased by 5kgs.
- Strong prices were driven by tighter supplies and a strong exchange rate with sterling which increased returns from our largest market in the UK.
- Strong IFA campaign on prices throughout the year. IFA twice weekly information on cattle prices through text, web and twitter.

Markets
- Main export markets for Irish beef were the UK, Italy, Holland, France and Germany. Total exports of 500,000 valued at €2.4bn.
- New market access was secured to the US and Canada, and the ban on China was lifted.

Live Exports
- Live exports were back 25% or 59,000 head in 2015, driven by strong calf and store prices.
- Calf exports of 85,546, weanlings 43,240 and finished cattle of 48,735.
- Main live markets are N Ireland, GB, Italy, Spain, and Holland.
- IFA lobbied hard on live export access in 2015 ensuring ferry access to the UK and EU markets.
  IFA work secured a reopening of the live export market to Egypt in 2016 and is working on opening the trade to Turkey.
- Live exports are vital for price competition and market outlets. IFA work closely with DAFM, Bord Bia and exporters to maximise the volume and value of the trade.

Beef Forum/ Weights/ Specifications and QPS
- IFA progressed a number of important issues for beef farmers at the Beef Forum meetings throughout 2015, with Minister Coveney in the chair.
- No carcase weight limit penalties were applied to cattle sales throughout 2015. Factories have imposed weight limit penalties since Jan/Feb 2016 on a piecemeal basis. The weight limit cuts are predominantly impacting on quality animals from the suckler herd and will cost farmers over €10m pa. Carcase weight limits were never part of the QPS.
- IFA has secured agreement from the Minister that DAFM AO will be used to monitor carcase trim and classification in the meat plants.

Quality Assurance
- IFA highlighted farmer problems with the QS scheme and is working with Bord Bia on a new set of producer criteria. It has been agreed that a new close out approach will apply, which will allow farmers correct non compliances while remaining in the scheme.
  In addition, IFA is seeking a simplification and consolidation of the scheme and the new criteria that have been put forward in order to make it more farmer friendly.
- 47,000 beef farmers in QA scheme. IFA has secured funding of €5m so as inspections paid for by the DAFM.
Competition

- IFA has highlighted the competition issues in the beef sector and the implications for producers from the proposed Slaney/ABP JV.
- IFA has met with Linden/Slaney/ICM/ABP on a number of times highlighting farmer concerns.
- IFA is working on a submission to the relevant competition authority, which will focus on competition in the beef and sheep processing sectors as well as rendering and other issues.

Trade Deals

- TTIP and Mercosur – IFA continue to lobby/highlight the implications for the beef sector from any trade deal at national with the Government and EU levels.
- The key issues are the level of TRQ access for beef into the EU, the new tariff rates, sensitive product status and EU standards particularly on equivalence on traceability, animal health and veterinary medicines control as well as the environment, SPS measures.
- IFA will continue to maintain a strong campaign on these trade deals to ensure that the Irish and EU agriculture sectors are not sacrificed in any negotiations to secure an overall trade deal. IFA has highlighted that the EU beef market and landscape has changed in recent years with a 500,000t reduction in beef consumption and the abolition of milk quotas as well as climate change commitments. In addition the EU must maintain a strong defence of EU standards and cannot accept imports which fail to meet these standards.

Support for the Suckler Cow Herd/ Beef Genomics

- IFA secured €52m under the Beef Genomics scheme for suckler farmers. 29,000 farmers applied on 630,000 cows.
- IFA held 20 meetings across the country on the BDGS and made significant progress securing changes to clawback on sale and transfer, allowing pre 2013 cows qualify, using 2015 as a reference year for over 1,000 cases and getting a 27% reduction in testing costs. IFA continues to pursue other changes to the scheme.
- Strong IFA campaign for targeted support for the suckler herd of €200 per cow.

Farm Schemes

- Strong IFA campaign during CAP reform and in Budget 2016 secured positive funding for farm schemes for the livestock sector including Basic Payment scheme, BDGP, ANCs, GLAS, TAMs and Knowledge Transfer scheme.
- IFA secured significantly changes on simplification, pre checking, tolerances, yellow card system and reduced penalties on the basic payment and greening scheme in 2016.

Priorities for 2016

- Maximising cattle prices, market returns, market access, live exports and competition.
- Strong opposition and defence of beef sector in any EU trade deals.
- The latest Market information and prices for producers on ifa.ie and ifarm.ie.
- Ensuring reasonable and fair specifications and conditions for the sale of stock including the QPS, Bord Bia QS.
- Securing pay out of all farm schemes on time within deadlines.
- Representing Irish livestock farmer

Henry Burns
Chairman

Kevin Kinsella
Director of Livestock
National Dairy Committee

Continuing production growth globally and especially in post quota EU, and the persistence of demand depressing factors including the absence of China and Russia from markets, and the major fall in oil revenues led to close on two years of steady dairy and milk price falls. EU output volumes grew 2.5% in 2015, with Irish volumes contributing significantly, with a 13.3% increase on the previous year.

GDT prices fell back to 2009 historical lows, while EU commodity markets also fell significantly. Intervention was used again for SMP from autumn, with the maximum 109,000t bought in by end of March 2016. The EU doubled the intervention limits, among other measures, in March, in a bid to stabilise dairy markets.

January 2016 farm milk prices were approximately 5.5c/l or 18% down on January 15.

While increased volumes, high constituents and good grazing conditions helped secure reasonable incomes in 2015, 2016 will be a challenging year for dairy farmers. Their cash flow will be stretched by below cost milk prices, and by high spring feeding bills due to bad weather and higher cow numbers, superlevy and investment repayments, and 2014/15 tax liabilities.

Industry investment for the increased volume of milk was tested by strong production growth. Ornua, jointly with Dairygold started building a new centre of excellence and butter packing plant on the Dairygold Castle Farm site in Mitchelstown. The Kerry R&D site in Naas opened during 2015. Ornua and a number of co-ops announced additional investments during the year.

Achievements and Work Done

Milk price campaign
- IFA pressure helped minimise price cuts and maximise co-op support of milk prices during 2015 despite weakening returns.
- IFA produced regularly updated market and lobbying reports to support Committee members in their communication with co-op boards.
- IFA lobbying helped obtain EU targeted aid measures utilising superlevy funds for payments to dairy farmers. IFA secured 50/50 matching national exchequer money. Dairy farmers received €1395 late 2015, and young farmers an extra €800 this year.
- IFA met all co-ops in early 2016, to challenge them on the farmer, milk price and credit supports they need to put in place through the next turbulent few months.

Dairy Forum and risk management
- IFA obtained the reconvening of the Dairy Forum in March to increase pressure on Government and on other stakeholders to focus their efforts on co-ordinating support on tax, finance, merchant credit, price supports, and new risk management tools. Also in preparation for the EU Agri Council debate on the dairy crisis.
- The EU Council meeting decided to double intervention ceilings to stabilise SMP prices, allow member states to provide for voluntary production control, temporarily allowed state aids up to €15,000 per farmer per year, and a number of other measures.

Sustainable Dairy Assurance Scheme
- Over 62% of dairy farmers are certified under the SDAS as of spring 2016.
- Greater commitment to the necessary support to help farmers successfully complete the audit has been obtained in most co-ops, with the vast majority of farmers now participants in the process.
- The average score before any close-out is 95.5%.
IFA has highlighted discrepancies between auditors and has helped resolve some disagreements over the nature of some non-compliances. At IFA’s behest, a feedback system is available, which allows farmers rate their auditor.

Priorities for 2016

Milk prices and dairy incomes
- IFA is challenging the industry's strategy so that farmers do not carry 100% of the risk of much riskier markets. A fairer share out of the extremely volatile margins must prevail.
- IFA will work with the Dairy Forum to optimise the utilisation of the new EU measures, especially on State Aid allowances, to support farmers’ cash flow.
- IFA will be vigilant at EU level to resist the reintroduction of any mandatory supply control tools.
- IFA will organise a major conference titled “How to Make Risk Management Work for Farmers”, targeted to co-op board members, to encourage the development of more industry options to help farmers cope with volatile incomes.
- IFA will continue to campaign for tax solutions to volatility, and greater flexibility and competition in farm finance offerings, as well as practical support on cost cutting and budgeting through Teagasc and co-ops.
- IFA will continue lobbying co-ops monthly on milk prices, monitoring market developments and adjusting strategy accordingly as prices improve later in 2016/17.

Implementation of SDAS scheme
- In light of the decision by Bord Bia and the industry to have all farmers certified by the end of 2016, IFA will press for much greater support for farmers through the process by all co-ops.
- IFA will remain vigilant to discrepancies between auditors and communication issues between Bord Bia and farmers, and will resist any change to the scheme until all farmers have had the opportunity to get certified.

Measurement of production costs by Teagasc's NFS and e-Profit Monitor
- Jointly with the Liquid Milk Committee and FMP, the Dairy Committee has produced a policy paper and started a dialogue with Teagasc to obtain that they deal with the cost elements currently not covered by the NFS or the e-Profit Monitor, especially farmers’ own labour input.

Sean O’Leary  
Chairman

Catherine Lascurettes  
Executive
National Liquid Milk Committee

With a further 18% fall in base manufacturing milk prices through 2015 and 2016, securing the necessary increased 15/16 winter payments proved a challenge for liquid milk producers. With support, analysis and information from the National Liquid Milk Committee, producer groups were able to negotiate some limited improvements in their winter payments.

Retail pricing remained unchanged with private label 2 litre packs at €1.49 in all outlets. In early 2016, the largest retailer switched most of its private label sourcing between dairies, creating concern that this may erode the margins available to pay farmers a viable price in 2016.

40c/l remains the 2015/16 break-even annualised price for specialist liquid milk producers. However, low base prices and renegotiated, increased winter payments for 15/16 only yielded 30 to 31c/l + VAT annualised at 3.3% p and 3.6%f.

Achievements and Work Done

Liquid milk price campaign “Securing Fresh Milk Supplies Post 2015”

- The Committee continued to highlight the risk to availability of fresh, high quality, local product on supermarket shelves year-round at a time when the end of quotas offer options, and low prices create pressure on farmers to switch from liquid milk.
- The Committee launched a Liquid Milk Handbook to analyse the sector, and prove the continued need for specialist milk producers to sustain year-round fresh supplies.
- The Handbook was presented to all stakeholders and regulators.
- The Committee organised a major liquid milk producer rally in Portlaoise on 23rd November 2015 where a Petition was signed by over 250 producers.
- The Petition seeks legal changes to increase the regulatory powers of the National Milk Agency to better protect the livelihoods of specialist milk producers. It was presented to the NMA and to senior Department of Agriculture Officials in February 2016.
- The Committee warned that payments would fall by 6c/l between October and January from lower constituents alone. The Committee therefore urged farmers to adapt winter calving and production patterns to provide only enough milk to cover their contracts.
- IFA calculated that to cover costs and pay themselves a modest wage, liquid milk producers would need an annualised average price of 40c/l, but have received as much as 8 to 10c/l less than that for the April 15 to March 16 period.
- Committee members were all supplied with detailed price comparisons and calculations to assist with individual group’s negotiations.
- The Chairman and Secretary met with the dairies to ascertain their plans for liquid milk in the context of the transition out of quota.

Retailer relations

- The Committee Chairman and Secretary met all retailers to highlight the margin pressures on primary producers and urge them to find ways to improve distribution of chain remuneration to help farmers reach break-even of 40c/l annualised.
- All retailers were invited to the launch of the Handbook, and were provided with a copy.
- Consumer spend on groceries is starting to improve as the recession eases, but market share competition between retailers is rife, and milk as a key value item is vulnerable.
- The new Grocery Sector Regulations have come into force, which will hopefully have a positive impact.
Priorities for 2016

Milk prices and pricing formulae

- The Committee will capitalise on the fact that autumn/winter dairy calvings were 16% down on previous year, suggesting that winter fresh milk supplies are tightening – creating a more favourable environment for price negotiations by producer groups.
- With fast rising volumes of sales through private label, the old producer price formulae which were reliant on branded sales will no longer suffice but the Committee will show there is room for some margin redistribution.
- Winter 16/17 price negotiations will start early, with some producer groups facing some major changes as distinct payment regimes within the same co-op are being rationalised. The Committee will continue to support producer groups with information, analysis and PR activity to assist with their milk price negotiations and changes to their pricing systems.

Retail activity

- In the face of a significant shift in March/April 2016 in the sourcing of private label milk by the largest retailer, the Committee will assert its strongly united view that the NMA and the NDC must uphold, and retailers and dairies respect, 3 main conditions for milk sourced in Ireland and sold under private label as Irish:
  - The milk is sourced exclusively from producers contracted under the NMA;
  - The milk is produced and processed in the Republic of Ireland and the process is audited by the NDC to ensure the milk qualifies for the NDC mark;
  - The producers are remunerated adequately for the additional costs they incur in producing milk year-round, especially over the winter months.
- The Committee will maintain ongoing communications with retailers, to ensure they appreciate the economic realities of liquid milk production, and the importance of delivering a fair share of retail returns.

Production costs – NFS and Profit Monitor

- In conjunction with the Dairy Committee and FMP, the Committee has engaged with Teagasc to have them carry out an add-on analysis on farmers’ own labour remuneration for the NFS, and make some changes to the communication and utilisation of both NFS and Profit Monitor results.

Teddy Cashman      Catherine Lascurettes
Chairman       Executive
National Sheep Committee

Achievements and Work Done

Lamb Prices and Market
- Lamb prices averaged €5.08/kg for 2015, up 9c/kg or €2 per lamb on 2014 levels.
- Hogget numbers were back 6%, ewe numbers back 12% but the lamb kill was up 77,000 head or 6%.
- IFA campaigned actively all year for strong lamb prices outlining the top prices being obtained by farmers through effective communication by text, app and agri media including www.ifa.ie

Promotion and Retail
- IFA worked closely with Bord Bia and retailers in 2015 maximising consumption and returns on the domestic market.
- IFA strongly promoted Quality Assurance and securing a QA bonus of about 10c/kg at factory level.
- IFA organised lamb forums with both the French and the UK on prices and markets.
- Following IFA lobbying at EU level, a new Generic Lamb promotional campaign was launched by Bord Bia involving Ireland, UK, France, worth €7m.

Live Exports
- IFA strongly supported the live export trade for lamb in 2015. Over 30,000 lambs were exported live providing strong price competition at important times.

Producer Groups
- IFA held a Producer Group forum, which addressed prices, markets, breeding and other issues.

Hill Lamb
- IFA continued the work of the group on hill lamb production and marketing involving the factories, Teagasc, Bord Bia, Sheep Ireland and IFA. Teagasc undertook important research work on hill lamb production, market specification and economics.
- The National Sheep Committee worked closely with the Hill Committee on various hill sheep issues including addition direct supports for hill sheep farmers.

IFA Campaign for Increased Direct Payments
- IFA launched a strong campaign for increased direct payments for sheep farmers in 2015, including a campaign for a targeted payment of €20 per ewe.
- A strong campaign by the National Sheep Committee leading up to the General Election, secured support for the IFA case from the two main political parties for increased sheep supports.

Knowledge Transfer
- IFA secured another €3m in funding for Sheep Discussion Groups.
- In addition, a new knowledge transfer scheme for sheep was secured as part of the new RDP programme for 2015-2020. Payment rates to the farmer of €750 pa.
- IFA lobbied to have dual enterprises receive additional payments such as beef and sheep farmers and secured payments of €1,150.

TAMS
- IFA got sheep fencing reinstated for grant aid under the New TAMs scheme
- Investments in sheep housing and equipment is also eligible for TAMs grant aid.
EU Sheep Reflection Group
- IFA represented Irish sheep farmers and participated in a number of meetings of the new EU Sheep Reflection Group set up by Commissioner Hogan in Brussels under the Chairmanship of John Bryan.
- IFA have had meetings with the French, UK and Irish and EU meat processing representatives as part of the Reflection Group.

CAP Reform
- Under the CAP reform, the sheep grassland payment will be incorporated and added to the SFP of sheep farmers going forward, at the increased rate of €15m pa.

Sheep Ireland
- IFA continued to work to develop and implement a strong Sheep Breeding Programme in 2015 including progress with the CPT and Lamb Plus and STAP Programmes. Over 50% of pedigree rams had Eurostar figures at sale this year.

Teagasc
- IFA worked with Teagasc to develop both the Sheep Advisory and Research programmes on sheep. The Sheep research programme in Athenry is now well developed and capable of delivering real research benefits to farmers.

Sheep Tagging and EID
- In a DAFM working group on sheep tagging, IFA adopted a minimalist approach to EID on sheep identification minimising costs and bureaucracy on farmers. IFA has insisted that the derogation on EID tagging direct to slaughter must remain.

Dog Control
- IFA continued with an effective campaign on responsible dog control including widespread media coverage including highlighting sheep kills and microchipping.

Priorities for 2016

Lamb Prices and Incomes
- IFA will continue to work to ensure the strongest possible lamb prices and improve incomes for sheep farmers in 2016.
- All New market opportunities for both processed lamb and live lamb will be pursued.

Promotions
- IFA will work to maximise the returns from both the domestic and export markets through strong promotion with Bord Bia and working with retailers and processors.

Direct Payments and Policy
- IFA will continue to actively pursue the policy for increase direct payments at national and EU level through the Sheep reflection Group, the EU Commission and COPA.

Hill Sheep
- IFA will continue to drive the case for hill sheep farmers on both the market and direct payment side especially on hill lamb, commonages, and GLAS.

Direct Payments
- IFA will insist on prompt payments of all Direct Payments to sheep farmers including BPS, DAs, GLAS, STAP/KT and TAMS in 2016.
National Pigs and Pig Meat Committee

Achievements and Work Done

Pig Prices
- Irish prices averaged €1.43/kg (excl. VAT) in 2015. This was over 102% of the EU average price for 2015. Over the past 5 years the Irish pig price has climbed from 93% of the EU average in 2011 to over 102% of the EU average price in 2015. This increase is largely attributed to IFAs extremely influential DNA programme resulting in a very strong home market and greater presence of the Bord Bia Quality Assurance logo on the supermarket shelves. To date in 2016 Irish pig prices are running at 105% of the average EU price.

Feed Prices
- IFA continue to lobby for lower compound feed prices to reflect any drop in raw materials. Feed accounts for over 70% of total production costs and therefore is the key input cost. IFA negotiated a €5/t drop in prices in early 2016 and are pressing millers hard to reduce prices further with immediate effect. Currently feed costs account for approx. €1.08/kg of total production costs.

EU Aid
- IFA secured €1m aid for pig farmers as a result of intense lobbying at both National and EU level. The Minister announced that the money will be distributed on a flat rate per farmer. This payment is compensation for the market disturbances that have affected the pig sector since the introduction of the Russian ban. IFA continue to exert pressure on the Department to allocate the payment immediately.

APS Scheme
- In response to continued pressure from IFA and other EU lobby groups, the Commission opened two Private Storage Schemes for pigmeat, one in March 2015, and the most recent in January 2016. In total, 154,000t of pigmeat was put into storage under the schemes. Although the scheme does act to support the market for a period, IFA expressed serious concern that this is only a temporary solution and a more long term view to stabilise the market needs to be taken. IFA continue to lobby for the introduction of export refunds and export credit insurance as more appropriate measures.

IFA’s DNA Certified Programme
- A review of IFAs DNA Programme was carried out recently to assess the current operation of the programme and to identify any necessary improvements in the scheme ensuring it is delivering the maximum return for farmers. The main recommendations from this review include:
  - Continued frequent engagement with both producers and A.I. stations to maintain the completeness of the boar database;
  - Following standard protocols in relation to dealing with non-compliant results;
  - Changes to the operation of any future ‘Certification Programmes’;
  - Identifying one contact person in IFA to liaise with Identigen on the overall operation of the scheme;
  - Continued engagement with retailers, encouraging them to move to a position of using 100% Irish pigmeat.

- These recommendations were agreed by the committee and are currently being implemented. The recommendations will act to ensure that pigmeat labelled as Irish in retailers, butchers, and other food business operators, is in fact Irish. IFA will be more active than ever among these food business operators to ensure as much Irish pigmeat as possible is sold on the domestic market and that this in turn delivers improved farm gate prices.
Country of Origin Labelling
- As a result of continuous lobbying by IFA mandatory country of origin labelling rules were introduced on pre-packed fresh pigmeat products in April 2015. However, IFA are not satisfied as the legislation does not go far enough, failing to fully address labelling issues by excluding processed products and loose meat. IFA made a submission to the FSAI requesting that the legislation is extended to loose product as well as processed pig meat.

Education
- IFA expressed serious concern in relation to difficulties sourcing trained, skilled personnel to manage and operate pig units. Teasgsc, as a result, have agreed to the following; A new pig production stream will be incorporated into the existing Advanced Certificate Level 6 course; A new Level 7 Pig Production Manager’s Course would be developed and implemented in 2016; A Pig Education Course Coordinator would be appointed to manage the full suite of education programmes and to promote pig production as a career, especially at second level. Teagasc have also given the commitment that if there is adequate demand from students for the pig module in Ballyhaise over the next 24 months, there would be the possibility of investing in the unit at this stage.

Priorities for 2016

Pig prices
- IFA will focus on the margin between producer, processor and retailer to ascertain where the profit is disappearing, negotiating with all sections of the food chain to increase prices and to ensure that a greater proportion of the margin reaches the producer. IFAs DNA Scheme will have an impact on pig prices during 2016. Primary processors have noted increased enquiries by secondary processors in Irish produce following IFAs campaigns highlighting the mislabelling practice’s by some secondary processors.

Feed Prices
- A committee priority is to ensure costs of production are kept as low as possible. IFA will continue to negotiate with millers on behalf of pig producers to ensure costs remain as low as possible.

Environmental Issues
- IFA has requested the formation of a technical working group with the EPA to ensure the number of outstanding issues for licence holders are resolved. IFA believe progress on the outstanding issues can be achieved, particularly with proper recognition by the agency of the outcome of Donal Brady’s court case in relation to the classification of pig slurry as an organic fertiliser.

Pig Industry Forum
- IFA has requested the formation of a pig industry forum for all key stakeholders. The main purpose of this forum is to address the current issues in the sector and set out a long term strategy for the future viability of the industry.

Promotion and Marketing
- Despite the increasing level of QA product on retail shelves, retailers will take any opportunity to import product particularly at times of shortage. IFA will continue to use the results of the DNA testing programme to expose those that are undercutting the market for pigmeat in Ireland and put pressure on companies to use more Irish pig meat.

Pat O’Flaherty  
Chairman

Deirdre O’Shea  
Executive
National Grain Committee

Achievements and Work Done

- Negotiations with Boortmalt secured a market for almost 130,000t of malting barley:
  - Delivered an average premium €33/t over feed barley including loyalty bonuses.
  - Growers who opted for the deferred November settlement date fared better.
  - Secured €160/t for surplus malting barley, €8/t over the 2014 price.
- A prolonged campaign by IFA delivered a significant premium over the market price for green grain as another bumper world grain harvest unnerved investors, collapsing international grain price.
- Sustained political pressure has secured funding for a dedicated TAMS scheme for tillage farmers.
- In addition a Knowledge Transfer scheme will be opened for tillage growers.
- The continued promotion of forward selling secures a higher price for feed grain and malting barley growers.
- The joint publication by the Grain Committee and the Inputs Project Team of insecticide, herbicide and fungicide price surveys was instrumental in forcing many merchants to cut their margins.
- Pre-harvest promotion allied with the distribution of over 85,000 technical feed leaflets boosted the ever expanding farm-to-farm trade providing much needed competition.

Priorities for 2016

Grain prices
- The outlook for new crop prices remains poor, with estimates for carryover stock into the 2016/17 campaign remaining high. The committee has met with the Commission officials outlining the deepening income crisis on tillage farms. In addition ongoing meetings are being held with key Irish buyers emphasising the need for them to support growers for another harvest.

Grain promotion
- The committee will be stepping up its grain promotion campaign, which has been very successful over recent years in displacing inferior imported feed ingredients.

Greening
- The current greening requirements for tillage farmers are complex and disproportionate with the 3 crop rule, proving inoperable for many growers that are dependent on contractors, particularly for harvesting. The committee is looking for simplification of the process.

SBCI funding for tillage farmers
- The Committee is working with the Farm Business Committee to secure lower cost funding from the SBCI for tillage farmers.

Forward selling key to price risk management
- Forward selling is an important price risk management tool. The first of a number of seminars was held in February to explain the role of price risk management.
GLAS Plus for tillage farmers

- Talks are ongoing with the Department to secure additional funding for tillage farmers through a GLAS plus type scheme.

Nitrates

- Phosphorous availability is a serious issue on high PH soils and needs to be addressed. In addition P placement should be allowed on winter crops sown after the current cut-off date.

IFA funded Teagasc break crop research programme

- The 5 year programme commenced in 2014. Crop advisory bulletins will issue this year based on the outcome of the trials to-date.

Liam Dunne       Fintan Conway
Chairman         Executive
Achievements and Work Done

**Brucellosis**
- All on farm Brucellosis pre-movement testing has been discontinued in 2015, culminating on the 28th September with the removal of the pre-movement test requirement for female animals over 24 months – worth €6m annually to farmers.

**TB**
- IFA secured a reversal of the DAFM approach to liability to pay for TB testing, which exposed farmers to payment of more than one TB test in the year. Where a herdowner has paid for a full herd test in the calendar year or in the previous 10 months even if this test was not completed on time any extra testing required in the herd will be paid for by the Department.
- Secured removal of ‘Medication of Animals’ as penal offence from TB SI
- IFA secured the first fundamental changes to the TB compensation schemes in over 20 years following a prolonged campaign, which reduce some of the enormous financial loss, associated with TB breakdowns and represent a positive first step in addressing the burden of the disease controls on farms.
- **Income Supplement**
  The rate of income Supplement for dairy cows will be increased from €25.39/cow/month to €55/cow/month, the 10% threshold for the Income Supplement will be retained as a general rule but extend it to include herds which lose at least 10% of their dairy cows, the 100 animal ceiling in the income supplement scheme will be abolished.
  Continued eligibility for income supplement assessed after 12 months.
- **Depopulation Grant**
  The rate of the Depopulation grant for dairy cows will be fixed at the same rate as that for the Income Supplement.
  The Depopulation grant rate for suckler cows will be increased from €31.74 to bring it into line with the Income Supplement rate of €38.09.
- **Hardship Grant**
  The Hardship grant scheme will be extended to dairy farmers even when producing milk.
- **Live Valuations**
  The ceilings on payments under the On Farm Valuation scheme will be increased from €2,800 for a bovine to €3,000 and from €3,500 to €4,000 for a stock bull and €5,000 for a pedigree bull.
  Separate categories will be introduced for served heifers and heifers with breeding potential.
  The EBI top-up coefficient for dairy cows will be reduced from €1.35 to €0.50.
- **Purchase in prohibition**
  The Department will endeavour to alleviate the problems arising from the prohibition in EU legislation on buying in to restricted herds by adopting as flexible an approach to feedlots as possible. DAFM will also be willing to allocate herd numbers to farmers where they have parcels of land where there are no cattle currently and will permit them to buy in cattle onto these land parcels.
- **Figures**
  In 2015 Reactor numbers reduced by 828 to 15,317, Herd Incidence reduced to 3.37% or 3,823 herds compared to 3.64% or 4,111 herds in 2014. APT (reactors per ‘000 tests) in 2015 were 1.82 down from 1.91 in 2014. The lowest figures recorded.
- DAFM study of TB in deer established incidence of disease of 16% - 24%.
IFA secured increased support payments for PI’s disposed of in 2015 and 2016.

2016 support payments for beef bred animals in suckler herds remain unchanged at €140 if disposed of within 5 weeks and €90 if disposed of within 7 weeks, payments for female dairy breed animals has increased by €20 to €120 if disposed of within 5 weeks and €70 if disposed of within 7 weeks.

IFA secured higher level ex-gratia payments for farmers losing a disproportionate number of calves as PI’s in 2014.

IFA have secured a commitment from DAFM that the unacceptable delays associated with BVD payments will not be repeated with a payment target of 2 months from close of scheme established.

31,272 PI animals have been removed from the national herd with only 324 of the 2013/14 and 2015 born animals or 1% still recorded as live on the system.

The number of herds identifying PIs has reduced from 9,485 herds in 2013 to 4,707 herds in 2015, a reduction of 50%; the number of PIs being disclosed has also reduced from 13,895 in 2013, to 7,442 in 2015, a reduction of 46%.

Figures to date in 2016 continue to show similar levels of reduction compared to the same period in 2015. The number of PIs is down from 2,311 to 1,117 with the number of herds with PIs down from 1,517 to 799 this year.

55,091 herds have attained negative herd status (NHS) – these herds are eligible for reduced cost testing, ranging from €2.35 to €2.80 with the majority of labs charging €2.50.

**Charter of Rights**

IFA secured inclusion in the charter specific reference to farmer pay obligations for TB testing and clarity from DAFM in relation to flexibility that can be provided for the re-scheduling of tests without sanction. The charter also includes a commitment from DAFM to make every effort to contact herd owners before restricting their herd. Issues relating to the compensation schemes and badger capture are also included.

**Priorities for 2016**

- Continue the reduction levels of TB
- Establishment of Deer management programme surrounding TB outbreaks
- Further flexibility on the purchase in prohibition including compensation where purchase is prohibited
- Resolution to the difficulties associated with calves retained in dairy herds due to TB restriction
- DAFM led and funded IBR programme
- Alternative lower cost monitoring option for the final phase of the BVD programme
- Provision of higher level ex gratia BVD payments for 2015 and remainder of programme
- Competitive and efficient Fallen Animal disposal structure
- Greater access for farmers to and more transparency in pricing of veterinary medicines in EU veterinary medicine proposals and protection of existing supply routes
- Protection of live export trade and removal of unnecessary controls under EU Official controls proposals from disease eradication schemes
- Prevention of extra costs/inspections under EU Animal Health law proposals
- Detailed analysis of costs and benefits of the pilot Johnes control programme

*Bert Stewart*
*Chairman*

*Tomas Bourke*
*Executive*
Aquaculture Section

Achievements and Work Done

- **Licence Review Commitment**: IFA secured a commitment – with timelines – to an independent review of the aquaculture licencing regime in “FoodWise 2025”.

- **Major Behaviour and Attitudes Survey** published on public perception of aquaculture – circulated widely to media, politicians, business, Brussels and internationally

- Unique detailed report on economic sustainability of **Recirculation Aquaculture Systems for salmon farming** in Ireland.

- **EMFF Grant programmes launched** – 40% capital aid for fully licenced producers €34m is available to aquaculture and IFA is insisting that this be spent in full on progressing a range of investments including hatcheries, new growing methods and cost saving equipment/practices.

- Socio Economic Assessment of the Irish oyster industry commissioned and published by IFA, prepared by prof Alan Renwick, UCD.

Priorities for 2016

- **Renewals** for salmon farm licences. To work with BIM and the Dept to ensure a cost effective and workable renewal process for marine salmon farms is put in place during 2016.
- To work with the Marine Institute and BIM on **Oyster** health/mortality problems
- To launch the new **Aquabusiness H.Dip.** in Carlow IT (Wexford campus)
- To pursue recognition for IFA Aquaculture as a **Producer Organisation** under new Common Market organisation for Fisheries rules
- IFA will ensure momentum on **licencing** is kept on to clear the remaining backlog of renewals and new licence applications. IFA’s priority will continue to be to reduce the backlog and redtape and achieve a more user-friendly, responsive licencing system with clear deadlines and flexibility to allow farmers to adjust holdings to accomodate new techniques and technology.

Jerry Gallagher
ISA Chairman

Damien O’Keeffe
ISGA Chairman

Richie Flynn
Executive
Communications

Achievements and Work Done

National and Regional media
Our focus remains on securing coverage of IFA issues in the national and regional media. We place a particular focus on the Farmers Journal each week, and also work to promote IFA policies and campaigns in all national and regional print, broadcast and online media. The IFA Page in the Farmers Journal provides a weekly opportunity to highlight IFA activities and events. The development of digital is putting pressure on newspapers.

Media Appointments
Louise Hogan took over as Editor of the Farming Independent. The significant increase in TV news coverage for IFA activities and agriculture that we experienced during 2014 has been maintained in 2015. Alison Healy has undertaken an extended leave-of-absence from the position of Farming & Food Correspondent in the Irish Times. A commitment was given to have somebody fill the role, but this has not materialised.

A round of meetings with Editors of the national media will be scheduled with the new President in the coming months.

IFA website
- IFA’s main online platform - www.ifa.ie – is updated daily with news on IFA campaigns and policies, and with information and updates relevant to agriculture, farming and IFA member interests.
- Content was updated and refreshed in all section of the website during 2015. In addition, new sections on Farm Schemes and Payments and on Rural Security were developed.
- A total of 169,500 users accessed the IFA website during 2015 – 50% of these were new users. In total, the website was accessed 323,500 times during 2015. The most popular content on the website during 2015 included: market reports, latest news, schemes and payments, sector pages, and member benefits. About half of the website users access the website on mobile or tablet devices.

Social media
- IFA has continued to develop its presence and impact on social media, increasing to more than 7,000 Twitter followers. On average, 6,600 people see IFA tweets each day. IFA Member Services also maintains a Facebook account.

iFarm
- The IFA app, iFarm was upgraded to a native app during 2015. More than 30,000 people used the iFarm app during 2015 - 20% of these were new users. In total, iFarm was accessed 141,500 times during 2015. iFarm users now receive notifications to their phone when new content is published.
Email
- During 2015, IFA began a new member email programme. An Autumn Newsletter and a Budget Update were issued to general membership by email. In addition, a monthly Dairy Newsletter is issued via email to dairy membership. The email initiative will be developed in 2016 to include more frequent communication to a wider audience.

Internal communications
- IFA communicates with members via online and offline communications including via email, text messaging and newsletters.
- In 2015, IFA produced member newsletters in autumn and spring to update members on IFA work across all sectors. IFA also produced a special information newsletter on Schemes and Payments to coincide with the introduction of new schemes and the Charter of Farmers Rights. In addition, IFA campaign and delivery updates were published periodically during the year.

IFA Work Agenda
- IFA activity and delivery is logged and reported via a new IFA Work Agenda document, distributed monthly. The Work Agenda includes a log of activities carried out by the President’s Office and all sectors and is issued to the Executive Council and to regional offices.

Priorities for 2016
- Securing an increased level of coverage for a range of key events during the year, e.g. AGM, new Programme for Government negotiations, ongoing price campaigns;
- Maintaining our presence as the leading voice for farm families and their issues;
- Further development of digital communications, both internal and external.

Niall Madigan
National Press Officer

Brigid Fitzgerald
Press & Digital Media Officer
Countryside Project Team

Achievements and Work Done

IFA’s rural policy document calls for measures to deliver improved competitiveness and balanced regional development
- The Countryside Project Team launched the Association’s second national rural affairs policy document titled, A Policy Charter for Rural Ireland, which sets out key measures to ensure that the economic recovery is more balanced across the regions.

Department of Justice agrees to introduce increased prison sentences for burglars
- Following significant lobbying by IFA of Minister for Justice Frances Fitzgerald and her predecessor, Government has introduced new legislation which will now result in longer jail terms being imposed on burglars who continue to target family homes. This must now be followed up with increased policing hours and presence of mobile units in rural areas by An Garda Síochána.

Castletownroche win Rural Spring clean initiative
- IFA Countryside teamed up with IFFPG for a Rural Spring Clean campaign during April, where farm families and rural dwellers across the country took part and did exceptional work in their local communities. Castletownroche was awarded the top prize, cleaning up in excess of 11 miles of road and making a real difference.

IFA call for “rural proofing” of all Government decisions
- The Project Team met with a number of Government officials including Minister for Rural Affairs and called for the “rural proofing” of all Government decisions to ensure that they deliver a balanced economic recovery across the country.

Changes to building control regulations will remove excessive compliance requirements
- After lobbying by IFA the Department of Environment agreed to remove excessive compliance requirements for the construction of new single dwellings and for domestic extensions, which will help family members of farm families who may be building a new family home or extending an existing building.

Priorities for 2016

To continue to lobby and progress the policy measures proposed in the policy document A Policy Charter for Rural Ireland, including:
- Delivery of a high quality rural fibre broadband network across rural Ireland.
- Introduction of tax-credits to encourage employers to take on apprentices.
- Tax relief on rental expenditure for businesses to locate in villages which were decimated during the recession.
- Increased and measurable targets for policing hours and presence of mobile units in rural areas by An Garda Síochána.
- Increased and ring fenced annual rural roads budget.
- Increased fines to tackle the scourge of littering

Tim O’Leary                      Thomas Ryan
Deputy President         Executive
& Countryside Project Team Chairman
Direct Payments Project Team

Achievements and Work Done

Direct Payments
- In total €1.6bn was paid out to farmers in Direct Payments, the majority within the payment deadlines set down in the Charter of Farmers’ Rights.
- IFA secured a 70% SFP advance payment from October 16th, resulting in a €700m cash flow boost at a vital time of the year.
- By year end, IFA pressure had secured Basic payments in excess of €1 bn to 118,000 farmers out of total applicants of 124,000.
- Outstanding cases were held up due to changes under the new payment regime, partnerships, PCC, Companies, transfers, dual claims, and inspections.
- ANCs payments commenced in the third week of September and IFA secured delivery of over €200m 95,000 farmers.
- Beef Data and Genomics Scheme. IFA secured payments to 20,000 farmers to the value of €36m.
- 6,300 young farmers received €35.5m under the National Reserve from basic payment and greening.
- 7,700 applicants were paid €17m under the Young farmers top up scheme.
- 85% of AEOS/GLAS paid in first instalment to 35,000 farmers, worth €130m.

Land Eligibility Issues
- IFA led a strong campaign against land eligibility penalties at farm level and worked with the DAFM in resolving many cases as well as national penalties at EU level.

CAP Implementation and Simplification
- Strong lobbying by IFA at EU and National level secured significant simplification changes in 2015/2016 including a pre checking arrangement for basic payment, a new yellow card system, increased tolerances and reduced penalties for land eligibility issues.
- IFA also secured changes on the difficulties associated with Greening, minimum stocking rates in marginal land areas, National Reserve and Young Farmer Scheme.
- IFA met with EU Commission officials on a number of times throughout 2015/2016 to discuss direct payments and farm schemes including on Greening.
- IFA participates on the EU Civil Dialogue Committee on direct payments along with COPA in Brussels.

Charter of Rights
- IFA negotiated a new Charter of Rights in 2015 involving improved deadlines for the delivery of all direct payments to farmers and protocols on inspections.
- In addition, the new Charter made progress in various areas on reduced inspections, notice of inspection, tolerances, reduced penalties and an improved appeal system.
- A monitoring committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Sean Brady and has met on 2 occasions.

Appeals
- At both local and national level, IFA assisted many farmers with difficult appeal cases throughout 2015.
Direct Payment Problems

- IFA assisted thousands of farmers with individual direct payment problems across all of the schemes at both national and local level throughout 2015. Critical to this is the structure and process which IFA has set up at national level to deal with these cases through direct contact with the relevant people in the Department of Agriculture.
- IFA held a full training day for senior officers and staff with the DAFM on all aspects of direct payments in 2015.

Priorities for 2016

Payments

- IFA will insist on prompt payment across all schemes in 2016, in line with the payment deadlines set down in the Charter of Rights.

CAP Simplification

- IFA will continue to campaign for further CAP simplification and improvements in direct payments.
- IFA will represent farmers on the various Monitoring Committees covering all CAP related measures, the EU Civil Dialogue Group and the National Reserve and Young Farmers.

New Charter

- IFA will insist that the Charter is properly implemented across all aspects of farm schemes focusing on payment delivery, notice, tolerances, and reduced levels of inspections and penalties.

Tim O’Leary
Henry Burns
Flor McCarthy
Kevin Kinsella
Gerry Gunning
Economics Section

Achievements and Work Done

Agri-Strategy 2025
- Developed the IFA submission, in coordination with all commodity sectors, to the Foodwise 2025 committee, the theme of which was the need to focus on ensuring farm profitability
- Provided briefing material for the IFA president, IFA’s representative on the Foodwise 2025 committee

Trade Negotiations - TTIP
- Developed and launched the IFA Policy paper on the TTIP negotiation Guarding the interests of Irish Agriculture in the TTIP negotiations in cooperation with relevant commodity sections
- Provided information, briefing notes and speeches for IFA elected officers on the IFA TTIP position

Inputs – IFA Fertiliser Conference
- Supported the IFA Grain Secretary to develop the IFA policy position on tackling fertiliser market and price issues at EU level
- Presented fertiliser price data, and its impact on farm input costs at the IFA international fertiliser conference

Cost-Benefit Analysis work – Flooding
- Developed a comprehensive CBA report on the economic costs of flooding in Co Clare to support a submission to the OPW to secure funding for flood defence works

Budget 2016
- Preparation of the pre-Budget Submission
- Coordination of pre-Budget lobbying
- Analysis of the Budget outcomes and the Finance Bill, in association with the Farm Business Committee.

Review of Farm Incomes 2015
- Preparation of annual report on agricultural output and income, together with analysis of various aspects of farm income and other relevant economic and statistical data

Agricultural Workers Joint Labour Committee
- Liaised with other agricultural employer bodies to develop a common approach to the re-establishment of the Agricultural Workers Joint Labour Committee
- Maintained IFA position that JLC no longer has a function, given the development of primary legislation on employer rights over the past two decades
Priorities for 2016

- To coordinate and lead the IFA information campaign on the potential implications for Irish agriculture and the economy of a potential exit by the UK from the EU (BREXIT) in advance of the referendum in June
- To coordinate the IFA position on international trade negotiations, including TTIP and Mercosur
- To produce and update the annual IFA Farm Income Review, in order to ensure that it continues to be a relevant and timely information source on farm incomes, structures, investment and demographics
- To further develop the IFA responses on the implementation of the current CAP reform and to commence the discussion on developing the IFA policy position on the future CAP.
- To continue to support IFA commodity sectors on relevant economic issues as they arise, including competition in the beef processing industry, input costs and the development of accurate labour cost metrics

Rowena Dwyer                                      Kevin Kilcline
IFA Chief Economist                                IFA Economist
National Environment & Rural Affairs Committee

Achievements and Work Done

New National Roads Agreement delivers €9m goodwill payment
- Restoration of an additional payment on-top of all other compensation of €3,000/ac, which will be worth approximately €9m to the landowners on the 75 schemes impacted.
- €3,000/ac fixed payment will be made retrospective, for all eligible projects that did not receive any fixed payment.
- Buildings’ replacement costs will be at current day replacement cost, regardless of age of building.
- Land under CPO will be valued as an individual parcel, based on its size quality and location.

National climate legislation removes divisive binding sectoral targets
- Ireland’s climate legislation introduced in December 2015 excludes binding targets on the agriculture sector, which would have impacted on the national herd, following successful lobbying by IFA.
- Teagasc has also been appointed on the Government’s technical advisory group to advise on future climate policy.

Paris climate talks recognise the need to safeguard food security and food production
- IFA participated in international climate talks in Paris and set out climate policy priorities for farmers and articulated Ireland’s unique low carbon model of food production.
- The Association contributed to discussions which delivered the following important text around food security and food production: “Recognizing the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change”.

Farmers to receive compensation for new 38kV projects
- A national deal with ESB was concluded, which will result in farmers impacted by new 38kV projects and similar sub transmission lines receiving compensation for the first time.
- The new package of measures will in the first instance apply to projects in Donegal, Cork, Longford, Cavan, Galway and Mayo.

Full consultation must take place with landowners impacted by Greenways
- IFA held landowners meetings across the country, including in Caherciveen, Loughrea, Ballinasloe and Oranmore regarding proposals to develop Greenways. Meetings also took place with the Minister for Transport.
- Strong opposition continues to the use of compulsory purchase powers, and the Association has called on local authorities and all state agencies to work with landowners and secure voluntary agreements that do not carve up farm holdings.

EirGrid abandons plans to develop new powerlines in South East, following review
- Following a review by EirGrid of electricity infrastructure developments across the country, the proposal to develop a new 400kV project in the South East called Grid Link was abandoned and the undergrounding of some or all of the Grid West project is also considered.
The need for the Grid West remains unclear, due to a large number of planning permission refusals for renewable projects in Mayo and Galway.

IFA made a presentation at the oral hearing of the North-South interconnector project and challenged the need for the project, the lack of clarity regarding energy generation plans in Northern Ireland, the negative impact the project will have on farm families in the area and the inadequate consultation process.

**Smart Farming - resource efficiency initiative identifies €5,000 on-farm cost savings.**

- During 2015, IFA continued with the national rollout of the voluntary Smart Farming initiative.
- The objectives are to improve farm incomes, while safeguarding the environment.
- Average cost savings of €5,000 on each farm that participated were identified.
- Applications to have a free on-farm cost saving study completed in 2016 can be made to smartfarming@ifa.ie or 01-4260343. Spaces are limited.

**Priorities for 2016**

- To ensure that the current 2030 EU climate and ammonia talks do not hinder the development of the sustainable agri-food sector.
- To ensure that the current review of the ammonia emissions directive does not impact on the use of splash plates when slurry spreading.
- To continue the national rollout of the voluntary on-farm cost savings Smart Farming initiative. This will involve working with at least 30 discussion groups and highlighting ways to improve farm returns by better resource management.
- To seek a review of the stringent controls and penalties in the nitrates regulations.
- To ensure all landowners impacted by a CPO receive all their entitlement under the terms of the renegotiated National Roads Agreement, including the €3,000/acre goodwill payment.
- To support landowners impacted by the proposed Eastern & Midlands Water Supply Project and ensure there is adequate information available and their entitlements are protected.
- That local authorities work with IFA to secure voluntary agreements with landowners for Greenway projects.
- To ensure that the review of the River Basin Management Plans supports the sustainable development of the sector and recognises the significant investment by farmers, to ensure farms achieve the highest environmental standards.
- Work with the CER to ensure that the any proposed new charges for water used on the farm does not add additional costs.
- Secure delivery of the changes to the hedge cutting dates proposed, by working with the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht.
- To work with the IFA Renewables Project Team, to deliver a robust renewable electricity scheme which encourages community participation in renewable projects.
- To work with the IFA Inputs Project Team to highlight excessive input prices, particularly in diesel fuel.
- To work with the IFA Countryside Project Team to drive economic recovery in rural areas and balanced regional development.

Thomas Cooney
Chairman

Thomas Ryan
Executive
National Farm Business Committee

Achievements and Work Done

Budget 2016

- The Farm Business Committee is responsible for developing and coordinating IFA’s taxation policy.
- This includes the development of formal proposals annually, in consultation with other sectors, and responding to short-term taxation issues that arise.
- The following taxation measures were delivered as part of Budget 2016, following meetings and consultation with the Departments of Agriculture and Finance:
  - **Succession Farm Partnership** - a tax credit up to a maximum of €5,000 per annum for five years, can be allocated to a profit-sharing farm partnership, which provides for the transfer of the farm to the younger farmers at the end of a specified period (not exceeding 10 years)
  - **Earned Income Tax Credit** - For self-employed tax payers, including farmers who do not currently receive the PAYE Tax credit, a new Earned Income Tax Credit of €550 was introduced from 1st January 2016.
  - **Tax treatment of Forestry Income**: Forestry income has been removed from the ‘High Earners Restriction’ for forest owners who manage their plantations on a commercial basis.
  - **Capital Acquisitions Tax - Thresholds**: The threshold applying to Group A “parent to child” transfers, in the case of commercial business assets including farming assets, is being increased from €225,000 to €280,000.
  - **Stamp Duty and Stock Relief measures**: Young Trained Farmers Stamp Duty exemption and Stock Relief (both general and Young Trained Farmers) measures were extended past their current expiry dates of 31st December 2015 for another 3 years.
  - **Marine taxation**: As part of Budget 2016, the Government published the Marine taxation review, which proposed the extension of Agricultural Relief from CAT to the Aquaculture industry.
  - **Reduced CGT 20% rate** - applicable to revenue arising from land that is purchased through CPO and subsequently reinvested in the farm

Other Taxation - Milk Quota Abolition

IFA sought and received clarification from the Revenue Commissioners and Department of Agriculture on a number of taxation issues relating to the abolition of milk quota. This provided certainty to farmers in preparing their annual tax returns. These were:

- **Milk Quota** – purchase before 2000 - in the case of milk quota purchased prior to the introduction of capital allowances, a ‘negligible value claim’ could now be made. This finally resolved the unfair discrimination against farmers who had invested in milk quota in the past, but had not been able to claim it as a business expense prior to this.
- **Milk Quota** – purchase after 2000 – the ending of a milk quota was a balancing event, meaning that farmers were required to calculate the balancing capital allowance, if any, due to them in the year in which the quota ended.
- **Superlevy payments** - the super levy is an expense of the trade of farming, and, for most farmers, whose accounts show it as an expense in the first year, it was deductible in computing the profits chargeable to tax in 2015.

Additional Taxation Submissions

- The IFA Farm Business Committee made formal submissions to the Department of Enterprise on additional public consultations, including Taxation and Enterprise and Women in Farming.
Access to Credit and Farm Credit Problems

- IFA has continued to assist farmers across the country with credit problems, through the IFA helpline.
- IFA continued to engage with the banks on issues arising for the farming sector on the costs and availability of credit.
- IFA met with ACC and negotiated an agreement which would allow farmers, in certain limited circumstances, to secure partial release of security, in order that they could finance investment/expansion through another financial institution.

Department of Enterprise Advisory Group on Small Business

- IFA was represented on the Advisory Group on Small Business by James Murphy, South Leinster Chairman.
- This forum inputs into policy development on issues of common concern in relation to SMEs and farm businesses, including taxation, access to credit and other business costs.
- As part of this forum, IFA made a formal submission to the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Action Plan for Jobs public consultation.

Priorities for 2016

Access to Credit and other banking costs

- IFA has met with the three main retail banks in January 2015 to discuss issues of relevance to different farm enterprises.
- IFA is urgently liaising with Ulster Bank on its proposed sale of a portion of its loan book, including agricultural loans, to third parties.
- IFA will liaise with the Strategic Banking Council.
- IFA will continue to work on behalf of farmers affected by the actions of banks who have departed the Irish market or who are selling portions of their loan books to third parties.

Further Taxation Policy

- IFA Farm Business Committee will develop further farm taxation policy proposals for 2016.
- This will include a renewed examination of the taxation system to determine whether measures can be developed to tackle volatility, and to identify taxation issues that are arising from new farming models, such as Share Farming.

Tom Doyle
Chairman

Rowena Dwyer, Kevin Kilcline
Executives
National Farm Family & Social Affairs Committee

Achievements and Work Done

Farm Safety

- 19 people lost their lives in the Agriculture sector in 2015, this is down from 30 people in 2014. Seven of the deaths involved tractors and farm machinery, 4 involved livestock and 4 were as a result of a fall from height.
- The SAVE LIVES, Think Safety Farm Safely campaign continued the work of the Association to increase awareness of the dangers of working on a farm and to encourage farmers to take preventative action to reduce risks.
- This was achieved through a series of initiatives including: the distribution of 95,000 calendars with a monthly farm safety message, production of a SAVE LIVES pen and leaflet, a SAVE LIVES tractor sticker was included in every IFA membership renewal pack. In addition monthly farm safety message on the IFA page of the Farmers Journal and regular farm safety texts sent to members.
- IFA created an information pack for national and secondary schools, and provided support to students involved in farm safety projects as part of transition year studies, BT Young Scientist, Young Social Innovator etc.
- The SAVE LIVES message was promoted via presentations at dedicated farm safety meetings, events and agricultural shows nationally.
- IFA hosted the second national farm safety day on the 21st July 2015 that encouraged farmers to update their Farm Safety Risk Assessment by developing a wall planner, which was distributed via the Farmers Journal. A number of farm safety events were held nationally to mark the day.
- IFA secured funding under TAMS II to support farmers to improve working and production conditions on farms. The scheme provides 40% funding up to a maximum of €80,000 per holding. The minimum spend under the scheme is €2,000.
- IFA is the Irish lead in the UK and Ireland Farm Safety Week, which will take place the 4th - 6th July 2016. The slogan for the week is Who Would Fill Your Boots? Each day will be dedicated to a main risk on farms.

Fair Deal – Nursing Home Support Scheme

- The Review of the Nursing Home Support Scheme, A Fair Deal was published in July 2016. The review recognised IFA’s position that income generating assets should be treated differently and that “consideration .. be given to the application of asset-based contribution to family farms and other family businesses where the relevant assets generates the household’s income, and where the asset would in the normal course pass on to the next generation as a primary income source”.
- IFA is campaigning for the following changes to the Fair Deal scheme:
  - A cap on the maximum % charge that can be applied to an income generating productive assets, such as family farm, in all circumstances.
  - A limit on the maximum % charge that can be charged on an asset that has been transferred within the previous 5 years.
  - Clearer guidelines on the definition of “sudden illness or disability”, which should be broadened to include those were cared for at home for a short time following a sudden illness or disability.
- An Interdepartmental/Agency Working Group has been established to progress many of the recommendations contained in the Review of the Scheme and will report to the Cabinet Committee on Health in June 2016.
- IFA has requested to make a presentation to this group and this is currently being considered.
- IFA provides information and advisory service to farm families that are applying under the Fair Deal scheme.
Mental Health Green Ribbon campaign
- IFA continued to work with See Change, Coillte and Mental Health Ireland to organise Let’s Walk and Talk walks in Wicklow, Donegal, Galway, and Kerry, which took place every Sunday in May.
- The aim of the campaign is to start a national conversation on mental health, to reduce stigma and challenge discrimination associated with mental health in Ireland.

Mind Our Farm Families
- It is estimated that 13% of those that die from suicide are from an agricultural background.
- 70% of people that contact Pieta House do not have a history of mental illness, they are simply reacting to life events.
- The IFA Pieta House – Mind Our Farm Families – phone line 1890 130 022 and free counselling service provides support for farmers and their families that are feeling suicidal.

IFA and Irish Heart Foundation
- IFA and IHF have joined forces to increase awareness about the importance of looking after your heart health following the publication of the Farmers Have Hearts report that shows that farmers are disproportionately affected by lifestyle diseases than other occupation groups.
- The initiative includes a presentation by IHF at each of the County Executives and 300 free heart health checks at 13 locations nationally.
- To date the IHF have made presentations in six counties: Cavan, Kilkenny, Louth, Meath, Wexford and Wicklow. The locations for the all the heart health checks have now been booked and will commence in early May 2016.

Social Farming
- Social Farming offers people who avail of services including mental, health, learning or intellectual disability or other aspects of care supports to engage and contribute in farming activities.
- IFA has supported and met with DAFM in relation to national funding application for Social Farming project.

State pension advisory service
- IFA provides an advisory and information service, as well as representation to farmers that are enquiring about qualifying criteria or entitlements or have issues in relation to their personal rate.
- IFA provides information and advice on Farm Spouse pensions, the application procedure and the qualifying criteria under the scheme.

Priorities for 2016
- To work to change the treatment of productive incoming generating asset, such as farm businesses, under the Fair Deal scheme. To get a cap on the maximum charge that can be applied, similar to the cap on the principle residence. In addition clearer guidelines and broadening of definition of “sudden illness or disability”.
- To continue to change the farm safety culture through the SAVE LIVES, Think Safety, Farm Safely campaign, with a focus on the implementation of programme for the protection and wellbeing of persons, including vulnerable groups.
- To continue to work with the Department of Health and other agencies to improve health and mental wellbeing of farm families through a range of initiatives.
- Delivery of the IFA and Irish Heart Foundation national initiative to improve farm families’ heart health.
- To produce a guide on both Contributory and Non-Contributory State Pensions.

Maura Canning
Chairwoman

Geraldine O’Sullivan
Executive
Achievements and Work Done

2015 Forestry Programme
- The final figures from the Forest Service (December 2015) show that:
  - 6,293 hectares of new forests have been established, an increase of 2% on this date last year.
  - €73,609,214 has been issued on forest premiums.
  - 65,116 linear metres of new forest road have been constructed, down 25% on this time last year.
  - 1,210 General Felling Licences have been issued to the private sector, to clearfell 2,012 hectares and thin 11,198 hectares.

Removal of High Income Earner Restriction (HIER)
- IFA secured the removal of the HIER on forestry income in the Budget 2016, this means that forestry income is once again income tax free.
- This will allow farmers to improve supply chain efficiency as the size of the felling crop is no longer limited by tax liabilities.
- Forest income is still liable for USC and PRSI.

Farmers’ Charter
- IFA secured the following changes in the Farmers’ Charter:
  - The establishment of a new Independent Appeals office. If a farmer is dissatisfied with the decision of the Forest Service Appeals Committee in relation to the payment under a scheme, they now have to right to appeal the decision with the Agriculture Appeals Office.
  - Forest Service Inspectorate is required to contact farmer at least a day in advance of site visit.
  - The claimed forest area will be determined by the Department reducing the number of future digitisation issues.

Land Types for Afforestation
- The Land Types for Afforestation working document is a land classification system that assesses suitability of land under the Afforestation Scheme, based on using ground vegetation to determine productive capacity.
- IFA has secured changes that will see some land that was previously classed as GPC1 and paid €185 per hectare now being classed as GPC 2-12 and paid a minimum of €510 per hectare.
- The 20% rule which limits the area of GPC 1 land within any afforestation application remains in place, however this is expected to be reviewed in 2016 when the environmental requirements have been updated.

Digitisation of forest area
- IFA has raised serious questions about the legitimacy of the Forest Service policy on digitisation and the recoupment of payments from farmers. The accuracy of the IFORIS mapping system is in question as there are ongoing issues defining the forest area.
- IFA is campaigning for the inequity in the policy to be addressed and the monies recouped to be repaid to farmers.

Forest roads
- IFA secured an additional bellmouth allowance of 20 metres or €800 per application, subject to costs incurred, where a new entrance to the public road is being created or modified.
The two stage 90:10 grant payment structure is replaced by a single payment for new Form 2 applications submitted for projects completed on or after 1st April 2016.

**Climate change and forestry**
- The Paris Agreement includes a strong recognition of forests in mitigating climate change and the need to account for both emissions and removals.

**IFA Timber Sales Guide**
- IFA has produced a timber sales guide, *Cut your timber, not your profits* that provides farmers with a step by step guide to selling their timber and maximising profits. The guide is available in hard copy and online in the Harvesting section of IFA.ie.

**Bi-monthly timber market reports**
- IFA undertakes a bi-monthly survey of timber buyers and forest owners to get both standing and product prices. The Timber Price Survey is available on IFA.ie and on the ifarm app.

**Hen Harrier SPAs**
- IFA coordinated industry response from the forest sector to the Hen Harrier Conservation and the Forestry Sector.
- The main proposals for the Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan include:
  - No designation on areas identified as Hen Harrier Regional Zones.
  - Removal of the afforestation ban in Hen Harrier SPAs.
  - Removal of red zones that impede management and harvesting operation.

**Priorities for 2016**
- Removal of the 20% rule on GPC1 type land and an increase in GPC1 grant and premium rates in line with income foregone.
- To work with the Forest Service to ensure that the new Afforestation Environmental Requirements do not reduce productive forest area.
- To reinstate afforestation quota and reduce the number of red zones in Hen Harrier SPA under Threat Response Plan.
- To develop a guide to forestry informing farmers of the requirements under the Afforestation Scheme, management advice and experiences of farmers that have entered into forestry.
- To develop a Timber Sales contract to ensure that farmers’ interests are protected.
- To develop an IFA Timber Marketplace that links farmers directly with markets.
- To resolve the ongoing forest area digitisation issues and get clear guidance on mapping protocols under IFORIS.
- To remove the need for planning permission when constructing new forest road entrances.
- To increase membership and continue to improve members’ services.

Michael Fleming
Chairman

Geraldine O’Sullivan
Executive
Flood Project Team

Achievements and Work Done

- Following the severe flooding in December-January of 2015/16, IFA has had several meetings with the Minister for the Office of Public Works Simon Harris, to get a commitment for greater resources to be put in place to alleviate flooding problems around the country.
- Funding was secured for the Dunkellan area of south Galway, the lowering of Lough Rynn in County Leitrim and flood alleviation works in south Leitrim.
- In conjunction with Clare IFA and supported by IFA economic analysis we secured €1.4m for the west coast Clare area and Shannon estuary.
- Meetings with Minister for Agriculture and OPW Minister Simon Harris to secure a fodder aid package. Following numerous visits to the river Shannon area, including meetings with the Taoiseach, a further package was put in place for small businesses affected by the flooding.
- Concessions were got for farmers in relation to spreading slurry and moving the dates for fencing from end of March to end of July under the GLAS scheme.
- A task force has been set up to deal with the Shannon, which IFA has insisted must not be a “talking shop”.
- On the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (CFRAMS), IFA has had ongoing discussions with Jacobs Consultants who are carrying out the initial study on the River Shannon. It is expected that a first report will be published in mid-2016.
- It is a requirement under the EU Floods Directive that such management plans are in place and that they will be implemented from 2016 onwards. Already discussions have commenced in other areas such as the South Galway area, the Dublin area and surrounds, the South East, the North East and the Cork area.
- IFA is particularly concerned that the CFRAMS will not come up with action plans that are necessary to deal with the ongoing problem of flooding.
- Several meetings were held with local authorities who were told to prioritise the protection of coastal areas, banks on rivers, as well as remedial work to alleviate flooding.
- Following the appointment of the new Minister of the OPW Simon Harris, a number of meetings took place, particularly in relation to alleviation works necessary on the river Shannon. On two occasions the Minister visited the river Shannon and saw for himself the issues that had to be dealt with.
- Commitments were secured to fund maintenance work on the River Shannon. This will also be extended to other areas.
- Ongoing meetings are taking place with ESB in relation to flood levels on the Shannon. During the recent flooding, this contact was vital.

Priorities for 2016

- That the CFRAMS delivers real results for farmers in avoiding flooding of farmland.
- That farmland is not sacrificed in order to avoid flooding in urban areas.
- That all efforts are made by all the state agencies including OPW, ESB, Waterways Ireland and local authorities to make every effort to either avoid or mitigate flooding.
- A single authority must be put in place to deal with the ongoing flooding issues on the Shannon with farmer representation.
- That the commitment is given in 2016 in relation to resources being provided by maintenance, remedial, structural repair and flood alleviation works is fully honoured.

Tom Turley
Chairman

Gerry Gunning
Executive
Fresh Milk Producers (FMP)

Achievements and Work Done

Negotiations with Consumer Foods Ireland (Glanbia)
- Additional 1 cent per litre on liquid milk for January, February and March 2016, (approx. value to FMP members €520,000)
- Framework for a liquid milk premium payment system agreed in 2015 and in place.
- FMP resisted any movement in liquid milk payment away from the current constituent’s payment.
- Inclusion of liquid milk in the Fixed Milk Price scheme in Gill.
- Additional 0.5 cent per litre on liquid milk for 2015 (€1,060,000)
- Commitment from Glanbia to include liquid milk in any future Co-op pay-outs on milk price.
- Represented all 1050 liquid suppliers to Glanbia in regular meeting and communications with Glanbia on milk quality issues.

Priorities for 2016

- FMP negotiation team will represent all FMP members (1050 active suppliers) in negotiations on a sustainable liquid milk premium for 2016-2018 in the coming weeks and months.
- The FMP Joint Quality committee will continue to meet on a regular basis with Glanbia representatives on all milk quality issues.
- Support the National Dairy Council (NDC) in their efforts to promote Irish farmed, locally produced NDC labelled milk. This will be a major threat and will be the weakening of global milk prices, and the availability to liquid milk processors in Northern Ireland.
- Ensure that all liquid milk is sourced from NMA (National Milk Agency) approved contracted suppliers.

Larry Hannon  Robert Malone
Chairman  Executive
Hill Farming Committee

Achievements and Work Done

GLAS & Commonages
- The Committee had several meetings with the Department of Agriculture to ensure that flexible arrangements are put in place for commonage farmers under the new stocking arrangements required.
- Over 7,000 commonage farmers have now joined the GLAS scheme and it is expected that a further 3,000 - 4,000 will join at the end of 2016.
- Where there are difficulties with GLAS on commonages, these will be referred to the Commonage Implementation Committee.
- The commonage plans will be done over the summer of 2016 and IFA has got guarantees that the min/max stocking levels set out can be reviewed by the Planner.
- IFA is ensuring that Planners are not asked to determine the eligible area.

Heritage Bill 2016
- The Committee were involved in the course of 2015 and early 2016 in a lobby campaign to change the burning date from the end of February to the middle of March.
- The Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Heather Humphreys, proposed the Bill at the end of 2015 to change the date to the end of March. The Bill was introduced to the Senate in January 2016 and IFA successfully lobbied Senators to ensure the passing of the Bill. Due to the General Election the Bill never reached the Dáil.

Walks Scheme
- The Hill Committee were actively involved in Comhairle na Tuaithe and in lobbying for an extension of the walks scheme.
- Over 40 walks are now established in the scheme, which IFA negotiated in 2008. Around 1,900 farmers are availing of the scheme, which is worth €1.9m annually.

Sheep Handling & Fencing Grants
- The Committee secured increased standard costings for the Sheep Handling and Fencing Scheme in hill areas given the increased costs of investment required in these areas. Farmers who have now been paid their grant under TAMS I have availed of the higher rate of grant.
- However the main issue affecting fencing on hill farms was the requirement of planning, IFA encouraged local consultation with the County Councils to overcome these issues.
- Under TAMS II, the Hill Committee supported the Rural Development Committee in getting Sheep Fencing included in the scheme through an amendment of the RDP.

CAP Implementation
- With the introduction of the new CAP, the Hill Committee dealt with many problems of hill farmers which included eligible land, National Reserve, Young Farmers and individual payment problems.
- The Hill Committee ensured that Natura land which was eligible in 2008 and has since become ineligible qualifies for BPS and ANC payment if the land has become ineligible due to restrictions imposed.
Priorities for 2016

The IFA Hill Committee has set out a 16 point plan as follows:-

1. The funding allocated RDP 2014-2020 is fully utilised for farm schemes which help support low income farmers.
2. Payments under GLAS are increased and the €5,000 cap is removed from the general scheme as well as the €7,000 limit for GLAS+.
3. That an additional €50m is put into the ANC scheme to reverse cuts and to increase payments up to a maximum of €6,000 in hill areas.
4. That a special Hill Sheep Knowledge Transfer measure is put in place with a payment of €1,000 per participant.
5. For Hill Farmers with Suckler Cows a payment of €200/cow should apply.
6. A targeted payment of €20/ewe is required to maintain the national flock including the hill flock.
7. A special upland environmental scheme along the lines of the Burren should be put in place to reward farmers for collectively managing their farms.
8. The recently published 2016 Heritage Bill to allow the extension of the burning season from the end of February to the end of March must be implemented without delay.
9. Recent flexibilities on eligible land must allow farmers to claim land where they are not allowed to improve such as Natura land.
10. The recent inclusion of Sheep Fencing under TAMS must be followed by increase in costing in hill areas where planning approval and other Natura restrictions apply.
11. Teagasc should give priority for online courses and more flexible arrangements for farmers in hill areas.
12. Where restrictions are imposed on farming in designated land, compensation must be paid through the NPWS Farm Plan Scheme.
13. The operation of Leader through the LCDC structures at Local Authority level must ensure that Designated and Hill areas are not discriminated against.
14. The income disregards of 30% must be restored in the Farm Assist means test.
15. This scheme should apply not just to recipients of Farm Assist and other Social Welfare schemes but also to other low income farmers who want to participate.
16. The number of walks covered under the Walks Scheme must be increased. This will support the development of recreational tourism in hill areas.

Pat Dunne
Chairman

Gerry Gunning
Executive
Horse Project Team

Achievements and Work Done

- As agreed with IFA, the 2016 foal levy bands will continue as they were for 2015. IFA sits on the Horse Racing Ireland (HRI) Thoroughbred Foal Levy Committee. 2015 foal levy fund amounted to €1.683m and allocated as follows: Equine Centre €850,000, ITBA €415,000, ITM €415,000 and IHWT €15,000.
- Meeting with Horse Sport Ireland (HSI) for discussions on the industry. The issue of traditional breeding versus warm blood horses and HSI's online database, CapallOir (provides the industry with a record of horses and their achievements) was discussed.
- Meeting with HRI Chairman and CEO on the following issues: Equine Discussion Groups' funding and the need to include thoroughbred horse breeders in the scheme, breeders' prizes, fillies programme, equine centre funding and sales based levy,
- Monitored the passage of the Horse Racing Ireland Act 2016 through the Houses of the Oireachtas.
- IFA Budget 2016 Submission, IFA sought continuation of the existing State contribution to the Irish Equine Centre of €1m over a three year period 2016-2018 and that all sectors in the equine industry should contribute to the funding of the Centre.
- IFA lobbied for funding for discussion groups in the equine sector. Budget 2016 provided support for promotion and marketing activities which will see 750 Sport horse breeders and producers benefit from this.
- IFA continues to address the Horse Passports / Unwanted Horse - Horse registration issue both with the Department of Agriculture and with COPA in Brussels.
- IFA sits on the Equine Liaison Group, coordinated by the Department of Agriculture, where issues being addressed include: unwanted horses, registration, equine health and welfare.
- COPA-COGECA Horse Vice-Chairman James Murphy continued to represent Irish horse breeders in Brussels where animal welfare, unregistered horses and transport of equidae are high on the agenda.
- J Murphy made presentation to the European Parliament on the challenges in the Irish equine sector, covering topics as follows: lack of profitability in the sector, knowledge transfer / discussion groups, purchasing groups, impact of regulation and bureaucracy on the sector and horse welfare and transport.
- IFA met with the Traditional Irish Horse Association (TIHA) on issues relating to retaining the identity of the traditional Irish horse. TIHA believe more needs to be done to promote the indigenous breed.

Priorities for 2016

- Continue to represent farmer horse breeders on issues that arise in the sector.
- IFA is campaigning for changes to how the foal levy is calculated, particularly on the actual stallion fee and will be pursuing this through the HRI Foal Levy Committee and the Department of Agriculture / Minister for Agriculture.
- Continue to pursue Minister Coveney / DAFM to find a solution to the unregistered / unwanted horses’ problem.
- Continue to lobby the European Commission to change the requirements for horses to enter the food change.

James Murphy            Elaine Farrell
Chairman                Executive
Horticulture Committee

Achievements and Work Done

Field Vegetables and Protected crops, Soft Fruit and Nursery Stock:

- IFA’s robust campaign throughout the year prevented a repeat of the 2013 6c promotion campaign by retailers in the run up to Christmas.
- IFA’s campaign against Aldi’s tendering process was successful, outcomes of the discussions with the retailer continue to be implemented and meetings are continuing to ensure progress.
- IFA’s Fresh Produce growers made presentation to Joint Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture on Below Cost Selling by retailers.
- IFA continues to ensure Irish produce gets retailer priority over cheaper imports, especially with discounters Aldi and Lidl.
- IFA’s constant communication with retail buyers has ensured growers’ concerns are foremost on the retailers’ agenda.
- IFA continues to push for recognition of growers’ costs of production by retailers as deflation in retail prices continues due to intense competition in the marketplace, exerting downward pressure on the farm gate price.
- IFA engaged with retailers on quality speck due to crop issues resulting from the bad weather.
- IFA assisted growers in making a case for support from Government for crop losses experienced as result of inclement weather in December 2015.
- IFA is working directly with growers so that the market balanced in supply of Brassicas.
- IFA has successfully minimised the importation of fruit / vegetable produce, continually monitoring the amounts of produce and through liaison with retailers.
- IFA involvement in the organisation of National Strawberry Week contributed to the domestic market benefiting from the continuous rise in consumption, which was up 5% year on year.
- IFA representation to the Department of Agriculture and at EC level assisted CMP in their PO bid for 2014, receiving almost €2.5m under the EU PO Scheme.
- IFA has raised issues with Bord Bia on the new Horticulture Quality Assurance Scheme.
- IFA participates in the new Horticulture Forum – initiative coordinated by Teagasc.
- IFA/IHNSA, together with Bord Bia organised two plant/trolley fairs in 2015 and 2016 for nursery stock producers aimed at reducing the importation of nursery stock produce.
- IFA /IHNSA Pot Sticker – ‘Grow Me I’m Irish’ continues to be used by IHNSA members. Stock sales increased slightly in 2015 after six very difficult years.
- 19 nursery growers also signed up to a garden centre initiative ‘GroMor’, coordinated by Retail Excellence Ireland; with the support of Bord Bia in an effort to get people back gardening.
- Packers and merchants continued to collect the IFA Horticulture Levy, whereby growers pay 0.25% of the farm gate price of their produce.
- IFA continues to provide regular and up-to-date market information to veg and fruit growers.
- Fresh produce growers have met with the Competition and Consumer Protection (CCPC) on the enforcement and compliance of the Grocery Goods Regulations 2016.
- IFA lobbied the DAFM for the inclusion of orchards (apple trees) in GLAS Tier 1.
Priorities for 2016

- Predatory Pricing by Retailers - this is the single biggest threat to the vegetable and fruit industry. Retailers continue to abuse their dominant market power.
- IFA will continue its campaign on below cost selling; growers cannot survive in the current environment.
- IFA will continue liaising with all retailers to ensure that Irish produce is stocked in preference to imported produce.
- IFA will be lobbying for stronger retail legislation and will actively be engaging with the CCPC to effect change, through the new Regulations, for improvement in doing business in the sector.
- To work with Bord Bia on the further promotion of all crops.
- To continue liaising with merchants and packers in the interests of growers.
- To make further representation, when necessary, to the European Commission to ensure existing POs can comply and benefit from the EU Scheme and to ensure that barriers that prevent maximum potential drawdown of EU funding (4.1% of turnover) are removed. Ensure that other growers in the sector are given the opportunities to enter the PO structure.
- Work with Bord Bia on a National Salad Promotion Campaign in July.

Gerry Reilly  Elaine Farrell  Patrick Farrell
Chairman     Executive     Potatoes & Fresh Produce
              Development Officer
Inputs Project Team

Achievements and Work Done

- The project team instigated a major international campaign to force the EU Commission to eliminate import tariffs and anti-dumping duties on non-EU fertiliser imports.
- The IFPRI report, commissioned by IFA, has exposed the power of major EU fertiliser manufacturers, pointing to possible price fixing and cartels and their cosy relationship with the EU Commission.
- Several meetings have been held with various DGs including Agriculture, Trade, Competition, Grow etc. lobbying for their support for the elimination of import duties on fertiliser.
- The Project Team’s advice to farmers is to continually shop around for all products before purchasing delivers real dividends. Farmers who check out prices and / or negotiate favourable credit terms can achieve considerable savings.
- Information is king. The publication of over 100 IFA price surveys and price information bulletins throughout 2015 highlights the significant price differences between cash and credit quotes.
- The following surveys were carried out during 2015:
  - Fertiliser, herbicide, fungicide, insecticide, glyphosate, seed, TB & brucellosis testing fees, vet call out fees, fallen animals, grain and feed ingredient, fuel quality and prices, bank charges and interest rates and vaccines.
- The publication of fertiliser prices on-line and in the farming press during the peak buying season, has forced the industry to cut margins saving farmers millions of euros per annum.
- The promotion of farm-to-farm trade for grain, through the publication and distribution of 100,000 technical feed bulletins, empowers livestock farmers to cut their feed costs by pressurising compound feed mills to cut their margins.
- The weekly publication of feed ingredient prices brings greater transparency to compound feed pricing, enabling farmers to benchmark prices while forcing compounders to reduce margins.

Quarterly fuel price survey shows 20% fall in diesel costs not achieved in all regions

- During 2015, the Project Team published 4 quarterly fuel price survey, with the most recent survey (March 2016) showing a 20% fall in diesel costs.
- However, fuel suppliers in counties including Kerry, Leitrim, Mayo and Westmeath continue to charge farmers the highest fuel prices in the country, which must be challenged.
- Full details of the fuel price survey are available at www.ifam.ie by clicking on the “input prices” section.

Legal cost of making a will ranges from €50 to €150

- Legal costs continue to rise for farm families seeking to do work such as land transfers or making a will.
- A nationwide survey conducted on behalf of the Project Team found that the cost of making a will ranged from €50 in counties such as Roscommon, Limerick, Wicklow and Galway to €150 in Donegal, Kildare and Kilkenny.
- The average cost of making a will is approximately €95, with some legal firms not charging existing clients for the service.
Building materials survey highlights excessive charges

- A building materials survey published on behalf of the Project Team identified that the average national price for concrete per cubic metre is €69.
- Farmers in Donegal, Mayo, Leitrim, Waterford and Cork were all reporting prices above €69, with farmers in Kerry paying 33% above the average price.
- The survey also revealed a 38% price difference in 4 inch trunking stone, with farmers in Mayo and Westmeath being charged €8.55 per tonne, while farmers in Kerry being charged €11.00 per tonne.

Priorities for 2016

Online price monitoring tool
Access to up to date price information strengthens farmers' bargaining power, reduces market segmentation and ultimately leads to greater price competition between suppliers. The ongoing development of IFA’s online price monitoring tool, SpotPrice.ie, focuses on reducing the information deficit faced by individual farmers, which weakens their negotiating position when purchasing inputs.

Price risk management tools
Price risk management tools are essential for running a modern day farming operation. The Grain Committee and Inputs Project Team will continue to promote the use of hedging and forward purchasing / selling mechanisms as a means of managing price risk. Pressure is being applied to fertiliser manufacturers to develop a system that would allow farmers to hedge fertiliser prices.

Collective purchasing a must for the future
Co-ops and merchants are combining their collective purchasing power to increase margins. Successful farmer purchasing groups are doing likewise. Substantial cost savings can be achieved through group / volume purchasing and the co-ordinated deliveries of inputs and or services. Volume orders are attractive to retailers. Ongoing talks between IFA and manufacturers / suppliers is increasing direct sales to purchasing groups. IFA, through its Skillnets programme, will provide expert training for farmers who wish to set up purchasing groups.

Expansion of farm-to-farm trade critical
The Project Team, in conjunction with the Grain Committee, will continue to vigorously promote and develop farm-to-farm trade as a means of boosting grain growers’ incomes while reducing livestock farmers feed costs for the 2016 season.

Continue to highlight excessive input prices being imposed on farmers through the publication of regular survey results.

Challenge all input suppliers to reduce input costs and play their part in improving farm incomes.

Work with County Executives that continue to report excessive input costs and develop a focused campaign on particular input suppliers to reduce their charges.

James McCarthy  Fintan Conway  Thomas Ryan
Munster Chairman  Grain & Inputs Executive  Environment Executive
& Inputs Project Team Chairman
Oireachtas Liaison

Achievements and Work Done

- Lobbying - IFA seeks to advance the position of farmers by communicating the members’ case to Oireachtas members / relevant Government Departments through:
  - Building relationships with key relevant Government Ministers/TDs
  - Devising/executing IFA’s political operation at national / constituency / county
  - Briefing/lobbying front bench spokespersons in the Opposition parties
  - Organisation/preparation of IFA presentations to Oireachtas Committees.
    Developed a good working relationship with Committee Chairmen/Clerks to Committees
  - Co-ordination /organisation of presentations to County Councils (where relevant)
  - Ensuring Government backbenchers and all-party Oireachtas Committees are aware of IFA’s position on relevant issues
  - On-going liaison with Political Parties’ Press Offices and Senior Government Advisors.
- The Regulation of Lobbying Act commenced on 1 Sept 2015, with the first registration period from 1 Sept – 31 Dec 2015, and the first returns of lobbying activity returned by 21 January 2016. IFA made every effort to ensure accuracy and compliance with the legislation.
- In total, IFA made 117 returns on a very broad range of issues covering all sectors, which saw IFA at the very top of the lobbying register in terms of activity.
- IFA has made it clear to SiPOC (Standards in Public Office Commission) that the IT system in place for registering lobbying has limitations and is placing excessive and costly requirements on organisations like IFA and we have looked for changes in this going forward.
- IFA has also related our objections to SiPOC about extending the Designated Public Official (DPO) to Principal Officer level, as this would greatly increase the volume of work for IFA.
- IFA sits on a Regulation of Lobbying Advisory Group, made up of relevant experts and key stakeholders, which was established by Minister Howlin, to provide information and guidance to assist in the implementation of legislation. Elaine Farrell represents IFA on this Group.
- IFA has recognised the objective to achieve greater transparency in regard to the lobbying of office holders and public officials on matters of public policy and other relevant decisions.
- IFA holds the position that lobbying is a legitimate activity which plays an important role in the efficient functioning of a modern democracy. It is essential therefore, that the legislation does not place excessive, impractical or costly requirements on bodies engaged in legitimate lobbying.
- IFA has met with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on the practical implementation of the legislation and has sought:
  - Simplification and reduction of the compliance burden for registered lobby representatives
  - Access to Leinster House for registered lobbyists, similar to access available in the European Parliament
  - Introduction of similar registration obligations for unregistered groups (who have no employees).
• IFA made presentations in 2015 to the following Joint Oireachtas Committees: Agriculture, Food & the Marine, Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation (targeted support for sheep sector, dairy sector, below cost selling in fruit and vegetables and marginal land and Basic Payment Scheme) and Justice (Rural Crime).

Priorities for 2016

• Programme for new Government – IFA policy priorities:
  - Farm income crisis
  - CAP – full defence of CAP budget and strengthening of EU supports in future negotiations
  - Funding support for RDP and Farm Schemes
  - Trade
  - Inputs costs
  - Taxation
  - Full Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine
  - Retailer regulation and a fair price for Farmers
  - Supporting vulnerable farm families and developing rural infrastructure
  - Climate change.

• IFA will monitor the Government’s new priority legislation listing when published, including the Heritage Bill 2016.

• Attending Ard Fheiseanna and Political Conferences.
• Regular meetings with Fine Gael Internal Agricultural Committee.
• Continue with relationship building of backbenchers; Oireachtas Committee Chairmen.
• Continue to brief Opposition Spokespersons on Agriculture.
• Legislation Monitoring - IFA will continuously monitor legislation coming before the Dáil and Seanad in the new Government, and will keep regular contact with the Chief Whip’s Office where legislation being brought before the Dáil and Seanad is decided on.
• Oireachtas Committees - IFA will continue to meet with and make presentations to the Chairman and members of the Agriculture Oireachtas Committee and other relevant Committees.
• IFA Lobby Days - IFA will continue to organise lobby days on specific issues as they arise. One to one contact between IFA officers and their local representatives is critical to the success of these days.

Elaine Farrell
Executive
National Potato Committee

Achievements and Work Done

- Robust campaign throughout the year resulted in an increase in farm gate prices over 2014.
- Liaison with retail buyers and potato merchants / packers ensures growers’ concerns are foremost on their agendas.
- IFA continues to ensure Irish produce gets retailer priority over cheaper imports, especially with discounters Aldi and Lidl.
- Planting Survey of 170 growers was published in the autumn. The survey represented an area of 17,000ac, 82% of total area planted. Main findings were:
  - decrease of 2,400ac (10%) from 2014
  - tonnage reduction of 4%
  - Early varieties reduced by 13% over 2014.
- IFA led campaign on sustainable prices to growers with the main retailers, documenting producer costs of bringing crop to market.
- IFA has worked tirelessly with Bord Bia and the Potato Council (UK) on the EU funded Potato Promotion Campaign – “Potatoes – More Than A Bit on the Side” of €1m over the next three years in ROI aimed at putting potatoes back on the plate of Irish consumers. Irish growers will contribute €250,000 over this period. The campaign strategy is to grow the retail potato market by 28,000t, increase the frequency of potato purchase by 6% and increase the health perceptions of potatoes by 8% with consumers over the three years of the campaign.
- IFA is actively involved in monitoring the use of grower registration numbers on potatoes for sale in Ireland.
- Market Price Reporting - price information is collected weekly and sent to growers via text message and published on ifarm.ie. This information is also published in the Irish Farmers' Journal along with information in relation to stocks and market trends.
- National Potato Day (NPD) 2015 – IFA was actively involved and participated in NPD which was co-ordinated by Bord Bia.
- Potato Forum established between IFA, growers and merchants and packers to progress issues and improve structure of the industry, with a priority to get an agreement on tare.
- Continue to work with Bord Bia on the Quality Assurance Scheme for potato growers.
- IFA, in conjunction with Teagasc and Bord Bia hosted the Potato Conference in February.
- Working with Bord Bia and Teagasc on a Salad Potato research programme, which includes growers trialling some varieties.
- IFA organised a Salad Potato field study trip to the UK.
- IFA organised a Seed Potato Seminar with Bord Bia and Teagasc.

Priorities for 2016

IFA will continue to work with Bord Bia and the IPF on the roll-out of the Potato Promotion Campaign, which will include grower involvement.
• IFA is continuously working towards better market co-ordination from growers, right through to consumer. Main focus is to ensure growers are in best possible trading position.

• IFA will continue meeting with growers to discuss problems in the market place. More efficient and accurate communications between the industry and growers is essential.

• Target imports for chipping, currently importing 50,000 tonnes per year. Seeking meetings with chippers to address this issue.

• Addressing the importing of over 15,000 tonnes of salad / baby potatoes will continue and more growers will be targeted to pilot the salad varieties available, which is now in year two of a three year project.

• Requirement by growers to have a workable producer Horticulture Quality Assurance Scheme for potato growers.

• Follow up with DAFM on commitment to establish a Seed Potato Working Group of Industry stakeholders.

• Lobbying of Government and MEPs to retain Glyphosate as a herbicide, critical for field crop production.

• Targeted grant scheme for potato growers in Budget 2017.

Eddie Doyle
Chairman

Elaine Farrell
Executive

Pat Farrell
Development Officer
National Poultry Committee

Achievements and Work Done

- Agreement by EPA on the reduction in cost of transfer IPCC licence within families.
- Inclusion of the poultry sector in the TAMS II.
- Approval by DAFM for Poultry Knowledge Transfer Groups in 2016.
- Significant increase in broiler package payments for the four groups supplying Western Brand.
- Significant increase in broiler package payments for the Carton Growers.
- IFA contributed and liaised with all stakeholders in the Campylobacter forum.
- Country of Origin labelling for poultry products.
- Avian Influenza (AI). IFA initiated an all information meeting for stakeholders in the poultry sector with DAFM at the outset of the outbreak of AI across mainland Europe.
- Successful agreement with DAFM in relation to the packaging and labelling required for importing whole turkeys in Ireland in 2015.

Priorities for 2016

- **Broiler Grower terms and conditions**
  IFA will assist broiler grower groups to negotiate an agreed code of practice to deal with housekeeping and quality parameters on a standardised basis in order to endure fairness and equality through the poultry production chain for farmers.

- **Broiler Groups**
  IFA will assist in the remaining groups of broiler growers to ensure an increase in payment terms and conditions.

- **Retailer Sector**
  The Committee will meet all retailers in early 2016 and ensure that ROI poultry products are stocked, correctly labelled and that a sustainable price is passed back through the procurement chain.

- **Rural Development Plan 2014-2020**
  The Chairman and the Committee will continue to interact with DAFM on issues relating to the prompt approval of TAMSII funding for farmers and the inclusion of new technologies in the scheme.

- **To assist with poultry producers in the formation of effective discussion groups for both broiler and egg producers under the Knowledge Transfer scheme.**

- **Negotiate with FBD to provide effective affordable insurance for poultry producers.**

Nigel Renaghan
Chairman

Robert Malone
Executive
Renewables & Alternative Land Use Project Team

Achievements and Work Done

**Solar policy uncertainty may be fuelling solar energy bubble**
The Project Team met with various state agencies in recent months including the Commission for Energy Regulation, Department of Energy and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland to highlight concerns regarding the lack of policy certainty in renewables and in particular solar, at a time when farmers continue to be approached to sign various exclusivity and option agreements. Current indications are that it will be summer 2016 before a renewable electricity tariff is announced and it may be December before it passes state aid criteria in Brussels.

The Association continues to lobby for communities to be a central part of future energy policy in Ireland and has progressed the establishment of a community renewable energy development initiative that will facilitate community participation in future renewable projects.

**IFA seek basic payment and agricultural relief eligibility for lands used for solar**
IFA is currently in talks with the Department of Agriculture to progress the case that farmers who have solar projects on their lands should be able to draw down the annual basic payment and be able to avail of agricultural reliefs.

**Biomass sector**
The Alternative Land Use Committee is working with a number of major companies to develop viable markets for crop residues. However, the failure by Government to develop a cohesive policy for the development of a sustainable biomass sector has stymied its development. Major projects are struggling to source financial backing from commercial banks given the lack of clear policy direction and Government funding for the establishment of biomass trading sectors at farm level.

**Priorities for 2016**
- To ensure Government’s anticipated renewable electricity scheme includes a defined community quota, whereby a specific proportion of the overall energy output target of the scheme is ring-fenced for projects that have community participation and a tariff premium is provided for projects owned by communities.
- To work with the CER to deliver priority grid access for community based renewable projects.
- To build on the community renewable energy development initiative to facilitate community participation in renewable projects.
- To continue to provide advice and support to landowners approached to sign various renewables agreements and ensure they get independent legal advice of their entitlements.
- To lobby for supports for farm-scale renewable projects
- To lobby for the development of policy that will allow for the development of a sustainable biomass sector
- Explore the potential for the development of a bio-refining industry using agricultural side streams such as biomass crop residues etc.

James Murphy         Fintan Conway         Geraldine O’Sullivan         Thomas Ryan
Renewables Project Team         Grain & Inputs         Forestry Executive         Environment Executive
Chairman         Executive
Retailer, Processor and Consumer Relations Project Team

Achievements and Work Done

- President and General Secretary met with CEO / senior management of all of the major retailers.
- On-going engagement and meetings with retail product buyers in all retailers.
- Made submission to Department of Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation on the Competition and Consumer Protection Bill 2014, Grocery Regulations Consultation and met with Department officials a number of times on same.
- Met with the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) on the new legislation and the draft Grocery Regulations and their role as enforcers of the legislation.
- Made presentation to Joint Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture, Food & the Marine on retailer dominance and below cost selling in the fresh produce sector.
- Met with Minister Richard Bruton in an effort to get the Grocery Regulations published.
- Met with Agriculture Opposition Spokesman Eamon O’Cuiv on retailer issues.
- Raised issue of Below Cost Selling by retailers with Ministers Coveney and Hayes.
- Attended GSCOP (Grocery Supply Code of Practice) Conference in UK and met with Christine Tacon UK Adjudicator.
- IFA President Eddie Downey chaired two COPA / COGECA Working Party on the Food Chain meetings.
- IFA led a campaign ‘Christmas for Growers’, warning retailers against discounting fresh produce in the run-up to Christmas, where growers are used as pawns in a vicious battle over market share.
- Met with the CCPC (March 2016), to discuss the implementation of the recently published Grocery Goods Regulations and the CCPC’s role as enforcer of the new Regulations, which come into effect from 30th April 2016. The SI’s provide for written contracts between retailers or wholesaler and suppliers, which must give greater certainty to producers on their term and conditions.

Priorities for 2016

- Campaign against retailers on below cost-selling and intensify campaign on new Government to ban this practice.
- Introduction of an Independent Ombudsman to oversee and regulate the behaviour of retailers.
- Legislation required to provide for the disclosure of profits in the Irish market by large retail multiples, to improve transparency and re-balance bargaining power in the food supply chain.
- Ensure the CCPC takes on board the importance of its role in monitoring the compliance of retailers and wholesalers within the legislation, including all the requirements for retailers/wholesalers in staff training, annual compliance reporting and maintaining of records.
- Ensure greater certainty to producers on their terms and conditions, as the statutory legislation provides for written contracts between retailers or wholesaler and suppliers.
• New Grocery Regulations must lead to change by retailers and wholesalers when it comes to paying their suppliers promptly, and provide for payment within 30 days as a standard provision.
• Continue to monitor Irish supermarkets on their commitment to Irish produce.
• Continue to campaign as a supermarket watchdog to tackle and expose mislabelling.
• Continue to increase percentage of Irish produce on-shelf.
• Country of Origin Labelling for all fresh produce.
• More transparency in labelling between ROI/NI especially in pigmeat, poultry, fresh produce.
• Address excessive discounting of food products at farmers’ expense.
• Increased price transparency is required to improve the overall functioning of the market. This requires the introduction of an EU wholesale price reporting system for food produce, particularly in the meat sector.
• Progress EU legislation through COPA–COGECA Working Party on Food Chain.
• Address issues raised in DG Agri’s report on ‘unfair business-to-business trading practices in the food supply chain’ which in IFA’s view is not dealing with unfair practices in the chain.
• Effective statutory legislation is needed at European level to address the imbalance in the food supply chain. The Voluntary Supply Chain Initiative (SCI), undertaken by the Commission, is not working for primary producers.
• Lobby EU Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan further to achieve fairness in the food chain and support his call for EU legislation.

Elaine Farrell
Executive
National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee

The National Rules Committee deals with internal organisational matters concerning the Association. Under the IFA Rules, the Committee’s function is “to advise Council for Council to decide” on all matters concerning the Constitution and Rules of the Association and on all matters of voluntary organisational procedure and discipline at all levels within IFA.

The National Treasurer/Returning Officer (NTRO) is designated under the Rules as Chairman of the Rules Committee and is also given direct responsibility for all elections and election procedures within the Association.

Work and Achievements

- Conducted National Committee elections in spring 2015 for Committee Vice Chairmen and Management Committees
- Conducted National Committee elections in early 2016 for Committee Chairmen.
- Supported the Boortmalt Sub-Committee of the National Grain Committee and the National Pigs Committee on rules and procedures.
- Advised and supported officers, County Executives and staff on rules and procedures, elections and the resolution of differences/disputes.

Following the resignation of the President in late November, the Committee, the NTRO and the Secretary ensured that Council was properly advised and the IFA rules were fully respected in handling the situation. We:
- Opened nominations for President and dealt with a challenge to the outcome
- Advised Council to make a Rule change allowing flexibility on the timing of IFA elections – adopted
- Advised Council on the appointment of a National Chairman - adopted
- Recommended a Code of Conduct for elections to Council discouraging door to door canvassing and prohibiting candidates are from accepting outside funding - adopted
- Developed a rule change proposal for the National Officers to revert to two two-year terms - adopted
- Opened nominations for the positions of Deputy President and Regional Chairmen
- Reopened the nomination process for Connacht Chairman and dealt with issues regarding the full-time farmer requirement for candidates
- Recommended rule changes for the introduction of one member, one vote and the removal of proxy voting – adopted
- Recommended a timetable for full elections to be completed by end-April – adopted.

Other preparations for 2016 National Elections included:
- Publication of register of 947 Branches eligible to participate in elections including those to hold outstanding AGMs at end March 2015
- Controlled release of IFA member information to candidates while respecting data protection requirements and IFA’s interests as far as possible
- Briefing County Officers and Development Officers on election procedures
- Production of IFA Newsletters for Presidential and Deputy Presidential candidates and Munster Chairman candidates.
Work Agenda for 2016

- Review of 2016 IFA National Elections
- Resolution of Connacht Chairman impasse
- Ongoing advice on rules changes including the current proposal to remove the full-time farmer requirement for candidates for the position of Regional Chairman
- Issue instructions in autumn 2016 for elections by County Executives of representatives to National Committees for the term of the new Committees running from January 2017 to December 2018.

The National Returning Officer and the Committee will continue to uphold and apply the Rules of IFA, while at all times respecting the rights of individual members and the authority of the Council as the governing body of the Association.

Jer Bergin  
Chairman &  
National Treasurer/Returning Officer

Bryan Barry  
Secretary /  
Acting General Secretary
Achievements and Work Done

Rural Development Plan 2014-2020
- Following the successful lobbying campaign in 2014 in securing €4bn for the 7 year RDP Plan, the workload during 2015 was to ensure EU approval of the plan.
- Ireland’s plan was agreed in May but IFA ensured that measures were implemented earlier.
- Allocations for each of the main measures were TAMS - €395m, GLAS - €1,750m, ANCs - €1,350m, Targeted Output - €70m, Knowledge Transfer - €100m, Beef Data Genomics - €250m, Organics - €40m, Leader - €250m.
- The Committee was involved in detailed discussions on the implementation with the Department of Agriculture and met with the EU Commission on several occasions.

GLAS
- The first phase of the GLAS scheme was introduced in February 2015 the second phase opened in October.
- From 1st January 2016, 38,000 farmers are in GLAS.
- IFA ensured that flexibility was given so that farmers could maximise their payments either for the GLAS+ of €7,000 or the basic scheme of €5,000.
- The Committee secured a €22m pay-out for first phase payment of 3 months in 2015.
- IFA negotiated reduced charges for GLAS plans with Teagasc.

TAMS II
- All TAMS measures were opened by July 2015.
- The 60% Young Farmers Scheme included support for a very wide range of works.
- Other schemes with a 40% grant introduced were the Dairy Equipment; Animal Welfare, Safety Nutrient Storage; Low Emission Slurry Spreading; Pigs & Poultry and Organics.
- Following 2 tranches, 6,000 farmers had applied by end of March 2016.
- Given the need of some farmers to proceed with investments such as dairy farmers and farmers with LESS, IFA ensured that 1,000 farmers got early approval.
- Improvements were made for farmers in partnerships where the investment limit is doubled from €80,000 to €160,000. A separate investment limit for Low Emissions Slurry of €40,000 applies with the measures either available for 60% in the Young Farmers Scheme or 40% in the other scheme.
- IFA has lobbied for changes to the scheme and has secured agreement that Sheep Fencing, Grain Storage and Tillage Equipment will be eligible for grant aid in 2016.

TAMS I
- Under TAMS I Farm Safety, Dairy Equipment and Sheep Handling - 8,550 had applied and by end of March 2015 - 279 remained to be paid.

Knowledge Transfer
- IFA secured important changes to the Knowledge Transfer measure these included: two payments where a farmer has two enterprises, double payment for partnerships and a practical payment system for farmers.
- The KT groups involve Beef, Sheep, Dairying, Poultry, Grain and Equine.
ANCs
- The payment of ANCs increased to over €200m in 2015 as a result of more flexible arrangements for farmers on the borders of ANCs, eligibility of farmers excluded who did not meet the Stocking Level in 2011 and the increase negotiated by IFA for offshore island farmers.
- Discussions have commenced with the Department in relation to the review of the ANC which must be completed by 2018.

Budget 2016
- IFA lobbied vigorously for funding for key farm schemes in 2016 such as ANCs, GLAS, TAMS and Farm Assist. The allocation for ANCs was set at €200m and agri-environment schemes which include residual AEOS and full payments for GLAS at €205m.

Charter of Rights
- A new Charter of Rights was negotiated which involved improved payment regime, reduced inspections and better Department procedures.

Leader Programme
- The Committee had a number of discussions with the Department of the Environment and local companies in the context of the new alignment LCDCs. IFA ensured that agriculture is a vital element of the local plan.

Locally Led Agri-environment schemes
- The Committee were involved in discussions on the locally led agri-environment schemes in Hen Harrier areas, the Burren, Upland areas, Callows and other areas. The Committee visited the Burren Life Project in July.

CAP Reform
- The Committee were involved in ongoing discussions and had an input on the new CAP including the new BPS, National Reserve and Young Farmers schemes.

Priorities for 2016
- The Committee will continue to seek changes to ensure that the full allocation of €4bn to the programme is utilised.
- Further amendments will be sought through the RDP Monitoring Committee.
- The early opening of GLAS to ensure 50,000 farmers are in the scheme from 1st January 2017.
- Getting the Targeted Output Scheme up and running in 2016.
- In the ANC review IFA will be ensuring that no area loses out and areas that have been excluded in the past are now included.
- That the allocation to ANCs is increased to €250m so as to restore the losses arising out of cuts in Budget 2008.
- The restoration of the income disregards for Farm Assist assessment.
- Ensuring that the Charter of Rights commitment for approvals of TAMS and payments across all schemes is fully honoured.

Flor McCarthy
Chairman

Gerry Gunning
Executive
SAC Project Team

Achievements and Work Done

- The SAC Project Team dealt with most of the issues resulting in the designations of land under the EU Habitats and Birds Directive.
- Several meetings were held with the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys where IFA called for the honouring of all compensation agreements where designations are imposed.
- The main issues were in relation to the SAC 1997 and 2004 Agreements and pressing that the deal is honoured.
- IFA has levelled criticism at the Minister for not renewing the National Parks and Wildlife Farm Plans Scheme for farmers who are not joining the new GLAS Scheme.
- IFA is represented on the Designated Areas Appeals Board which deals with appeals to the designation of land.
- In relation to flooding, IFA raised the restrictions in relation to dredging and river maintenance on designated rivers.
- As part of the ongoing campaign on designations and related matters on restrictions, IFA has launched a poster campaign entitled “National Parks and Wildlife and Bird Watch – Keep off our land, no designation without compensation”. This was launched in Shannon Harbour on 30th March 2016.
- This campaign will be extended to highlight the lack of proper compensation for designations.
- The Hen Harrier threat response group has met on several occasions and IFA has criticised the delay in getting a farm scheme up and running as well as allowing forestry to continue in these areas. IFA got clarification on Natura SAC/SPA sites with regards to eligibility. Under the Basic Payment Scheme terms and Conditions Article 32 (2)(b)(i) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 in the case of Natura sites where similar lands that are not designated may be deemed ineligible for payment. Article 32 declares that the Natura land is eligible for payment under the Basic Payment Scheme, provided it: (i) was claimed under the 2008 Single Payment Scheme; (ii) was eligible for payment under the 2008 Single Payment Scheme; (iii) has since become ineligible as a result of the management requirements or ecological objectives of the Natura site. IFA will be monitoring implementation.

Priorities for 2016

- Ensuring that farmers are fully compensated for designations and that there is a revamped NPWS farm scheme put in place.
- The Designated Areas Appeals Board works effectively.
- The compensation for turf-cutting is improved.
- That there are no turf-cutting restrictions on blanket bogs.
- That there are no further designations of SACs / SPAs.
- That an effective scheme is put in place in Natura areas in the new GLAS scheme.

Tom Turley
Chairman

Gerry Gunning
Executive
The Irish Farmers’ Association

REPORTS FOR 2015
FROM
REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

61st Annual General Meeting

Irish Farm Centre
Wednesday 27th April 2016
Reports for 2015
from Representatives on Outside Bodies

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Agri Aware
An Bord Bia
CAP Rural Development Monitoring Committee
COFORD
Comhairle na Tuaithe
Designated Areas Appeals Advisory Board
Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council
Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee (FSPAC)
Fertiliser Association of Ireland
IFAC
Irish Cattle Breeding Federation
Irish Farm Films Producer Group Ltd
Irish Forest Certification Initiative (IFCI)
National Dairy Council
National Economic and Social Council (NESC)
National Milk Agency
National Peatlands Council
National Statistics Board
Ornua
Sheep Ireland
Teagasc
Agri Aware would like to thank the IFA most sincerely for their continued support in 2015.

CAP communication campaign entitled ‘Be Agri Aware – Put your thinking CAP on!’
Agri Aware’s nationwide communication campaign entitled ‘Be Agri Aware – Put your thinking CAP on!’ began in May 2015 and will run until the end of April 2016. The aim of this campaign is to communicate the many benefits of CAP to the general public and farmers, across Ireland and Northern Ireland. This major campaign, co-financed by the European Commission, was awarded to Agri Aware following a competitive bidding process. A key element of the campaign was Agri Aware’s ‘Meet the Farmer in the City’ initiative, developed by Agri Aware and Dublin Zoo. Agri Aware selected four resident farmers who were present at weekends in Family Farm in June, July and August. These farmers represented a number of different sectors within the farming community (beef, dairy, sheep, tillage and pigs).

Family Farm, developed by Agri Aware and Dublin Zoo
With over 1.1 million visitors to Dublin Zoo in 2015, Family Farm is a key attraction to communicate the importance of our agri-food industry to the Irish general public, and visitors from abroad. In May 2015, Agri Aware hosted National Dairy Week to educate students and the general public about the importance of the Irish dairy industry. June saw the launch of Agri Aware’s ‘Meet the Farmer in the City’ initiative which was launched by the EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Phil Hogan. Also in June, Agri Aware celebrated ‘Be Agri Aware and celebrate Irish agriculture’ day at Family Farm.

Visitors to Family Farm at weekends during the summer months had the opportunity to witness sheep shearing and try their hand at spinning, weaving and knitting. In August, Agri Aware hosted a week of educational activities for National Heritage Week, with more than 58,000 visitors to Family Farm. In September, Agri Aware hosted a Harvest Festival with a pumpkin display, scarecrow making and food experiments.

Farm and Countryside Safety
In April, 2015, Agri Aware hosted Farm and Countryside Safety Week, to educate students and the general public and make them aware of the potential dangers when working on or visiting a farm. In July, Agri Aware hosted a National Farm Safety Awareness Day in conjunction with the IFA national day. Throughout the day, visitors to Family Farm had the opportunity to take part in a ‘spot the dangers’ activity sheet and make a pledge in the area of farm safety. Over 50 pledges were received while more than 250 danger trails were taken by young visitors. Agri Aware, with the support of IFA, FBD and ESB Networks, has produced a farm safety drama, which was filmed on a farm in Co. Cavan with child actors. The drama will be posted to all 3,300 primary level schools.

Agri Aware’s ‘Mobile Farm’
Agri Aware’s ‘Mobile Farm’ travelled to a number of schools, shows and public events across Ireland in 2015, including Tullamore Show, the Galway Racing Festival and Waterford Harvest Festival.

Bloom, the National Ploughing Championships and Tullamore Show
Agri Aware delivered large interactive exhibits at Bloom in the Phoenix Park in conjunction with Bord Bia, and engaging exhibits at the National Ploughing Championships and Tullamore Show.
Incredible Edibles healthy eating initiatives for primary level students
A total of 865 primary schools across Ireland participated in Agri Aware’s 2015 Incredible Edibles project to grow fruit and vegetables in school, with a view to increasing consumption of fruit and vegetables.

‘Farm Walk and Talk’ 2015 for second level students
Some 2,500 students from 77 second level schools across 23 counties across Ireland participated in Agri Aware’s ‘Farm Walk and Talk’ 2015, which was delivered in eight agricultural colleges and research centres and featured a number of Agri Aware’s patrons.

Agri Aware’s CAP after 2013 video series
In December 2015, Agri Aware produced six video tutorials to communicate the CAP after 2013 to farmers and the general public. These video tutorials looked at six different aspects of the reformed CAP: (1) Organic farming, (2) GLAS scheme, (3) Collaborations/producer organisations, (4) Greening, (5) Young Farmer scheme and (6) Areas of Natural Constraint. The videos are available on Agri Aware’s YouTube channel.

Agricultural Science Study Guides
Agri Aware, in conjunction with IASTA and the Irish Farmers’ Journal, delivered the Agricultural Science Study Guides in the Irish Farmers’ Journal, for 28 weeks of the academic year, along with several key resources, including: Pastures New (an Agricultural Science textbook for Leaving Certificate students), Dictionary of Agricultural Science Terms, Book of Agricultural Science Experiments, Guide to the Agricultural Science Practical Assessment and Agricultural Science Revision Aid and a new ‘Plant Identification Aid’ for Agricultural Science students.

Updating the Agricultural Science specification for Leaving Certificate students
Agri Aware is playing a pivotal role in shaping a modern and relevant specification for students, in conjunction with the NCCA and its patrons. Chief Executive, Dr. Vanessa Woods, was appointed as Project Officer with the NCCA to deliver the new specification and former Chairman, Bernard Donohue, is a member of the NCCA Development Group. Agri Aware consulted with its patrons to ensure the delivery of an industry relevant specification.

Transition Year modules – Equine
Agri Aware attended the inaugural Transition Year EXPO in Kilkenny in September 2015, to promote our equine educational module. Some 6,200 students and 300 teachers from 180 secondary levels schools visited the event.

Newspaper advertisements and Christmas Radio advertisements
Agri Aware placed a full-page newspaper advertisement on CAP in the Sunday Independent, Irish Times and the Examiner along with The Belfast Telegraph as part of our CAP communication campaign. Agri Aware produced a Christmas radio advertisement for national and regional radio stations, with the key messages being to support Irish farmers and food producers this Christmas.

Agri Aware’s CAP telestration advertisement in cinemas and national television
Agri Aware launched a telestration advertisement on national television stations RTÉ, TV3, Sky and 3E, in addition to cinemas in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. This advertisement targeted the general public/ citizens and farmers, aiming to communicate to young people in urban areas, in particular. See http://agriaware.ie/cap-telestration-video.

Richard Moeran         Joe Parlon         James Kelly
Chairman               Secretary
An Bord Bia

In addition to the ongoing Bord Bia meat programmes, including market development, market intelligence, trade fair participation and promotions, the main activities in 2015 included:

**Beef Promotion 2015**

Bord Bia’s Beef promotional programme in 2015 focused on building the premium positioning of Irish beef through a series of integrated consumer promotions across a number of key export markets, with particular emphasis on the UK, Germany, Holland and Italy.

- **In Germany**, Bord Bia promotions focused on the superior taste of Irish beef and our sustainable production system.
- **In Britain**, the new Irishbeef.co.uk website is a hub for our social media communications. Cooperating with the Great British Chefs online platform has helped build a reputation and awareness of Irish beef with high spending foodie consumers.
- **In Italy**, Irish beef promotions emphasised the purity and natural quality of Irish beef.
- **Promotions in the Netherlands** highlighted the integrity of Irish beef production, focusing on eating quality, sustainability and animal welfare.

**Pigmeat Promotion**

The main focus of the 2015 Bord Bia Quality Assured pigmeat promotions on the domestic market was to encourage consumers to switch to ham and bacon with the Quality Mark when shopping and to promote increased frequency of purchasing pork.

There were four main time periods of activity on ham and bacon across March, May, October and November in 2015. Targeting 30-60 year old female shoppers, activities included twelve weeks of TV advertising, six weeks of Video on Demand (airing the TV advert online to target lighter TV viewers) supported by point of sale advertising, advertorials in national newspapers, PR and online activities.

**Sheepmeat Promotion**

The aim of the lamb campaign was to drive frequency of purchasing and household penetration among the core consumer target group (ie heavy lamb female shoppers over 45 years old) during peak lamb season. Activities included six weeks of TV advertising during June and August/September combined with PR and online activities.

In response to growing concerns around the decline in both sheep meat production and consumption across the EU, Bord Bia, AHDB (UK) and Interbev (France) launched a three year campaign to promote lamb. This pan European lamb campaign (2015 - ’17) which commands an annual investment of €1.6 million from Bord Bia, Interbev, AHDB and the EU is focusing on promotion and marketing activities across Ireland, Belgium, Denmark, England, France and Germany.

**Livestock promotion**

Exports of live cattle during 2015 reached 178,000 head, a decline of 25% on the previous year. Live exports represent a significant market outlet and source of competition for certain categories of stock, particularly for male calves from the dairy herd and high quality weanlings from the suckler herd.

Bord Bia’s promotional programme for Irish livestock focuses on highlighting the strengths of Ireland’s offer to international buyers and building capability. The underlying objective of all
activities is to maximise the value of live exports from Ireland. Significant work is undertaken in collecting and disseminating market intelligence and insight which is co-ordinated by the Livestock Sector Manager in Dublin with the input of the principal markets in Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and North Africa. Specific Bord Bia activities included the following: providing up-to-date information on the major markets, organising an annual seminar for the live export sector, arranging networking events and itineraries, advertising of Irish livestock in key markets and acting as an important point of contact for existing buyers, while continually seeking to identify new potential customers.

Quality Assurance Promotion
The overall strategy was to build consumer understanding of the Quality Mark by outlining the quality standards, auditing processes and traceability behind the Mark. This was achieved by integrating these rational messages throughout all generic activities on the Quality Mark and across the marketing programmes for lamb, ham and bacon and eggs.

Generic Quality Mark activities included sponsoring the RTE 1 television programme ‘Home Chef’ with Neven Maguire which featured him cooking quality assured ingredients for everyday family meals in various locations. A national representative survey of grocery shoppers by Red C in July 2015 indicated that 92% of shoppers are aware of the Quality Mark.

Bord Bia Quality Assurance Programme involves QA schemes across all sectors, Beef and Lamb, Dairy, Pigmeat, Poultry and Horticulture. The QA programme has been extended to incorporate Sustainability linked to the Bord Bia origin Green promotional strategy.

Egg Promotion
The aim of the egg marketing campaign was to increase the frequency of consuming quality assured eggs for weekday dinner occasions among 25 – 44 year old female shoppers. A new plan was devised which included two bursts of activities of national and local radio advertising, advertorials in the magazines of national weekend newspapers, PR and digital activities. Retail sales of eggs increased by nearly 9% in volume in 2015.

Market Access Highlights
In the first half of 2015 following a trade mission in February market access was secured for beef to the US and by the end of the year six Irish plants have been approved to export. Negotiations remain ongoing for access of manufacturing beef while an application for sheep meat access to the US has also been made.

The Canadian market for beef and lamb opened with applications from 25 plants received by the end of December 2015.

Following approval in 2015, an extension was negotiated for market access to the Philippines for Irish beef, pork and sheepmeat while the Maldives has opened for all meats. Market access to Iran and Oman has also been approved for beef and sheepmeat while South Africa opened for pigmeat.

Ireland remains the only EU country to have the beef ban to China lifted with negotiations for approval of a health certificate ongoing between both countries.

Progress was also made on beef access to Egypt, Israel and Saudi Arabia with beef and sheepmeat negotiations progressing with Korea, Vietnam, Thailand and Mexico.
Potatoes and Horticulture Promotions

Bord Bia’s application to the EU to secure matching funding to promote potatoes on the Irish market, supported by IFA and the IPF, was successful and secured funding for a €1m campaign to be implemented between 2015 and 2018. The €0.5m secured from the EU will be matched by growers / packers (€0.41m) and the DAFM (€0.09m).

The campaign strategy is to grow the retail potato market by 28,000t, increase the frequency of potato purchase by 6% and increase the health perceptions of potatoes by 8% with consumers.

National Strawberry week was held in June supported by Bord Bia and the soft fruit producers. National Potato Day was organised by Bord Bia and held in early October.

Bord Bia also supported the promotion of fresh produce to school children with packers and growers the Incredible Edibles Schools programme. 600 national schools participated in 2015. The Food Dudes Programme is managed by Bord Bia and promotes healthy eating among school children. The Food Dudes Boost Programme was introduced in 2015 which covered 820 schools and 155,000 children.

The ‘Just Add Mushrooms’ campaign is worth €2.7m over three years and is co-funded 50:50 by the EU and producers and marketers in Ireland and the UK. The campaign (July 2013 - 2016). The programme is an information and promotional campaign in the UK and Ireland.

The GroMór gardening promotion campaign was launched in 2015 and was funded by the garden centres, nurseries, Bord Na Mona, Westland and Bord Bia. Activity included radio, print and on line advertising.

Horticultural Trade & Consumer Events

Bord Bia provided sponsorship for the GLAS tradeshow and the National Plant Fairs.

The Bord Bia garden festival, Bloom 2015, took place in the Phoenix Park in June, which attracted 95,000 visitors to Ireland’s biggest horticulture consumer event of the year.

Eddie Downey  
Henry Burns National Livestock Chairman  
John Lynskey National Sheep Chairman  
Pat O’Flaherty National Pigmeat Chairman  
Nigel Renaghan National Poultry Chairman  
Catherine Lascurettes Executive Secretary National Dairy Committee  
Gerry Reilly National Horticulture Chairman  
Eddie Doyle National Potato Chairman
CAP Rural Development Monitoring Committee

Achievements and Work Done

- The Monitoring Committee which is made up of various organisations is part of the European legislation in the implementation of the Rural Development Programme.
- The Committee met on one occasion in 2015 but approvals for amendments are being done by written procedure.
- The Committee agreed a number of changes to the RDP for 2015 which included: TAMS, GLAS specifications, technical changes on Leader, Knowledge Transfer Measures, inclusion of the Burren programme in the Locally Led Scheme and some other technical changes.
- The Committee has to be consulted on all aspects of the RDP. In early 2016 the Rural Development network was awarded to a consortium whose role is to ensure the Rural Development Programme get sufficient publicity and to highlight where money is being spent.
- The Committee is also required to move around funding if necessary from underspent areas to areas where there is high demand. This is particularly relevant to IFA to ensure that the vast majority of the Rural Development fund is spent on farm schemes.
- Competing demands are put forward at the Monitoring Committee but the importance of IFA’s continuing dialogue with the Department of Agriculture ensures that 93% of the RDP funding goes to farmers and farm related schemes.

Priorities for 2016

- With one amendment to the RDP being made every year, IFA will be ensuring that it is made in sufficient time that the changes are relevant to schemes as quickly as possible.
- The priority for IFA will be to ensure that all EU funding allocated in the RDP is fully used up. The €580m per annum of EU/National funding allocated is fully utilised on farmer programmes over the next 7 years.

Flor McCarthy  
Chairman

Gerry Gunning  
Executive
COFORD Council (Programme of Competitive Forestry Research for Development)

- The Coford council is a representative body of the forestry sector, appointed by the Minister of State for Forestry to decide research and development policy and priorities, oversee annual budgets and spending, and provide direction to the executive. The members of the COFORD Executive are appointed to implement and administer the programme on behalf of the Council. IFA is a member of the COFORD Council.
- The Coford council was re-convened by Minister Tom Hayes on the 21st October 2015.
- There was a update on the work of the last Council which included the: FORI report which reviewed research, the Wood Mobilisation report, Forest Management Planning, which developed a forest management plan template, Land Availability for Afforestation report, and the Forestry 2030, papers, which deal with important aspects of Irish forestry that included Climate change, biodiversity, recreation, renewable energy and the economy.
- The new research programme of the Forest Service Research Division is focussed on the following topics:
  - Agroforestry, that offers potential and new avenues for agriculture and forestry to work together.
  - Resource utilisation, a need to devise ways to better engage with forest owners in the management of plantations.
  - Assessment of emerging supplies of hardwoods by considering new product development for small diameter hardwood and assess opportunities for solid wood products, energy wood, and other products.
  - Forest fires and the need for national baseline data.
  - Ecosystem services and biodiversity, particularly forest planning and management within hen harrier habitats.
  - Forests and climate change.
- The Council work programme 2015- 2018 and groups established are:
  - National forest research staffing and capacity (Chair John Phelan, Woodlands of Ireland).
  - Wood mobilisation and production forecasting (Chair Mike Glennon, Glennon Sawmills)
  - Forest composition and forest genetic resources (Chair Seamus Dunne, FS-DAFM).
  - Review and revisit the recommendations of the forest policy review (Chairs John Phelan, Woodlands of Ireland and Donal Whelan, ITGA)
  - Promotion of afforestation (Chair Nuala Ni Fhlatharta, Teagasc).
  - Develop guidance on the management of mixtures (Convenor Daragh Little, IFFPA)
  - Wood Technology Ireland initiative
  - Bioeconomy
  - Private Sector Roundwood Production Forecast

Michael Fleming
Farm Forestry Chairman
Achievements and Work Done

- Comhairle na Tuaithe (CnaT) was established in 2004 to develop a national strategy for leisure use of land and waterways, dealing with conflicts where it exists and bring about a satisfactory resolution and to agree a countryside code between recreational users and landowners.
- The representation is broad including tourism bodies, recreational users, relevant departments and farm organisations. The Department of the Environment is the lead Department.
- It is vital that IFA participates in this group given the varied representation and to ensure that there is no change to existing land laws governing access in Ireland.
- Comhairle na Tuaithe met on three occasions in 2015/2016 and issues discussed were Mountain Access Scheme, the Blueways (Water Routes), National Indemnity Scheme, issues with the Department of Agriculture on land eligibility on Walkways, integration of countrywide recreational strategy in tourism plans.
- On the National Indemnity Scheme, the Department planned to have the State Claims Agency cover all users of land. IFA had expressed concern that this could be seen as a way to introduce general access to land and will be seeking firm political commitments on this.
- On the Walks Scheme, all 1,900 participants have been offered second 5 year contracts on the 39 trails that are covered. This scheme is worth €1.8m to farmers.
- IFA is pursuing an extension of the number of walks and has got broad support from CnaT on this issue.
- In relation to the eligibility of lands which are on trails for farm schemes, the Department of Agriculture has informed CnaT that they have got favourable feedback from Brussels on this issue so farmers will not lose out on payments.
- The Rural Social Scheme continues to play a key role in the creation of walks and it is estimated that 400 farmers support the walks under the RSS.
- On the Land Access Bill which was being pursued by the Labour Party in the last Government, IFA ensured that this Bill was not supported by CnaT.

Priorities for 2016

- Seeking additional funding for the development of new walks.
- New walks to increase from 40 to 80.
- Promoting the development of walks through various tourism organisations and that they are part of development plans in each Leader area.
- Resisting any attempts to change legislation in land access.
- Monitoring very closely the increased emphasis on greenways. This will be done in conjunction with the Environment Committee as there are moves made for CPO legislation to be used to create greenways. IFA will continue to reject this.
- Ensuring that land on walks continues to be eligible for all farm payments.

Pat Dunne
Hill Farming Chairman

Gerry Gunning
Executive
Designated Areas Appeals Advisory Board

Achievements and Work Done

- The Designated Areas Appeals Advisory Board was set up following the implementation of the EU Habitats Directive in 1997. Its purpose is to hear appeals by landowners of lands designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). Landowners have 3 months to appeal once notification of designation is issued by the National Parks & Wildlife Service.
- There are two appeals Boards. One chaired by Sean Duignan dealing with SACs and the other one chaired by Ciana Campbell which deals with SPAs. The Board is made of farm organisations, IBEC where relevant and environmental organisations. The cost of each appeal is about €5,000 which covers the cost of the Board as well as the grant to the environmental consultant to make the case for the appellant.
- As a result of objections by IFA in relation to the undue influence of the independent advisor to the board at the Appeals Board meeting, it was felt that the advisor was favouring the environmental NGOs and therefore IFA sought equality at a technical level in the final discussions.
- Due to the unsatisfactory nature of dealing with appeals in the Donegal area, IFA objected to the continuation of these appeals until such time as a proper mechanism was put in place to ensure fair treatment of landowners.
- A meeting chaired by Ciana Campell resolved some of the issues and the appeals have commenced.
- There are 286 appeals outstanding, mainly related to recent SPA designations. The main bulk of these are 160 sites in the Connemara bog complex.
- IFA continues to resist the 3-month time period imposed by the last Government by which an appeal must be made following a notification of designation.

Priorities for 2016

- To ensure that any farmer who has had land designation imposed on his land is given ample opportunity to appeal the designation.
- That the number of appeals dealt with in 2016 is increased.
- That the grant of €1,350 to appellants is increased to fully reflect the cost of doing a scientific report.
- That the farmer representation on the Board is fully maintained.
- That the influence of the Environmental NGOs is strongly challenged.

Tom Turley
The FAWAC held 4 meetings throughout 2015 under the chairmanship of Professor Patrick Fottrell. Key issues dealt with during 2015 included the following:

- Horse Flier issued March 2015 - Advice offered to horse owners to promote good animal welfare and to assist with control measures in the event of a disease outbreak amongst horses in Ireland including the legal requirements of micro-chipping and passporting of equines and the registration of equine premises.
- Announcement by the Minister for DAFM of €1m funding for the development of Urban Horse Projects/Traveller Horse Projects which DAFM is progressing in association with Local Authorities.
- Concerns on the continuing indiscriminate breeding of horses without any consideration for market outlets and the new transfer of ownership of horses' legislation placing responsibility on change of ownership on the new horse owner (buyer) whereas previous legislation placed responsibility on both the seller and the buyer.
- The On Farm Euthanasia of Pigs booklet is progressing. Final publication is awaiting the results of trials on non captive bolt penetration.
- Council agreed it would be timely to update the earlier 2003 FAWAC guideline booklet on dairy welfare as the expansion of dairy herds was identified as requiring vigilance.
- Disbudding of Calves - the use of anaesthetics for disbudding in calves over two weeks.
- Alison Hanlon reported that the FAWC workshop held in University of Reading (UK) was looking at Ireland’s EWS model. Chairman asked Alison to assist Reading University (RU) in elaborating on EWS and Alison will liaise with Richard Bennett from RU.
- EuroFAWC - concerns regarding the ongoing negotiations on the proposed free trade agreement between the EU and the USA – the transatlantic trade and investment partnership (TTIP).
- Welfare of livestock as a result of the floods.
- Dogs worrying sheep continues to be an issue. Kevin Kinsella gave a power point presentation on responsible dog ownership emphasising the problems associated with dogs worrying sheep and the devastating effects of these attacks.
- Enforcement of Dog Microchipping - questions raised as to who will enforce the new dog microchipping legislation.
- Council agreed payment of €2,500 to AgriAware for FAWAC’s patronage for 2015/2016. AgriAware are strongly advocating for animal welfare to be given a higher priority in the State’s examination process.
- FAWC organised and held 4 Regional EWS Meetings.

IFA was also represented on a number of the FAWAC working groups in 2014. IFA utilised the Committee and Project Team structure within the Association on these working groups.

IFA continue its valuable input and work at county level with the Early Warning System in respect of welfare issues and problem cases at county level.

Henry Burns National Livestock Chairman
Sean O Leary National Dairy Chairman
Kevin Kinsella Director of Livestock
Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee (FSPAC)

- The FSPAC is an advisory committee to the board of the Health and Safety Authority. It has made considerable progress raising awareness of farm safety.
- The FSPAC introduced a new Farm Safety Action Plan 2016 – 2018. The overall objective of the plan is to reduce the level of fatal accidents, ill health and serious injuries in the agricultural sector.
- The FSPAC has set six goals to achieve these objectives:
  - To achieve cultural behavioural change in health and safety of persons working in the agricultural sector through Research, Education and Training
  - To develop programmes which will foster Innovative Approaches and deliver Engineering Solutions to reduce the risks to persons working in Agriculture
  - To reduce the level of death and injury arising from Tractor and Machinery use
  - To establish initiatives to reduce the level of death and injuries arising from working with Livestock
  - To ensure high standards of health and safety are adopted in Forestry and Timber Work on farms
  - To implement programmes for the protection of health and wellbeing of persons, including vulnerable groups, working in Agriculture.
- The IFA is lead with UCD in the working group to implement programmes for the protection of health and wellbeing of persons, including vulnerable groups, working in Agriculture.

Maura Canning  
Farm Family & Social Affairs Chairwoman
The Fertilizer Association of Ireland comprises of members from the farming and the agri-business industry, with an interest in research, use and retail of fertilizers. The Association was established to promote the efficient use of fertilizer through technical meetings, field visits, conferences and the publication of technical papers.

Spring Scientific meeting
The Spring Scientific meeting took place in February, with Harold Kingston chairing the meeting. Four papers were presented at the seminar:
  - Soil Fertility Trends – Latest Update by Mark Plunkett; Teagasc.
  - Optimising Grassland Sulphur by John Bailey; AFBI.
  - Fertilising for Profit on Grassland Farms by Christy Watson; Teagasc.
  - Soil and Fertiliser for Tillage Yield Improvement by Andy Doyle, Irish Farmers Journal.

Autumn field visit
  - An autumn field visit took place this year in the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine in Backweston and the UCD Lyons Research Farm in Cellbridge, County Kildare. The field visit looked at results of trial programmes on both cereals and maize and nitrogen programmes in forage maize and winter wheat.

Technical bulletin highlighting best practice in soil sampling
  - During 2015 a bulletin titled “Soil Sampling – Why and How?” was issued, which sets out best practice protocol for soil sampling, as well as information on the benefits of having up to date information on soil fertility levels for planning fertilizer inputs and for tracking soil fertility trends on a farm over time.

Harold Kingston                       Thomas Ryan
IFA Representative             Executive Secretary
Environment & Rural Affairs Committee
IFAC Accountants

2015 was a successful trading year for IFAC with turnover increasing over 10%. IFAC’s main focus is to continue with its core competency of providing a book-keeping, accounts and taxation service to a predominantly farmer client base.

- **New Branches.** In 2015 IFAC acquired new branches in Bandon Co. Cork, Callan Co. Kilkenny and Lucan Co. Dublin (T/A TaxBright Accountants and Business Advisors).

- **TaxBright.** This new Dublin branch office set up in 2013 traded in excess of budget expectations for 2015, and at the time of writing, continues to expand, attracting a diverse range of clients in the SME sector in the Dublin area and beyond.

- **Growth.** The growth strategy commenced by IFAC some years back and enhanced by the appointment of an Agri-Support Manager, expansion of a National Tax Department, development of a new website and focused media advertising have all contributed to IFAC expanding its range of services to a growing client base. In 2015, 1031 new clients signed up for service.

- **Retirement.** Both Willie Fahey (IFAC CEO) and Bernard Banaghan (IFAC Nenagh Branch Manager) retired in 2015.

- **New Appointments.** John Donoghue was appointed IFAC CEO commencing 01st July 2015. In addition, IFAC appointed a Group Marketing Executive, Head of IT, Commercial Manager and a number of branch managers and staff across the country.

- **IFA.** IFAC continues to provide intellectual capital to IFA.

- **Macra Na Feirme.** IFAC continues to provide support by way of sponsorship to Macra to aid their participation in CEJA.

- **Property.** In 2015 IFAC continued with its policy of upgrading current offices as required, move to new rental accommodation as required and the purchase of new premises where deemed appropriate. In 2015, premises were purchased in Dublin, renovations commenced in Blarney (Co. Cork), Limerick and Sligo, and new premises leased in Bandon (Co. Cork), Callan (Co. Kilkenny) and Lucan (Co. Dublin).

- **2016.** A combination of depressed commodity prices and increasing recruitment costs as the wider economy continues to improve will present significant challenges for IFAC in 2016. IFAC’s client base requires ever increasing levels of service and expertise to meet the challenges of a changing farm, taxation and business landscape.

*Tim O’Leary*
*James Kane*
*James Kelly*
Irish Cattle Breeding Federation

Review of 2015

The headline project at ICBF early in 2015, and indeed throughout the year, was the new Beef Data and Genomics Scheme. Notwithstanding a difficult start in terms of communication, excellent progress has been achieved on all aspects of this very exciting programme. Over 26,500 farmers joined the scheme, and at farm level, farmers are responding very well to the job of tagging the animals and recording quality data. There has been a huge increase in the awareness of Eurostar indexes with each of the 26,500 herds in the scheme getting a report on the star ratings of their cows, and with the training aspects of the scheme beginning in early 2016, this awareness and knowledge will continue to grow.

Adoption of dairy genomics at farm level continues to operate at very high levels. In 2015, 60% of some 650,000 recorded dairy inseminations were from genomically selected bulls. The results from both the Next Generation Herd in Moorepark, and the ‘Daughter Proven’ results continue to show that the genomic predictions are holding up well across the teams of genomic bulls. The AI companies continue to invest very significantly in genotyping, ensuring that the best possible selection of young bulls are going into the Gene Ireland programme for progeny testing. This is key to the on-going validation of the genomic indexes, and to maintaining the on-going rates of genetic gain.

Our genetic evaluation activities continue to be at the very heart of ICBF’s role in dairy and beef. We completed a review of the Replacement index in May of this year. While the genotyping efforts of farmers will have a major impact on the reliabilities of our evaluations, they continue, however, to be at the mercy of good quality data for real progress to continue. The on-going roll-out of the Beef Data and Genomics Programme will play a key role in improving progress here.

The GÊNÈ IRÊLAND® dairy progeny test program continued in 2015. The implementation of a revamped GÊNÈ IRÊLAND® beef programme continued in 2015, and after the initial two years we are now in the process of reviewing how we can improve it. The Tully Performance Test station has continued to operate very successfully. The installation of further elements of the new feeding system early in 2015 (using support from DAFM) has allowed us to continue the expansion of steer. Tully is also continuing to provide a rich stream of data in the area of meat eating quality, and the results emerging have great potential in continuing to position Ireland as producers of top quality beef.

HerdPlus® membership has exceeded 19,500 dairy and beef herds. These herds have access to a wide range of valuable breeding information which farmers can use to breed more profitable cattle. On the service income side, both Milk Recording and AI service uptake has continued to grow, thanks to excellent work by the service providers. Our Bull Search facility (on www.icbf.com) continues to be the facility on our website that farmers and breeders find most useful with, again, over 1,000,000 searches in the last twelve months.

We continue to do significant development work in conjunction with Animal Health Ireland (AHI) in the area of IT infrastructure for management of the BVD programme. Significant progress was also made in relation to the CellCheck and Johnes programmes. ICBF’s ability to generate genetic evaluations for animals in relation to disease resistance is becoming an increasingly important area, and initial results are showing significant potential for genetics to assist with national animal health programmes. As such, our relationship with AHI will continue to be extremely important.
2015 saw the completion of OptiMIR project, focusing on the use of spectral data from milk testing, and involving ICBF, Teagasc and 15 other partners across Europe. The project focused on making good use of the extra data (the MIR spectra) that can be collected from milk sample testing. This work will continue in 2016 under a new collaborative structure.

Irish farming benefits greatly from the unique partnership that exists between Government and the industry. The ability of ICBF to put DAFM funding to good use is widely acknowledged and in 2015 was particularly evident again through the progress being made across a range of areas, and adoption by farmers. Without DAFM support it would be much more difficult for ICBF to deliver so much benefit to the industry and wider community, through the services it provides. In that context, the board would like to acknowledge the contribution that Dr. Dave Beehan (DAFM representative on the ICBF Board) has made to the ICBF journey over the past 12 years.

Summary
2015 has been another very exciting year in the cattle breeding community. There are many challenges ahead, but also lots of opportunity. The key to ICBF’s success remains the same as ever - the application of good science, a focus on the needs of farmers, working closely with our stakeholders and a 100% commitment to delivering by a talented and dedicated team. We are most fortunate to operate in an environment where ICBF’s vision is shared by our Board, our members, DAFM, Teagasc, and, most importantly, Irish Farmers.

Michael Doran, Vice Chairman ICBF
Henry Burns, National Livestock Chairman
Kevin Kiersey, National Dairy Committee
Kevin Kinsella, Director of Livestock
During 2015 the Irish Farm Films Producer Group Ltd. (IFFPG) collected over 25,200 tonnes of film plastic. The majority of this was collected at the bring centres located in every county across the country.

Farmers and IFFPG continue to exceed the annual farm plastic recycling target set by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

**Reducing the cost of recycling for farmers**
- IFFPG continued the campaign during 2015 to support farmers to reduce the cost of recycling, by encouraging the better storage of waste plastic on farms. Strong messaging and communication efforts took place at bring centres and at the National Ploughing Championships. Given that farmers are charged on a pay by weight basis, storage in dry and clean areas will reduce the cost of recycling.

**Non-payment of VAT and levy on film plastic**
- The Revenue Commissioners, local authorities and the Department of Social Protection continued their activity in 2015 regarding the non-payment of VAT and levy. A number of farms, merchants and contractors were reported as receiving visits.

**Membership & collections**
- The EPC charge is €110 per tonne (excl. VAT), with the farmer fee at bring centres of €15 per half tonne (with label code).
- Over 220 bring centres are operated nationwide

**Farm Plastic Recycling**
- IFFPG’s partnership with Farm Plastic Recycling Ltd. continues to operate well, expanding the recycling service provided to farmers. Farm Plastic Recycling Ltd. collects and recycles meal and fertilizer bags and chemical containers at the IFFPG bring centres.
- Triple rinsing of chemical containers is essential before presenting chemical containers at bring centres.

Aidan Larkin
IFA Representative & Board Member of IFFPG Ltd

Thomas Ryan
Environment Executive & Board Member of IFFPG Ltd
Irish Forest Certification Initiative (IFCI)

- IFCI was established to develop a national forest management standard, which is based upon the principles and criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The FSC is an international certification standard used to promote responsible management of forests, based on ten principles and associated criteria that cover a wide range of issues relevant to social, economic and environmental concerns. The main objectives of IFCI as outlined in the Memorandum and Articles of Association are:
  - To advance sustainable forest management in Ireland
  - To develop a certifiable forest management standard for Irish forests based upon the principles and criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)
  - To engage the general public and relevant interest groups in the development of the Irish FSC forest management standard
- The Forest Service is supportive of the IFCI revising the national FSC standard. IFCI in process of developing plan and identifying organisations that might able to provide financial support for the initiative.
- IFCI is to register with FSC International as standard development group and new members for each of Economic, Social and Environmental chambers will need to be identified.
- A national conference on Forest Certification is planned for 2016 to raise awareness of the need and importance of certification.

Geraldine O’Sullivan
Farm Forestry Executive
Through 2015 and into 2016, the NDC has been refocusing its strategy for sustainable growth and development of the dairy category, building on plans to deliver stronger awareness of milk and dairy nutrition benefits for healthy, active living from childhood to old age. This is particularly important in light of the aging global population, the new discoveries to improve performance in sports, and the growth and innovation in the Irish dairy sector.

Recognising the power of partnership, the NDC plan is rooted in collaboration, scientific expertise, marketing excellence and working with its member co-ops to play a greater role in shaping the dairy industry’s agenda in terms of applied research, innovation, reputation, policy and consumer understanding.

The NDC mark campaign continues to be promoted on television, radio and print media and attracts considerable interest from retailers and consumers alike. It is focused on ROI provenance and processing, and the importance for consumers to choose NDC marked milk to support Irish jobs and the economy.

In the face of myths and misconception around dairy consumption increasingly spread through social media and self-styled celebrity nutrition “experts” The NDC also deals actively with misinformation on matters relating to nutrition and health.

The NDC’s promotional activity includes nutritional education to schools through the medium of competitions and advertising campaign awards, and is very active on social media. It also targets the medical profession with specifically developed regular nutrition bulletins.

The NDC is hosting every year, in co-operation with local dairy co-ops, Health and Wellbeing Evenings around the country. Those have been well received, attracting large numbers of mostly women attendees to inform them on issues around health, nutrition and lifestyle, and the place of dairy products in their diet.

The NDC is involved in the national School Milk Scheme, in which 1000 new fridges were disseminated to schools.

The NDC for the fifth year co-operated with Ornua in a joint Quality Milk Awards. The 2015 winner was Kieran O’Sullivan, a supplier to Drinagh Co-op.

IFA representatives for 2016 on the National Dairy Council are Sean O’Leary and Teddy Cashman, with Denis Fagan representing the National Milk Agency. Teddy Cashman was elected Chairman of the National Dairy Council late in 2015.

Sean O’Leary  Teddy Cashman
Chairman       Chairman
National Dairy Committee National Liquid Milk Committee
National Economic and Social Council

Achievements and Work Done

NESC is the consultative body to Government and is responsible for strategic analysis or major economic and social policy issues. The membership includes the five Social Partner Pillars, senior representatives of a number of Government Departments, and a number of independent members nominated by Government.

IFA’s representative on NESC until November 2015 was the IFA General Secretary, Pat Smith. No replacement has yet been appointed, but it is expected that this will be undertaken following the appointment of a new General Secretary.

During 2015, the work of NESC was concentrated on challenges in housing supply and the impact on the private rental market. In addition, studies were undertaken in the area of Climate Change, Aquaculture, jobless households and environmental policy.

Rowena Dwyer
Chief Economist
National Milk Agency

Established 22 years ago by the Milk (Regulation of Supply) Act (1994), the National Milk Agency’s (NMA) role is to ensure an adequate year – round supply of milk for the liquid consumer trade. It does this by ensuring that liquid milk producers are duly contracted to their dairies and are adequately compensated for the additional cost of year round/winter production.

The Agency has 6 staff. Three inspectors audit all processors nationally each month to see that liquid milk is used and a liquid price is paid. The NMA’s 3 inspectors carried out numerous inspections aiming at ensuring that liquid milk is being paid for at liquid milk prices, and that manufacturing milk is not used in lieu of liquid milk. Prosecutions have been used where necessary to ensure compliance.

Three administrative staff deal with around 1,800 contracts each year and work with other organisations including IFA, Department of Agriculture, National Dairy Council and the Consumers Association of Ireland. They also maintain a Register of Producers, a Register of Processors and a Register of Contracts.

During 2015, the NMA has advocated on behalf of the specialist liquid milk producers, because of the threat their problematic economic sustainability poses to the year-round supply of fresh milk for Irish consumers.

In the summer of 2015, the National Liquid Milk Committee produced a Handbook outlining the concerns of liquid milk producers as to the sustainability of their specialised production systems in the context of the post quota export milk expansion plans of the Irish dairy industry. This gave rise to a campaign culminating in a major farmer rally in November 15 and a petition on behalf of all liquid milk producers, presented by IFA to the NMA in February 2016.

The NMA had reduced the 0.145 c/l total levy by 25% from April 2013. Most dairies collect half of the levy from farmers, and pay the balance centrally.

Representatives of the processing industry on the NMA board include Frank Tobin from Glanbia, Eoghan Sweeney from Aurivo, and the Chairman and Secretary of the NDA, Tony O’Driscoll (Clona Dairies) and George Kearns.

An October 2015 election for farmer board members resulted in two changes. The current five farmer board members are Padraig Mulligan, Aidan Casey, Teddy Cashman, Denis Fagan and Willie Lennon.

Teddy Cashman
Chairman
National Liquid Milk Committee
National Peatlands Council

Achievements and Work Done

- The remit of the council is to come forward with a strategy for Ireland’s peatlands and to oversee the implementation of the SAC Habitats Directive on 55 raised bogs and 75 NHA bogs.
- The work of the Committee to date, has been mainly dealing with the turf-cutting restrictions on the raised SAC bogs where turf-cutting was forced to cease early from 2012.
- The Council members include IFA, Environmental NGOs, Irish Rural Link and Bord na Mona as well as the National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- The IFA representation on the Board is vital as the environmental NGOs want to restrict cutting of turf not just on SAC bogs but on all bogs including blanket bogs throughout the country.
- In the Peatlands Strategy document, IFA ensured that turf-cutting will continue to operate on bogs in Ireland. The Strategy was presented and approved by the Government.
- The blanket bogs issue has not yet been addressed but IFA will be insisting that turf-cutting is allowed to continue in these areas.
- One of the key areas addressed at the Council was the Compensation Scheme for farmers which offered €1,500 p.a. for 15 years with a €500 top up the first year. Over 3,000 farmers are availing of this package worth €4.5m p.a.
- A further 229 farmers have had turf delivered to them annually and 720 farmers have applied for relocation.
- The relocation to alternative bogs is a slow process with only around 2 bogs, Clara and Mountbellew having been successfully concluded.
- IFA has dealt with a number of appeal cases in order to secure compensation.
- On NHAs where turf restrictions will apply in 2016, IFA has been assured that the number is small and possibly no greater than 140. Compensation will be offered to all NHAs.
- At the board, IFA has strongly argued that where flooding results from blocking of drains to preserve the bog that farmers lands must be protected.

Priorities for 2016

- In 2016, IFA will be insisting that the compensation scheme continues to be paid and improvements made and that it is extended to all NHA areas.
- IFA will be insisting that all outstanding claims are dealt with.
- The Government strategy on bogs clearly recognised the rights of turf-cutters.
- Any proposals on blanket bogs must allow continued turf-cutting for domestic users.

Tom Turley          Joe Parlon          Gerry Gunning
National Statistics Board

Achievements and Work Done

The National Statistics Board was set up as a non-statutory body in 1986 and established on a statutory basis in November 1994 under the Statistics Act 1993. The role of the Board defined by the Statistics Act is to guide the broad strategic direction of the Central Statistics Office and, in particular, to establish priorities for the development of official statistics in Ireland. In March 2014, Rowena Dwyer was among the Taoiseach’s nominees to the Board. Her term will run until end 2016.

The main work of the Board in 2015 was the development of the Strategic Priorities for Official Statistics, 2015-2020, A World Class Statistical System for Ireland. The central theme of the strategy is that a modern and effective system of government must maximise the quality and usage of data held across all public organisations. The report highlights the critical importance of official statistics for public policy and planning in Ireland, and identifies new challenges such as the role of ‘Big Data’ in official data collection, how the collection of official statistics can be undertaken more effectively by State Agencies, and improving accessibility for users.

During 2015, board members also participated in a peer review of the CSO, undertaken on behalf of Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Commission.

Priorities for 2016

In 2016, the main work of the committee will be to prioritise the implementation of the 2015 Strategy, in addition to overseeing the implementation of recommendations from the Eurostat peer review.

Rowena Dwyer
Chief Economist
Ornua

2015 and 2016 saw a continuation of strong global milk supply growth, with particular increases in some EU countries after the end of quotas on 31st March 2015. Weaker demand affected by low purchases from China, the Russian ban on EU food imports and reduced oil revenues compounded the situation, resulting in a prolonged period of very low commodity prices. The predicted downturn in NZ output due to El Nino failed to fully materialise in late 2015 and early 2016, so that production there fell only by 4% instead of 10%, while EU output increased by 2.5% in 2015.

EU production growth is now slowing down, however, due to low profitability on farms, and demand is picking up both in export and importing countries, with particular vigour in China and SE Asia. Hence the expectation of a sufficient rebalancing of supply and demand towards 2017 to result in improved market, and then milk prices. The protracted nature of the downturn came as a surprise to all experts, and 2016 is expected to prove as difficult a year for the sector as 2009.

The Irish Dairy Board changed its name to Ornua during 2015. The PPI index, which reflects the returns from Ornua’s entire product mix, including over 40% of cheddar cheese, first picked up in February and March 2015, reflecting the market response to a temporary downturn in the NZ output in that period, then fell from its March level of 101.2 points equivalent to approximately 29c/l incl VAT to 85.4 points or 24.1c/l incl. VAT for February 2016.

The outlook for 2016 is for a medium term continuation of the supply/demand imbalance after the build up of significant levels of stocks, including SMP intervention and APS in the EU. Ornua predict that their PPI will fall further before summer with a recovery only occurring as we head towards 2017.

Dairy products representing around 60% of the milk produced in Ireland are traded by Ornua each year. This includes around 80% of butter and cheese, and around 70% of powders. Ornua has subsidiaries in the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands and the US providing valuable distribution channels and routes to markets for Irish products.

During 2015, Ornua opened a Kerrygold packing factory in Nigeria providing routes to markets for Irish milk powders, and a new R&D centre in Avila, Spain. Early 2016, Ornua purchased Ambrosia, a Shanghai based dairy manufacturer, providing Ornua with access to high end retail and food services outlets.

Ornua have also started building the Kerrygold Centre of Excellence and butter production and packing facility in Mitchelstown, which is to start production in the summer of 2016.

Ornua is continuing the extensive strategic work it started with milk processors before the end of quotas to identify products and markets which can be profitably tackled with growth milk.

Mr Kieran O’Sullivan, supplier to Drinagh Co-op, was overall winner of the 2015 NDC and Kerrygold Quality Milk Awards.

To further promote Ireland’s marketing edge on the global scene, Ornua are also engaging closely with Bord Bia’s Origin Green sustainability campaign, and are strongly supporting the SDAS scheme.

Sean O’Leary
Chairman
National Dairy Committee
Sheep Ireland

Review of 2015
Sheep Ireland (www.sheep.ie) continued to make excellent progress in 2015, with strong leadership from its Chairman, James Murphy, and a strong development team operating under the stewardship of Eamon Wall. Commercial and pedigree farmers continue to become much more aware of the existence of the EuroStar indexes, and how they can play a significant role in removing the risk around ram purchases, and help the industry to ensure that it does not lose ground to other countries in terms of gains through genetic progress.

The commercial farms that make up the CPT and MALP programmes have again put in a huge amount of work this year, and data coming from these farms is hugely valuable in generating accurate genetic evaluations for Sheep.

LambPlus has again expanded in 2015, and numbers are continuing to rise. This means that over 50% of the rams sold this year would have EuroStar figures available. We expect this number to rise again in 2016, and current indications are that this is achievable.

STAP continued to have a major impact in terms of raising the awareness of Eurostars on Sheep, especially rams, and the fact the Eurostar concept is similar to that in cattle also helps in this regard. It is critical for the success of Sheep Ireland that (a) farmers use the indexes in their purchasing decisions and (b) that the performance of the sheep correlate with the indexes – i.e. high index sheep perform more profitably than low index sheep.

Very significant updates to the systems infrastructure supporting Lambplus were launched during the year, and they provide LambPlus members with as good a web infrastructure as exists anywhere in the world. It is the culmination of a huge amount of work from the Sheep Ireland team, and it puts Sheep Ireland in a strong position next year as we continue to grow the levels of participation in the various activities.

Irish Sheep farming is benefitting from the unique partnership that exists between Government and the sheep industry. The ability of Sheep Ireland to put DAFM funding to good use is widely acknowledged and in 2015 was particularly evident again through the LambPlus and STAP programmes. Without DAFM support it would be impossible for Sheep Ireland to deliver to the industry and wider community. We are most fortunate to operate in an environment where Sheep Ireland vision is shared by our Board, DAFM, Teagasc, and, most importantly, Irish Sheep Farmers.

James Murphy
Chairman Sheep Ireland

Kevin Kinsella
Director of Livestock
Teagasc Report

Achievements and Work Done

I am the IFA nominee to the Teagasc board and I also sit on the advisory and education committee and the research committee. The purpose of the authority under the chairmanship of Dr. Noel Cawley is to oversee the operation of Teagasc and to guide its policy to the betterment of the agricultural industry. The main activities of Teagasc cover Research, Advisory, Education and Schemes.

Challenges in 2015

- The main challenge in recent times has been the recruitment embargo. In 2015 there has been a relaxation on this. Acting positions are being made permanent, allowing Teagasc to fill vital posts. This will have a positive impact on all areas of the organisation and will help the organisation in delivering vital programmes for farmers.
- The changing emphasis in the delivery of advice away from one to one consultation to discussion groups continues apace to optimise resources. Teagasc is heavily involved in the new Knowledge Transfer programme.
- Improving beef advice and research was high on my agenda when I joined the Board and this resulted in a very comprehensive open day in Grange research centre was held. A similar open day will be held in in 2016 as well as a Suckler event in Athenry.

Education

There was a huge demand for education courses in 2015 as a result of changes to Young Farmer schemes in CAP reform. This involved priority for 959 students having to be catered for to meet the educational standards. 70 extra teaching staff were appointed to satisfy this need. 650 full time students go through the colleges on an annual basis.

Advisory

- The GLAS scheme announced as part of the RDP also presented a major challenge to Teagasc as it did not have the staff to service its clients wishing to partake in the scheme. A system where FRS provided contract staff to do plans for up to 11,200 applications for Teagasc clients was implemented in the first 2 phases of GLAS.
- The BDGP 4 hour training for suckler farms was also provided to 26,000 farmers.
- Nitrogen Derogation applications were completed under contract by FRS. This released dairy advisors to do technical work.

Priorities for 2016

- Continue in a lead role in agricultural and food research in Ireland.
- Continue to deliver the results of that research to its client farmer base and the broader agricultural industry.
- Because of the challenging year, technical and financial advice will be prioritised.
- The “Farm Financially Fit Programme” will be rolled out again in 2016 with a strong emphasis on one-to-one contact.
- Provide a high quality education service to young farmers entering the industry.
- Implement through FRS the third phase GLAS scheme for its clients.
- Implementing the new Knowledge Transfer Measures under the RDP for all sectors.

Tim O'Leary