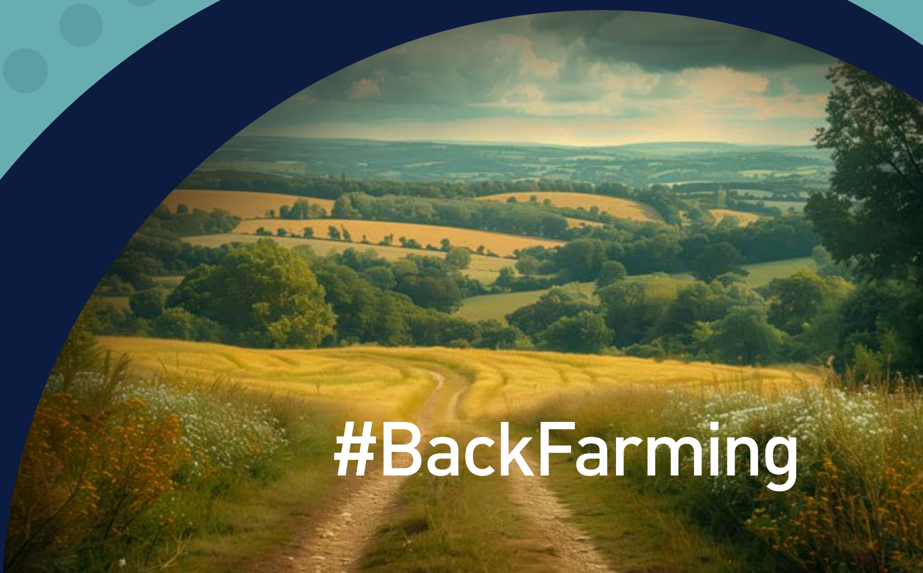
June 2025

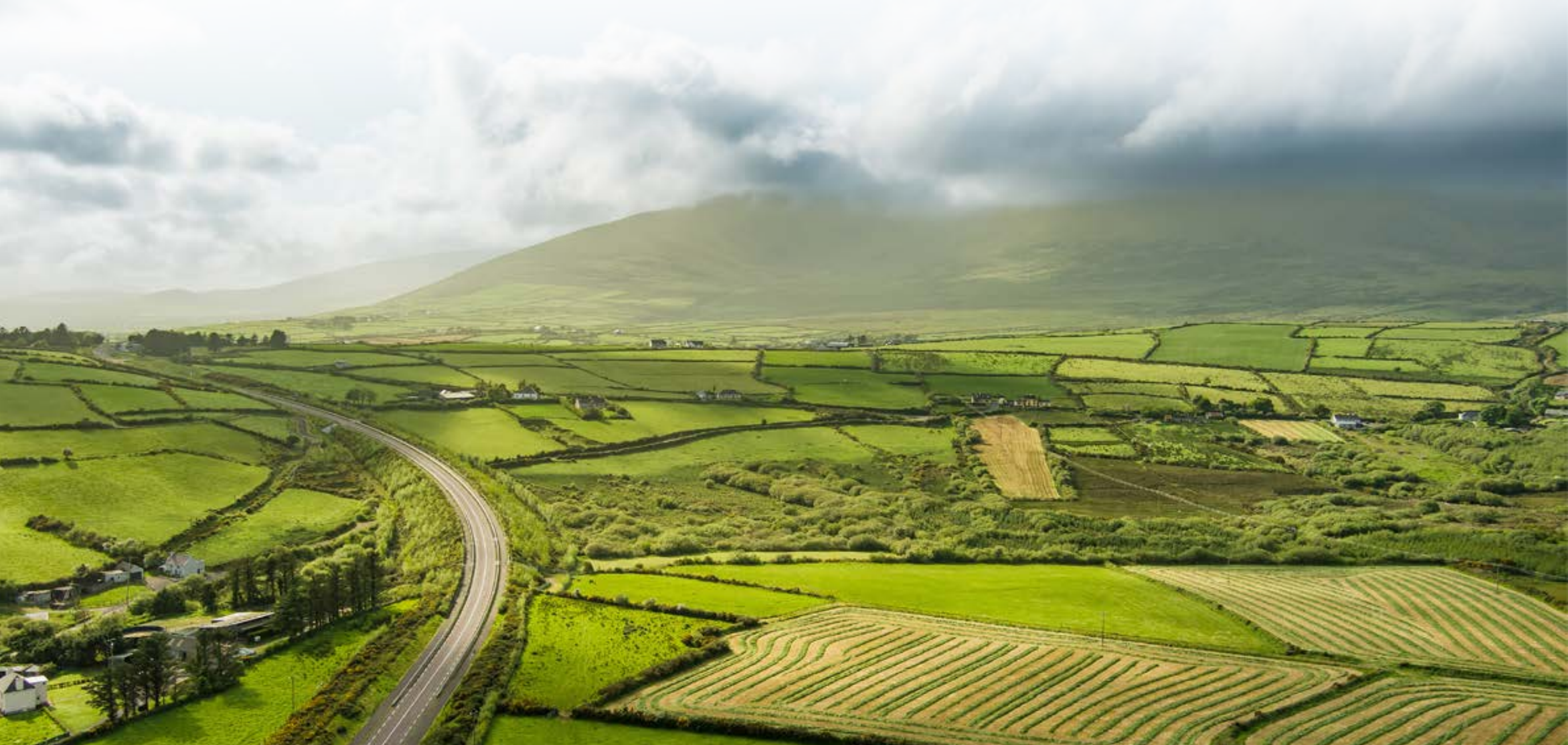
Key CAP post-2027 Principles



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The European Commission is preparing for the following multiannual financial framework (MFF), the EU's long-term budget, which will start in 2028. Initial proposals are expected from July 16th, unlike in previous years, to be submitted in tandem for the next Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

- Every CAP negotiation, since it was first initiated in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union boils down to two fundamental components: 1) the available budget; and 2) how that funding is spent supporting farmers.
- Over recent decades, we have seen the undermining of the CAP with budget cuts, no allowance for inflation, and forcing farmers to do more and more for less and less. CAP, too, has been raided to fund environmental ambition.
- Recent Commission suggestions toward adopting a new 'single fund' approach has raised a concern that the Comission no longer places a value on farmers and food production..
- Reallocating EU funding into a Single Fund would undermine the CAP (cornerstone of Europe's competitiveness & food sovereignty); increase complexity & uncertainty for farms; weaken the Single Market; negatively impact EU rural areas and the appeal of farming for both existing and future generations.
- While the EU's budgetary needs are many, and careful reflection on the strategic policy areas of the Union and how to support them adequately must occur, new priorities, in and of themselves, should not dampen the fundamental importance of existing EU priorities. Agriculture and food Security remains as strategically important as ever.
- Europe needs a more substantial, simpler and dedicated (inflation-adjusted) CAP budget to ensure competitiveness, potential for the next generation, and guarantee a decent income for the active farmers of today. The current CAP unfairly penalises active farmers and imposes impractical, bureaucratic environmental rules. A new approach is needed—one that rewards active farming and productive land use supports evidence-based environmental measures that work alongside output and efficiency, recognises sustainability as a tool for long-term resilience, not as a barrier to viability, and protects the future of commercial farming and rural communities.
- IFA expect the integrity and independence of the CAP to be respected, ringfenced and maintained in line with the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union in the next MFF.
- Having Pillar II schemes based on a 'costs incurred, and income foregone' model means that, by definition, these schemes cannot improve farmers' incomes. This needs to change. The '**costs incurred/income foregone**' calculations should set a baseline from which greater remuneration is provided to incentivise participation.
- The Commission need to establish new income streams and utilise the next MFF to bolster confidence, financial & operational resilience among its citizens and businesses, while not creating a state of angst by suggesting a complete overhaul of long-established EU foundations, budgetary mechanisms and programmes. Evolution, not revolution, is the order of the day.



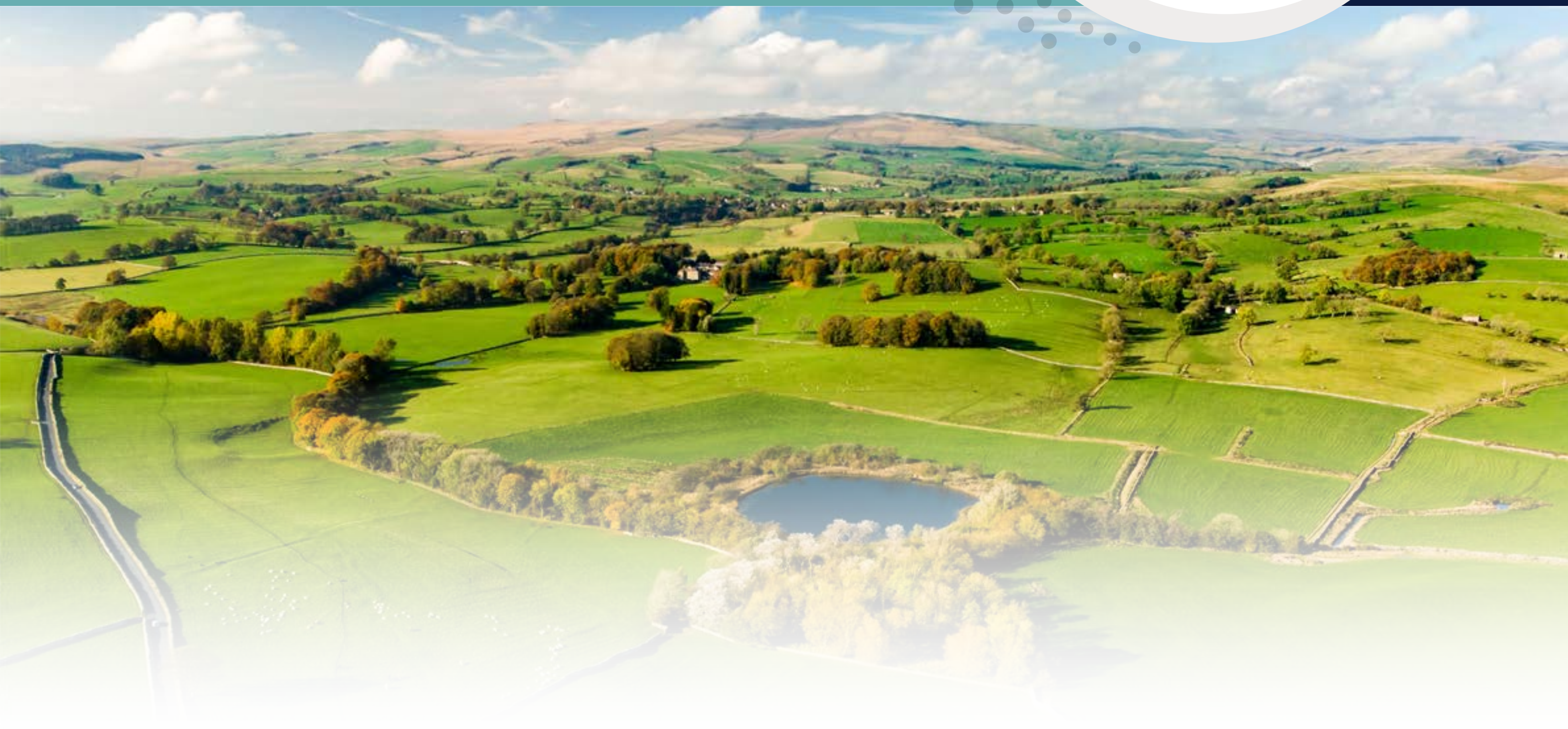
2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The implementation of the next MFF or CAP must not create more unviable farmers or rural areas; instead, it should focus on supporting sustainable productivity growth, with additional targeted interventions for young farmers, those in vulnerable sectors, and those on designated land. With CAP currently accounting for approximately 30% of the EU budget (0.36% of EU GDP), EU farmers cannot disproportionately bear the cost of funding new and emerging EU budgetary demands.

- For farmers to have confidence in the process, and indeed the next CAP, there must be real and meaningful engagement with farmers and their democratically elected representative bodies at all stages, but most particularly at the design stage.
- A comprehensive economic, environmental, and social impact assessment of any proposed MFF/CAP reforms must be completed, with viable alternative or protective measures available immediately where required. Nationally, this includes maximum co-financing, as well as the design of national interventions to mitigate any potential cut in EU CAP Payments were they to materialise. **Increased state aid thresholds** for the agriculture and fisheries sectors should be sought and secured.
- The government need to deliver on commitments made within the Programme for Government, namely strengthening farm incomes; ensuring vital farm payments are protected and expanded, including a fully supported, simplified CAP with an increased budget. The government is also committed to working at the EU level to secure new funding streams, separate from the CAP, to support farmers in meeting their environmental responsibilities.
- Greater recognition needs to be afforded to the fact that change, especially as fundamental as suggested, will require significant time and resources at the Member State level to plan and undergo the necessary adjustments to implement and administer efficiently. This pales in significance compared to the added uncertainty and risk to the future availability and security of key essential revenue streams for beneficiaries. Any change should only be progressive.
- The impact of environmental regulations on agricultural productivity needs to be better appreciated, and a review, together with practical recommendations, should be included in future simplification proposals.
- To protect the Single Market and EU Food security, the CAP must remain a stand-alone allocation within the EU budget. Its funding allocation needs to be substantially increased to meet the growing political and societal objectives set, as well as EU enlargement, and used to support farmers, food production, and food security. It should also be index-linked (to guarantee continuity of food supplies and help preserve on-farm margins in inflationary times) and simplified considerably, adopting an incentivised rather than regulatory approach, and re-balancing the importance afforded to economic sustainability. Future CAP/EU supports cannot penalise productive farmers or put food security and rural viability at risk.
- A separate Environment Fund is needed to support environmental action on farm. This must include support for farmers with designated land and any actions that may arise to support the EU Nature Restoration Plans.
- **Target payments at those that need it most** - the farmer producing the food, working the land, tending to livestock, harvesting the crops, etc, are the farmers who need it most.
- Only genuine active farmers engaged in food production should be eligible to claim payments in the CAP. The responsibility of defining 'Active Farmers' should rest with individual Member States, given the diversity of food production systems across Europe.
- Activity should be defined through a minimum output/sale value from the farm and stocking density, with a different, lower level for organic farms, those on designated land or those in Areas of Natural Constraints (ANC).
- The traditional two-pillar (EAGF and EAFRD) funding model should be retained, with targeted income support and eco-scheme payments provided to active farmers through Pillar 1 (EAGF), supplemented by additional dedicated sector-specific supports for vulnerable sectors, as well as rural development and agri-environmental supports through Pillar 2 (EAFRD).specific supports for vulnerable sectors; rural development and agri-environmental supports through Pillar 2 (EAFRD).

3. PILLAR I INTERVENTIONS

- Dedicated income supports, based on area-based payments, should be retained and distributed, together with a new 'Farm Activity Support Scheme', only to genuine active farmers engaged in food and agricultural production.
- All genuine active farmers should get at least 70% of their BISS payment in mid-October. Issues arising thereafter can be resolved from the balancing payment.
- Lessons of the past surrounding convergence and its impact on on-farm viability must be incorporated into any potential move toward full convergence.
- Conditionality: The next CAP should have a greater orientation toward an incentivised approach, through eco-schemes/agri-environmental schemes, rather than any further SMR/GAEC requirements. Any changes to Conditionality or individual GAECs must not undermine the economic agricultural activity taking place on Irish farms. They must be sensibly designed and pragmatically implemented at a national level, with additional support in areas with natural constraints and designated sites.
- GAEC-2 (Protection of Peatlands and Wetlands) should be removed from Conditionality, and an incentivised approach, through eco-schemes or agri-environmental schemes, should be adopted.
- GAEC-4 (Buffer Strips) – A derogation should be provided for organic producers, with optimisation of the management of existing buffer strips prioritised over any increase in existing buffers post 2028. The tillage sector has been unfairly penalised with the requirement for a 3m buffer around fields producing cereal, oilseed and protein crops and 6m buffers for late-harvested root crops. Existing margins must be eligible for funding under environmental or specific tillage schemes. To avoid loss of grazing land and shelter for animals, there must be no requirement to fence buffer strips.
- GAEC 6 (Soil Cover): Having a minimum of 30% grass/stubble lie-back when grazing forage/catch crops with livestock has impacted the sustainable practice of integrating livestock into cropping systems. The lie-back requirement must be abolished, and responsible grazing practices for cover crops permitted.
- GAEC-7 (Crop Diversification): The 2-crop rule needs to be removed entirely as it is driving an exodus of smaller growers away from the tillage sector. The requirement for three crops should only kick in at 50 hectares and above.
- GAEC-8: Eligible forestry, **ineligible forestry**, native woodlands, commonage, privately owned hill, and non-active turbary plots within holdings must all be included in the 'space for nature' calculation.
- GAEC 9: Reseeding in Natura 2000 sites must continue to be allowed, as was the case previously. This is vital for farmers who wish to incorporate a multispecies sward into permanent grassland and continue sward rejuvenation, which improves response to fertiliser, thus facilitating reduced application.
- Capping – No further capping of BISS payments for genuine active farmers should apply. Leased-in entitlements should be excluded when calculating total BISS payments for capping purposes. Family employment and/or arrangements to facilitate generational renewal (e.g. Registered Farm Partnerships) where more than one income is being earned from the farm should also be factored into total BISS payments before Capping comes into effect.
- Eco-Schemes **should be retained in Pillar 1**, with no further increase in funding allocation beyond the existing 25% level. A menu of practical actions, relevant for all sectors and regardless of intensity, income vulnerability and geography, should be provided. No increase to existing obligations or thresholds should apply, nor should the inclusion of an obligatory participation clause in supply chain agreements for sustainability. Payment for mandatory legal requirements should also be permitted.
- Rules relating to sectoral Intervention in the Fruit and Vegetable Sector (Producer Organisations) should be less bureaucratic and designed in a more farmer-friendly manner.
- Coupled payments - there needs to be scope to provide more support to vulnerable sectors, such as the tillage and livestock sectors, particularly for countries with very low cropping areas. Expand the remit beyond protein crops to other sectors and provide flexibility to extend existing Pillar 1 thresholds that can be devoted to coupled support.
- Complementary Redistributive Income Support for Sustainability (CRISS) - CRISS was devised as a mechanism within the context of a European distribution of CAP payments. However, Ireland's distribution of CAP payments is much less skewed than the EU average. Accordingly, no increase in percentage allocated to CRISS should occur. DAFM modelling indicates only a minor increase in payment for those who benefit, and a significant loss for many who will have their payments reduced.



4. PILLAR II INTERVENTIONS

- Pillar II must be retained within the traditional CAP structure, and used, together with maximum permissible levels of national co-financing to provide vital supports (of lesser number but at increased payment rates to retain overall payment amounts) to farmers in the more vulnerable sectors, namely beef (cattle rearing, suckler farming and other types of drystock cattle enterprises), sheep and tillage. Irish suckler farmers operate one of the most environmentally sustainable beef farming systems in the world, and they are a critical component of the beef production industry. Future schemes must be simplified, ambitious and provide meaningful support to the sector. Costings must be increased/updated, and additional practical and beneficial measures defined for suckler farmers.
- Expand the scope of the Dairy Beef Welfare Scheme to include farmers who rear and finish weanlings and stores from suckler farms, with a budget allocation which can deliver at least €100 per animal.
- Dairy Beef Welfare Scheme - essential to support and optimise the welfare of dairy calves and their beef value in the farming and food chain.
- Sheep Improvement Scheme - the scheme must have a funding allocation to deliver €30/ewe to all participants for all ewes applied for, with increased/updated costings and additional practical and beneficial measures for sheep farmers.
- The Straw Incorporation Measure must remain for 2028 and beyond, with an increased annual budget (to €13.75m) to enable 55,000ha of straw to be incorporated back into soils annually by 2030 as stipulated under the Climate Action Plan.
- Having Pillar II schemes based on a 'costs incurred, and income foregone' model means that, by definition, these schemes cannot improve farmers' incomes. This needs to change. The '**costs incurred/income foregone**' calculations should set a baseline from which greater remuneration is provided to incentivise participation. They should be the minimum, not the maximum, payment involved.
- Agri-environmental schemes should be available and appealing to all farmers (not only at the start of the new CAP programme), complementary to eco-schemes, with a flexible application commitment period (e.g. from 1 year to 5 years) and more attractive payments provided (beyond merely the cost incurred / income foregone). Baseline requirements should be removed, with payment to meet national mandatory requirements, plus any additional actions, provided. A loyalty bonus should be built into payments where farmers continually participate in agri-environmental schemes. The ACRES scheme has been shambolic and has failed to deliver for farmers. We need a revamped environmental scheme that provides farmers with a minimum annual payment of €15,000.
- Organics - Increased investment is required to develop suitable markets and outlets for both existing and projected organic produce. Funding for the Organic Farm Scheme should be increased to incentivise and further develop the land area under organic production, with the participation payment maintained. Dual funding is a barrier for anyone considering converting to organic farming or already participating in the Organic Farming Scheme. This should be reviewed in the next CAP.

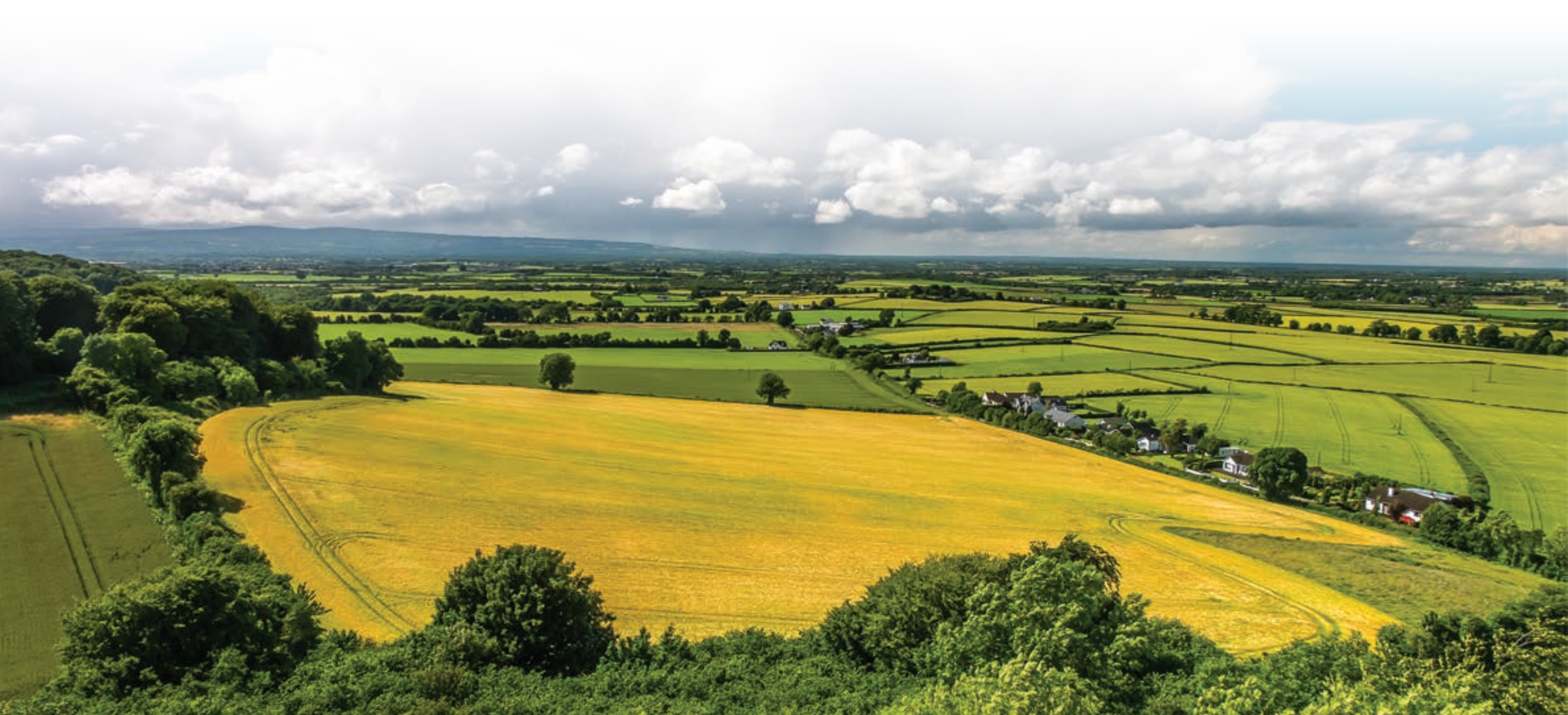
- Forestry - In August 2023, the European Commission granted State Aid approval to the afforestation scheme under Ireland's Forestry Programme 2023 – 2027, subject to several criteria. The condition on organo-mineral soils should be reviewed so that peat depth of less than or equal to 50 cm, subject to appropriate assessment screening, is eligible under the afforestation scheme. In addition, the mandatory broadleaf area requirement should be reduced to 15% as per the previous programme. An amendment to the State aid guidelines to support farmers with ash dieback is also required.
- Areas Facing Natural Constraints (ANC) The ANC scheme must be co-funded to the maximum by the National Exchequer.
- The budget to support ANC should be increased to €300 million per annum, with eligible land thresholds restored to their previous levels.
- Producer Organisations must contribute in practical and tangible terms to improving the position of farmers in the food chain, empowering them to have greater negotiation weight, including on prices, specifications and production conditions. Measures and supports must be available across all sectors, be adequately resourced, farmer-friendly and keep bureaucratic requirements to a minimum.
- TAMS - All farm-related items currently eligible for grant aid in TAMS III should continue to be eligible for grant aid in a new On-Farm Capital Investment Scheme, together with additions such as the dribble bar, ATV, UTV, virtual collars/fencing, quad gates, etc. Permitting grant aid to meet legal requirements is beneficial; the timeline of which, particularly for new entrants, should be extended.
- The volume of supporting /certifying documentation should be reduced.
- Investment costs should be updated more regularly or index-linked to ensure reference costs that better reflect prevailing market costs. Non-farm investments should be supported outside of CAP.
- Investment ceilings should increase beyond the current €90,000 (€160,000 for Registered Farm Partnerships) to better account for the inflationary impact on eligible investment items and preserve the benefit of the grant-aid provided.
- For the young farmer, extend the duration of additional support for investments beyond the 5 years since first established to 10 years.
- Removing the herd size limit on investments.
- Payments need to be accelerated – too many farmers are having to resort to taking out bridging loans and extending their term to fund investments while waiting on the grant.
- The Collaborative Farming Grant, which supports farm partnerships, should be available to both existing partnerships and newly formed ones.
- The Knowledge Transfer Programme should be retained, with its coverage expanded.
- LEADER Programme - a sustainable budget should be provided for future LEADER Programmes to drive 'bottom-up, community-led' investment to create and sustain employment in rural Ireland; provide funding in the rural environment, and support climate change mitigation initiatives in rural communities. It is essential to involve all stakeholders, including farmers, in LEADER Boards and similar initiatives.
- Natura 2000 sites – the economic impact of designation needs to be better realised in future CAP schemes, and no further restrictions should apply to designated / Natura 2000 lands. Increased support (advisory, financial, etc) beyond priority access to mainstream schemes should be provided, and agricultural activity allowed to continue, with a full review of the internal operating dynamics surrounding designations, compensation and applications for Actions Requiring Consent in consultation with key farming stakeholders. A 'no compensation, no designation' policy should apply. Where financial resources are not available to remunerate impacted farmers for lost income potential, **security and asset devaluations, the designations should be removed**.
- European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs) play a valuable role in peer-to-peer awareness raising, enabling groups of farmers to adopt and share practices that improve biodiversity, among other environmental benefits. EIPs must be more readily scalable to benefit farmers directly, and there must be no leakage of funds away from the farmers concerned. Locally led schemes that have been audited and have been proven to deliver environmental benefits should be reinstated in the next CAP. Additional supports (advisory & financial) are also required in participating areas after the EIP ends, to maintain positive momentum and engagement secured.
- Risk Management – the primary objective should be to keep farmers productive, ensuring food security. Given the new and greater frequency of challenges presenting, it is essential to ensure a toolbox of interventions is available where required to secure farmers' incomes (distinctive but complementary to direct payments; crisis management; agricultural reserve In this regard it is essential to keep it voluntary for Member States to establish/keep it voluntary for Member States to establish/keep a risk management system/framework within the CAP or outside the CAP. The advantages of being within the CAP are that it potentially supports better coordination of instruments and objectives, but it is likely more bureaucratic than being outside the CAP. Outside the CAP, while potentially quicker to access necessary funds, it can be costly and reliant on the Member State's financial capacity to support. There needs to be an EU approach to geopolitical risks outside the CAP.

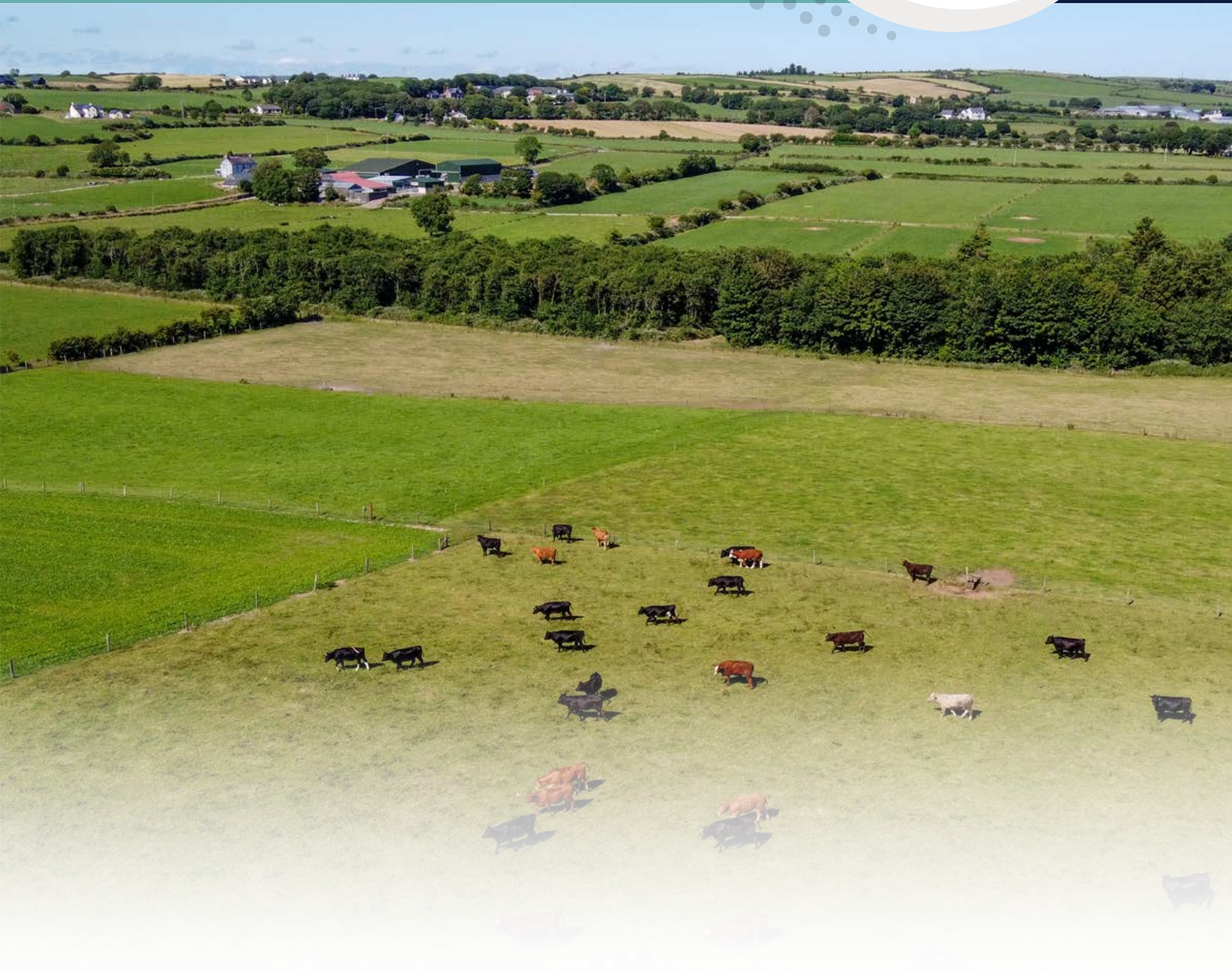
5. GENERATIONAL RENEWAL

- Attracting and retaining new entrants to farming remains a fundamental challenge across most Member States, with tackling Generational Renewal among the top priorities of the new Commission. CAP is a pivotal generational renewal mechanism in this regard, but to truly address it will require more than the provision of a series of stronger & targeted interventions (which will be necessary, and across both Pillars of CAP) to support committed young farmers (across all sectors). A fundamental overhaul and reduction of governing regulation – both agricultural & non-agricultural, together with farmers assuming a greater share of the food value chain, must be provided. An incentivised approach rather than a regulatory approach, with fewer conditional requirements, is required. One of the most effective ways to support generational renewal is to address the challenges that farmers face today. Measures proposed to support generational renewal include strong support for committed young farmers, including a preferential national reserve, top-up payments (such as BISS and TAMs), partnership supports, and the mainstreaming of the land mobility service.
- Provide investment support for farmers setting up for the first time in an agricultural holding as head of the holding in respect of investments to comply with Union standards (as existed 2014-2022).
- Extend the period of additional grant-aid support for young farmers beyond the current 5 years from the date of first establishment to 10 years, or initiate a 5-year term from the date of first supported investment.
- Amendments are needed to support legal entities, as the current framework is too restrictive, and issues will only intensify in the years ahead if CAP support remains unchanged. By way of example, a young farmer draws down the Young Farmer scheme support from 2015 to 2020. In 2023, their spouse (who is under 40, completed green cert, first time on holding, etc) joins the company. However, the spouse is ineligible for the Young Farmer payment because their spouse has already received it. She will have spent money and time obtaining the necessary Education Qualifications, yet no added reward is provided. This needs to be corrected, and some form of support provided.
- The 'Forgotten Farmers' should be eligible to apply for CIS-YF (or its equivalent) and the National Reserve. The funding for this does not necessarily have to come from CAP funds; instead, it should be funded by the National Exchequer.
- The introduction of a meaningful Farm Succession Scheme, with a series of targeted interventions for both parties (i.e., the retiring farmer and the new entrant), should be provided to encourage farm mobility. This may include a tiered payment structure, with top-ups and increased grant thresholds offered to young farmers until they reach 40 years of age (regardless of how many years they have been farming).
- Like that of young farmers, greater access to grant funding for women farmers should be provided in the next CAP to support continued and increased participation.

6. PERFORMANCE-BASED PAYMENTS

- With the possibility of increased orientation toward performance-based payments in the next CAP, below are some lessons from the current CAP for consideration:
- Simplify performance-based payments. Alleviate the burden of proof/verification required to receive payments by relying more on self-declaration and/or other mechanisms (e.g. Geo-tagged photos; AMS; AIMS, etc).
- A transitional period should apply to performance-related schemes, with a meaningful participation payment provided in Years 1 and 2 of the scheme, before the impact of any management-related actions takes effect from Year 3 onwards. This would enable paying agencies to design any necessary IT systems to administer efficiently, provide clarity to farmers regarding payments, and also allow both parties ample time and opportunity to ascertain baseline performance metrics and devise corrective strategies to maintain or advance them without unnecessary payment delays.
- The probability of achieving a high score/performance rating should be at least equal to the likelihood of achieving a lower score/performance rating. No negative marking should apply, with a '0' being the lowest score.
- Flexibility should be provided to paying agencies to adjust upwards assigned payment rates and/or individual contract commitments, in agreement with the scheme participant, where assumptions made in ringfencing related calculations prove materially different to that subsequently achieved nationally.
- Practical support (advisory & financial via agreed environmental actions) should be universally available to all farmers in performance-related schemes, regardless of any categorisation applied within the scheme. The purpose ultimately is to improve baseline scores. New or additional bespoke measures beyond the list of prescribed measures should also be eligible for payment, where appropriate, to promote or enhance habitat and biodiversity in individual locations, as agreed upon in consultation with the Advisory Teams.
- Farmers should be advised of the date that their lands/actions are being monitored/assessed, and provided with the opportunity, should they so wish, to accompany the planner/consultant during the assessment to enable information sharing and corrective action to be relayed in real time. More broadly, an agreed-upon timeline is required for providing assessment outcomes to farmers upon completion.
- Similar to mobile TAMS applications (subject, perhaps, to a maximum of €5,000 per application), permit applicants can progress with environmental actions at their own risk once valid applications have been submitted. Payments to follow on receipt of geo-tagged photo and vouched expenses. This will also enable environmental actions (agreed upon in advance with advisory teams) to be undertaken more quickly, allowing for greater environmental benefits and improved overall performance-related payments.
- To minimise lost time, utilised resources, and constrained environmental action, the opportunity to amend minor infringements within individual applications should be permitted, rather than rejecting individual measures entirely. Approval on condition should also be considered.
- Farmers need a reformed CAP that rewards active farming and productive land use, while supporting evidence-based environmental measures that complement output and efficiency. Financial supports that promotes the implementation of measures within the MACC curve should be provided.



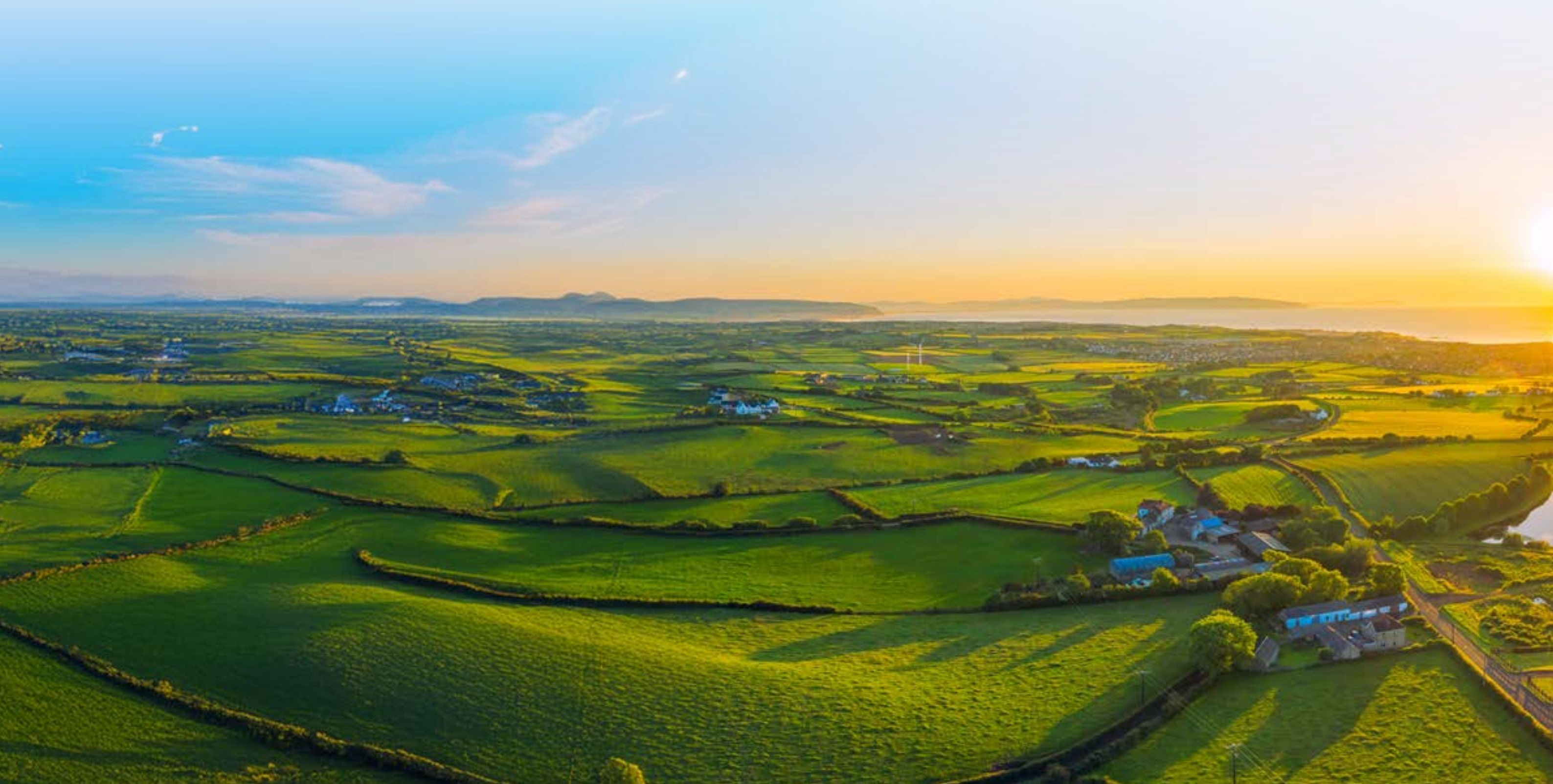


7. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

- Adequate resources should be deployed to DAFM staffing, IT infrastructure, etc, to ensure the swift delivery of payments per the Farmers Charter of Rights, where required on foot of MFF/CAP Reform. Individual cases (incl. partnerships), which require additional processing, should not be continually pushed out or processed without payment. Advance payments should be issued to all, with any issue/ discrepancy corrected via balancing and/or future scheme payments where required.
- Full scheme details must be provided to farmers at the outset and point of application. Unless to the farmer's advantage, individual terms/ qualifications must hold for at least the term of the new CAP programme. There can be no downward revision or pro-rata reduction in either payment or maximum eligible area within individual measures.
- It is essential that an agreed decision timeline is derived (& enforced) from when, post end of application window, farmers can expect to receive decision letters. Non-receipt of formal decisions within agreed-upon timelines is assumed to be approved.
- Paying agencies need to proactively notify farmers and their planners of potential penalties/anomalies arising from non-action directly, in written format, rather than relying on digital means through AgFood.
- Any unspent CAP funding must be ringfenced and distributed within Agriculture
- Any amendments to national CAP Strategic Plans (CSP) should only require Commission approval where strategic.

8. INSPECTIONS / PENALTIES

- Farmers must not be unduly disadvantaged, penalised or prone to increased on-farm inspections following direct/indirect advances in available technologies, data collection or monitoring mechanisms, with the privacy and data protection rights of the farmer secure and protected at all times. The sharing or transfer of data from one data source to another, even within individual entities, is not permitted without the prior consent of the farmer.
- The level of ongoing monitoring of on-farm activities must be proportionate and similar to that afforded to other employment cohorts.
- Inspections should follow the Farmers Charter of Rights protocol, with all farmers, irrespective of whether inspected or not, provided with a detailed list of annual requirements for scheme participation.
- There must be a degree of flexibility concerning on-farm inspections. Farmers must be allowed to reschedule or refuse an inspection (e.g. where serious illness, mental health, bereavement, etc, is evident) without disadvantage. There must exist a considerable 'grace period' provided for farm families in such instances also against any future on-farm inspection, where the principal farm operator has recently endured serious illness, trauma or is deceased.
- At least 48 hours' advance notice should be provided to both the farmer and planner in all instances, with the farmer/agent provided with the same information the Department have when doing inspections. The ambition should be to achieve scheme compliance, rather than a revenue-generating exercise. A written summary of the inspection should be provided to the farmer before leaving the farm.
- A streamlined appeals mechanism (including acknowledgement within defined timelines) should also be put in place, with all details provided to the farmer in advance, and adjudicated on in a timely and efficient manner.
- Farmers subject to an inspection and/or appeal should be subsequently paid promptly where appropriate.
- Any penalties applied to non-compliance must be proportionate and fair, with flexibility and common sense applied to genuine cases. A complete disregard of positive action undertaken and the application of a full potential 100% penalty on total yearly payments (plus potentially additional) is excessive. A 'Yellow Card' system should apply before any formal penalty is applied, with a period to correct individual non-compliance required.
- Any recoupment of funds should be done only on agreement, with provision to arrange repayment across multiple years where necessary. No interest charge or penalty on such funds should apply.
- While not seeking to alleviate any mandatory or legislative responsibilities, farmers, through Social Conditionality and associated penalties, should not be disproportionately penalised relative to other economic groups in instances of non-compliance. Social Conditionality should be removed from the CAP.



9. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the upcoming MFF / CAP frameworks will shape the future and orientation of Irish farming for years to come. In agreement with the Commission, but from a different perspective, the 'status quo' is not an option. Increased funding allocations in the next Medium-Term Financial Framework (MFF) are necessary for strategically important assets, with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) being a key focus in this regard.

Agriculture is, and must continue to be, at the core of the European Union, with a strong and supportive common policy, backed by an ambitious EU budget. Europe needs a stronger, simpler, and dedicated (inflation-adjusted) CAP budget to ensure competitiveness, foster potential for the next generation, and guarantee a decent income for today's active farmers.

Farmers need a reformed CAP that rewards active farming and productive land use, supports evidence-based environmental measures that complement output and efficiency, recognises sustainability as a tool for long-term resilience, not as a barrier to viability, and protects the future of commercial farming and rural communities in Ireland.

A separate EU environment and transition fund, in addition to more substantial CAP allocations, managed by agricultural governance, is needed to support environmental action on farms, ensuring that future generations commit to farming with certainty regarding funding streams.

While the EU's budgetary needs are numerous, additional actions and policies cannot come at the expense of the CAP/CFP budget, particularly given the growing demand for food and potential EU enlargement.

Were the Commission to implement its Single Budget proposal, alongside a potential Mercosur deal (which should be stopped), it would significantly impact EU Agri-Food production and, consequently, EU food sovereignty. Both must be resisted.

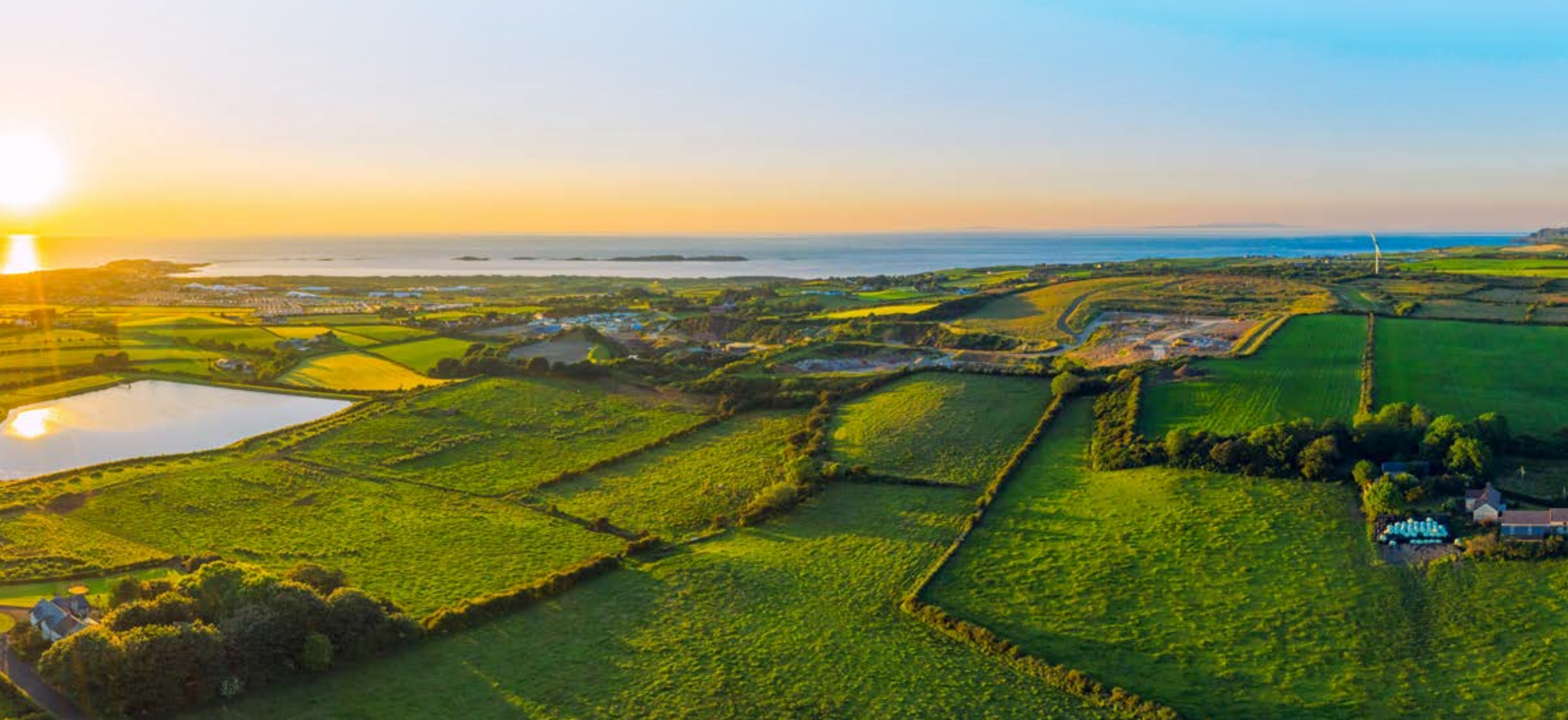
EU farmers should be looking ahead with a sense of optimism and purpose. Yet, economic, bureaucratic and societal pressures are stifling hope and on-farm endeavour. Farmers need a period of certainty, starting with financial certainty and a stronger, dedicated CAP in the next MFF.

Producing the highest quality food globally at affordable prices is both a Public Good and a key pillar of the EU's future security. It's time Europe's policymakers recognise this.

Ends.

Agreed by IFA National Council 11.06.25

This document may be updated and reviewed as more details emerge of the Commission proposals on the Multi-annual Financial Framework and the Common Agricultural Policy.



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