

# The Irish Farmers' Association



## Constitution and Rules

### Notes

- (i) *The Irish Farmers' Association* was formed on December 22, 1971 by the merging of
  - National Farmers' Association (1955)
  - Irish Sugar Beet Growers' Association Limited (1926)
  - Irish Commercial Horticultural Association (1947)
  - Leinster Milk Producers (1937)
  - Cork Milk Producers (1934)
- (ii) The Irish Farmers' Association is an unincorporated organisation which has as its Trustee,  
Feirmeoirí Aontuithe na hÉireann Iontaobaithe Teoranta, a Company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital, which acquires, holds and disposes of all property and assets of the Irish Farmers' Association in accordance with the directions of the National Council of the Association.  
Registered under the Companies Act 1963, on March 13, 1972.

The Rules were last updated on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2025.



# Constitution and Rules

## **Name**

1. The name of the Association shall be "The Irish Farmers' Association" (hereinafter referred to as "the IFA").

## **Place of Business**

2. The place of business shall be the Irish Farm Centre, Bluebell, Dublin 12 or such other place as the National Council of the IFA may from time to time determine.

## **Objects**

3. The Objects of the IFA are:
  - a) To promote, foster and develop agriculture in all its Branches including horticulture, arboriculture, mariculture and farm tourism by doing all such things as are, or may be incidental and conducive thereto, including affiliation to such National and International Organisations as shall be deemed appropriate, provided always that it shall remain non-sectarian and shall not sponsor, put forward or support any candidate for political office.
  - b) To secure an adequate living, evolving in line with prevailing standards, economic and social, for the maximum number of families living on the land in Ireland as enshrined in Article 45 of Bunreacht na hÉireann and within the European Community Union in Article 39 of the Treaty of Rome (EEC) and economic and social cohesion within the European Community required by Title V Part Three of the European Community Treaties.
  - c) To have effective negotiating rights for farmers and farm families and full recognition by the Irish Government and the Institutions of the European Community.
  - d) To represent, advance and protect the particular interests of members, both collectively and where appropriate individually, and to develop services for members and the direct benefits of IFA membership.
  - e) To promote and defend the particular interests of the farming community.
  - f) To improve the expansion of industrialisation and the development of tourism, fishing, forestry, and other activities beneficial to rural areas.
  - g) To improve the conditions of rural life generally.
  - h) To assist in the promotion or defence of any actions or legal proceedings in cases which in the opinion of the IFA may be deemed to affect agriculture as a whole.

- i) To purchase, lease, or otherwise acquire land, buildings, and other real and personal property, and to sell, demise, exchange and otherwise deal with the same.
- j) To borrow or raise money, with or without security, and if necessary to secure payment of monies so borrowed by mortgage or debenture over, or charge upon, or by the mortgage of all or any of its real or personal property.
- k) To invest any monies of the IFA in such investment and in such manner as may seem desirable and with power from time to time to vary investments for others of like nature.
- l) To do all or any things that are necessary or conducive to carrying out all or any of the above objectives.

It is hereby expressly declared that each sub-clause of these objects shall be construed independently of the other sub clauses hereof, and that none of the objects mentioned in any sub clause shall be deemed to be merely subsidiary to the objects mentioned in any other sub-clause.

## **Constitution**

4. The Organisation of the IFA shall consist of

- a) Members
- b) Branches
- c) County Executives
- d) National Committees and Commodity Sections
- e) National Officers' Committee
- f) Project Teams
- g) National Council

## **Membership**

5. Membership shall be divided into the following classes:

- a) *Ordinary Members* – Individuals, companies or partnerships owning, using, or managing land or buildings in Ireland for the purposes of deriving an income from agriculture, specified in Rule 3a) hereof providing that full fees are paid to the IFA. Each ordinary member shall be entitled to one vote at duly convened meetings of the IFA and no person shall be entitled to more than one vote in any ballot except as provided in Rule 45. Where a member cannot attend a meeting, they shall be entitled to one voting representative (duly authorised in writing).  
A person is deemed to be an ordinary member provided they are paying the current full annual membership fee as laid down by the National Council from time to time. The property and assets of the IFA shall be owned by the ordinary members and held in trust by Feirmeoiri Aontuithe na hÉireann Iontaobaithe Teoranta, which shall at all times act in accordance with the directions of the National Council.

- b) *Farming Family Members* – Spouses, sons, daughters, nieces or nephews of ordinary members under a) hereof, who derive an income from farming and who do not fully satisfy the criteria for ordinary membership under a) hereof. Farming family members shall be entitled to one vote at duly convened meetings of the IFA and no person shall be entitled to more than one vote in any ballot except as provided in Rule 45. Where a member cannot attend a meeting, they shall be entitled to one voting representative (duly authorised in writing). The fee for farming family members shall be less than the fee for an ordinary member and shall be laid down by the National Council from time to time. The membership of a farming family member shall not be renewed where the membership of the relevant ordinary member ceases for any reason.
- c) *Retired Members* - Retired members of at least 55 years of age who no longer fully satisfy the criteria for ordinary membership under a) hereof. Each retired member shall be entitled to one vote at duly convened meetings of the IFA and no person shall be entitled to more than one vote in any ballot except as provided in Rule 45. Where a member cannot attend a meeting, they shall be entitled to one voting representative (duly authorised in writing). The fee for retired members shall be less than the fee for an ordinary member and shall be laid down by the National Council from time to time.
- d) *Associate Members* – Persons or legal entities who, while not satisfying the criteria for ordinary membership, farming family membership or retired membership under a), b) or c) hereof, satisfy the criteria for one of the following two categories of associate membership:

*Business Members* – Co-operatives, companies, partnerships or individuals purchasing produce from farmers and / or supplying goods and services to farmers or the agricultural industry.

*Countryside Members* – Individuals or families who are living in the countryside or who have an interest in agriculture and the countryside.

Associate members shall be entitled to such benefits and services, as may be determined from time to time by the National Council. Associate Members shall have no voting powers or right to hold office in the Association. The fees for business members and countryside members shall be determined by the National Council from time to time.

- e) *Honorary Life Members* – The National Council may if it so desires confer Honorary Life Membership on any person who in the opinion of the Council has rendered outstanding service to the IFA, notwithstanding that they may not have the qualifications necessary for ordinary membership. Each year, a County Executive shall be entitled to propose one person of at least 65 years of age, who has rendered outstanding service to the IFA, for Honorary Life Membership. An Honorary Life Member shall enjoy the full privileges, duties and benefits of an Ordinary Member. The Association shall provide the

membership fee from its general fund and the normal benefits of membership shall be free to the Honorary Life Member.

6.
  - a) The annual Ordinary Members, 'Farming Family Members', and Retired Members' membership fees shall be paid in accordance with the existing direction of the National Council at the time of payment. The amount of the annual fee may be revised from time to time. Only fully paid up members shall be entitled to any special benefits that may derive from membership.
  - b) The subscription year shall be the twelve (12) month period commencing seven (7) days from the date that the membership fee is debited to a member's account or paid directly by a member. In the case of the initial affiliation of a member the fee for the year shall be due and payable on joining.
  - c) Any candidate for election to any office in the IFA must be a fully paid up member and a full contributor of any relevant commodity fees or levies operated by the IFA. A member must have a minimum of six (6) months unbroken membership of IFA in order to be eligible to be a candidate for election to any national position.
  - d) A member whose fee is six (6) months in arrears shall not be entitled to the privileges of membership for that year and, after notification of such fact, they shall automatically forfeit any position they hold.
  - e) Where a subscription has not been debited from a member's account by the collecting agent, bank, creamery etc., and the member is not so aware they may appeal to the National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee for restoration of their privileges on payment of their full membership fee for the year.

## **Branches**

7.
  - a) A Branch which is the primary organisational unit of the IFA may be formed by twenty five (25) or more persons who are entitled to and are admitted under Rule 5 a), b), c) and e) hereof as Ordinary Members, Farming Family Members, Retired Members and Honorary Life Members respectively.  
  
The minimum membership requirement for a Branch to maintain affiliation to the IFA is sixteen (16) fully paid up members as defined in Rule 5 a), b), c) and e) hereof.
  - b) The area of the Branch shall be such as may from time to time be determined by the County Executive which may if it thinks fit amalgamate two (2) or more Branches into one (1) Branch, divide a Branch or may group Branches together for specific purposes only with the express approval of the National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee. Branches comprising parts of neighbouring counties may by majority decision of the members elect to which County Executive the Branch is to affiliate.
  - c) Each Branch shall as soon as possible after its formation call an inaugural General Meeting of all its members for the purpose of electing Branch Officers for the

following twelve (12) months. The new officers shall formally affiliate the Branch with the Secretary of the County Executive and the National Returning Officer before April 30 of that year.

- d) A Branch which has been refused affiliation by a County Executive shall have the right of appeal to the National Officers' Committee.
  - e) The quorum for a Branch meeting shall be five (5) fully paid up members as defined in Rule 5 a), b), c) and e) hereof.
  - f) Each Branch duly affiliated to a County Executive as laid down in Rule 8 d) hereof shall be entitled to participate in all elections for the office of President and Deputy President. Duly affiliated Branches may nominate candidates for election to the office of National Committee Representative and officers of the County Executive as defined in Rule 13 b) hereof.
  - g) In exceptional circumstances and on application from the appropriate County Executive, the National Officers' Committee may allow lower membership number requirements at Rule 7 a) and e).
8. a) At its *Annual General Meeting* which must be held before March 31 each year, each Branch shall elect from the fully paid up members as defined in Rule 5 a), b) c) and e) hereof the following Officers: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Branch Registrar. The Chair, Secretary and Branch Registrar shall automatically be Representatives to the County Executive and their votes duly cast represent the Branch. Each Branch shall be entitled to a fourth voting Representative where the four (4) Representatives include both male and female members.
- b) No member shall be elected to serve as a Branch Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Branch Registrar, or fourth Representative to the County Executive for more than four (4) consecutive years in that position. They shall be eligible to stand for re-election after a break of one (1) year. A member who has completed four (4) consecutive years as Branch Chair shall be ineligible to stand for election to any other Branch office, with the exception of Branch Registrar, until after a break of two (2) years.
- c) Each Branch Secretary shall lodge with both the Secretary of the County Executive and the National Returning Officer before April 30, each year a Branch registration form giving details of date of Annual General Meeting, attendance and officers elected. In the case of newly formed branches in their first year, this date may be extended to August 31. If this requirement is not fulfilled, the Branch shall be ineligible to participate in any election in that calendar year.
- d) The Director General shall, before April 30 each year send to the Branch Registrar a record showing names and addresses of the current IFA membership within the Branch area.

- e) The Branch Registrar shall examine this record and amend details regarding individual members where necessary including compiling a list of all farmers in the Branch area who are not current members of the IFA This information shall be returned to the Director General before the third Friday in May each year.
- 9
- a) All Branch proposals, suggestions, queries and grievances shall be directed to the County Executive to which the Branch is affiliated.
  - b) All Branch communications on matters of national policy to Government Departments, Local Government, State, semi-State and all other Outside Bodies, Agencies or commercial entities must be agreed subject to Rule 11 hereof by the County Executive to which the Branch is affiliated and must pass through the hands of the Director General of the IFA.
  - c) All Branch communications on local issues to Government Departments, Local Government, State, semi-State and all other Outside Bodies, Agencies or commercial entities at county level must be agreed subject to Rule 11 hereof by the Chair of the County Executive to which the Branch is affiliated.
  - d) No independent action shall be taken by a Branch or its members on matters of general policy without the express consent and approval of the County Executive to which the Branch is affiliated subject to Rule 11 hereof.
  - e) Any member or Branch having a particular grievance with their County Executive may communicate in writing to the Director General, provided always that the Secretary of the County Executive shall be furnished with a copy of all such correspondence.
- 10.
- a) Legitimate expenses incurred by Branches in pursuance of their organisational activities shall be submitted for payment by the County Executive. Legitimate expenses shall be rent of meeting room and/or notification costs of meetings incurred by the Branch.
  - b) Donations to charitable or other causes shall not in any circumstances come from IFA fees or levies but a Branch shall be free to have a separate collection otherwise to provide a contribution to a charitable or other such cause.
  - c) A Branch which has ceased to function as a Branch of the IFA shall through the last Secretary or Treasurer of the Branch holding office forward to the County Executive to which the Branch was affiliated any funds which the Branch may have collected together with records and other documentation which were the property of the Branch.

### **County Executives**

11. The Branches in each county shall establish a County Executive which shall among other functions have responsibility for:

Extending membership of the IFA within the County Executive area and doing all such things as may be considered conducive to the achievement of that objective, including the formation of new Branches.

Rendering help and guidance to all Branches affiliated to the County Executive and considering all matters referred to it by affiliated Branches.

Establishing sub committees to deal with particular commodities or specific matters.  
Considering all matters referred to the County Executive by the National Council.

Receiving reports from the County Representative on the National Council and transmitting same to affiliated Branches.

Considering national policy and transmitting reports on same to the National Council through the Director General and the County Representative/s on the Council.

Nominating candidates for the office of President, Deputy President and Regional Chair as defined in Rule 84 a) hereof of the IFA.

Electing representatives to National Committees in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 a) hereof.

12.
  - a) Each County Executive shall be comprised of four (4) Representatives as defined in Rule 8 a) from each affiliated Branch within the County Executive area, two (2) Representatives from the County Executive Committee of Macra na Feirme, the Officers of the Executive as defined in Rule 13 b) hereof, the Representatives from the county on the National Council, National Committees and Commodity Sections. In the event of a vote, where a National Committee or Commodity Section has more than one Representative, each such Committee or Section shall have one (1) voting member, who shall be agreed among the Representatives of that Committee or Section or failing that shall be determined by lot.
  - b) Branch Representatives are obliged to attend regularly all meetings of the County Executive. In the event of a Representative being unable to attend another member from the Branch may be authorised to attend on their behalf.
13.
  - a) Each County Executive shall hold an Annual General Meeting within the period April 1 to March 31 every year at which the following general business shall be transacted:
    - (i) Adoption of Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting.
    - (ii) Adoption of Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet.
    - (iii) Election of Officers of the County Executive.
    - (iv) Annual Reports of National Committees and Commodity Sections.
    - (v) Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies.
    - (vi) Any other business.
  - b) At the Annual General Meeting each year the following Officers of the County Executive shall be elected: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Registrar /Treasurer, Public Relations Officer and a second county representative on the National Council where the County Executive qualifies for such representation under c) (ii) hereof.



- c)
    - (i) The Chair of the County Executive shall be the county's Representative on the National Council. The Chair shall not be eligible to represent the county at the same time on National Committees or Commodity Sections.
    - (ii) Where a County Executive has more than double the average number of ordinary members in all County Executives for two (2) consecutive years, it shall qualify for a second seat on the National Council provided the second Representative gives a significantly greater geographical spread within the County Executive area. The second Representative shall not be eligible to represent the county at the same time on National Committees or Commodity Sections. Qualification for the second seat shall be lost where the County Executive's ordinary membership falls below double the average ordinary membership of all County Executives for two (2) consecutive years.
  - d) The following procedure shall govern the election of Officers of a County Executive as defined in b) hereof.
    - (i) Each Branch as defined in Rule 7 a) hereof and fulfilling the requirements of Rule 8 c) hereof shall be invited by the Secretary of the County Executive to nominate at a duly convened Branch meeting one (1) candidate for each position in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 b) hereof. Duly completed nomination papers shall be returned by the Branch Secretary to the Secretary of the County Executive at least seven (7) days prior to the date of the Annual General Meeting as defined in a) hereof.
    - (ii) If only one person is validly nominated to an office the Chair of the County Executive shall declare him to be elected.
    - (iii) If more than one person is nominated to an office a list of the validly nominated candidates shall be presented to the Annual General Meeting as defined in a) hereof and a secret ballot shall be held in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 a) hereof.
    - (iv) Only the four (4) Representatives from each affiliated Branch, described in Rule 8 a) hereof shall be entitled to vote in the election of Officers of a County Executive. In the event of a Representative being unable to attend, another member from the Branch may be authorised to attend and vote on their behalf. However, where the Branch has four voting Representatives as described under Rule 8 a), the four Representatives or the members authorised to attend and vote on their behalf shall include both male and female members.
- 14. a) No member shall hold any individual office as defined in Rule 13 b) hereof for more than four (4) consecutive years.

- b) A member who has served four (4) years as Chair or four (4) years as second county representative on the National Council shall be ineligible to serve in the same position again; and a member who has served as Chair shall be ineligible to serve as second county representative on the National Council.
  - c) Subject to b) hereof, an officer of the County Executive shall be eligible for re-election to the same position after a break of one (1) year.
  - d) Where a vacancy occurs for any position defined in Rule 13 b) hereof it shall be filled forthwith in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 13 d) hereof.
15. The quorum for a meeting of a County Executive shall be based on attendance from at least one-fifth of the affiliated Branches within the County Executive area or such fraction in excess of one-fifth as the County Executive may from time to time determine.
16.
  - a) All County Executive communications on matters of national policy to Government Departments, Local Government, State, semi State, and all other Outside Bodies, Agencies or commercial entities must pass through the hands of the Director General.
  - b) County Executives are obliged to adhere to and support general policy as agreed by the National Council of the IFA.
  - c) No independent action outside the ambit of general policy shall be taken by any County Executive without the express prior consent and approval of the President or the National Council.
17. The Director General shall before June 30 each year receive a properly prepared Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet from the Treasurer of the County Executive for the preceding financial year's transactions which shall be submitted by the Treasurer to the Annual General Meeting of the County Executive.
18. County Executives may have special rules governing the conduct of business provided that they are not inconsistent with the rules for the time being of the IFA and have been sanctioned by the National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee prior to their being implemented. Subject to the foregoing the said special rules may be altered, amended or rescinded by a resolution passed by a two-thirds majority at a meeting of the County Executive provided that not less than fourteen (14) days clear notice in writing is given indicating the proposed change.
19. A County Executive on ceasing to function as a County Executive of the IFA shall through its last elected Treasurer forward to the National Council through the Director General any funds which the County Executive may have on hand, in the banks or otherwise invested and shall through its last elected or appointed Secretary forward in like manner to the Director General all records and other documentation which were the property of the County Executive.

## National Committees

20. Each of the County Executives shall be invited to elect one (1) Representative onto each National Committee whose work is of importance to a significant number of farmers in the County Executive area. However, any Representative shall be eligible to serve only on one (1) National Committee or Commodity Section at the same time.
21. A person seeking election to any National Committee must:
  - a) be a fully paid up member and a full contributor of any relevant commodity fees or levies operated by the IFA.
  - b) be a producer of the commodity concerned or have a direct interest in the specific non commodity area.
  - c) fulfil the requirements of Rule 81 hereof regarding non-involvement in party political activities.
  - d) fulfil such other requirements as the National Council of the IFA shall determine.
22.
  - a) Each Branch as defined in Rule 7 a) hereof and fulfilling the requirements of Rule 8 c) hereof shall be invited by the Secretary of the County Executive to nominate at a duly convened Branch meeting one (1) representative in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 b) hereof for each National Committee in which farmers in the Branch area have a direct interest.
  - b) Each person nominated by a Branch for the various National Committees shall be placed on a list at County Executive level. The County Executive at a specially convened meeting shall then elect the National Committee Representative/s by secret ballot of only the four (4) Representatives from each affiliated Branch in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 a) hereof. In the event of a Branch Representative being unable to attend another member from the Branch may be authorised to attend and vote on their behalf.
  - c) All Branch nominees shall constitute the County Committee for the particular commodity or area of activity concerned and shall operate under the direction of the County Executive with the Representative first elected to the National Committee acting as Chair of the County Committee.
23. In the case of the following there shall be exceptional arrangements.
  - a) The National Pigs and Pigmeat Committee shall be comprised of representatives elected by the various regions in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 a) hereof but shall not exceed twenty five (25) members.
  - b) The National Poultry and Poultrymeat Committee shall be comprised of representatives elected by the various regions in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 a) hereof but shall not exceed thirty three (33) members.

- c) The National Liquid Milk Committee shall be comprised of representatives elected by the various regions in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 a) hereof but shall not exceed thirty five (35) members.
  - d) The National Rural Development and Less Favoured Areas Committee shall be comprised of one Representative elected by each of the County Executives as provided for in Rule 11 hereof, the Chair of the SACs Committee and the Chair of the National Hill Farming Committee. The latter two members shall enjoy all the rights of members elected by County Executives, except the right to vote in the election of the Management Committee or the officers of the Committee.
  - e) The National Grain Committee shall be comprised of representatives elected by County Executives as provided for in Rule 11 hereof. Any county with annual production in excess of forty thousand (40,000) hectares of grain crops shall be entitled to one (1) extra representative. Grass-Seed, Protein and Oil crops producers shall be represented as sub-committees of the National Grain Committee.
  - f) The National Potato Committee shall be comprised of representatives elected by the various regions in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 a) hereof. A region or county with commercial production in excess of one thousand six hundred (1,600) hectares shall be entitled to one (1) extra representative. The Committee shall not exceed twenty nine (29) members.
  - g) The National Hill Farming Committee shall be comprised of representatives elected by the various regions in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 b) hereof but shall not exceed fifteen (15) members.
24. The election of National Committee Chair and Vice Chair shall be a function of each National Committee and shall be conducted in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 b) hereof.
25. a) The Chair of each National Committee may serve a single term of four (4) years and shall be ineligible to serve in the same position again. A Chair may be subject to a mid-term challenge at two (2) years where one-third of the Committee members sign a motion submitted to the Secretary of the Committee calling for an election, in which case the election shall be held with at least seven (7) days' notice.
- b) The election of Chair of each National Committee shall take place at the midpoint of the Committee's two (2) year term.
- c) On the election of Chair of each National Committee the County Executive or region previously represented by the Chair shall be entitled to elect an additional or replacement representative to that Committee for the period of office of the Chair. The additional representative shall have the same rights as ordinary members of the National Committee except that they will not be eligible for election to the position of Vice Chair. When the Chair ceases to hold office as Chair, the additional representative shall automatically become an ordinary

member of the Committee and the sole representative of the County Executive or region which elected them.

- d) The outgoing Chair shall be a non-voting expert on the Committee for the remainder of the term of office of that National Committee. The National Officers' Committee, in consultation with the National Committee Chair, and with the approval of the National Council, shall have the power to co-opt up to three (3) IFA members to a National Committee nominated by Macra na Feirme or from the Future Leaders' Programme. These co-optees would be voting members, but would be ineligible to be elected as Chair or Vice Chair of the Committee. They will be appointed for a two (2) year term from the date approved by the National Council and are eligible to serve a maximum of two (2) terms.
  - e) Where a vacancy occurs for the position of National Committee Chair or Vice Chair it shall be filled in accordance with Rule 24 hereof.
  - f) In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Committee.
- 26.
- a) A member of a National Committee may serve a maximum of three (3) consecutive two (2) year terms of office.
  - b) Subject to a) hereof, a member may serve a maximum of six (6) consecutive two (2) year terms of office on National Committees and, provided they then take a break of service of at least two years, they may serve a further three (3) consecutive two (2) year terms of office on National Committees.
  - c) Any member who has served at least six (6) two (2) year terms on National Committees will not be eligible to go forward for election, should another candidate who has not previously served on any National Committee be validly nominated.
- 27.
- a) Where a vacancy occurs, for any reason, on a National Committee it shall be filled by the appropriate electing or nominating Body at its next meeting following the declaration of the vacancy in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 hereof.
  - b) A National Committee member who absents themselves from two (2) in-person National Committee meetings without notification or three (3) such meetings with notification in a calendar year, shall in the absence of 'just cause' forfeit their seat on that National Committee and the relevant electing or nominating Body shall immediately be invited to elect a replacement.
  - c) A National Committee member who is absent from five (5) in-person meetings in any calendar year of the County Executive shall in the absence of 'just cause' forfeit their seat and the relevant electing or nominating Body shall be invited to elect a replacement.

- d) Where a member is unable to attend a National Committee meeting, they shall in good time notify and consult the Chair of their County Executive or of the region they represent, and the Chair shall appoint a proxy. Where the position of Chair of the region as described herein does not exist, the member shall appoint a proxy.
  - e) Notwithstanding the provision in Rule 27 d) to allow the appointment of a proxy to attend a National Committee meeting, this is not deemed to mean an attendance by the member at a National Committee meeting and the provisions of Rule 27(b) and 27(c) above still apply where a National Committee member absents themselves from the relevant number of meetings in Rule 27 b) and/or Rule 27 c) in the absence of "just cause".
  - f) If a National Committee Chair notices that a member is in breach or in danger of being in breach of Rule 27 (b) and/or (c) the National Committee Chair shall consult with the County Chair of the nominating county. If following consultation with the County Chair, the National Committee Chair believes there is no 'just cause' and that Rule 27 may have been breached then the National Committee Chair shall notify the National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee. The National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee shall then write to the member advising them that they are potentially in breach of Rule 27 and that they will forfeit their seat on the relevant committee within fourteen (14) days unless they provide a reason that constitutes 'just cause'. If the member provides a reason which they believe is 'just cause', this will be considered by the National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee, whose decision shall be final.
28. The co-option of any non-voting expert by a National Committee shall be in all cases subject to the prior approval of the National Officers' Committee.
29. All National Committees shall meet not less than twice (2) in-person and not more than four (4) times each year in-person. Additional in-person meetings of a National Committee shall require specific authorisation from the National Officers' Committee.
30. Details of the attendance record of members of National Committees shall be available to the National Council, the National Officers' Committee and the County Executive they represent.
31. a) The members of each National Committee shall elect a Vice Chair and a *Management Committee* consisting of the Chair of the outgoing Committee and the Vice Chair, together with one (1) member elected in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 b) hereof by the members from each Region as defined in Rule 84 a) hereof. In the case of each of the following National Committees the members shall be entitled to elect:
- (i) *National Dairy Committee* – Munster Region two (2) of their number to the Management Committee.
  - (ii) *National Grain Committee* – Munster Region two (2) of their number to the Management Committee. South Leinster Region two (2) of their number to the Management Committee.

- (iii) *National Sheep Committee* – Connacht Region two (2) of their number to the Management Committee.
  - (iv) *The National Rural Development Committee and Less Favoured Areas Committee* shall elect a Management Committee consisting of the Chair of the outgoing Committee together with one (1) member elected from themselves by the group from each Region as defined in Rule 84 a) hereof. The Chair of the SACs Committee and the Chair of the National Hill Farming Committee shall be members of the Management Committee. The Management Committee shall not exceed eleven (11) members in total.
  - b) Meetings of Management Committees shall take place at intervals consistent with the efficient discharge of Committee business and subject always to such provisions as the National Officers' Committee may from time to time determine.
  - c) Any vacancy arising on a Management Committee shall be filled at the next meeting of the National Committee in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 b) hereof from the members that the retiring member represented.
32. No Management Committee shall exceed ten (10) members in total except as provided for in Rule 31 a) (v) hereof. In addition to the outgoing Chair and those members elected as regional representatives in accordance with Rule 31 a) hereof a National Committee shall by election from its own members secure the complete membership of its Management Committee.

### **Commodity Sections**

33. a) The National Council may from time to time determine that an Organisation or Group within the IFA or admitted to membership of the IFA shall operate as a Section hereunder, under such title and terms as the National Council shall determine. On the date of the adoption of this Rule the determined Sections are:
- The Sugar Beet Section
  - The Horticulture Section
  - The Fresh Milk Producers' Section
  - The Cork Liquid Milk Producers' Section
  - The Fish Farming Section
- b) All Representation on behalf of the members of Commodity Sections shall be determined by decision of the Governing Body of the particular Section, subject to Rules 38 and 39.
  - c) Only fully paid up members of IFA who are also members of the Section shall be entitled to participate in the discussions and decisions of the Section.
  - d) The Chair of the Fresh Milk Producers Section, the Chair of the Cork Liquid Milk Producers Section and the Chair of the Fish Farming Section referred to in a)

hereof shall be entitled to attend the Council for the business of the relevant section when such business appears as an item on the agenda of the Council and they shall have a vote at the meeting on such business only.

- e) Each Section referred to in a) hereof shall if considered necessary have its own Rules, Sub Rules or Constitution which shall not be in conflict in any way with the Constitution and Rules of the IFA and in the event of conflict the IFA Constitution and Rules shall automatically prevail.
- f) Any Rules, Sub Rules or Constitution of any Section may only be made, altered, rescinded or amended by a majority of two-thirds of the representatives of that Section present and voting at a special meeting of the Governing Body of the Section called for that purpose.

No decision of a Section making, altering, rescinding or amending the Rules, Sub-Rules or Constitution of the Section shall be taken without prior notice to and approval of the National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee which, if it withholds approval, shall refer the matter to National Council for authorisation before it shall be voted on in the Section.

- g) National Council may from time to time determine the terms or rules under which a Section or Sections shall operate, and these shall automatically apply to the Section concerned.

### **National Officers' Committee**

- 34 a) The President (who shall be the Chair), Deputy President, four Regional Chairs as defined in Rule 84 a), National Treasurer and the Director General shall constitute the National Officers' Committee.

The National Council shall have the power to co-opt up to three (3) additional members to the National Officers' Committee, subject to a transparent process and criteria, agreed in advance by the National Council.

Co-optees would be appointed for a two (2) year term and would be eligible to serve a maximum of two (2) terms.

Current or former National Council members or current or former staff members will not be eligible to be co-opted.

Co-optees to the National Officers' Committee will be ineligible to seek any position on the National Council for a two (2) year period after they complete their term.

- b) The National Officers' Committee shall assist the President in:
  - Implementing the decisions of the National Council,
  - Dealing with urgent issues arising between Council meetings,



- Co-ordinating the work of National Committees, Commodity Sections and Project Teams,
  - Communicating with County Executives between Council meetings and
  - Co-ordinating campaigns at national and regional level.
- c) The members of the National Officers' Committee shall be *ex officio* members (without the right to vote) of all National Committees, Commodity Sections and Project Teams.
- d) The members of the National Officers' Committee for the time being shall be the Directors of Feirmeoiri Aonthuithé 17<sup>ah</sup> Éireann Iontaobaithe Teoranta.
- e) The National Officers' Committee shall meet at the request of the President on their own authority or at the request of four members of the Committee made in writing to the Secretary.
- f) The National Officers' Committee shall review and report to the Council every four years on the areas of responsibility of all National Committees, Commodity Sections and Project Teams and on the structure of the organisation and make recommendations to re-organise and streamline responsibilities and structures, for the Council to decide.
- g) Once a candidate is elected to a position on the National Officers' Committee, they will not be eligible to seek any other position in the Organisation, except for another position which *ex-officio* is a member of the National Officers' Committee or the position of National Returning Officer. This only applies to members elected to the National Officers' Committee after this rule is ratified.

### **National Returning Officer**

- h) The National Council shall elect a National Returning Officer at an ordinary meeting of the National Council prior to the Annual General Meeting at which they will take up office.

Members of the current National Council or those members who served on the National Council in the previous eight (8) years, shall be eligible to be nominated for the role of the National Returning Officer.

Nominations from members of the National Council shall be submitted to the Secretary at least seven (7) days prior to the National Council meeting, at which the National Returning Officer is to be elected.

The National Returning Officer shall:

- be elected for a four (4) year term and shall be eligible to serve a maximum of two (2) terms.
- not be a member of the National Council or the National Officers' Committee, but shall have the right of attendance.
- be ineligible to be nominated for any other position in IFA for the four (4) year period for which they are elected. This restriction would continue to apply even if they leave office during the term.

### **Project Teams**

35. The President and the National Officers' Committee, in consultation with the relevant National Committees and the National Council, may appoint the members and Chair of such Project Teams as they may from time to time decide, and may stand down same. Project Teams shall be accountable to the National Officers' Committee and ultimately to the National Council. On the date of entry into force of these Rules, the following Project Teams are established:

The Horse Project Team

36. The President and National Officers' Committee, in consultation with the National Council, shall determine the terms of reference, including period of office for Project Teams.
37. The Chair of a Project Team shall be entitled to attend the Council for the business of that Project Team when such business appears as an item on the agenda of the Council and they shall have a vote at the meeting on such business only.

### **National Council**

38. a) The Governing Body and Supreme Authority of the IFA shall be the National Council (herein after referred to as "the Council"), which shall at all times have ultimate responsibility for determining the affairs of the organisation to achieve the objectives of the IFA.
- b) The Council shall be constituted as follows:
- The President, who shall be Chair of the Council and the principal representative of the IFA in all respects.
  - The Deputy President, who shall be Vice Chair of the Council.
  - Four Regional Chairs.
  - The National Treasurer.
  - The Chair of each County Executive or in their place the Vice Chair, and the second county representative where the County Executive qualifies for a second seat.

Any person whose appointment as Chair of a National Committee or Section has been ratified by the Council, where the Committee or Section qualifies for Council representation. The following National Committees and Sections shall qualify for representation through their Chair:

- The National Livestock Committee
- The National Dairy Committee
- The National Liquid Milk Committee
- The National Sheep Committee
- The National Animal Health Committee
- The National Hill Farming Committee
- The National Grain Committee
- The National Sugar Beet Committee
- The National Farm Forestry Committee
- The National Environment Committee
- The National Farm Business, Services and Inputs Committee
- The National Farm Family and Social Affairs Committee
- The National Rural Development
- The National Pigs and Pigmeat Committee
- The National Poultry Committee
- The National Potato Committee and the National Horticulture Committee shall share one seat on the Council, with representation at Council meetings alternating between the Chairs of these two Committees on the basis of two meetings to one respectively.

The President of Macra na Feirme, provided they are a farmer. Otherwise, Macra na Feirme shall be invited to nominate a young farmer representative.

One (1) representative elected by the National Livestock Committee in addition to the Chair of the Committee, so that one member is representative of farmers with suckler herds and the second member is representative of beef finishers. Where the Vice Chair of the National Livestock Committee provides this balance of representation, they shall be the second member, otherwise the second member shall be elected by the Committee to achieve the required balance. The Editor of the *Irish Farmers' Journal* and the President of the Irish Co-operative Organisation Society (ICOS) shall have the right to attend and participate at Council meetings, without voting rights.

The Director General shall be *ex-officio* a member of the Council.

- c) The Chair of the SACs Committee shall be entitled to attend the Council for the business of that Committee when such business appears as an item on the agenda of the Council and they shall have a vote at the meeting on such business only.
39. a) The Council shall meet for the despatch of business, adjourn and otherwise regulate its meetings as it thinks fit, so however that it shall hold not less than six (6) *Ordinary Meetings* each year. Such meetings shall be convened by the Secretary of the Council at the request of the President or the Council.
- b) The Council shall formulate the principles of National Policy and approve the policies of each National Committee and Commodity Section.
  - c) The Council shall nominate and/or ratify all representatives to Outside Bodies on behalf of the IFA.

- d) The Council may appoint such Standing or Ad-Hoc Committees as it may from time to time decide and may dismiss same.
  - e) The Council shall determine the terms of reference including period of office for all Standing or Ad Hoc Committees subject always to the provisions of Rule 24 and Rule 25 hereof as if the reference therein to National Committees were to Standing or Ad Hoc Committees.
40. The Council may as and when it shall decide, delegate any or all of its powers to the National Officers' Committee, National Committees or Commodity Sections.
41. A *Special Meeting of the Council* may be called by the President at any time on their own authority, or by a majority of the members of the National Officers' Committee or on the request of fifteen (15) members of the Council made in writing to the Secretary or on the joint written request of five (5) County Executives, made in writing to the Secretary. At least seven (7) days clear notice to all those entitled to attend must be given of any such meeting. No business shall be taken at any *Special Meeting* of the Council except that specified in the notice convening the meeting.
42. a) The *Annual General Meeting of the Council* shall be held every year, the date of which shall be determined by the Council. Fourteen (14) days notice thereof shall be given to all those entitled to attend. Newly elected members shall have a vote at the meeting but outgoing members unless re-elected for the ensuing term shall not have a vote at the meeting.
- b) The Council may decide to organise, in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting of the Council, an *Annual Congress of Agriculture* including additional representatives from within the Association and other appropriate representatives, as the Council thinks fit.
43. At the Annual General Meeting the following general business shall be transacted:
- a) Adoption of Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting.
  - b) Consideration of Auditors Report, Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet.
  - c) Appointment of Auditors.
  - d) Annual report of National Committees and Commodity Sections.
  - e) Election of National Treasurer who must be a newly elected, re-elected or outgoing member of the Council.
  - f) Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies.
  - g) Election of National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee.  
Nominations from newly elected, re-elected or outgoing members of the Council shall be submitted to the Secretary at least seven (7) days prior to the Annual General Meeting.
  - h) Election of Honorary Life Members.
  - i) Any other business of which fourteen (14) days clear notice shall have been given to the Secretary by any member of the Council entitled to vote at such meeting.

44. One-fifth of the members of the Council present in person or online shall form a quorum.
45. Except where otherwise provided for in these Rules a majority vote of those present and voting at a meeting of the Council shall be binding. In the event of an equality of votes but not otherwise the Chair shall have an additional casting vote.
46. Any decision of the Council may be rescinded by a notice of motion submitted by a member of the Council to the Secretary. The notice of motion shall appear on the Agenda for the next meeting of the Council and shall be passed by a simple majority of those present and voting for inclusion on the Agenda of the immediate following meeting of the Council.

The motion shall be decided upon at the immediate following meeting of the Council by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting.

47. Where any matter of a personal nature affecting a member of the Council is to be considered, the Council may require that member to absent himself from the meeting if two-thirds of the members present so decide.
48. The Council shall have power to co-opt suitable personnel as observers or advisers with or without full voting rights only for the term of office of that Council.
49. Upon election to a position on the National Officers' Committee as defined in Rule 34 a) hereof or Chair of a National Committee or Commodity Section a member shall be eligible for continued unbroken membership of the Council, but with the exception of the holder(s) of the office of President, Deputy President, Regional Chair and National Treasurer only, no member shall remain as a member of the Council for more than ten (10) consecutive years.
50.
  - a) Where the Chair of a County Executive does not attend National Council, the Vice Chair of the County Executive shall be entitled to attend and vote on their behalf.
  - b) In the event of a National Committee or Commodity Section Chair being unable to attend National Council, the Vice Chair of the National Committee or Commodity Section shall be entitled to attend and vote on their behalf.
51.
  - a) A member who absents themselves from two (2) consecutive in-person meetings of the Council without prior notice to the Secretary or three (3) consecutive such meetings of the Council of which due notice of absence was received by the Secretary shall in the absence of 'just cause' forfeit their seat. The County Executive, National Committee or Commodity Section represented by the former member shall be duly invited to elect a replacement as laid down in Rule 54 hereof.
  - b) A member who is absent from four (4) in-person meetings of the Council in any calendar year shall in the absence of 'just cause' forfeit their seat and the County Executive, National Committee or Commodity Section that they represented shall be duly invited to elect a replacement as laid down in Rule 54 hereof.

- c) Notwithstanding the provisions in Rule 50 a) and 50 b) to allow the relevant Vice Chair attend in place of a Chair, this is not deemed to mean an attendance by the Chair at a National Council meeting and is deemed to be an absence by the Chair in accordance with Rule 51 a) and/or b) in the absence of 'just cause'.
  - d) If the President or Secretary of the Council believe that a member is in breach or in danger of being in breach of Rule 51 (a) and/or (b) the matter will be brought to the attention of the National Officers' Committee. If following consultation with the National Officers' Committee, the President believes there is no 'just cause' and that Rule 51 may have been breached, then the President shall notify the National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee. The National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee shall then write to the member advising them that they are potentially in breach of Rule 51 and that they will forfeit their seat on Council and the position they hold which entitles them to a seat on the Council within 14 days, unless they provide a reason that constitutes 'just cause'. If the member provides a reason which they believe is 'just cause', this will be considered by the National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee whose decision shall be final.
52. No act or proceeding of the Council shall be invalidated by reason of the fact that there was a vacancy or vacancies on the Council at the time.
53. Any vacancy arising on the Council shall be filled forthwith. In the case of death, or resignation or removal or suspension of the President, Deputy President, a Regional Chair or any member of the Council an election shall be held within two (2) months of the vacancy being declared, or such other period as the Council may decide by a simple majority, in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 80 hereof for the election of such officers/members.
54. Where the President, Deputy President or a Regional Chair vacates office for any reason, the position shall be filled by election in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rules 73 to 79 hereof. The newly elected officer shall serve a minimum of three (3) years and a maximum of five (5) years, which shall be for so long as their predecessor would have held office or for an additional period of two (2) years or four (4) years thereafter depending when the newly elected officer took up the position.
- Any other vacancy arising on the Council for any reason shall be filled by the electing or nominating Body at its next meeting, following the declaration of the vacancy. Any person so elected shall hold office for so long as their predecessor would have held office subject to Rule 25 f) and Rule 49 hereof.
- 55. a) A member of the Council shall not apply for an official salaried position within the IFA at any level unless and until they vacate, retire, or resign from the Council for a period of two (2) years prior to they making application for such a post, except by permission of the Council.
  - b) A member of the staff of the IFA at any level shall not be eligible for election to the Council until at least two (2) years has elapsed from the time they vacate, retire, or resign from the staff of the IFA.

## **Collective Responsibility**

56. When a majority of the Council, National Officers' Committee, a National Committee or Commodity Section present and voting at a duly convened meeting has arrived at a decision on any matter, all members of the Council, National Officers' Committee, a National Committee or Commodity Section are bound by the collective decision and obliged to support it in all respects.

## **Allowance to Members**

57. Members of the Council, National Committees, and Commodity Sections when engaged on the work of the IFA shall be made an allowance for travelling and out of pocket expenses upon such scale and subject to such regulations as the Council shall from time to time determine.

## **Representation on Outside Bodies**

58. a) Following nomination of a representative as appropriate by the relevant National Committee or Commodity Section all appointments of such representatives to Outside Bodies on behalf of the IFA must be ratified by the Council prior to formal acceptance of any such position.
- b) All representatives of the IFA on Outside Bodies are obliged to promote and uphold the policies of the IFA at all times in every respect and must report regularly to the appropriate National Committee, Commodity Section or to the Director General on a quarterly basis and shall provide a written report for the Annual General Meeting of the Council.
- c) (i) Voluntary representatives on Outside Bodies shall serve two (2) terms each of two (2) years.  
(ii) If the term of office of the Outside Body exceeds two (2) years voluntary representatives shall serve one (1) term regardless of duration.  
(iii) In the case of Outside Bodies not having a specific term of office voluntary representatives shall serve one (1) four (4) year term.
- d) Representation on Outside Bodies directly related to National Committees or Commodity Sections shall be held by the Chair of the National Committee or Commodity Section. An exception may only be allowed with the approval of the Council which must receive formal notice of request through the Secretary from the appropriate National Committee or Commodity Section.
- e) Entitlement to representation on the appropriate Outside Body shall transfer automatically on election to the Chair of the National Committee or Commodity Section subject to a) hereof.
- f) The President and National Officers' Committee shall each year review and report to the Council on representation on Outside Bodies and ratification of representatives on Outside Bodies shall be for the Council to decide.

## **National Finance Committee**

59. The National Finance Committee shall operate under the direction of the Council and shall undertake the necessary action to maintain the solvency of the IFA. The National Treasurer shall be Chair of the National Finance Committee.

The National Finance Committee shall be comprised of the National Officers' Committee, Secretary, Director of Organisation and the Financial Controller.

The National Treasurer shall have responsibility for presentation of financial statements of the IFA including an Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet to the Council for adoption. In addition, they shall report to the Council from time to time.

All payments made from the Head Office of the IFA shall be signed by the National Treasurer.

In the absence of the National Treasurer, their functions shall be undertaken by the Deputy President.

## **Finance**

60. The funds of the IFA shall derive from:

Members' (membership) Fees  
Levies/Contributions  
Payment for services rendered  
Donations from persons or Bodies including the fees of Associate Members  
Investments  
The accumulation of a Reserve Fund.

61. a) All monies collected under the auspices of the IFA at any level shall be the property of the IFA the beneficial owner. All property, investments and bonds established at Branch, County Executive, Commodity Section or National level shall be the property of and held in trust for the IFA the beneficial owner.
- b) The IFA may purchase, lease or otherwise acquire land, buildings and other real and personal property and sell, demise, exchange and otherwise deal with the same.
- c) The IFA may borrow or raise money with or without security and if necessary secure payment of monies so borrowed by mortgage or debenture over, or charge upon, or by the mortgage of all or any of its real or personal property.
- d) The IFA may invest monies in such investment and in such manner as may seem desirable and have power from time to time to vary investments for others of like nature.
62. The funds of the IFA shall be answerable for the debts, liabilities and engagements of any Branch, County Executive, National Committee or Commodity Section as shall have been



- legally incurred or contracted with the express authority in writing of the Council through the President, Director General and the National Treasurer upon the terms that the IFA is to be answerable therefor.
63. No new financial liability shall be incurred by or on behalf of the Council without the approval of the said Council or the National Finance Committee or the President, Deputy President, Director General and National Treasurer jointly in an emergency.
64. The entire subscriptions paid to the Account of a County Executive from every bank standing order or creamery order must be submitted to the Director General before December 31 in that year.
65. All County Executive expenses shall be within a budget as agreed between the Director General, the National Treasurer and the County Executive.
66. a) In addition to paying the full membership fee each producer of a particular commodity may be required to pay such fee or levy in respect of that commodity as the Council may from time to time determine. However, the Council shall not determine in respect of (i) the Sugar Beet and Vegetable Section; or (ii) the Fresh Milk Producers' Section a level of fee or levy in excess of that determined by in the case of (i) the Council of the Section or (ii) the National Executive of the Section, following consultation with the National Finance Committee.
- b) The total amount of annual fees or levies of each Commodity Section shall be forwarded each year to the Head Office of the IFA to be lodged in the IFA main operating Bank Account. This Account shall be administered by the National Finance Committee.
- c) The National Finance Committee shall agree and authorise transfers from the IFA main operating Bank Account to separate Sugar Beet and Vegetable Section and Fresh Milk Producers' Section Accounts on an agreed basis. Cheques drawn on the Accounts of each Section shall be signed by the National Treasurer of the IFA and countersigned by the Chair of the Section or their respective single named alternates.
- d) In the case of the Sugar Beet and Vegetable Section Bank Account and the Fresh Milk Producers' Section Bank Account such Accounts shall in each year be guaranteed by the IFA main operating Bank Account to the extent of all monies received by way of levies from the members of the Sugar Beet and Vegetable Section or the Fresh Milk Producers' Section in that year and to such further extent as may be required to meet unforeseen deficits and to give a reasonable opportunity for the Commodity Section to redress any deficit arising.
67. The Council may from time to time make provision as it deems fit in regard to the financing of any Section.
68. If the Council shall at any time or from time to time resolve by a two thirds majority that it is necessary in addition to the aforementioned contributions to make a levy upon the County Executives to meet some special expenditure (of which the Council shall be the sole judge

and of which particulars shall be sent with the notice convening the meeting of the Council) the Council shall make such levy by assessing the amount which each County Executive is to contribute thereto and naming a date whereon the same shall be paid.

### **Personal Liability**

69. No personal liability shall attach to any member, officer or official of the IFA consequent upon any decision taken by the Council. Every officer or official for the time being shall be indemnified out of the assets of the IFA against any liability incurred by him in defending any proceedings, whether criminal or civil, arising from any action of such member, officer or official taken consequent upon a decision of the Council.

### **Audit**

70. The Council shall arrange that all Accounts are properly kept and shall cause an Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet to be made out annually and shall cause them to be audited by a professional Accountant or Firm of Accountants appointed for the purpose by the last previous Annual General Meeting of the Council or in the case of a casual vacancy appointed by the Council. The Accounts so audited shall be presented as laid down in Rule 59 hereof at a meeting of the Council which shall be held before the next Annual General Meeting of the Council following the close of the period covered by these Accounts.

### **Inspection of Books**

71. a) On application, in writing, by any five County Executives to the Secretary, the Council may appoint a person qualified to act as an Auditor under the Companies Act 1963 - or any statutory amendment thereto for the time being - to inspect the Books, Accounts and lists of members of the IFA and to report there-on.
- b) The Books, Accounts and lists of members of any County Executive shall be open to the inspection of any person duly authorised in writing by the Council or the Director General or by at least five (5) Branches of which the County Executive is formed.
- c) The Books, Accounts and lists of members of any Branch shall be open to the inspection of any member of that Branch or any person duly authorised in writing either by the Council, the County Executive or the Director General.

### **National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee**

72. The National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Council as provided for in Rule 43 g) hereof and shall be comprised of:
- The National Returning Officer (who shall be Chair of the Committee) and six (6) members of whom at least one (1) member shall be from each Region as defined in Rule 84 a) hereof.

Members of the current or immediately preceding Council and retiring members of the Committee only are eligible for election to the National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee. Only County Representatives on the Council shall be entitled to vote in the election of the National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee.

Two (2) members of the Committee other than the Chair shall retire annually by rotation. The members of the Committee to retire in every year shall be those who have been longest in office since their last election but as between persons who became Committee Members on the same day, those to retire (unless they otherwise agree among themselves) shall be determined by lot. No member of the Committee shall serve longer than six (6) years.

The Committee shall advise Council for the Council to decide:

- On all matters in relation to the Constitution and Rules of the IFA.  
Regarding all matters of voluntary organisational procedure and discipline at all levels within the IFA.

Council shall direct the Committee to set up a sub-committee to deal with disciplinary processes to be known as “The Disciplinary Committee.”

The Rules Committee shall draw up the Rules for the operation of the Disciplinary Committee as well as a guide for any disciplinary process.

National Council shall approve the Rules and the disciplinary process by way of a vote at a National Council meeting. The Rules and disciplinary process may be amended from time to time by the Rules Committee and any such changes shall be approved of by National Council at any of its monthly meetings.

National Council shall have two weeks’ notice in advance of the meeting of any proposed changes to the disciplinary Rules and process.

## **Elections**

73.
  - a) The National Returning Officer shall have responsibility for the orderly execution of all elections and election procedures within the IFA. In the absence of the National Returning Officer their functions shall be undertaken by the Deputy President.
  - b) The National Returning Officer shall in good time before the date(s) for County Executive nominations for National Elections involving the office of President, Deputy President or Regional Chair, recommend to the Council a Code of Conduct for candidates and prospective candidates which, once agreed, will take effect until the result of the election(s) is declared. While the Code of Conduct is in force, all questions as to the conduct of candidates shall be determined by the National Returning Officer and their decision to restrict the activities of candidates, to refuse to accept a nomination, or to disqualify a candidate, once given bona fide on any matter in question shall be final and conclusive.
  - c) Before a candidate is disqualified the National Returning Officer shall notify in writing the candidate of the matters which they consider to be in serious breach of

the Code of Conduct and if not satisfied with the explanations of the candidate, the National Returning Officer may in their sole discretion warn the candidate as to their future conduct in the election or disqualify him as a candidate in the election.

- d) All questions as to the eligibility of any candidate nominated or as to the validity or regularity of any nomination paper or voting paper or as to spoiled votes, or the validity of any vote shall be determined by the National Returning Officer and their decision given bona fide on any matter in question shall be final and conclusive.
  - e) In the interests of the security of the ballot and notwithstanding Rule 5 a), b) and c), the National Returning Officer shall have the authority to prohibit the use of voting representatives by members in any election and their decision once given bona fide on any such matter in question shall be final and conclusive.
- 74.
- a) The National Returning Officer shall determine the date(s) on which County Executives are to meet for the purpose of nominating candidates for the office of President, Deputy President, and Regional Chair as defined in Rule 84. a) hereof of the IFA.
  - b) Each County Executive as defined in Rule 12. a) hereof may nominate one (1) candidate for each position to be filled in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 b) hereof, provided each candidate is from within the County Executive area.
  - c) A candidate for the office of President must secure nomination by their own County Executive, endorsed by the signed support of five (5) and not more than five Chairs of other County Executives.
  - d) A candidate for the office of Deputy President must secure nomination by their own County Executive, endorsed by the signed support of five (5) and not more than five Chairs of other County Executives.
  - e) A candidate for the office of Munster, Ulster/North Leinster, South Leinster, or Connacht Chair, as defined in Rule 84 a) hereof must secure a nomination by their own County Executive
  - f) A County Chair may endorse only one candidate for any position at Rule 74 c), and d ) above.
  - g) Duly completed nomination papers shall be returned to the National Returning Officer within seven (7) days of the nomination taking place.
- 75.
- a) For the office of President, Deputy President or Regional Chair candidates may accept nomination for one (1) position only at each election.
  - b) A candidate for the office of President **or** Deputy President shall be a full-time farmer by occupation. Each candidate who accepts a nomination for the office of President, Deputy President or Regional Chair shall in confidence inform the

National Returning Officer of any significant business, trade, professional or occupational interest which they hold outside of farming. If, in the judgement of the National Returning Officer, a potential conflict of interests could reasonably arise, they shall disclose it to Council.

76. In the event of one (1) person only being duly nominated for the office of President, Deputy President or Regional Chair as defined in Rule 84 a) hereof the National Returning Officer shall forthwith without an election declare the said person elected for the ensuing term on the day on which nominations close.

77. a) (i) Where more than one (1) person is duly nominated for the office of President or Deputy President, the National Returning Officer shall cause ballot papers to be issued by post to each member as defined in Rule 5 a), b), c) and e) hereof.
- (ii) Each member shall have one (1) vote as defined in Rule 78 a) hereof to indicate their preference in each election for the office of President or Deputy President.
- (iii) The completed ballot papers, shall be returned by each member to specified venues / addresses, designated by the National Returning Officer on or before designated date(s) and time. Ballot papers that arrive after the relevant dates will not be accepted.
- (iv) The National Council, on the proposal from the National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee may make any necessary regulations for the orderly running of a ballot.
- b) (i) Where more than one (1) person is duly nominated for the office of Regional Chair as defined in Rule 84 a) a list of the candidates shall be issued to each County Executive in the Region. The National Returning Officer shall cause ballot papers to be printed and delivered either by themselves or their representative to a properly convened meeting of each County Executive in the Region, notice of which has been duly given to the members as defined in Rule 12 a) hereof.
- (ii) The members of each County Executive shall vote by secret ballot on the list of candidates presented at the meeting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 a) hereof.
- (iii) The members of each County Executive shall each have one (1) or more votes as defined in Rule 78 a) hereof to indicate their preference for the office of Regional Chair.
- With the exception of the four (4) Representatives from each affiliated Branch, each member of the County Executive shall have one (1) vote.
  - The vote of each Branch Representative shall be weighted according to the number of members eligible to vote in their Branch so that:
    - 8 to 25 voting members constitute one (1) vote
    - and every additional 25 such members or part thereof

constitutes one (1) additional identical vote.

- For the purpose of weighting, the ballot papers of the Representatives of each Branch shall be placed in a corresponding Branch envelope.

- (iv) The completed ballot papers and Branch envelopes, sealed in an envelope signed by the County Chair, shall be collected by the National Returning Officer or their representative in the presence of the meeting.

78. a) All elections to the office of President, Deputy President or Regional Chair as defined in Rule 84 a) hereof and all elections at County Executives for Officers of the County Executive and Representatives to National Committees shall be conducted on the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.

- (i) If there are two (2) or more candidates for any position those entitled to vote shall by secret ballot express their preference for the candidate of their choice by number (e.g. one (1), two (2), three (3) etc).
- (ii) The first preference votes cast for each candidate shall be counted and the total of the first preference for all the candidates is the total valid poll. The quota is calculated by dividing the total number of valid papers by the number of positions to be filled plus one (1) and adding one (1) to the result.
- (iii) At the end of any count if the number of votes credited to a candidate is equal to or greater than the quota, that candidate shall be deemed to be elected.
- (iv) Where no candidate exceeds the quota the candidate with the least number of first preferences shall be eliminated and the second preferences transferred to the remaining candidates.
- (v) This procedure shall be repeated until the number of candidates remaining corresponds to the number of positions to be filled.
- (vi) Where there remains only one (1) position to be filled in the event of equality of votes between the last two (2) remaining candidates the candidate securing the highest number of first preferences shall be deemed elected. In the event of equality of first preferences the names of the remaining candidates shall be placed in a draw and the preference determined by lot.

b) Elections to office at Branch as in Rule 8 hereof and at National Committees for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair as in Rule 24 hereof and for members of the Management Committee as in Rule 31 hereof shall be conducted as follows:

- (i) If there are two (2) or more candidates for any position those entitled to vote shall by secret ballot express their preference for the candidate of their choice.
  - (ii) The votes shall be counted, and the sum of the votes cast is the total valid poll.
  - (iii) The quota is fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) of the total valid poll.
  - (iv) At the end of any count if the number of votes credited to a candidate is equal to or greater than the quota, that candidate shall be deemed to be elected.
  - (v) When no candidate secures a majority, the candidate with the least number of votes shall be eliminated and another poll conducted in favour of the remaining candidates.
  - (vi) This procedure shall be repeated until the number of candidates remaining corresponds to the number of positions to be filled.
  - (vii) Where there remains only one (1) position to be filled in the event of ultimate equality of votes the names of the remaining candidates shall be placed in a draw and the position filled by lot.
- c) Election to the office of the National Treasurer as provided for in Rule 43 e) and Rule 80 d) and the National Returning Officer by the members of the Council shall also be conducted on the system of proportional representation in accordance with the procedure laid down in a) hereof.

The National Treasurer shall hold office for not more than two (2) consecutive terms of two (2) years and shall be ineligible to serve in the same position again.

79. The counting of votes for election to the office of President, Deputy President and Regional Chair as defined in Rule 84 a) hereof shall take place at the Head Office of the IFA or such other place as the National Returning Officer may decide, on a date specified by the National Returning Officer on or before the third Friday in December.
80. a) No person may hold two (2) positions at the same time at National level within the IFA.
- b) In the event of a person being elected to a more senior National position during their term of office they shall immediately relinquish their former position.
- c) Where a vacancy for any reason occurs at National level nominations to fill the vacancy shall be sought by the National Returning Officer within twenty one (21) days of the date on which the office became vacant. The Office shall then be filled in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rules 73 to 79 inclusive hereof.

- d) Where a vacancy occurs in the case of the offices of National Treasurer or National Returning Officer, an election shall be held at the next meeting of the Council after which the Office became vacant in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 78 c) hereof.

## **Party Politics**

- 81.
  - a) The IFA shall remain non-party political and non-sectarian and shall not sponsor, put forward or support candidates or candidates' substitutes for the Parliament of the European Community, Dáil Éireann, Seanad Éireann, County or Urban District Councils or Presidential elections.
  - b) Members of the Parliament of the European Community, Dáil Éireann, Seanad Éireann, County or Urban District Councils or consenting nominated candidates or henceforth consenting nominated candidates' substitutes or persons consenting to their names appearing on an election list for any of the above named bodies, while eligible for Ordinary Membership cannot and shall not become eligible for any position within the IFA as officer or official whether at Branch, County or National level during election and period of office if elected and for two (2) years subsequent to relinquishing office. A substitute shall not be eligible for any position within IFA for the same period as their principal.
  - c) Defeated candidates and defeated candidates' substitutes in elections for the Parliament of the European Community, Dáil Éireann, Seanad Éireann, County or Urban District Councils while eligible for Ordinary Membership as defined in Rule 5. a) hereof shall be excluded from holding any position within the IFA as an officer or official whether at Branch, County or National level for a period of two (2) years subsequent to the date of the relevant election.
  - d) Any intending candidate or intending candidate's substitute in elections for the Parliament of the European Community, Dáil Éireann, Seanad Éireann, County or Urban District Council shall resign their post within the IFA as an Officer or Official whether at Branch, County or National level prior to announcing their candidature or acceptance of the position of candidates substitute for such election.
  - e) An officer shall be interpreted as being a member holding any position within the IFA at Branch, County or National level other than that of member.
  - f) An official shall be interpreted as any employee of the IFA at Branch, County or National level whether in a temporary, permanent or contractual position.
  - g) A candidate for any position of office within the IFA shall sign a prior undertaking not to be active in party politics or to seek nomination for the Parliament of the European Community, Dáil Éireann, Seanad Éireann or County or Urban District Council during their period of office.
  - h) Active in party politics shall be defined as holding a position in a party political or independent political organisation at the level of county officer or higher.



- i) County Officer shall be defined as any position or post secured at the Annual General Meeting or such other appropriate meeting of the party political or independent political organisation within a county together with any county or constituency director of elections or party agent.
- j) No officer or official of the Association shall act publicly in such a manner as to use their IFA office or allow it to be used in support of a political party, independent political organisation, candidate or candidate's substitute in elections for the Parliament of the European Community, Dáil Éireann, Seanad Éireann, County or Urban District Councils or Presidential elections.
- k) A candidate for any position or office within IFA shall ensure that their candidacy is not endorsed or supported by any party political or independent political organisation or by any public representative in the Parliament of the European Community, Dáil Éireann, Seanad Éireann, County or Urban District Council.

### **President**

- 82. a) An election for the office of President of the IFA shall be held every four (4) years. The President shall hold office for a period of four (4) years from the Annual General Meeting of the Council at which they assume office. However, where there is an existing vacancy, they shall take office immediately on election.
- b) A member who serves as President may serve a maximum of one term of four (4) years and shall be ineligible to serve in the same position again.
- c) The President during their term of office may not accept any Government appointment other than where IFA has established rights of representation.

### **Deputy President**

- 83. a) An election for the office of Deputy President of the IFA shall be held every four (4) years. The Deputy President shall hold office for a period of four (4) years from the Annual General Meeting of the Council at which they assume office. However, where there is an existing vacancy, they shall take office immediately on election.
- b) A member who serves as Deputy President may serve a maximum of one four (4) year term and shall be ineligible to serve in the same position again.
- c) The Deputy President during their term of office may not accept any Government appointment other than where IFA has established rights of representation.

### **Regional Chairs**

84. a) There shall be four (4) Regional Chairs of the IFA. One (1) Regional Chair shall be elected for each of the following groups of County Executives, each group to be known for this purpose as a Region.

- *Munster* - Counties Clare, Cork Central, West Cork, North Cork, Waterford, North Tipperary, South Tipperary, Limerick and Kerry.
- *Connacht* - Counties Galway, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo and Leitrim.
- *Ulster and North Leinster* - Counties Longford, Westmeath, Meath, Louth, Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal.
- *South Leinster* - Counties Dublin, Wicklow, Wexford, Kildare, Carlow, Kilkenny, Laois and Offaly.

Elections for the office of Regional Chair of the IFA shall be held every four (4) years. Each Regional Chair shall hold office for a period of four (4) years from the Annual General Meeting of the Council at which they assume office. However, where there is an existing vacancy, they shall take office immediately on election.

- b) A member who serves as Regional Chair may serve a maximum of one four year term and shall be ineligible to serve in the same position again.
- c) Regional Chairs shall have full power to speak and vote at meetings of the Council and the National Officers' Committee. The County Executives within each Region shall elect the Regional Chair to represent that Region in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rules 73 to 79 inclusive hereof.

## **Staff**

85. a) The Council shall appoint a Chief Executive Officer who shall be the Director General of the IFA and who shall be responsible for the day-to-day running of the Association, the implementation of Association policy and, in consultation with the President and Deputy President, for all matters concerning all employed officials of the IFA at all levels including appointment and dismissal of same.
- b) The Secretary of the Association shall be the Secretary of the National Council and National Officers' Committee and shall be responsible for advising and supporting the President and the Council on all matters relating to governance. The Secretary shall report directly to the Council on their secretarial and governance duties. The function of Secretary shall be carried out by a staff member other than the Director General and notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 85 (a) above the said staff member shall be approved by the Council on the recommendation of the President and Deputy President.
- c) All staff shall have the right of appeal against dismissal to the National Officers' Committee.

## **Media Authorisation**

86. a) The President shall be the principal spokesman for the IFA. All information, statements or releases to the National Press, Radio or Television in the name of the IFA must have the prior authority of the President or the Director General.
- b) All information or releases to the Press, Radio or Television in the name of Branches or Branch Officers, County Executives or the Officers of a County Executive must have the prior authority of the Chair of the County Executive.

### **Discipline, Removal of Officers**

87. a) The President, Deputy President, Director General, Secretary or any member of the Council, National Committee or Commodity Section on good cause being shown may be removed or suspended from office by the Council.
- or*
- Any member of a County Executive as defined in Rule 12 hereof, on good cause being shown may be removed or suspended from office by the County Executive or the Council.
- or*
- Any Officer of a Branch as defined in Rule 8 a) hereof on good cause being shown may be removed or suspended from office by the County Executive or the Council.
- or*
- Any member or Branch deemed to have brought the IFA into disrepute may be suspended or expelled as thought fit by the County Executive or the Council.

However, save for a decision for suspension made by the Rules Committee in accordance with Rule 72, no such removal shall take effect except on a resolution passed by a majority of two-thirds of the members of the Council or County Executive as the case may be present and voting at a meeting of the Council or County Executive specifically summoned for that purpose of which at least twenty-one (21) days notice in writing has been given indicating that such resolution will be proposed.

In the event of expulsion by a County Executive, the expelled Branch or member shall have the right of appeal to the Council. On the expulsion of a Branch, each and every member of it shall be automatically expelled. After expulsion, the expelled Branch or member shall automatically cease to have any rights or interests in the IFA and shall forfeit all rights to or claims on the IFA or its property or assets.

Application for the inauguration of a Branch in the area partly or wholly covered by the expelled Branch shall not be considered before the expiry of six (6) months from the date of expulsion.

- b) Any member who is convicted of a criminal offence involving prohibited substances in livestock, poultry, crops and aquaculture production for the food chain shall forfeit the privileges of membership and any position they hold and shall automatically be expelled from membership of IFA following such conviction. There shall be no right of appeal to Council or otherwise following such expulsion or conviction.

- c) Any member expelled under Rule 87 b) may only be considered for membership in the future following application to the National Rules, Privileges and Procedures Committee whose recommendation must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the Council.
- d) In the event that the Disciplinary Committee, established under Rule 72, makes a decision to suspend a Member for in excess of two year then no such suspension or removal shall take effect except on foot of a resolution passed by a majority of two thirds of the Members of the National Council present and voting at a meeting of the National Council, such National Council meeting shall be an ordinary National Council meeting of which at least twelve (12) days' notice in writing has been given to National Council indicating that such a resolution will be proposed.
- e) Should the President or Deputy President lose a motion of no confidence by a simple majority of those present at a meeting of the National Council, specially convened for that purpose with at least fourteen (14) days' notice, they shall be deemed to have vacated the position and a new election shall take place. The Secretary shall convene such a meeting at the written request of at least five members of National Council.
- f) Should the Regional Chair lose a motion of no confidence by two-thirds of the County Chairs in their region, at a meeting of the County Chairs in that region specifically convened for that purpose, with at least fourteen (14) days' notice, they shall be deemed to have vacated the position and a new election shall take place. The Secretary shall convene such a meeting at the written request of at least two of the County Chairs in the relevant region.

## **Notice**

- 88. a) Notice in writing may be given by the IFA or any National Committee, Commodity Section, County Executive or Branch thereof as the case may be, to any member either personally or by sending it to him by post, email, text message or facsimile transmission at their last known address.
- b) Notice may be served on the IFA or any National Committee Commodity Section, County Executive or Branch thereof by sending it by post, email or facsimile transmission to the Secretary at the Head Office for time being of the IFA or to the Secretary of the National Committee, Commodity Section, County Executive or Branch at their last known address.
- c) Where a notice is sent by post, service of the notice shall be deemed to be effected by properly addressing, prepaying and posting a letter containing the notice and unless the contrary is proved it shall be deemed to have been effected at the expiration of twenty four (24) hours after the letter containing the same is posted.

## **Dissolution**

89. a) The IFA shall be dissolved whenever a resolution in that behalf is carried by a two-thirds majority at a duly convened Special Meeting of the Council of which twenty eight (28) days clear notice shall have been given specifying the intention of such a resolution being proposed.
- b) Upon the dissolution of the IFA all the property of the IFA not consisting of money shall be sold and the proceeds, together with so much thereof as shall consist of money, together with other assets of the IFA under this Constitution and Rules shall be applied in satisfaction of the debts and liabilities of the IFA and subject hereto shall be distributed among the Ordinary Members, as defined under Rule 5 a) hereof.

### **Force and Interpretation of Rules**

90. By accepting membership of the IFA each member shall be bound by and shall submit to the Rules hereof.
91. In these Rules where the context so admits and unless the contrary intention appears words in the singular shall include the plural and words in the plural shall include the singular and words denoting the masculine gender shall be deemed to include the feminine gender.
92. All properly convened online, or hybrid meetings shall rank '*pari passu*' and have the same status as properly convened in-person meetings.
93. If the special or local rules of any Branch, County Executive or Commodity Section are inconsistent with these Rules or any amendment thereof notwithstanding any previous approval by the Council of any special or local rules these Rules shall prevail and the Branch, County Executive or Commodity Section rules shall be deemed to be modified accordingly.
94. In case any matter shall at any time arise that is not provided for by these Rules or any doubt arise as to the interpretation of these Rules the same shall be determined by the Council by two-thirds majority decision which decision shall be final.

### **Alteration of Constitution and Rules**

95. a) No decision altering, repealing or adding to the existing Constitution and Rules of the IFA shall be taken except at a meeting of the Council.
- b) Notice of any proposed alteration, repeal or addition to this Constitution and these Rules must be submitted by:  
the National Officers' Committee  
or  
a National Committee

*or*

a Commodity Section

*or*

a County Executive

through the Council Representative/s and must be given to the Secretary at least twenty eight (28) days before the meeting of the Council at which the matter is to be raised. Particulars of the proposed alteration, repeal or addition shall be given in the notice convening the meeting.

96. If such alteration, repeal or addition is passed by not less than two thirds majority of those recorded present and voting at a meeting of the Council same shall become effective after ratification by a two thirds majority of those recorded present and voting at the next Annual General Meeting of the Council or at a Special Meeting of the Council convened for the purpose and of which proposed alteration, repeal or addition notice has been duly given.