

## Press release

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# Ministers McConalogue and Heydon launch ACRES Training Scheme

From [Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine \(/en/organisation/department-of-agriculture-food-and-the-marine/\)](#).

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The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue, and Minister of State with responsibility for farm safety, Martin Heydon, today announced the launch of the ACRES Training Scheme.

The scheme will provide specialist training to farmers in the Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme (ACRES) in the environmental priorities of the scheme as well as farm safety.

Launching the Scheme, the Minister commented:

“I am pleased to be announcing the launch of another scheme under Ireland’s CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027. Some 46,000 farmers have commenced their contracts under ACRES and the purpose of this ACRES Training Scheme (ATS) is to increase farmer knowledge on the way in which ACRES actions are to be implemented which, in turn, will optimise delivery of the actions and the contribution of those actions towards achieving the overall ambition of ACRES. It will increase farmers’ understanding of climate change, the impact of farming activities on natural resources and the protection of biodiversity at farm level.”

Participants in ACRES are required to attend a mandatory training course within their first year of participation in ACRES. The ATS provides for the provision of two types of courses – the mandatory course and a second voluntary course which an ACRES participant may attend in the third year of their participation in ACRES. The content of

the second course will include the ongoing management of the ACRES actions, provision of updates to ACRES participants as regards the specifications for ACRES actions and lessons learned on the implementation of the overall (ACRES) scheme. The training under ATS will be facilitated by approved ACRES Trainers, with courses to be provided throughout the country.

Referring to the roll-out of the ATS, Minister McConalogue added:

“My department is currently in the process of training those ACRES advisors who have expressed an interest in being ACRES Trainers. When approved, ACRES Trainers will be able to commence holding courses for ACRES participants by the end of this month. I encourage farmers in ACRES to attend the mandatory courses when they become available as they will enable farmers to implement actions correctly and also increase their awareness about the value of the actions.”

Commenting on the farm safety training, Minister Martin Heydon said:

“Farm safety has been put to the front and centre of the new CAP. Farmers are the backbone of our food production system and it is incumbent on us all to prioritise and protect their safety and wellbeing. The ACRES training programme will provide an important opportunity to reach farmers with practical safety advice and ensure they can deliver on the environmental priorities of ACRES by staying safe on the farm.”

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## Notes

The ACRES Training Scheme is jointly funded by the European Union and the National Exchequer under Ireland’s CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027. [The Terms and Conditions of the Scheme are available on the department’s website.](https://www.gov.ie/en/service/927ff-acres-training-scheme-ats/)

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The Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme (ACRES) requires all ACRES participants to attend a single compulsory ACRES Training Course in the first year of their participation in ACRES. This is to facilitate knowledge transfer and acquisition of information on

specific actions, complemented by on-line demonstrations/advice on good environmental practices.

The ACRES Training Scheme (ATS) is accordingly being provided to enable ACRES participants fulfil this requirement.

While the ATS complements ACRES, it is a separate measure in Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan (CSP) and is provided under Article 78 of EU Regulation 2021/2115.

The Scheme is jointly funded by the European Union and the National Exchequer under the CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

## Objectives of the scheme

The objectives of the Scheme are to:

- increase farmers' understanding of climate change, the impact of farming activities on natural resources and the protection of biodiversity at farm level
- outline how the actions undertaken as part of ACRES will address the environmental, climate and biodiversity related challenges outlined in the SWOT analysis undertaken as part of Ireland's preparation of its CAP Strategic Plan
- educate farmers on how to appropriately implement the ACRES actions; thereby equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to optimise delivery and continue the ongoing management of the commitments undertaken; as well as to facilitate the implementation of sustainable farming practices and improve their knowledge of farm safety priorities

## ACRES Training Courses

The ACRES Training Scheme provides for two types of training courses, namely:

1. The compulsory/mandatory course to be undertaken by ACRES participants within their first year of participation in ACRES; and

2. A voluntary course, one of which may be undertaken by ACRES participants in the third year of their participation in ACRES

## Content of courses

1. The mandatory ACRES Training course to be provided to ACRES participants in their first year of participation in ACRES must be designed to provide:

- an introduction to the Green Architecture model, the elements within it (conditionality, eco-schemes and ACRES) and how these elements interact with one another
- an overview of the challenges to be addressed (environmental, climate and biodiversity)
- an overview of the agri-environment climate measure, its regulatory basis, the objectives of the scheme and funding
- information on the individual commitments as well as nutrient management, sustainable farming practices, record-keeping, delivery timelines, controls, inspections and sanctions
- an overview of health and safety as part of good farm management

2. The voluntary ACRES Training course which may be availed of by ACRES participants in their third year of participation in ACRES must be designed to provide:

- management and aftercare actions
- updates to participants on issues that have arisen or have been identified in relation to compliance with specifications
- lessons learned to date on the implementation of the overall (ACRES) scheme
- follow up on any issues identified at initial training and any developments on higher level environmental issues

## Format of courses

Each training course comprises of two training sessions (one in the morning and the other in the afternoon) on the day of delivery.

The course must be 6 hours duration and must be delivered between the hours of 9am and 6pm on any day during the week except on Sunday, Bank Holidays or Public Holidays.

In-person training for one of the sessions, either morning or afternoon, must be delivered on a host farm. The Trainer may choose to deliver both training sessions on host farm. The host farm cannot be owned, farmed or managed by the ACRES Trainer.

Where required, relevant experts may assist in the delivery of training.

The maximum number of valid attendees that will be paid per ACRES Training course is 30.

## Payment rates

Reimbursement per attendee shall be in the amount of €156.

The ACRES Trainer payment shall be €90 per DAFM validated attendee.

The Terms and Conditions of the Scheme are available on the department's website. (<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/927ff-acres-training-scheme-ats/>).

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