

Agriculture & Fisheries

Protecting and supporting our indigenous industries



**INDEPENDENT
IRELAND**

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Agriculture and Fisheries



Farming and fishing form the backbone of the rural economy, and Independent Ireland will fight to protect these industries. Our Government unjustly blames farmers for climate change and regularly changes priorities, making it impossible for farmers to plan strategically. Our policies are clear: we will advance policies that expand farming and fishing; and we will oppose any effort to restrict these industries.

Key Policy Positions

- **Oppose any mandatory cull** of the national herd;
- Oppose the Mercosur Trade deal;
- Introduce a specific **Minister for fisheries** responsible for maritime issues, and management of Ireland's territorial waters;
- Ensure **no farmer will be forced to re-wet their lands** or be affected by adjoining holdings undertaking re-wetting, under the Nature Restoration Laws;
- **Introduce yellow-card scheme for farm inspections** and implement 21-day notice before farm inspections (excluding animal welfare checks);
- **Remove carbon tax on marked gas oil** sold to the agricultural sector including agricultural contractors;
- Establish a **financial safety net** for farmers and fishermen or fisherwomen hit by unforeseeable challenges;
- Provide **funding for harbour development** to accommodate small and large fishing vessels, as well as tourism operators;
- Provide for a **farm retirement scheme** with a proposed budget of €300 million to facilitate the transfer of 20,000 to 30,000 farms to younger farmers;
- Create fund to help farmers and fishermen/fisherwomen **adopt technological advances** to improve efficiency;
- Create a **€200 million rainy fund** for all agricultural sectors to protect farmers in the case of serious adverse weather or emergencies affecting crops;
- Implement **taxation and zoning benefits** for areas that lose historically rural industries;

Industry Specific Policies

Fisheries

- Fight to increase the quota for Irish fishing vessels;
- Re-negotiate use of Irish territorial waters for Irish fishermen & fisherwomen;
- Create a specific responsible for maritime issues, and management of Ireland's territorial waters;
- Expand investment in deep-sea ports countrywide to reduce crowding in Dublin and limit environmental impact;
- Implement existing EU fuel rebates for fishermen/fisherwomen;

Dairy

- Oppose any reduction in derogation level and support farmers with water quality challenges;
- VAT reimbursement for dairy farmers on fixed milk tanks, calf feeders and mobile or fixed slurry cleaning equipment;

Beef & Suckler

- Introduce SCEP 2 – a simplified scheme to sustain suckler farming;
- When combined with the National Beef Welfare Scheme, each eligible cow and calf will be raised to €300. This scheme will assist 20,000 farmers;
- Farmers, including in SCEP 1, to experience raised subsidy on a pro-rata basis;
- Promote domestic consumption of Irish Beef;

Sheep

- Research and create viable wool markets;
- Increase funding for sheep improvement schemes;
- Implement a comprehensive dog control plan to protect livestock;

Equine

- Issue Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes (TAMS) grants to cover change of use;

Pigs & Poultry

- Invest in infrastructure and promote free-range practices;

“We must encourage and support the next generation of Irish Farmers, we produce some of the highest quality food in the world, that should be celebrated and promoted at every opportunity”



Exports, Tillage, TAMS, Environment



Exports

- Ensure continuation of live export markets and oppose EU policies that threaten them. Support live export of dairy calves and weanlings from all herds;

Tillage & Horticulture

- Implement €300 per hectare of a supplemental subsidy in addition to basic payments;
- Maintain funding for current schemes in the tillage sector;
- Explore the feasibility of resurrecting industries that have closed in recent decades; for example, sugar beet production and processing;
- Introduce urban allotment scheme;

Organic

- Reopen organic scheme for farmers who wish to engage in organic farming and eliminate the duplication of form-filling in the organic sector and schemes;

Environmental

- Introduce ACRES 3 open to 20,000 additional farmers who wish to participate;

TAMS

- Increase annual budget by €50 Million (new total will be €140 million);
- Increase grant to 70 percent maximum;
- Allow contractors to qualify for TAMS grants for all slurry equipment;
- Expand grants to deal with longer winters and increase slurry storage capacity;
- Expand list of qualifying equipment and infrastructure fundable under the scheme;

Education

Veterinary

- Targeted financial supports for young vets to join or set-up practices in areas where remoteness and scarcity of vets is posing a danger to animal welfare;
- Open two more veterinary schools, so students need not go abroad;
- Ensure anti-competitive practices are prohibited and legislate to prevent an oligopoly from developing in this sector;
- Provide financial support to agricultural college to prevent Irish students from having to travel abroad to pursue an education in agriculture;

Forestry

Forestry requires a full overhaul as Ireland has not and will not reach its targets.

- Full re-engagement with EU on regulations in forestry sector;
- Ensure balanced county percentage contributions;
- Improve compensatory scheme for ash dieback;
- Full review of carbon sequestration to include hedgerows and unmanaged forestry and deliver on the LiDER study which has been promised for many years;

Social & Regulatory Issues

EU Common Agricultural Plan (CAP)

- Engage with EU to ensure CAP budget is fit for purpose and addresses the issues for which it was originally designed;
- Ensure any future proposed environmental scheme is not taken out of CAP budget;
- Advocate for fair distribution of payments and maintain key income support schemes and increase budgets for critical schemes (e.g. ANC);

Young Farmer Supports

- We propose inflationary increases in young farmers' support, ensuring a vibrant future for the next generation of agricultural leaders;

Land Distribution

- Establish a Farmland Management Agency for fair land distribution;

Turf-cutting

- Protect the right of individuals to cut turf, in keeping with the heritage and traditions of rural regions;

TB

- Undertake an in-depth analysis of the TB situation in Ireland and work with UK researchers to learn from their experience to tackle the evolving threat TB poses to farmers and their herds;



Our farmers and fishermen are the guardians of our land and waters, and it's time we support them with common-sense solutions that secure the future of rural Ireland.

Broad Support For All Farmers: Today and in The Future

- **Young Farmers:** Support young farmers through innovative lease-to-buy schemes including strategic low-interest and longer-term loans are available to active farmers;
- An extension of the young farmer scheme and an alignment of the young farmer's scheme in relation to stamp duty and entitlements, as stamp duty is at age 35 and entitlements are 40. Both should be brought to age 40.
- **Women in Farming:** Introduce grants for women farmers and streamline applications;
- **Forgotten Farmers:** Rectify Government mistakes over the past 15 years by consistent funding and support and address the needs of "Forgotten Farmers" to ensure no farmer is left behind;
- **Research:** Increase support for precise scientific analysis of land and maximize potential for carbon credit trading;
- **Mart Infrastructure Scheme:** Make financial support of 75 percent available for safety measures and capital reinvestment projects;
- **Small-scale Agricultural Scheme:** Support, through our planning reforms, the ability of rural dwellers to participate in small scale agriculture related industries including sales, processing, manufacturing etc. This will also be supported with capital grants from DAFM and DET and local authorities;
- Support sustainable seaweed harvesting around the country to create aquaculture jobs;

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"We fully support the farmers and fishermen of Ireland, we understand they are the backbone of rural communities and will work to deliver for these industries"