

Department of Agrifood Business and Spatial Analysis

Dr Maeve Henchion, HOD



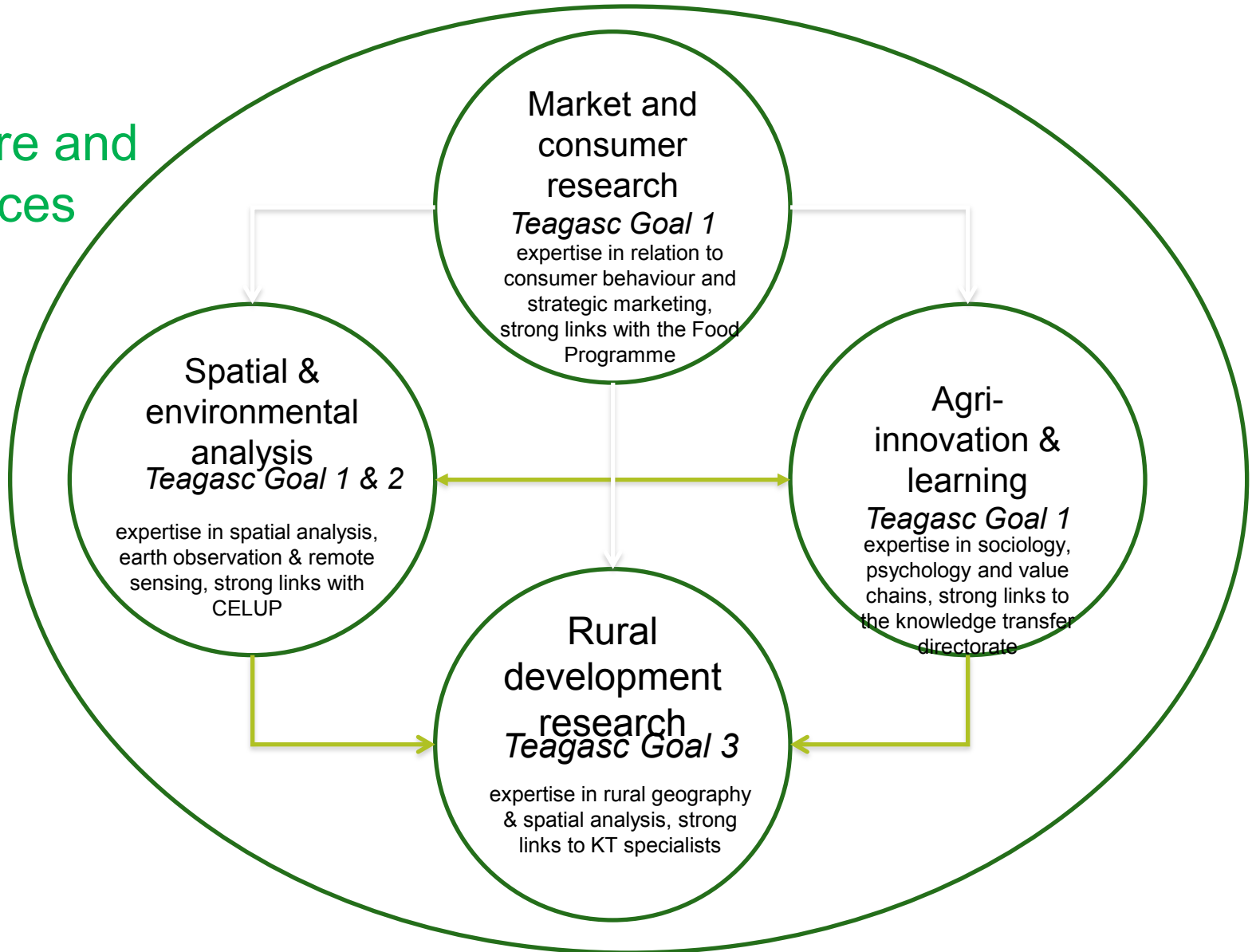
Vision

- That AFBSA be the
 - key partner in national and EU networks that analyse socio-economic and environmental issues relating to innovation in agriculture, food and the bioeconomy.
 - With the objective of producing high quality social science research and spatial analyses to support the central role of innovation in addressing contemporary societal challenges

Objectives

- To collect timely, quality information, inform decision-making by stakeholders and support the broader Teagasc research agenda
 - Undertaking research, interpreting market and policy developments, enabling stakeholders make better decisions
 - » Identifying strategic market opportunities and understanding consumer behaviour
 - » Understanding the socio-cultural context framing farmer behaviour
 - » Evaluating the impacts of rural restructuring for farm and non-farm households
 - » Applying new geospatial understanding and technology to support sustainable agriculture practice and policy at all scales

Structure and Resources



Agri-innovation & learning

- **Macro (AKIS) and micro (individual farmer decision making) analysis re innovation**



Wide perspective on innovation, e.g. organisational innovations, digitisation, animal health and production issues

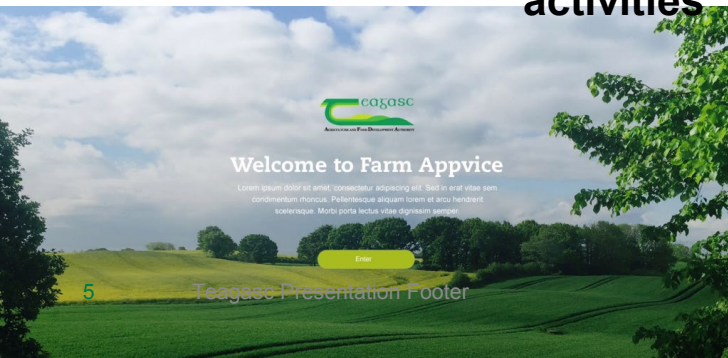
- **Consideration of required support frameworks**

- **Socio-culturally sensitive approaches to understanding and supporting farm-level change**

- **Co-design of policy and extension tools**

- **Strong link to KT Directorate**

- **Informs design and implementation of programmes**
- **Supports evaluation of programmes and extension mechanisms and activities**



Market & consumer research

- Address multi-disciplinary themes which cross the supply chain, e.g. sustainability, innovation, food quality
- Support Food Programme and industry support bodies
 - New market opportunities in the wider bioeconomy
 - Food and Health
 - Consumer behaviour and attitudes, and taste preferences
 - Acceptance of novel food technologies and ingredients
 - Innovation and technology transfer processes and behaviour

Healthy aging: diet and lifestyle might hold the key to eternal youth



Subit McNeill was a pioneer research scientist at Teagasc and is a final year student in 2022 by **Sharon McNeill**.

Silver Segments
The aim of this research in conjunction with the Dublin Institute of Technology and University College Cork was to examine the food choice attitudes.

The future is bio

This article highlights the need to transition to a sustainable, low-carbon bioeconomy and the work of Bio2Biz, a project that aims to provide the evidence base for this transition in Ireland.

Imagine the future. It's 2050 and as you wake up, your brain electronic digestive ticks in to heat your house using food waste and grass biomass residues. You consider your options in a sustainably sourced cash breakfast, deciding on a protein-rich animal derived from dairy by products, an egg, orange juice juice made from fruit, preferably not from an intensive underutilised farm species and a sustainably sourced supplement for extra boost of antioxidants. You brush your teeth with your strong bioplastic toothbrush and shower using a range of biomass-derived detergents. You finish the day with a glass of bio-based beverage. You plan to work in the local bioeconomy to create that protein-rich waste and other residues from the agricultural sector to create multiple products for food, feed, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, bioenergy and biochemical markets. Your car is, of course, also powered by biogas, produced from waste biomass crops.

From future visions to reality

of the energy and chemicals valued in 2050 were defined from final use (final bioeconomy) and from more than 90% of chemicals and polymers (oil, coal and gas), derive from renewable resources (O'Connor, 2019). Indeed, in the face of daunting challenges related to climate change, biodiversity loss, ageing growing population, the need to transition to a more sustainable, low carbon way of living is increasingly recognised. It is, thus, not a matter of if, but when, society makes this transition.

The Bioeconomy

The bioeconomy concept offers one way to address these challenges. Increasing the use of renewable biological resources and reducing dependence on fossil fuels, while still achieving economic growth, it is a concept that is gaining traction worldwide, coming to the forefront in key policy documents at both global and national levels. In Ireland, the National Bioeconomy Strategy (2020-2030) sets out a vision for the bioeconomy and outlines key policy objectives. The strategy is a key policy document at both global and national levels. In Ireland, the National Bioeconomy Strategy (2020-2030) sets out a vision for the bioeconomy and outlines key policy objectives. The strategy is a key policy document at both global and national levels. In Ireland, the National Bioeconomy Strategy (2020-2030) sets out a vision for the bioeconomy and outlines key policy objectives. The strategy is a key policy document at both global and national levels.

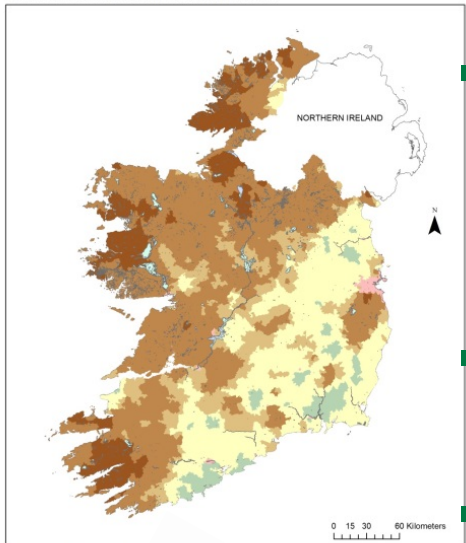
Key Bioeconomy

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Rural development research

Distribution of High Nature Value Farmland in Ireland:
Statistical Classification of Electoral Divisions



- Working with national and local rural policy stakeholders focusing on issues arising from rural economic restructuring and their implications for rural development.

- Links to the Teagasc Farm Health & Safety Programme

- Close working relationship with institutes / universities across Ireland and the EU and amongst policy stakeholders in Ireland, particularly LEADER companies and the Department of the Environment.



Spatial Analysis



- Spatial analysis and remote sensing of rural Ireland
 - Knowledge and tools to develop SMART agriculture
- Geo-informatics infrastructure to support agricultural, environmental and rural development policy.**
- Strong inter-programme research ties.

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(Reamonn Fealy currently on secondment to DAFM)