



AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority

Summary of topics covered were...

Local impact of SME's

Co-ordination between agencies can help spread the load of responsibility and assist in facilitating new businesses.

Rural Innovation Survey

- Main challenges – regulation, grants and marketing.
- ‘Where to get help???’
- Lack of business skills and knowledge
- Travel to mentoring and training.
- Ways to increase business survival:
 - access information quickly
 - access training locally
 - access to finance
 - building confidence

Innovation and Enterprise:

- Keep it simple
- Export – deliver it cheaper and faster
- It's all about sales
- Problem gap – selling skills – make a sales plan.
- Profit is sanity, turnover is vanity
- Finances and cash flow require firm management skills.

Innovation and Enterprise cont...

- Train yourself and train your staff
- Professional presentations
- Employ expertise
- Be prepared for problems such as insurance claims.

Open Discussion:

- Don't underestimate how difficult it is to start a business.
- All agencies need to work together to deliver more effective services.
- Lack of confidence is a serious problem for start up's – self-belief.
- Education and training boards need to address I.T supports for farmers i.e. using Google
- Diverse education levels.

Teagasc NFS viability and regional results:

- East West divide is a growing issue
- Viability is at 37%
- The Gap is widening between regions
- Average age gap is also widening
- Investment of €1.7 billion in 10,000 jobs
- Large regional differences in farm viability

Innovation and commercialisation:

The Canadian speaker Bill Ashton spoke about

- Innovation ecology
- Supports are not coordinated
- Culture is risk diverse
- Learning innovation by driving and encouraging it in secondary schools

Rural Economic Development Zones

- Potential for bottom up planning
- 154 travel to work areas
- Demand and supply for local labour
- Filling jobs from outside –need for skills training
- Important information for education and training boards
- Regional skills forum

In summary

The essential elements necessary to move from innovation to enterprise are...

- Idea generation
- Development of a business model
- Coordination of necessary skills and supports
- Development of financial skills
- Provision of clear access to knowledge i.e. regulation, grants and marketing.
- Confidence building / self belief
- Access to finances