

The Times They are A Changing!

By Bernie Leahy, B&T Drystock Adviser, Teagasc Galway/Clare

CAP is financed by two funds, EAGF - this pays Direct Payments and Market Measures to farmers and EAFRD which represents EU funding for Rural Development. The entire budget allocation of Ireland's RDP for 2014-2020 is €4.2 billion, with almost €2.2 billion of this coming from EU funds.

The Department of Agriculture, in the recent Budget 2020, allocated €1.647 billion to the following programmes:

BDGP (€18m), BEEP and Animal Welfare Schemes (€40m), the Sheep Welfare Scheme (€18m), Forestry Funding (€105m), TAMS Scheme, Horticulture, Organic (€91m), GLAS (€235m), Fisheries (€137.8m), Horse & Greyhound Sector (€84m). Funding is available for Producer Groups in the Horticultural Sector (PO's). This needs to be developed further for all farming sectors. Knowledge Transfer (KT) Groups are not being funded at present meaning social and information sharing opportunities are being lost to farmer groups. Farmers need to uptake schemes in order to maximize their incomes.

The Value of Agricultural Output to the Irish Economy:

Bord Bia figures for 2018-2019 for food, drink and horticulture sectors, show Irish exports total **€13.6 billion** with 10,000 people working in the Agri-food Industry in 2018. This is made up of dairy export values **€4 billion**, meat & live exports **€4 billion**, sheep meat **€315m**, pig meat **€666m**, poultry **€316m**, live animal exports **€161m**, Seafood **€561m** which includes shellfish to French and Chinese Markets, edible horticulture & cereals **€208m**, Amenity Horticulture **€18.5m**, Animal skins & hides **€1.5m**.

More lucrative sectors such as prepared consumer foods (meat, dairy) had an export value of **€2.5 billion**, prepared food market (enriched dairy powders) had an export value of **€1.9 billion** 50% going to the UK Market. The Beverage Industry has export values of **€1.5 billion** with 60% of our Whiskey going to North America.

Supporting farmers with Direct Payments, Education and Marketing Programmes is reaping many returns for our agricultural export markets.

Opportunities in Farm Diversification:

€250m, 6% of the total RDF funding is allocated to Rural Development. The LEADER Programme is administered by Local Action Groups (LAGs), which are partnerships of both public and private bodies that are responsible for selecting and approving projects in their respective areas.

Irish Local Development Network CLG (ILDN) represents LEADER companies involved in successful projects for example Galway Rural Development (GRD), Roscommon LEADER Partnership and Galway City Partnership.

Successful Projects to date:

Glen Keen Farm, Co Mayo, Slieve Aughty Centre, Loughrea, Co. Galway, Glendeer Pet Farm, Co. Roscommon are examples of successful projects set up under the guidance of these development companies.

Woodville Walled Garden, Kilchreest, Co. Galway and Portumna Workhouse Project are private and community projects attracting tourists to rural areas.

Killeen Cheese, Portumna, Co. Galway host popular Food Trail holidays where visitors can experience a product from “Farm to Fork”.

Galway County Council is also involved in projects promoting local Arts & Crafts, Artisan Food Producers on their free directory www.madeingalway.com

Grant Aids:

The **ACORNS** Programme, for female entrepreneurs living in rural Ireland is run by Enterprise Ireland and KPMG jointly. Information can be found on their website www.acorns.ie. It is sponsored by Department of Agriculture Rural Innovation & Development Fund.

Grant aid of up to €25,000 is available for Agri-Food tourism projects linking local food markets, farmer producers and craft workers. Proposals must be sent to ridf@agriculture.gov.ie by mid May each year.

Restoration grants for old buildings of up to 75% can be applied for through Leader (GRD) or Heritage Council Ireland for GLAS participants.

Climate Change is Centre stage For Future Farming Systems:

The European Innovation Partnership (EIP-Agri) is a project under the RDP 2014-2020, where farmers, researchers, Advisors and Agri- businesses develop projects where farmers diversify their systems in sustainable ways. Rural Development Funding of €59m was allocated to 23 projects to be completed by 2022. Projects range from Small Bio Gas, Anaerobic Digestion demonstration sites for small scale biogas producers, Ovi- Data promoting profitability in Sheep Breeding via Genetic evaluating of all sheep parentage, Farming Rathcroghan Project where farmers are encouraged to farm land and enhance ancient cultural landscapes. The Hen Harrier and Pearl Mussel Projects are EIP projects with two Teagasc Advisers guiding them in counties Galway and Clare.

Now is an opportune time for innovative farmers and advisors to come up with an idea. Contact eip@agriculture.gov.ie

Options Event at the Teagasc Centre Athenry, Co. Galway on **Friday, November 8th** (10.00am to 1.00pm) with an afternoon visit to local Entrepreneur in the Loughrea area. For further details, please contact **Laura** at (090) 9642456.

The Final Call:

The end of the month is fast approaching. The storm clouds of a No deal Brexit are gathering! Keep in contact with your local Advisor, Accountant or KT group on Brexit issues.

Useful contacts: brexitcall@agriculture.gov.ie, brexitqueries@revenue.ie
brexitunit@enterprise-ireland.com