

Developing Rural Ireland

December 2021

A History of the Irish Agricultural Advisory Services

A new book that documents the history of the Irish agricultural advisory services and their role in developing rural Ireland was launched at a virtual event at Teagasc, Oak Park, Carlow, on Wednesday, September 1, 2021.

Developing Rural Ireland – A History of the Irish Agricultural Advisory Services was written by Dr Mícheál Ó Fathartaigh, and was officially launched by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue TD. Speaking at the launch, Minister McConalogue said: “This book is a wonderful insight into the history of rural Ireland, agriculture and farming. For much of our history, rural Ireland was underdeveloped compared to many of our industrialised neighbours, but this changed, with agriculture going through a series of evolutions and revolutions. In just 100 years, Irish agriculture changed and is leading the world in a dynamic and ambitious way. Central to this development was the advent of the advisory services in Ireland”.

The book’s author, Dr Ó Fathartaigh, said: “For most of modern history, rural Ireland and Irish agriculture were comparatively underdeveloped but this changed dramatically in the 20th century. In 1900, rural Ireland and Irish agriculture were synonymous with poverty, but by 2000 they had become identified with progress”.

Dr Ó Fathartaigh continued: “Many people and organisations contributed to this progress, but



From the book, an image from 1906 showing the benefits of potash in potato production.



From the book, an image from the Co. Louth Committee of Agriculture Annual Report 1979 showing a spring barley variety trial. From left: farmers Peter O'Neill and Vincent Murphy; advisor Jim McArdle; and, Willie Butterly, on whose farm the trial was conducted.

chief among these were the Irish agricultural advisory services. With their establishment, agricultural instructors, trained to the highest international standards, were dispatched to every community in rural Ireland. Their brief was to work with farmers helping them to improve their farm enterprises, and in doing so, to develop rural Ireland. This gradually bore fruit as each succeeding generation of agricultural advisors and farmers co-operated to adopt the most modern agricultural approaches". This book tells their story.

Historical context

In addition, the book relates to the wider national and international historical narratives of the 20th century, making it fully accessible both to those who know rural Ireland and to those who do not.

Copies of *Developing Rural Ireland – A History of the Irish Agricultural Advisory Services*, are available for purchase from all major online retailers, directly from the publisher at www.wordwellbooks.com, or by phone on 01-293 3568. It can also be found in the following bookshops:

- Hodges Figgis (Dublin);
- Dubray Books (Galway and Dublin);
- The Book Centre (Waterford, Kilkenny and Wexford);
- Waterstones (Drogheda);
- Eason (Navan);
- The Bookmark (Portlaoise);
- O'Mahony's (Limerick and Ennis);

- Charlie Byrne's (Galway);
- Bookmarket (Clonmel); and,
- All Books (Portlaoise).

Developing Rural Ireland is also available from a number of smaller bookshops nationwide who order via wholesalers.

