



ICSA EXHIBITION IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: ICSA's Austin Stevenson, Edmund Graham, John Barron, Paul Brady, Pat Loughnane and Cathal O'Reilly with Irish MEPS Jim Higgins (who organised the event) Pat The Cope Gallagher, Liam Aylward and Sean Kelly. More on page 4

## CAP Reform Agreed in Europe but hard decisions to be taken at home

**T**he agreement on CAP reform in Brussels and Luxembourg in June marked a major success for the Irish presidency of the European Union and reflects well on the Minister and the many Irish officials who worked round the clock to achieve an agreement involving, for the first time, 27 ministers at the Farm Council, negotiating in turn with the Commissioner and the European Parliament.

To say that this was challenging is an understatement, but it has

certainly done a lot for Ireland's credibility. However, the outcome provides for a lot of flexibility and this is where the challenge only begins as Minister Coveney and his officials begin the process of consultation with organisations such as ICSA on the finer details.

The key unknown which was determined was that the flat rate is now optional and it is certain that Ireland will opt instead for a form of approximation (internal convergence) which is governed by one compulsory condition which is that the minimum payment per

eligible hectare shall be 60% of the national average.

As it stands, the Department figures suggest that bringing all the eligible hectares up to this 60% requires an average cut of 12% from those above the average with a maximum cut of 30%. However, this is after we first adjust payments downwards by up to 8% to cater for young farmer top up, national reserve, linear cut etc.

There is also the possibility of front loading payments on the first

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## CAP Reform - continued from page 1

32 ha. Whether this is taken up will very much depend on the maths and the practicalities, with the reality that the very many small farms will only gain a small increase from the very few large operations in Ireland.

There is also the possibility of a maximum payment per ha and suggestions that this could be around €650/ha have been floated but the agreement allows for any possible figure. Again the key determinant will be whether the effort is worth it.

Recoupling is also a possibility (see article below) with Ireland being given the option of cutting the Pillar 1 payment by a further 10%. One fifth of this - 2% - is ring fenced for protein crops meaning that, if we opt to cut we can use 8% for sucklers, sheep and - as suggested by some farm leaders, but not by ICSA - small dairy farmers.

The key winners are qualifying young farmers who will get a top-up of 25% for up to five years on



ICSA president Gabriel Gilmartin, general secretary Eddie Punch, and beef chairman Edmond Phelan discussing the outcome of the CAP deal with Minister for Agriculture Simon Coveney in the European Parliament



ICSA CAP committee chairman, Billy Gray

their Pillar 1 payment. ICSA will continue the process of membership

consultation and is already engaging with the Department on the details.

## KEY OBJECTIVES FOR ICSA

- No return to coupled payments which involve cutting farmers' Pillar 1 payment by up to 10%
- Ensure that Pillar 2 payments, including DAS, agri-environment and improving competitiveness and viability are all designed to maximise support for low income cattle and sheep farmers.
- Favour limiting Pillar 2 payments to farmers who can show an economic need for support and that payments are targeted in a fair way to those who need them most.
- Campaign for conditions to be linked to getting an increased Pillar 1 payment so that higher payments can be targeted at active and young farmers.
- Support a minimum stocking rate to prevent armchair farmers getting a windfall payment of 60% of the national average.
- Support the top-up for young farmers and aim to ensure that no deserving young farmer loses out through bureaucratic anomalies.

## AGREEMENT ON CAP WELCOME BUT COMPROMISE IS FAR FROM IDEAL

ICSA president Gabriel Gilmartin has welcomed agreement on CAP reform which has been very difficult and led to a lot of uncertainty for farmers.

However, he said that the compromise remains far from ideal because it is linked to the original flawed concept of a flat rate payment. "ICSA is not happy to see cuts to payments for active farmers with modest payments but at least the more severe elements of the original plan have been watered down to the extent that many farmers will live with the compromises."

"An average cut of 12% on top of 2% for young farmers, 3% for national reserve along with linear cuts and crisis fund cuts are too severe for many farmers but the original proposal for a flat rate would have meant cuts of 30-50% for many active farmers."

He said that the 60% minimum payment will provide a welcome increase for some farmers but the fact that it seems likely that all landowners will qualify for a minimum payment of 60% of the average means that we are missing an opportunity for a really worthwhile increase to progressive and active farmers, which could have been achieved with greater targeting.

"There is too much emphasis on levelling the field and not enough on helping those who want to help themselves. This CAP reform has been based on a flawed principle right from the start of moving all hectares to a flat rate. While we are not going to have a flat rate, the concept of a minimum of 60% for all hectares regardless of farming activity is still a flawed reform," he concluded.

# Going back to Coupled Payments- Turkeys Voting For Christmas?

**T**he option for limited recoupling set out in the CAP reform framework has led to a frenzy of speculation that the suckler cow could benefit from a recoupled payment. Of course, the real question is whether the suckler farmer will benefit and this has been lost in most of the comment to date.

On the face of it, everybody loves a free lunch and when hard pressed suckler farmers are being coddled into believing that there is such a thing- worth maybe €100, maybe more in some of the more fanciful suggestions- then there is no surprise that recoupling starts to get momentum.

However, there is an obligation to tell farmers the hard facts and then to analyse the likely consequences of any decision to recouple.

To start, there isn't a single extra euro in this for Irish farmers. The recoupling option is not an extra payment, it is money obtained by first cutting every single payment by an extra 8%. We have just concluded a most difficult CAP reform where farm organisations, ICSA included, argued that the more active farmers were going to be severely hit, even allowing for the watered down option of internal convergence. While the final outcome is certainly better than the flat rate proposals of Commissioner Ciolos, the more active farmers face an average cut of 12%

arising out of the decision to introduce a minimum payment per ha of 60% of the average.

The average cut of 12%, hides the fact that at the upper end, farmers with bigger payments will be cut 28%. This is not the end of it however. In fact, before the re-distribution is taken into account, the total national envelope will have up to 8% of a reduction arising from linear cuts, young farmer top up, national reserve etc. So that means that the average cut for the farmer who had an above average single payment is more likely to be in the region of 20%.

If we go for re-coupling, then we are voting for a further 8% cut (or 10% if we decide to grant a coupled payment for protein crops). This is clearly a matter of not only robbing Peter to pay Paul but also robbing Paul as well.

Then there is the question of who benefits. While a lot of the talk has been about the suckler cow, what about the ewe? The stark facts are that sheep production has declined much more significantly than sucklers so why should the sheep man be cut in order to help keep suckler cow numbers up?

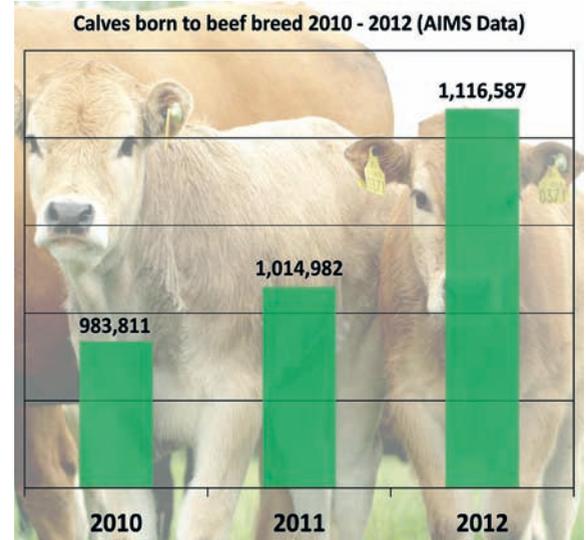
It's also fair to suggest that if the beef finisher takes a further 8% hit to pay for the re-coupling, then the beef finisher will bring 8% less money to the mart to buy weanlings, meaning that there is less competition all round.

The suckler farmer might have a suckler premium but will that really make up for less money at the ringside?

In terms of straight maths, 8% of the €1.215 billion is around €97 million. In 2012, there were 1.116 million calves born to beef breed cows. This was a substantial increase from 2010, where there were 980,000 suckler births, which in itself shows just how one sided the debate has been. So if we went for a suckler premium based on 2012 figures, the rate per cow would be around €84/cow. However, if we decided in fairness that the sheep man should get €10/ewe, then there would be €64/cow.

€64/cow and €10/ewe is not so attractive but that's what the facts are. Talk of €150/cow is pie in the sky. However, some commentators believe that we could top up the suckler payment by using some of the Pillar 2 Rural Development money. For sure, there is a case to use rural development funds for sucklers and sheep. However, any proposal to use Pillar 2 is contingent on EU approval for an Irish Rural Development Programme.

In the event that we tried to use Pillar 2 to add to a recoupled Pillar 1 payment, it is most likely that the EU Commission would correctly interpret this as Ireland trying to circumvent the EU agreement to limit recoupling to 8% and it could potentially



lead to the Irish Rural Development Programme being rejected with consequent delays in getting a new programme off the ground.

ICSA believes that the best way to benefit suckler and sheep farmers is through targeted measures in Pillar 2 aimed at progressive and active farmers whose viability is under threat. This is most likely to succeed however, if we do not opt for Pillar 1 re-coupling.

However, the real issue is what is the knock on effect of re-coupling. If we re-couple we are signing on for keeping numbers higher than they might otherwise be just to draw down a suckler premium. Plentiful cattle supplies is ideal for meat factories but it is never in the interest of farmers. The drop in suckler calvings in 2010, along with increased live exports, provided a key stimulus to the improved prices in 2011.

Now we have some farm representatives campaigning for policies that will do the exact opposite to what happened in 2010-2011. In other words, keep suckler numbers high, which give the meat factories the ideal opportunity to drop prices. Already we can see a glimpse of where we might be heading as the sharp increase in calvings in 2012, combined with lower live exports is leading to downward pressure on price.

Re-coupling would copper-fasten those conditions for the next seven years. Not re-coupling provides farmers with more flexibility to reduce numbers which in turn will support price. No wonder the meat industry has been lobbying hard for coupled payments but it is incomprehensible how some farm leaders could fall for this. As the old phrase goes, it's like turkeys voting for Christmas.

# ICSA CENTRE STAGE IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

## ICSA Ireland North West Exhibition a huge success

**W**hile the CAP talks were in their critical final stages, ICSA had the honour of representing the farmers and produce of the North West of Ireland in a European Parliament exhibition hosted by Jim Higgins MEP. The exhibition was one of the showcase events of the final days of the Irish Presidency of the EU, with ICSA in pride of place as the only farm organisation invited to participate.

With the emphasis of the exhibition being MEP Higgins' Ireland North-West constituency, a delegation of ICSA

national executive members based in the region was sponsored by the MEP to attend the event. Cathal O'Reilly (Mayo), Pat Loughnane (Galway), Edmund Graham (Monaghan), Paul Brady (Cavan) and Austin Stevenson and John Barron from Donegal travelled over to Brussels in the last week of June, with ICSA staff members Geoff Hamilton and Kathy McKenna.

An impressive display in the most prominent exhibition space in the Parliament building focussed on the ICSA members that travelled to the event. A series of posters detailed the type of

farming operations they run, the top-quality beef and lamb they produce for the consumers of Europe and crucially, what the

CAP means for them and their farms. This was the key element as it was critical that the MEPs visiting the exhibition

came away with a strong sense of what was needed by these farmers as the future of the CAP was being decided.



ICSA delegation arrives at the European Parliament on Day 1 of the exhibition



Jim Higgins MEP, who hosted the event, giving his speech at the reception



Parliament staff setting up the reception area



Cathal O'Reilly (Mayo) and Paul Brady (Cavan) chatting to Liam Aylward MEP at the ICSA exhibit



A section of the crowd that attended the ICSA exhibition in the European Parliament



ICSA's Rural Development chair John Barron speaking at the event. Mr Barron provided the crowd with an immediate reaction to the CAP developments in Luxembourg

The highlight of the exhibition was a reception on Tuesday 25th of June, where Jim Higgins organised a display of traditional, quality Irish food and drinks to be served. On behalf of ICSA, rural development chair John Barron outlined the unique place the farmers of Ireland North-West hold at the heart of Europe. "We are farming in some of the most disadvantaged land in Europe. Daily we have to overcome the challenges of climate, the problems of poorer

soil, the fact that many of us are farming at higher elevations. Yet we are committed to producing the best food we can, utilising the resources we have." With ICSA president Gabriel Gilmartin and general secretary Eddie Punch closely monitoring developments in the CAP talks in Luxembourg, Mr Barron was able to give the assembled crowd an up-to-the-minute reaction to the new reforms.

Speaking at the reception, Jim Higgins

said, "The ICSA plays a constructive and vital role in representing their members in Ireland and in Europe. Their work on CAP reform has been impressive and time and time again, they have delivered informed, determined arguments to support active farmers who need CAP support. I want to congratulate them on their hard work and thank the delegation for joining me here in Brussels to celebrate the Irish farming industry."

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MEP Pat The Cope Gallagher with ICSA's John Barron and Austin Stevenson



Sean Kelly MEP with ICSA's Cathal O'Reilly and Paul Brady



Event organiser Jim Higgins MEP with ICSA's Paul Brady of Cavan



The exhibit all set up and ready to go



Mairead McGuinness MEP with Edmund Graham of Monaghan



ICSA's Edmund Graham and Pat Loughnane with Marian Harkin MEP

**ICSA EXPO - continued from page 5**

The reception and exhibition as a whole garnered huge exposure for ICSA among some of the most influential people in Europe. Many MEPs, including most Irish MEPs, attended the reception, along with senior officials at both European and Irish Government level. In addition, the ICSA

display stayed in place for the entire week, where it was visible to the EU Agriculture Commissioner Dacian Cioloș and the 27 Ministers for Agriculture when they arrived en masse to the European Parliament on Wednesday 26th of June to conclude the negotiations which had been underway in Luxembourg on the Monday and Tuesday.



A huge crowd attended the ICSA "From Farm to Fork" reception. The event garnered huge exposure for ICSA, with many MEPs, senior European officials as well as officials from the Departments of Agriculture, an Taoiseach and an Tánaiste coming to view the exhibition and speak with the ICSA delegates



Independent Ireland North West MEP Marian Harkin speaking at the event



Cathal O'Reilly and Jim Higgins enjoying the Irish food MEP Higgins brought in specially for the event

## News Briefs Compiled by Kathy McKenna

**ICSA: BVD COMPENSATION FOR SUCKLERS WELCOME**



ICSA suckler chair Dermot Kelleher

Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers' Association suckler chairman Dermot

Kelleher has welcomed the announcement by Minister Coveney that there would be a compensatory payment for BVD positive calves in the suckler herd. The payment of €100 applies to second and all subsequent calves in a herd that are culled because they test positive for BVD.

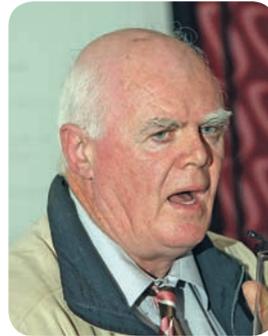
"The compensation will not come anywhere near the value of a suckler calf in most cases but at least it is recognition that the impact of losing a quality calf is particularly severe in low margin suckler enterprises."

Mr Kelleher also argued that the compensation should extend to cover the first calf in every herd.

**ICSA WELCOMES 'PRAGMATIC DECISION' ON ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE BILL**

The Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers' Association has welcomed the Government's "pragmatic decision" not to press ahead with legislation in relation to access to the countryside for recreational use.

ICSA Connaught/Ulster vice president and member of Comhairle na



ICSA Connaught/Ulster VP John Flynn

Tuaithe, John Flynn, said, "This move recognises the consensual approach adopted at Comhairle na Tuaithe level towards hillwalking and the development of tourism arising from it. ICSA

agrees with the Minister for the Environment that the current permissive access regime for recreational enjoyment of hill areas is working well. Maintaining this while continuing to debate the issues surrounding access to the countryside is a very pragmatic decision."

**ICSA: NATIONAL FARM SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS PRECARIOUS SITUATION ON CATTLE AND SHEEP FARMS**

The Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers' Association says the preliminary estimates under the National Farm Survey

show that the viability of cattle and sheep farms is very precarious. ICSA president Gabriel Gilmartin said, "It is clear that these farms are particularly vulnerable to any cuts in direct payments because direct payments are so vital to actual family farm income."

"Whereas direct payments contributed 32 per cent of dairy farm incomes, they account for 132 per cent of cattle, 118 per cent of suckler and 118 per cent of sheep incomes. While the percentage fall in dairy incomes is highest at 24 per cent, the 8-11 per cent fall in cattle and sheep incomes is from a very low base."

"The reality is that average incomes are €11,743, €17,621 and €16,898 on suckler, cattle and sheep farms respectively, compared with €51,648 for dairy farms."

"This demonstrates the importance of ensuring that the Single Payment for low income cattle and sheep farmers must be protected to the greatest extent possible. It also highlights the reality that Pillar 2 rural development money must be directed to the greatest extent possible to the low income cattle and sheep sectors under the CAP reform. It also has to be taken into account when considering how to handle rural development funding in the interim 2014 period," Mr. Gilmartin concluded.

**ICSA WELCOMES BURGER KING'S IRISH BEEF ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers' Association

welcomed Burger King's decision to recommence using Irish beef in its burgers as a vote of confidence for the beef produced by Irish farmers.

The decision was announced by the restaurant giant at the end of May.

However, ICSA president Gabriel Gilmartin warned that "we cannot ever allow a situation to arise again where we could face losing these types of contracts."

**ICSA WELCOMES ANNOUNCEMENT OF MICROCHIPPING REGULATIONS**

ICSA national sheep chairman, Paul Brady, welcomed the announcement by the Minister for Agriculture in late March that he intends to introduce new regulations requiring all dogs to be microchipped.

Mr Brady said, "ICSA has been campaigning for compulsory microchipping for over ten years. I am delighted that the Minister has taken our concerns on board and taken this important step in promoting responsible dog ownership."

"This will go a long way towards tackling the problem of out-of-control dogs attacking flocks of sheep. It is often all too easy for dog owners to simply turn a blind eye to the fact that even cherished family pets can and do turn into dangerous marauders, decimating flocks and inflicting savage injury and stress on the remaining sheep. Making sure that dog owners will be held accountable if their pet

**ICSA welcomes appointment of Tom Hayes as Minister for State at the Department of Agriculture**



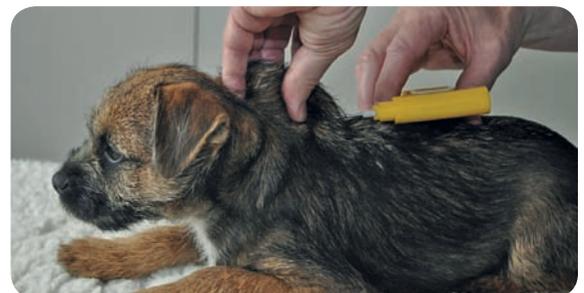
ICSA president Gabriel Gilmartin and beef chair Edmond Phelan in conversation with new Minister of State at the Dept of Agriculture, Tom Hayes, in the European Parliament

**The Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers' Association has welcomed the appointment of Tipperary South TD Tom Hayes as Minister for State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.**

ICSA president Gabriel Gilmartin said, "I would like to wish Minister Hayes the best in his new role and ICSA looks forward to working with him for the betterment of Irish agriculture into the future."

carries out an attack on vulnerable sheep through the microchip will encourage responsible ownership and will certainly be helpful in reducing the risk of attacks."

"Enforcement will be crucial. I would also be urging the Minister to bring this into force as quickly as possible, and to ensure that the cost is kept to the absolute



Microchipping is a quick, inexpensive procedure

minimum for households," Mr Brady concluded.

ICSA has sent a detailed

response to the Minister's call for submissions on dog microchipping – read more on page 14.

# Exclusive €75 offer for ICSA members on Zurich Farm Insurance in conjunction with Sparrow Insurance Brokers

ICSA has teamed up with Sparrow Insurance Brokers and Zurich PLC to deliver an exclusive €75 voucher off all farm insurance packages. Zurich, one of Ireland's leading insurance companies is part of the Zurich Insurance Group and offers a wide range of insurance products. Zurich has been insuring farmers across the globe for over 30 years and has recently launched a market leading Farm Insurance product here in Ireland.



ICSA general secretary Eddie Punch, Michael Sparrow of Sparrow Insurances, Conor Brennan, director of distribution with Zurich, and ICSA president Gabriel Gilmartin

Sparrow Insurances is a 100% wholly owned Irish Insurance Broker with offices based in the midlands, including Portlaoise, Thurles, Nenagh and Roscrea. They are committed to servicing farmers throughout the country on all their insurance needs and are happy to talk through your specific insurance requirements and how Zurich's new Farm Insurance product can

work for you. They are committed to delivering excellent customer service and to dealing with all insurance queries promptly and efficiently.

ICSA president Gabriel Gilmartin said that farmers should always shop around and he was delighted that the association could deliver

an exclusive €75 which would be in addition to any deal negotiated with Sparrow. "It makes sense to get a quote from Sparrow- it could be the most financially rewarding thing you'll do all day."

He paid tribute to ICSA staff who negotiated this deal, especially Belinda Gyves who did a lot of the

groundwork on this.

All paid up ICSA members will be getting the voucher sent to them with their renewal letters, but if your insurance is due before your ICSA renewal, simply contact the ICSA office in order to get the voucher. For further details, see the enclosed letter or contact the ICSA office.



ICSA admin & marketing officer Belinda Gyves, who played a key role in bringing this deal to ICSA members



Conor Brennan, Zurich director of distribution, Michael Doyle, head of Agri Business with Zurich, and Zurich CEO Ken Norgrove



Zurich director of distribution Conor Brennan, Zurich head of agri-business Michael Doyle, Michael Sparrow of Sparrow Insurances and Eilish Sparrow of Sparrow Insurances

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# President's *Address*

**Gabriel Gilmartin - President, ICSA**

**Just half-way through and 2013 has already been a tumultuous year. Two crises (in the form of the horsemeat scandal and the fodder shortage) have severely tested the mettle of Irish farming and after a long and tortuous process, we have agreement on CAP reform. Perhaps a breather is now in order for the sector as a whole!**

We finally saw agreement reached on the future

of the CAP at the end of June. Having been deeply involved at national and EU level every step of the way, ICSA is certainly glad to see agreement; however, the compromise is far from ideal. An in-depth analysis is in our front page article.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Minister Simon Coveney and his officials for their hard work in actually achieving agreement and limiting the worse impact of the original proposals.

ICSA had the honour of presenting one of the showcase events of the final days of the Irish Presidency in Brussels. Organised by Ireland North West MEP Jim Higgins, the exhibition took place during the last week of June in one of the most prominent parts of the European Parliament building. Showcasing the farmers of the region and their top-quality produce, ICSA re-affirmed its credentials as an effective lobbying force for Irish cattle and sheep farmers at the heart of decision-



making in Brussels - more on p4.

As an organisation, a huge amount of time was dedicated to finding solutions to the problems created by the acute fodder shortage. The challenge now is to do what we can to avoid such a catastrophe in future.

Finally, in the midst of all the turmoil, the voice of ICSA standing up for our members has been loud and clear. The past number of months has seen ICSA prove itself to be consistently motivated, determined and effective by and on behalf of you, our valued members.

## Looking back on a crisis: ICSA action on fodder shortage

It would be hard for a visitor to Ireland to imagine that just a couple of months ago, we were in the grip of one of the worst grass and fodder shortages in memory.

ICSA was one of the first groups to get stuck in and tackle the issue in a practical way. In July 2012, ICSA president Gabriel Gilmartin warned that the banks "must sit up and recognise the reality of what's happening on the farms... We must be allowed to access credit and trade through what we know will be a very tough winter." As the crisis dragged on, ICSA held talks with the major banks and encouraged anyone experiencing difficulty in accessing credit to contact ICSA's national office for support.

In August, Mr Gilmartin visited West Cork, where almost constant rain since April had left many farms in extremely poor condition. Even at that stage, housed cattle had no fodder in some cases, and ICSA's West Cork chairman and suckler

chairman Dermot Kelleher was receiving distress calls on an almost daily basis from local farmers. A delivery of straw bales was organised and subsidised by ICSA for some of the worst-hit farms in the area.

When the Department announced the fodder transport subsidy scheme in the wake of a dreadful spring, ICSA launched into action quickly, importing dozens of loads of quality hay from the UK, which was distributed through local marts in the North West. ICSA also organised several loads of hay from Carlow for the North West, as part of an appeal to farmers with surplus fodder to sell it to those in dire need. Gilmartin paid tribute to ICSA national executive members Eddie Graham (Monaghan) and Denis Nolan (Carlow) who played a huge role in sourcing the fodder here and in the UK.

With the worst of the crisis now over, ICSA is looking ahead and working hard to ensure



ICSA president Gabriel Gilmartin with local farmer Eddie McPartlin at one of the ICSA fodder deliveries at Manorhamilton Mart

that our members will not be so vulnerable in future. ICSA has called for new Minister of State Tom Hayes to be put in charge of the national emergency task force ICSA is calling for, to deal with the ongoing fall-out from the fodder crisis, including planning for the forthcoming winter and beyond, as well as dealing with the mental health issues in the farming community that were exacerbated by the incredible pressure caused by the crisis.

**ICSA worked in conjunction with the following marts and co-op to organise fodder deliveries:**

- **Manorhamilton Mart**
- **Castlerea Mart**
- **Roscommon Mart**
- **Ballinasloe Mart**
- **Clones Mart**
- **Drumshanbo Mart**
- **Ballyshannon Mart**
- **Carrickmacross Mart**
- **Town of Monaghan Co-op**

# Fodder budgeting: Forewarned is forearmed

**Geoff Hamilton**  
ICSA Policy Officer

**W**e are all aware of the difficult situation experienced by many farmers late last year and in the first half of 2013 as a result of a wet summer, exhausted winter fodder supplies and a delayed spring. With the immediate pressure off, farmers must be pro-active in securing adequate fodder for winter 2013/14. ICSA commodity chairs Dermot Kelleher, Edmond Phelan and Paul Brady have proposed the following basic rules for fodder planning:

- Planning for a five-month winter (1st November to 1st April) should suffice for the majority of beef and suckler farmers, though six months may be advisable for farms in West Cork, Donegal, Connemara etc.
- One good-quality bale of silage is the equivalent of one tonne of pit silage. An average quality bale equates to slightly less than a tonne of pit material.
- As a rule of thumb for cattle, budget for 10 bales per animal per winter. This allows a carry-over of one bale per animal.
- For sheep farmers, budget for a three-month winter, and aim for one bale per ewe per winter.
- Reduce stock numbers this year if you are concerned that you will still have a silage deficit this winter. For example, selling seven store cattle can save 50 tonnes of silage.
- Forage crops can provide a viable feed alternative, though they are best suited to drier ground and weanling grazing. While July is too late to sow kale, there is still time to sow rape. Ground badly in need of reseeding may be targeted for forage growing. Due to the visual appearance of fields after grazing, it is advisable to use fields on minor roads, strip graze sections furthest from the road first and start grazing during dry periods to minimise poaching.



**ICSA have also been in correspondence with Teagasc Animal Nutritionist Dr Siobhan Kavanagh, who has kindly supplied the following advice:**

1. Start planning now. Those that acted earliest last year came through the spring more easily.
2. Increase the fodder required by 10-20% to replace depleted silage stocks.
3. Once you have at least 50-60% of your winter silage requirements, you have options available.
4. Silage dry matters can vary. The standard is 200kg DM per tonne of pit silage and 180kg per bale. These are typical with a maximum of one day wilting. If DM is higher, take this into account.
5. There is no single strategy to deal with the shortage. A combination of actions will be needed to help you deal with the problem:
  - a. Reduce demand for winter feed:
    - i. sell off cull cows/empty cows (scan cows early);
    - ii. sell store cattle; and,
    - iii. put finishing cattle on meals and minimal silage.
  - b. Maximise grass growth on the farm over the next few months: apply 20-30 units of nitrogen (N) to grazing ground and remove surplus grass as bales, where possible.
  - c. The alternative feed options include:
    - i. buying silage – standing crops of grass for silage or baled/pitted silage;
    - ii. buying ration to fill the gap;
    - iii. growing forage crops\*
    - iv. buying alternative forages such as maize silage, whole crop cereal silage, or fodder beet; or,
    - v. buying cereal grains and store.
  - d. Examine the options carefully. Cost is important but other factors also need to be considered, including the risk of poor yields/quality, the need for storage/handling facilities, the cost of balancing for protein and minerals, the labour input, cash flow implications and feed space requirements.
6. Don't panic buy feedstuffs to fill the gap. Talk to your consultant or Teagasc adviser before making your decision.

Teagasc carried out the National Fodder Census on July 1st. While the main results were unavailable at the time of print, early indications are that yields of first cut silage harvested in the first half of June were generally below normal but the quality was good. Yields in the second half of June had improved and again favourable weather conditions should mean good quality silage was made. A subsequent census will be carried out on October 1st.

To allow farmers to assess whether they will have a surplus or a shortage for the upcoming winter, Teagasc have drawn up a fodder budgeting sheet which is reproduced on the opposite page. ICSA strongly encourages all its members to immediately carry out a fodder budget calculation. The earlier a potential fodder deficit can be identified, the more time and options are open to a farmer to take positive action to address any such issue.

# FODDER BUDGETING WORKSHEET



Farmer details

Name	Enterprise
Herd number	Land type
County	

## SECTION 1: What fodder is required on the farm?

Animal type	A No. of stock to be kept over winter	B Number of months	C Pit silage needed/ animal/month	Total tonnes of silage needed – multiply AxBxC
Dairy cows			1.6	
Suckler cows			1.4	
0-1 year old			0.7	
1-2 year old			1.3	
2+ year old			1.3	
Ewes			0.15	
Total tonnes needed				Tonnes <input type="text"/> X
or				or
Total bales needed (tonnes multiplied by 1.1)				Bales <input type="text"/> Y

## SECTION 2: How much silage is in the yard and/or to be harvested?

Farms with pit and bale silage	A	Pit silage – currently in the yard <sup>1</sup>	
	B	Pit silage – to be harvested (acres multiplied by 7t/ac)	
	C	Total pit silage (A+B)	
	D	Bales – in the yard	
	E	Bales, converted to equivalent of pit silage (Multiply D by 0.9)	
	F	Total silage (C+E)	<input type="text"/> F
Farms with bale silage only	A	Bales – in the yard	
	B	Bales – to be harvested	
	C	Total bales (A+B)	<input type="text"/> C

<sup>1</sup> Pit silage (length x breadth x settled height) metres ÷ 1.35 = tonnes (t) equivalent.

## SECTION 3: Surplus or shortage?

Surplus or deficit	Using pit and bales Deficit in tonnes (F-X)	Using bales only Deficit in bales (C-Y)
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
What's the % deficit? (Deficit/X (or Y) *100)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

\* If you are using alternative feed sources, please contact your adviser.



# SOMMET DE L'ELEVAGE, CLERMONT-FERRAND, FRANCE

## October 2nd to 4th 2013 - A must-attend event

**S**et in the heart of the Massif Central region, birthplace of the world's most famous beef cattle breeds, the Sommet de l'Élevage ("Livestock Summit") of Clermont-Ferrand, France (October 2nd to 4th) will welcome all French breeding organisations for dairy and beef cattle, sheep and horses, as well as all machinery and farming equipment manufacturers. 1,250 trade exhibitors and 80,000 visitors are expected again for this 22nd edition of the show.

Benoit Delalay, its International Manager, says, "Every year, we would have 2,000 animals on display from 70 different breeds. One breed would be selected to put on a special show of their stock. This year is the turn of the Salers for the beef sector and the Montbéliarde for the dairy sector. They will both organize their national championship at the Sommet."

Through this 3 day event, Limousin, Charolais, Blonde d'Aquitaine, Aubrac, Holstein, Simmental breeds, to name a few, will be competing. An International livestock evening, on October 2nd, will also present French

cattle and sheep breeds to some of the expected 3,000 visitors from overseas.

More than 20 free guided tours of livestock farms and agri-food businesses will be also organised specially for foreign delegations. Due to the success of these tours (700 participants in 2012), early booking is recommended. The show's International Club will welcome visitors from all over the world, where refreshments will be served, student interpreters will be available and information about the show distributed. Facilities are available to arrange B2B meetings and the entrance to the show is free of charge for all international guests.

A rich programme of business forums, seminars and conferences, professional promotional events, a sector innovation competition, all adds up to Europe's leading forum for livestock professionals. A success that has reached the President of France, François Hollande, who has announced he will be attending this year's event.

More information, please call Mrs Charlotte Jehanno, (+353) 86 604 9133. Online registration for free entrance and participation to the guided tours: [www.sommet-elevage.fr](http://www.sommet-elevage.fr)





**SOMMET  
DE L'ÉLEVAGE**

2,000 ANIMALS - 1,250 EXHIBITORS - 80,000 VISITORS

**Europe's No 1 livestock show**



**2-3-4  
OCTOBER  
2013**

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# Policy Submissions Update

ICSA Policy Officer Geoff Hamilton presents a summary of recent ICSA submissions to Government consultation calls. The full texts of these submissions is available on the ICSA website at [www.icsaireland.ie/policy/policy-submissions](http://www.icsaireland.ie/policy/policy-submissions)

## RDP 2014-2020

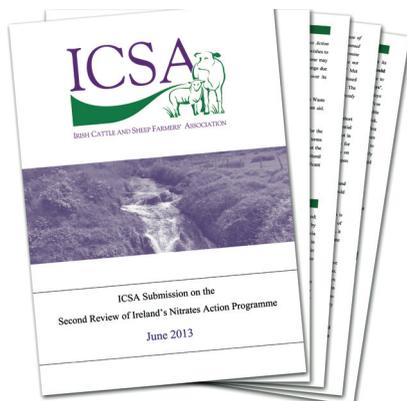


This broad-ranging ICSA submission set out the Association's position on where the focus should lie for Ireland's next Rural Development Programme, which is funded under Pillar 2 of the CAP. Besides an overall well-funded and supported RDP, ICSA called for: More streamlining and less administrative burden; A comprehensive agri-environment scheme with greater ambition than AEOS; Expansion of the BTAP and STAP schemes; Specific Pillar 2 support for suckler farms; Innovation to improve competitiveness; Inclusion of the Sheep Grassland Scheme in the RDP; Top-ups for young farmers involved in RDP schemes and top-ups for 'low income holdings'; Continued support for the organic sector; Specific focus for Ireland's upland resource; Support for farm forestry; Increased interaction between LEADER schemes and the agri-food sector.

Following the CAP deal at the end of June, it is expected that the Government will now embark on further consultation and meetings with rural stakeholders. ICSA will remain deeply engaged with this process.

## NITRATES ACTION PROGRAMME

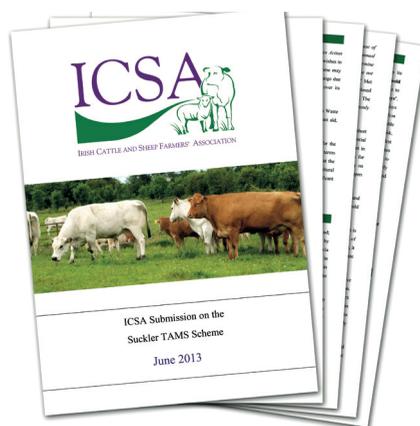
The Government has embarked on its Second Review of the Nitrates Action Programme. In its submission, ICSA highlighted the difficulties caused by calendar farming, which continues to be problematic from a farming point of view and also from an environmental standpoint. The



positive cumulative impact of yard improvements, agri-environment schemes, slurry storage and application technology and better climate prediction tools now need to be taken into account. ICSA reiterated the position that farming decisions must be guided by weather and ground conditions, not dates on a calendar.

In summary, ICSA called for: More flexibility in the Nitrates Action Programme in relation to appropriate dates for the spreading of slurry; Advisory service-led guidelines for the practical implementation of spreading of slurry to inform best practice and utilise all available information sources; More flexibility for the application of Phosphorus to address deficits and better reflect farming realities.

## SUCKLER TAM SCHEME



The Department of Agriculture sought views from the main farming stakeholders on the potential content of a new Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme for the suckler sector. The Suckler Committee reached a consensus that the most appropriate use of funding for a Suckler TAM Scheme would be to prioritise improving farm safety and welfare through modernised animal handling facilities. In this submission,

ICSA called for funding for a suite of TAM measures that could deliver improved farm safety and animal health & welfare, namely: Crush equipment with optional head scoop for safer inspection and dosing of animals; Smaller dedicated crates for calf dehorning; Crush extensions for increased safety at rear of animal; Mobile crush units for use in field situations; Wired or wireless cameras for installation in calving sheds; Calf-weighing equipment; Badger-proof feed troughs; Tipping water troughs. Through these measures, ICSA believes that we can advance the competitiveness of the suckler sector, whilst improving the overall health and genetic resources of the national herd.

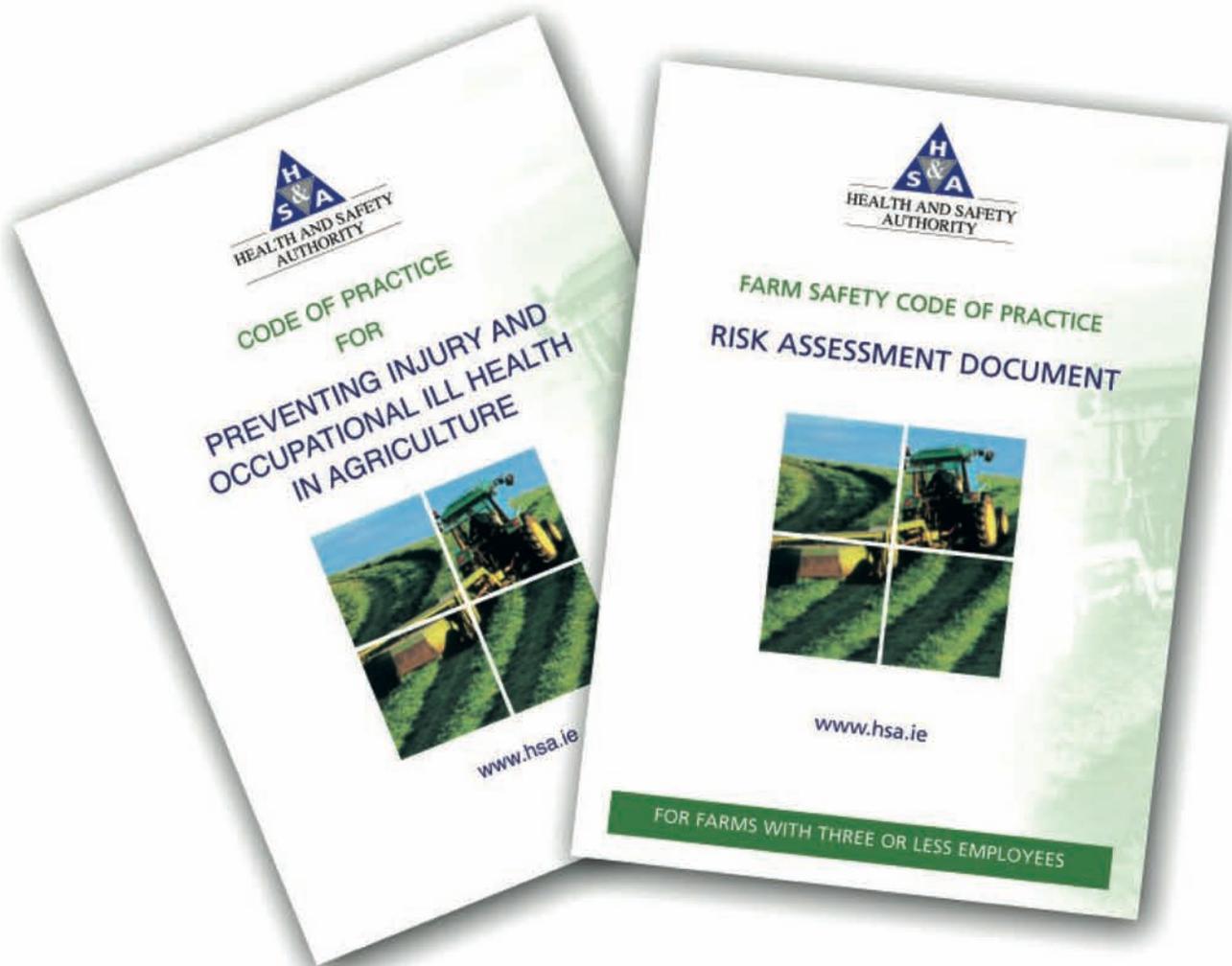
## DOG MICROCHIPPING



Minister Coveney recently made a call for submissions on Dog Microchipping as part of the passing of the Animal Health and Welfare Bill into law; he specifically plans to introduce a regulation which will require the microchipping of all dogs in the country.

ICSA has been calling for such compulsory microchipping for many years, and has strongly welcomed the Minister's proposal as a solution to many of the current problems relating to Ireland's dog population such as straying, rehoming, theft, livestock worrying, animal cruelty and dangerous dogs. This submission makes a number of recommendations relating to the implementation of microchipping, including: Equal chipping rates for all dogs, regardless of purpose; Restriction of chipping practice to registered vets, dog wardens and staff of approved dog shelters; Minimising of costs; Education regarding requirement of addition of chip data to a database; Clarity regarding protocol during change of ownership. ICSA aim to play an active role in any publicity campaign during the microchipping rollout.

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