



ICSA president Patrick Kent and general secretary Eddie Punch corner EU Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan in Brussels to argue for a totally funded CAP targeted at low income sectors such as cattle, sheep and tillage

## ICSA FIGHTING FOR FULLY FUNDED CAP

On 1 June, EU agriculture commissioner Phil Hogan gave a more detailed outline of CAP reform proposals for the period 2020-27. The announcement came within weeks of the EU budget proposals which outline a 5% cut in the CAP budget in nominal terms.

### Eddie Punch General Secretary

ICSA has been actively lobbying at home and in Brussels on the budget for the CAP. ICSA president Patrick Kent describes cuts of 5% as completely unacceptable especially as the cut is more like 12% when account is taken of inflation.

"We keep asking farmers to do more for less. Originally, CAP payments were meant simply to compensate farmers to produce food cheaply for the benefit of the

consumer, while ensuring a fair standard of living for the farmer. Nowadays, the farmer's share of the final retail price is lower than ever but CAP insists that farmers do more and more in terms of traceability, animal welfare, the environment and climate change," according to Patrick Kent.

This point has also been made forcibly by Minister Creed at the most recent Farm Council and in talks with other EU agriculture ministers where the objective is to build a coalition for a fully funded

CAP. In theory the loss of the UK net contribution to the EU budget is the reason for a potential reduction in the budget but it is also a result of the EU wanting to spend more money on cyber security and the migrant crisis.

ICSA believes that member states will have to make up their minds. It's all very well for farm ministers to support full CAP funding but the decision on the EU budget is ultimately a matter for the heads of government in an EU summit meeting.

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### The Drystock Farmer

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Eddie Punch,  
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# DOUBLE STANDARDS ON MERCOSUR CANNOT BE TOLERATED

With cuts to the CAP budget becoming more and more likely, there are equally ominous signals that the long dreaded Mercosur trade deal is moving closer. Talks are continuing between the EU and the Mercosur bloc with the inclusion of a beef tariff quota of 100,000 tonnes likely to become a reality.

This is despite the fact that a recent report by MEPs on the European Agriculture Committee has highlighted the failure of standards at all levels in Brazil. A group of MEPs had visited Brazil on a fact finding mission and concluded that "Brazil does not have the same traceability standards as EU producers." In addition, the report stated, "Sanitary and export certificates were falsified and federal inspectors bribed."

**The report makes it crystal clear that beef can no longer be included in the Mercosur trade talks. Instead the EU must endeavour to keep unsafe and inferior quality South American beef out of Europe at all cost.**

The Mercosur countries are failing to meet EU standards on the fundamental issues of food safety and traceability and there is no real prospect of the EU being able to impose these standards in South America. EU beef farmers have endeavoured over many years to ensure the very highest standards are met at every stage of production. It is farcical that the EU should expect European farmers to produce to these standards and then turn around and allow vast quantities of sub-standard and possibly dangerous food into the European market. ICSA will not tolerate such double standards from the EU on this issue. We will continue to oppose this deal at the highest levels, both here and in Brussels. Ultimately, any Mercosur deal will have to be rubber stamped by the parliaments of the EU member states. The real test of whether your TD supports the future of the Irish cattle farmer will be how they vote on Mercosur. ICSA will be pushing very hard to ensure that words of support are translated into action.



**ICSA president Patrick Kent**



## 25th Anniversary Celebration Dinner

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With special guest

**Phil Hogan**

EU Commissioner for Agriculture & Rural Development

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In the event that a bigger EU budget cannot be agreed, there is still the possibility for member states to make a bigger co-financing contribution to Pillar 2 (for the Rural Development programme which includes ANC, agri-environment schemes, farm investment etc.).

In fact, Commissioner Hogan was cognisant of this possibility in a strategy to minimise cuts to the direct payments.

A key element of this strategy was to cap payments at €60,000 which was suggested on the same day that budget Commissioner Oettinger announced the financing proposals. However, the €60,000 cap has been watered down to a €100,000 cap and severe cuts between €60,000 and €100,000.

(See table A). However, there is scope to receive more for farm enterprises which have paid labour. It is critical that employed labour should not be allowed to become a gaping loophole to permit a continuation of massive payments to agri-business or large scale commercial operations at the expense of the family farm.

The main feature of the Hogan proposals is to allow more flexibility to member states to design their own policy in a way which reflects practical farming realities in that member state. However, each member state would still have to get agreement from the Commission and the plan would have to be in line with overall Brussels rules. Critically, the member states would be required to devise policies which would achieve Brussels

determined objectives such as helping young farmers or mitigating climate change.

The contentious issue of capping is back on the agenda for CAP reform. Capping of payments to individual beneficiaries is a possible response to the often-quoted complaint that 80% of payments go to just 20% of farmers.

However, this is regularly misused by commentators as a sign that the CAP is outrageously unfair. In fact, according to EU Commission statistics, of the 10.8 million agriculture holdings in the EU, some 40% had an output of less than €2,000. If a farm is selling less than €2,000 it is very hard to argue that this kind of farm is entitled to substantial increases in CAP funding. Overall, the average farm size in the EU is 16 hectares.



ICSA commodity chairs John Brooks (Sheep), Edmund Graham (Beef) and Seamus Sherlock (Rural Development) along with general secretary Eddie Punch arriving at the European Parliament in Brussels in February to lobby on CAP



Discussing Brexit and CAP with MEP Mairead McGuinness were Gavin Carberry (Louth Chair), Jim Harrison (Connacht/Ulster Vice president), Edmond Graham (Beef chair), John Brooks (Sheep chair) and Neassa Fitzgibbon (ICSA press officer)



Ireland South MEP Deirdre Clune pictured with ICSA rural development chair Seamus Sherlock, beef chair Edmond Graham and general secretary Eddie Punch



ICSA general secretary Eddie Punch was a panellist at a dinner for 100 of the most influential Irish people working in Brussels recently along with MEPs Matt Carthy and Marian Harkin



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**Eddie Punch and Dan Lynam met Liadh Ní Riada (EU Budget Committee member) on the importance of a fully funded CAP**



**ICSA lobbying Luke 'Ming' Flanagan on a range of issues at the European Parliament**

Moreover, it follows that the distribution of CAP payments will appear unbalanced but in reality, it reflects the fact that at least 40% of farms have very little economic activity due to scale. Added to this is the fact that 3.6 million of the farm holdings are located in Romania.

The last CAP reform by the Romanian agriculture commissioner Dacian Cioloș tried to transfer significant amounts of money from larger farms the EU-15 to countries like Romania but it is very hard to justify equal payments in a country like Romania with Ireland, when labour costs in Ireland in 2017 were five times higher per hour.

In Ireland, 40% of cattle herds have less than 25 head at the end of the year. So it follows that there will never be a CAP system

that gives every farmer exactly the same amount. If there was, it would be a flat payment of some €9,000 to all recipients.

However, there is a really strong argument that it is simply unacceptable that large agri-business concerns and factory controlled feedlots continue to get payments which are multiples of what family farms get.

There is also a loophole in the proposal for capping that allows extra money to be given to big enterprises in respect of hired labour. In practice, this means that many farmers fail to get enough direct payments to create a full-time job for themselves while the CAP supports jobs on big operations which in practice are being filled by immigrant labour from outside the EU.

## Key Features of the Commission Proposals

- Each member state would have more flexibility and more responsibility in drawing up a CAP model to suit its own circumstances but any model would still be subject to an overall regulation and to achieving objectives agreed with the Commission.
- The concept of greening is being changed so that the first Pillar will encompass a Basic Income Payment combined with a possible top-up payment for the first few hectares and an additional voluntary payment for undertaking actions under an eco-scheme heading.
- The Rural Development Programme is currently facing the brunt of cuts under CAP proposals, but member states do have the option of additional co-funding of programmes such as agri-environment and ANC.
- The whole process will have a lot of focus on member states delivering results on agreed objective and already it is clear that climate change and water quality will be central to this.
- There is increasing focus on excessive use of nitrogen fertiliser.
- Young farmers will still be a key priority with the top-up likely to continue in some shape or form, but also the option of a substantial installation package of up to €100,000 is mentioned. A more likely outcome could be development loans leveraged on some CAP funding.
- There is acknowledgement that retiring farmers also have to have a sustainable future and a possible support to those getting out is mentioned.
- Risk management is likely to be a feature with member states being allowed to set aside some proportion of the national envelope for a crisis reserve, which would be retained in the member state.

### Table A: Proposed capping to Direct Payments

- By at least 25% for the tranche between €60,000 and €75,000
- By at least 50% for the tranche between €75,000 and €90,000
- By at least 75% for the tranche between €90,000 and €100,000
- And shall be capped at €100,000

The thresholds can be increased by the cost of declared salaries.

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# MONAGHAN BEEF FARMER EDMUND GRAHAM ELECTED ICOSA BEEF CHAIR

Monaghan beef farmer Edmund Graham was elected ICOSA national beef chairman at ICOSA's AGM and Annual Conference earlier this year. Hailing from Ballyleck in Co Monaghan, Mr Graham focuses primarily on his weanling to beef and stores to beef enterprises.

Following his election Mr Graham was firm that his focus would be on improving prices for beef farmers.

**"Farmer trust in the grid system continues to be a major issue. The system is outdated and needs to be replaced with a model that fully utilises modern digital technology."**

ICOSA understands that some preliminary work on this issue is in the pipeline with trials involving new technology being tested by processors, in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture. This could be a significant step towards facilitating a payment based on meat yield and could

potentially result in the farmer getting a price in closer alignment with what is sold on the shelf.



**ICOSA beef chair Edmund Graham on his farm in Ballyleck, Co. Monaghan**

In addition Mr Graham said pushing on with live exports and gaining access to new markets is crucial. We recently had news of a deal between the ABP Food Group and Asian restaurant group Wowprime Corporation. The three year deal, valued at €50 million, will see the Irish owned meat processor supply beef to the Wowprime network of restaurants across China.

**"Securing deals of this nature around the world is testament to the quality produce of Irish farmers, so it is imperative that farmers should benefit from it. For too long the financial benefits of such deals have not trickled down to the primary producer."**

Mr Graham said he would also be keeping up the pressure to ensure vast quantities of extra South American are kept out of European markets.

**"It is unthinkable for beef quotas to be considered in the Mercosur trade talks with continuing uncertainty surrounding Brexit. Any concession would show a reckless disregard for the beef sector."**

# KILDARE FARMER FERGAL BYRNE TO LEAD ICOSA ORGANICS COMMITTEE

Kildare farmer Fergal Byrne was recently elected to the position of chair of ICOSA's newly formed Organics Committee. Mr Byrne is an organic suckler, sheep and tillage farmer based in Calverstown Little near Dunlavin.



**Fergal Byrne, newly elected ICOSA Organics chair on his farm at Claverstown Little, Co. Kildare**

Following his election Mr Byrne said: "The focus now has to be on finding additional markets for organic produce. To this end, we need to see more collaboration between the meat industry and Bord Bia. This must be a priority if we are serious about the organics sector maximising its potential and becoming more than just a niche sector."

"We know that demand for organic produce is growing all over Europe, but even still, organic producers here struggle to find markets for what they currently produce. This is despite the organic meat sector in Ireland being very small compared to other EU countries. Leakage of organic stock, i.e. organic stock that has to be sold as regular stock due to lack of markets, remains an issue."

Mr Byrne is the ICOSA delegate sitting on the new Organic Sector Strategy Group. The group was established by the Department of Agriculture and aims to develop the strategic plan for the organic sector to 2025 in line with the overall aims of the FoodWise 2025 Strategy.

**"ICOSA will also be pushing for funding of the Organics Scheme to continue post 2020. It is high time for the Organics Scheme to be revisited and ICOSA will be lobbying for that but there is no point in putting more people in without more markets."**



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# Finishing 16 month old Bulls

**Grattan Evans from Greystones used a 3 Stage Bull feeding plan developed in conjunction with Quinns nutritionist. The results exceeded his expectations.**

Grattan breeds all his own beef animals from continental suckler cows (Mix of Simmental, Limousine and Charolaise) The cows are crossed with either a Limousine or Simmental bull. The cows all calve in mid spring (mid February – Early March). All male calves are kept as bulls with the aim to finish them under 16 months of age.

In September 2017, Valerie Hobson from Quinns and Grattan met and discussed a feeding plan for the bulls, taking into account the forage that was on the farm and looking at the animal weights. Quinns decided to focus on 15 bulls weighing them on a monthly basis and monitoring their progress accordingly. Quinns then looked at their kill out weights, grades and fat scores.

The animals diet changed in early December over a gradual period of approx. 10 days and were fed **Quinns Supreme Bull Beef** ration. This 15% crude protein ration and is ideal for bulls growing rapidly and supports a strong frame growth along with muscle development. Again the animals were fed some silage and straw. The animals were built up to 6kgs concentrate quite quickly and were gradually increased to 8Kgs by the time they were completed stage 2 of the feeding plan which was at the end of January.

In early February the bull's diet began to change again with an increase in energy supplied and the protein level was reduced accordingly. **Quinns Supreme Maize Beef** was fed for this last stage with average intakes for this final stage at 11.5Kgs per head per day. Silage and straw was also fed but their forage intakes did reduce dramatically in the final few weeks before slaughter.

Over the 3 stages of finishing the animals gained an average weight of 1.9Kg per head per day. The animals average slaughter date was 27th April 2018. The bulls were actually all slaughtered less than 15 months of age. The table below shows the slaughter weights along with their fat scores and grades.

	Stage 1 (Oct - Nov) <b>Quinns Supreme Weanling</b>	Stage 2 (Dec - Jan) <b>Quinns Supreme Bull Beef</b>	Stage 3 (Feb - Apr) <b>Quinns Supreme Maize Beef</b>
	Rolled Barley Beet Pulp Nuts Rolled Beans Soya Bean Meal Flaked Maize Molasses Beef Minerals & Yea-Sacc	Rolled Barley Beet Pulp Nuts Soya Bean Meal Ground Maize Rolled Beans Flaked Maize Molasses Beef Minerals & Yea-Sacc	Rolled Barley Flaked Maize Ground Maize Beet Pulp Nuts Wheat Distillers Molasses Rolled Beans Beef Minerals & Yea-Sacc
<b>Protein</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Fibre</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8.7</b>
<b>Oil</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Ash</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Energy</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>11.2</b>
<b>UFV</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>0.96</b>
	<b>2Kgs concentrate</b> <b>0.5Kg Straw</b> <b>20Kg Silage</b>	<b>6Kgs concentrate</b> <b>0.5Kg Straw</b> <b>10Kg Silage</b>	<b>11.5Kg concentrate</b> <b>8Kgs Silage</b> <b>0.75Kg Straw</b>

\*Ingredients in descending order

\*Feed Listed is available in both pellets & coarse ration

The bulls were creep fed before weaning at grass for 3 weeks and then were all housed on the 23rd October. The animals were housed in a well aerated straw bedded shed. They were kept on **Quinns Supreme Weanling** when housed and were gradually built up to 4 Kgs per head per day of concentrate. They were also fed 20Kg of 74% DMD silage and 0.5Kg barley straw.



## Average kill out weight, fat scores and grades

Weight	415.3	424.9	373.6	388.9	405.5	442.6	414.3	403.2	395.3	410.8	468.4	381.2	393	410.4	376.3
Kill Out Grade	U=3+	U+4	U=2+	U=4	U=2+	U+3-	U+2=	U+3-	U-3-	U+3-	E=3=	E-2+	U-3+	U=3=	R+3+



Valerie Hobson (Quinns Feed Nutritionist), Grattan Evans & Ciarán Murphy (Quinns Technical Advisor)

Average kill out weights of 407Kgs were achieved and excellent fat scores obtained. The feed plan exceeded our expectations with animals reaching target finishing weights quicker than originally planned for. The animals never lost momentum on the plan and each ration that was fed contained a balanced blend of ingredients to make sure it matched with the animal's requirements at each particular stage. Yea-Sacc was included in all 3 concentrates which insured us that rumen function was optimised and animals achieved optimum daily live-weight gain.

**Quinns are happy to assist you in implementing this feed plan or help you with your feed requirement on your farm. Please contact 059-6481266 or your local Quinns branch should you need advice or have any questions.**

# HALL OF FAME AWARD FOR ICSA PRESIDENT PATRICK KENT

ICSA president Patrick Kent has been inducted into the National Hall of Fame for Livestock Breeding at a ceremony which took place in the Sheraton Hotel in Athlone. Mr Kent was nominated for the award by the Belgian Blue Cattle Society because of his:

**“Outstanding service, dedication and commitment to the development of the Belgian Blue cattle breed.”**

Mr Kent first became acquainted with the Belgian Blue breed in the mid 1980s. Having experienced the great success and realising the benefits of the Belgian Blue cross beef from his fattening enterprise, in 1998 he purchased a heifer from the Debiert herd in Belgium which became the foundation heifer of his herd.



Growing his herd to 50 breeding heifers by the mid-nineties Mr Kent has concentrated his efforts on the production of easy calving bulls suitable for Irish grass based systems. He is always keen to respond to customers' needs and has fine-tuned his breeding policy to meet those needs.



ICSA president Patrick Kent pictured with some of his Belgian Blues at his farm in Aclare, New Ross, Co Wexford

**Congratulations from all at ICSA!**

## ICSA SUCKLER FARM WALK

ICSA's suckler committee will host a Suckler Farm Walk on the farm of Sean Hayden, Longfordpass, Urlingford, Thurles, Co Tipperary (E41 HT62)

**on Wednesday 4 July at 6pm**

With special guest speaker

**Billy O'Kane,**

Farmers Weekly Beef Farmer of the Year 2016

All are welcome. For more information, call ICSA on 057 8662120 or check [www.icsaireland.com](http://www.icsaireland.com) for updates



ICSA suckler chairman John Halley



Stabiliser heifers on the Hayden farm



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Enhancing Knowledge

Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> June

10am - 5pm



# PROTESTING FOR A FAIR

ICSA has hit the ground protesting against the

## CLP FOR SHEEP, WHAT A MESS!

It must be back to the drawing board on the Clean Livestock Policy (CLP) for sheep if we are to avoid a repeat of the chaotic scenes at meat factories over the spring.

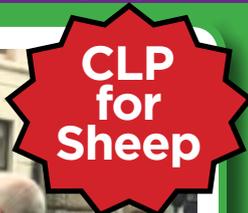
ICSA sheep chairman John Brooks said:

“ICSA is demanding an urgent review of the implementation of the policy as we cannot allow a repeat of the chaos we have seen on occasion in factories with whole consignments of lambs being sent off for shearing.”

It is incumbent on the Department to pull all stakeholders together to develop a consensus on what will work in practice.

It is especially important that Teagasc develop and trial systems of production that will ensure farmers can comply with requirements. Advice is needed on different systems of fattening lambs and prepping them for slaughter if the way sheep farmers have been doing it for decades is suddenly no longer acceptable under the Clean Livestock Policy for sheep (CLP).

Farmers need certainty and there is a lot of anger about the lottery of sending lambs in to a factory not knowing what will happen to them.



Members of ICSA's sheep committee, led by sheep chair John Brooks protest against the mandatory EID tagging for all sheep and the chaotic rollout of the Clean Livestock Policy for sheep (CLP)



CLP, What a mess! ICSA protesting outside the offices of the Department of Agriculture on Kildare St



ICSA are adamant that the chaotic scenes at meat factories during the rollout of the Clean Livestock Policy for sheep must not be repeated



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# BIG DEAL FOR FARMERS

The big issues that have angered sheep farmers

**EID Tagging**



**“No way, we won’t pay.” Farmers cannot be expected to bear all the costs associated with the introduction of mandatory EID tagging for all sheep. At a cost of €2.5m annually, EID is a cost that sheep farmers cannot bear**



**ICSA sheep committee members Tom Stephenson, William McGirr and Kieran Farrell protest at the Department of Agriculture in Dublin**

## THE FOLLY OF EID TAGGING

ICSA is continuing to oppose the introduction of mandatory EID tagging for all sheep. The move was announced by Minister Creed in April and is scheduled to take effect from 1 October 2018. ICSA Sheep chairman John Brooks has said:

**“There is neither rhyme nor reason to the Minister’s decision to impose mandatory electronic tagging on lambs going direct to the factory.”**

Mr Brooks said, “This is an issue we had to take to the streets about. It was done at the behest of processors who are the only ones that will benefit. Why should sheep farmers bear all the cost? The traceability requirement is that they are tagged before they leave the farm. A few hours later, the lamb is processed with the ear disposed of and the costly electronic ear tag is in the skip.”

ICSA estimates this decision will add some €2.5m cost to sheep farmers annually, based on additional costs of €1/lamb and a throughput of some 2.5m lambs yearly. However, the average profit per lamb is about €14, based on an annual average price of €100 or €4.80/kg over the past five years. It costs the average Teagasc profit monitor farmer €86 to produce a lamb. So when the Minister adds €1 cost to a lamb producing €14 profit, he is imposing a 7% income cut.

Mr Brooks added that the proposal for a one-off payment of €50 was really rubbing farmers up the wrong way.

**“Does the Minister really believe we can be bought off for €50? You’d give it to a youngster for their holy communion but it doesn’t make up for a permanently imposed cost leading to a 7% cut in sheep farmers’ profits.”**

A 7% cut is on lowland farms; the situation is even worse for hill farmers who are being asked to fund an extra euro when selling store lambs from the hills that might only be worth €20-30. The Minister talks about new markets but the reality is that the vast majority of our lamb will continue to go to EU markets which are under-supplied. There is no need to add cost to our lamb for existing markets and the reality is that in the biggest EU market - France - lamb imports will always be discounted compared to native French lamb regardless of what we put in lambs’ ears.

The main marketing logic was allegedly for the US market but this won’t be the first Minister to talk up the potential of the US market in vain. If we can’t make inroads there with grass fed beef, we are highly unlikely to fare much better with sheepmeat. ICSA is continuing to liaise with the Minister and Department officials on this issue.

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# URGENT RETHINK OF RURAL CCTV SCHEME NEEDED AS FUNDS GO UNUSED

ICSA rural development chairman Seamus Sherlock has said it's time for Minister Flanagan and the Department of Justice to consider amendments to the scheme introduced to help local communities install CCTV systems as a crime prevention measure. "Funding was allocated but the take up has been miniscule. We cannot allow the funding to go unused because of an overly arduous application process," he said. "Recent figures released by the Department of Justice indicate that only 4% of the €3m CCTV funding available has been spent. Reaching the halfway point in the scheme and with only €120,000 spent indicates a problem somewhere. An urgent review needs to be carried out at this stage to see how local communities can be further assisted with utilising the scheme. Of particular importance is clarification as to whether the Gardaí or local authorities are responsible managing the footage collected."



**ICSA met with Justice Minister Charlie Flanagan to discuss the findings of the ICSA/WIT Agricultural Crime Survey**

Mr Sherlock was speaking at a ceremony in Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) to mark the official handing over of the Agricultural Crime in Ireland reports to the Luke Wadding library. The reports were compiled by Dr Kathleen Moore Walsh, a lecturer in Law and Criminology and Louise Walsh, a lecturer in Accounting and Finance, following the ICSA/WIT Agricultural Crime Survey. The study examined crimes that occur solely on farms or relating to farming activities. The significant findings of each of the three reports are as follows:

**Report 1 provided data on the incidence of agricultural crime in Ireland and found that two thirds of farmers have experienced crime relating to their farming enterprise.**

**Report 2 provided data on financial costs experienced by farmers arising from agricultural crime and indicated an average cost of €4,328 per respondent with experience of an incident(s) of agricultural crime. The report also found that many farmers were reluctant to report thefts due to the risk of rising insurance premiums. It found that on average farmers were willing to take a financial hit of €1,771.00 rather than report the incident.**

**Report 3 provided data on agricultural crime reporting to Gardaí and indicated that 45% of such crimes go unreported.**

Mr Sherlock said, "The nature and scale of agriculture specific crime has been well and truly established with this survey and subsequent reports. Rural people want more resources in community policing, stiffer sentences for repeat offenders and closer consultation between rural stakeholders, local authorities and An Garda Síochána."



**(L-R) ICSA rural development chairman Seamus Sherlock, president of WIT Professor Willie Donnelly and report authors Louise Walsh and Dr Kathleen Moore Walsh pictured at the Waterford Institute of Technology on 17 May**

# EXEMPTIONS TO TRACTOR TESTING BUREAUCRACY A GOOD OUTCOME FOR FARMERS & CONTRACTORS



**Silage cutting at full tilt in Co Clare**

From 20 May 2018, fast tractors must undergo periodic tests and must display certificates of roadworthiness (CRWs).

A 'fast tractor' is defined as a wheeled tractor in category T with a maximum design speed exceeding 40 km/h. If you use a fast tractor and you are unsure of its maximum design speed, you should consult its vehicle manufacturer or an authorised Irish tractor distributor.

As a stakeholder in discussions on the proposed legislation with the Department of Transport, ICSA was pivotal in securing the following important exemptions.

### EXEMPTIONS

**A fast tractor will not have to undergo a commercial vehicle test if it is used:**

**For the purposes of agricultural, horticultural, forestry, farming or fishery activity solely within the State and mainly on the land where such activity takes place, including agricultural roads, forestry roads or agricultural fields or**

**Exclusively on a small island.**

**This exclusion from the requirement for compulsory testing will apply to all of the islands off the Irish coast.**

According to the Road Safety Authority, it is important to note that an exemption from undergoing a commercial vehicle test is not an exemption from the requirement to ensure your vehicle is in a roadworthy condition when it is used on a public road.



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**Full traceability**  
your livestock are, your fertilizer should be too



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# BIOFUELS OBLIGATION RATE - WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The Biofuels Obligation Scheme requires suppliers of motor fuel to ensure that biofuels make up a certain percentage of national annual fuel sales. This is known as the biofuel obligation rate and it has just been increased from 8% to 10% by volume. The move was announced by Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment Denis Naughten and will come into effect on 1 January 2019.

**Biofuels are motor fuels produced from renewable sources such as bioethanol (which can be blended with petrol) and biodiesel. Bioethanol can be produced from crops such as sugarcane, wheat and corn.**

It is well known that Biofuels have a wide range of benefits from reducing Ireland's dependency on fossil fuels to lowering greenhouse gas emissions, so news of this increase has been welcomed by ICSA. Crop based biofuels have up to 70% less GHG emissions than fossil fuels, reduce dependence on imports from outside the EU and provide a much needed boost to EU arable farmers.

However, the increased obligation rate must go hand in hand with Ireland rejecting the absurd EU proposal to cut the crop based biofuel mandate from the current 7%. ICSA has been campaigning to overturn the EU proposals which represent a complete U-turn on renewables under the Renewable Energy Directive (RED II).

Farmers can be part of the solution on climate change - but this requires a positive policy framework to allow farmers to grow more renewable energy crops in Europe not less. For this reason,

ICSA will be pressing Minister Naughten to follow through on his sensible decision on the national biofuel obligation by strongly opposing the EU Commission proposals on reducing the biofuel mandate from 7%.

It is also important to note that biofuel production from EU crops results in significant supplies of high value protein feeds such as distillers' grains and rapeseed meal. At a time when the EU has launched a consultation on how to increase protein supplies in Europe, it makes no sense to reduce a very useful source of proteins produced in the EU.

## The case for supporting increased production of Biofuels:

1. Lower emissions (66% for crop based ethanol compared to fossil fuels)
2. Less dependence on imported fossil fuels
3. Viable outlet for European farmers (worth €6 billion in 2015), improves the outlook for tillage and may be complementary to plans to resurrect sugar beet in Ireland
4. Jobs in less developed rural regions in Europe
5. Bolster investor confidence that EU policy is coherent and stable
6. Avoids conflict with WTO rules and general moral imperative to stop dumping food in the least developed countries so that their agriculture can develop
7. By-product meets the need for locally produced GM free animal feed protein
8. Successful biofuel refineries support research into other by-products which can contribute to higher tech, more efficient European farming.



**ICSA push for support for crop based biofuels and on-farm renewables at a meeting with the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment Denis Naughten**



**ICSA general secretary Eddie Punch met with Minister Naughten at UN Climate Change talks in Bonn to make the case for a positive approach to Irish farming**



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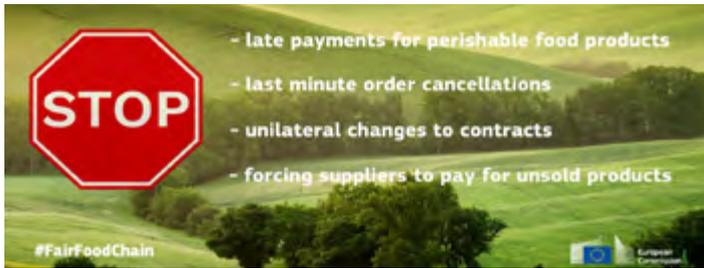
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## MOVES TO RESTRICT UNFAIR TRADING PRACTICES BUT MORE TRANSPARENCY NEEDED AROUND WHO GETS WHAT IN THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN



Moves by EU Commissioner for Agriculture Phil Hogan's moves to bring an end to Unfair Trading Practices (UTPs) in the food supply chain have been welcomed by ICSA.

**UTPs set to be outlawed under Commissioner Hogan's directive includes late payments for perishable food products, last minute order cancellations, unilateral or retroactive changes to contracts & forcing the supplier to pay for wasted product.**

Commenting, ICSA president Patrick Kent said, "ICSA has been lobbying extensively for this, both at home and in Europe. The Commissioner's proposed directive provides a unique opportunity to improve the functioning of the food chain supply to make it fairer by strengthening the bargaining power of small suppliers." "This is a very important step on the road in curtailing the greedy

practices and excessive profiteering at retail level. However, we need to follow this with legislation to audit the whole retail chain and discern whether there is a fair share of margins allocated to all parts of the chain. We now need to push for more transparency around how the profits from key products like beef, lamb and dairy are shared."

**"For too long retailers have been making huge profits at the expense of primary producers so identifying exactly who gets what profits in the entire food supply chain is essential."**

Mr Kent said he would like to reassure members that ICSA will be at the forefront of this process to ensure farmers are treated more fairly.



## ICSA REMEMBERS ROBERT ROE



**The late Robert Roe**

Robert Roe, of Hollymount, Roscrea, who was laid to rest on Friday 13 of April last, was a leading figure in the re-establishment of the association in the 1990s and a highly regarded long serving member of the ICSA national executive. He also served as a director on the ICSA board, and was the honorary secretary of ICSA until 2003, as well as having served as Tipperary ICSA chairman.

Robert was a highly respected cattleman and a gentleman in the very best sense of the word. As a member of Man Com he was unfailingly courteous and he believed in encouraging others with positive comments. He never allowed political disagreement to descend into personal animosity and his contribution to ICSA was unfailingly constructive. But he was also imbued with steely conviction and when ICSA occupied the Department of Agriculture HQ in Kildare St for eight days in 2001, Robert was there.

A team of ICSA volunteers entered the building to protest at government inaction on the beef crisis which at the time was dominated by the negativity around BSE. But the refusal of Minister Walsh to meet

the ICSA protestors only toughened their resolve and the ICSA representatives refused to leave. After a week of sleeping in the lobby of Ag House, Minister Walsh finally agreed to meet and concessions on beef farming issues were achieved. It was also significant that this protest marked the arrival of ICSA as a serious lobbying force and laid the groundwork for ICSA eventually becoming social partners.

It was the determination of people like Robert Roe, and other ICSA colleagues such as former presidents Jimmy Cosgrave and Albert Thompson, ICSA stalwarts such as Marian Condren and Mervyn Sunderland and ICSA people destined for greater things in the world of agri-journalism – Martin Coughlan and John Heney – that gave such impetus to ICSA at that critical time. Then ICSA president Charlie Reilly went into talks with the Minister with a greatly strengthened hand because of the protest and the considerable TV and press coverage that went with it.

Robert's contribution to community was also evident in his support for Gurteen agricultural college and his involvement with the Church of Ireland at a national level.

Those of us privileged to know him in ICSA circles will miss him but of course the loss is greatest to his wife Doreen, his children Peter, Suzie and Mandy, his eight grandchildren and his many friends and neighbours.

May he rest in peace.



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# GROWING FRUSTRATION AT DISMAL RETURN FOR WOOL MUST PROMPT AN INDUSTRY RETHINK

ICSA sheep chairman John Brooks has said farmer frustration is growing with dismal returns on the sale of wool.

**“Wool prices are so depressed that they no longer cover the cost of shearing. It just amounts to yet another cost that sheep farmers have to absorb.”**

Mr Brooks said, “The fine weather has arrived and we are in the middle of the shearing season. However, with wool currently worthless, farmers will be facing a loss financially at the end of shearing season. With new costs associated with the Clean Livestock Policy for sheep and EID tagging being foisted on sheep farmers, this additional cost is something that just can't be borne. Long term we may even face a welfare issue if the poor price trend for wool is not reversed.”

**“The time has come to address the current apathy towards wool in this country and right around Europe. The demise of the indigenous wool industry has resulted in wool remaining both underused and undervalued.”**

In light of this Mr Brooks added, “ICSA believes Wool is an important natural resource yet the wool industry has been completely cast aside. However, there is huge potential to capitalise on a revitalised wool industry and this needs to be given serious consideration.”

“We need to see a concerted effort made to breathe life back into the industry. At a time when low carbon, low waste, biodegradability and renewability are the factors by which products and processes are judged, wool scores high on all. Efforts will have to focus on increasing awareness of this and remarketing wool as green and efficient commodity which is a viable alternative to fossil fuel based synthetic fibres. As sheep have to be shorn every year, wool is not only an important natural resource but also an abundant and renewable resource. Unfortunately, the competition from cheaper synthetic fibres means we constantly have to battle for a fair fleece price.”



**“The uses for wool are many and varied and certainly not limited to just clothing. Bedding, furniture, soft furnishings, carpets and even fertiliser can all be produced from wool. It is also an excellent means of insulation and can insulate the home providing and retaining warmth, all while reducing energy costs. Yet, wool processing in Ireland is done only on a very small and niche scale.”**

“We cannot afford to ignore an opportunity like this when such a valuable natural resource is available to us in vast quantities. Utilising our renewable natural resources must be made a priority and wool needs to feature strongly in that category going forward. Consumer momentum is certainly moving in that direction and ICSA would like to see the Irish government take a lead on this issue and also to push for a revitalisation of the industry at a European level.”

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ICSA Cavan chairman Hugh Farrell has been elected as chairman of ICSA's newly formed Animal Health & Welfare Committee. Mr Farrell is pictured above with Minister Michael Creed



ICSA's newly formed Tillage Committee will be led by Louth chairman Gavin Carberry, pictured above with fellow Louth native Mairead McGuinness MEP

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