

Message from the Minister



The restoration of Ireland's economy is of paramount importance in overcoming the current economic crisis. Our Programme for Government clearly identifies the important role of the agri-food and marine sectors in this recovery.

Irish agriculture and the agri-food sector have always been resilient. The sector has overcome many challenges in the past and has demonstrated a capacity to adapt and innovate. Its influence goes far beyond the farmgate and into communities throughout the length and breadth of the country.

The Rural Development Programme for Ireland will continue to make a significant contribution in meeting the challenges that lie ahead. The programme encompasses many of our major schemes including on-farm investment, REPS, AEOS and Less Favoured Areas. LEADER also has an important and influential role under the Programme.

Communicating the benefits of the Rural Development Programme and the sharing of ideas from on-farm innovation to small start up enterprises in rural areas informs all stakeholders and is an essential component of the programme.

The Tipperary Institute, as the contracted National Rural Network provider under the Rural Development Programme, is providing a very valuable communication service through this Newsletter, seminars, training, conferences and studies on the key issues relating to rural development.

I am very pleased that the newsletter is playing an active part in communicating the opportunities for rural Ireland under the rural development programme and I wish the Institute continued success in its role.

Simon Coveney TD

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine

NEWSLETTER Spring 2011 Issue 7

In this issue...

AEOS Farms Profiled	2-3
Green Business Network Launched	4
Developing Tourism in the Comeraghs	5
Support for Unique Meath Park	6
Harvesting Rainwater	6
Rural Development Conference Highlights	7-9
Report Urges Emphasis on Enterprise	10
News Roundup	11-12



Some 9,000 participants in the Agri-Environment Options Scheme (AEOS) have been busy in recent months complying with various environmental options under the scheme.

The objectives of the AEOS are:

- To promote biodiversity, encourage water management/quality and combat climate change
- To contribute to positive environmental, management of farmed Natura 2000 sites and river catchments in the implementation of the Birds Directive, Habitats Directive and Water Framework Directive.

We profile three farmers who have joined the scheme and outline the actions they are implementing.

Maintaining Stone Walls in Roscommon



Liam Gately, maintaining 6.5 km of traditional stone walls

Liam Gately farms at Dysart in south Roscommon, an area renowned for its traditional stone walls. The 30 ha of owned land (a further 15 ha is rented) consists of a maze of stone walls in external and internal boundaries. It is therefore not surprising that Liam

opted for maintenance of these traditional stone walls as one of the actions under his AEOS plan. He has undertaken to maintain a total of 6,491 metres of these walls as a complementary action.

He has selected 2.8 ha of traditional hay meadow as the

priority environmental action under the scheme. In order to qualify, the sward must have at least three grass species, other than ryegrass, and must be grazed in accordance with traditional practices.

The meadow must not receive more than 30 kg of nitrogen/ha and cannot be cut until after 1 July. If, due to bad weather or other reasons, hay cannot be saved, the grass can be turned into silage but it must be turned at least twice in order for the seeds to disperse.

Liam Gately runs 20 suckler cows, with the male progeny reared to beef, and a 140-ewe mid-season lambing flock. His AEOS plan was drawn up under the guidance of Teagasc adviser, James Kelly.

Michael Picks Five Actions



Michael Devaney, planting 475 metres of hedges

Michael Devaney, who farms at Drumshinnagh, Swinford, Co Mayo, was one of the early participants in REPS. He joined the scheme in 1995 and completed REPS 3 in 2009. He was delighted with the opportunity the AEOS afforded him to further improve the visual image and environmental standards of his 9ha suckling farm. Under the guidance of agricultural consultant, Breian Carroll, Michael selected five actions under the

scheme - two priority actions and three complementary actions.

He is growing one hectare of traditional hay meadow and has opted to maintain a riparian margin of around 100 metres beside a stream that runs along the boundary of the farm. This involves putting a fence at least 2.5 metres from the stream and installing a trough as a drinking source for cattle.

He committed to plant 475 metres of hedgerows along the inner side of boundary ditches with neighbouring farms and on internal ditches. This has now been completed and all necessary fencing is done. The hedgerows, which Michael planted himself, consist mainly of whitethorn.

He is currently planting about 15 trees – a mixture of oak, ash and sycamore – along a section of the farm boundary and has committed

to establish a traditional orchard with 15 native apple varieties. As the supply of native varieties has run out, he will have to wait until next year to implement this part of his plan.

Breian Carroll ran a demonstration on the implementation of key aspects of the AEOS on Michael Devaney's farm in early March. Over 50 farmers from the Swinford locality attended the event.

'Always more to be done'



Kim McCall in the traditional orchard he has planted

Kim McCall, who farms at Calverstown, Co Kildare, has a strong track record in environmental friendly farming. He is a former national winner of two farming conservation awards, sponsored by Teagasc, the RDS and the Farmers Journal. One of the country's earliest REPS participants, he was also a regional winner of the national REPS awards.

Convinced there is always more that can be done to enhance the farm environment, he was an enthusiastic applicant for the AEOS. With Carlow-based agricultural consultant, Pat Minnock, he selected four

actions under the scheme.

He runs a herd of pedigree Aubrac sucklers and a flock of rouge-cross ewes on the all-grassland farm of 8.3 ha. One of the priority actions he selected under the AEOS is the maintenance of just over 10 ha of species-rich dry grassland. The grassland must contain at least five 'positive' indicator species. Over 20 such species are specified in the terms and conditions of the scheme. Also, the grassland must not contain more than 20% in total of 'negative' indicator species, of which 12 are listed in the terms and conditions.

No artificial fertiliser, slurry,

farmyard manure or other organic material can be applied to the grassland. Topping is prohibited until after 15 July and the stocking density and grazing regime must be such as to conserve the ecological integrity of the habitat. There is also a general prohibition on the use of herbicides.

Kim has also undertaken to grow around 3.5 ha of traditional hay meadow. Another action he has just completed is the revitalisation and fencing of an old hedge which had gone into a severe state of disrepair. It consisted of a mixture of mainly whitethorn and elm. He trimmed it up and planted a mixture of whitethorn, field maple, dog rose and buckthorn. The plan committed him to revitalise 100 metres but he did a total of 180 metres.

Kim's final action was the planting of a traditional orchard with a minimum of 10 native apple trees. For good measure, he planted a further nine other apple trees.

Tipperary Green Business Network Launched

A new Green Business Network has been launched in Tipperary with the aim of bringing together all agencies and information sources on the full array of green issues.

The network, which was launched at a function at the Tipperary Institute on 6 April, emanated from a highly successful green economy event held in January, which attracted an attendance of 150 from North and South Tipperary and adjoining counties.

Organised by North Tipperary Leader Partnership (NTP), in association with the Tipperary Institute and Cultivate.ie, the event on 'Finding Opportunity in the Green Economy' featured presentations, demonstrations and discussion on business, training and funding opportunities in the areas of green energy, construction, tourism,

agriculture and food.

Gearóid Fitzgibbon, regional community worker with NTP and one of the organisers of the event, said a key conclusion of the event was that 'green' is no longer specific to environmentalists or activists. "Green is as much about savings and efficiency. In a world of scarce resources, there are enormous business opportunities opening up in transforming the old wasteful way of doing things, moving the nature of business into the business of nature.

The main outcome from the event was the decision to set up the Tipperary Green Business Network. The launch of the network on 6 April was accompanied by a workshop on 'Tipperary as an Eco County'. The network will organise regular meetings, with expert

speakers, mentoring and interactive workshops and training sessions. The first meeting is planned for late April. Gearóid Fitzgibbon said the ideas that have already arisen include the setting up of a website where all organisations can post their eco projects and support agencies can link into. The development of a directory of skilled students who would be willing to get involved in aspects such as research and web design is another suggestion that is being pursued.

The network is also looking at developing linkages with other projects around the country, such as the Ballynagran zero carbon project in Wicklow. Using the Fairtrade model to achieve ECO status is also being examined.



At the 'Green Economy' event at the Tipperary Institute were, from left: Paul McCarthy, Teagasc and presenter of the Higher Ground on RTE; Paddy Phelan, Tipperary Energy Agency; Michael Murray, Chief Executive North Tipperary Leader Partnership; Seamus Hoyne, Manager Tipperary Energy Agency; Patrick Killeen, Project Officer North Tipperary Leader Partnership.



Developing Tourism in the Comeraghs

From the dramatic scenery of the Nire valley to the spectacular Coomshinguan corrie lake, from delightful villages like Kilbrien and Rathgormack to the unique ecosystem of the moorlands, the Comeragh Mountains are a mecca for walkers, hikers, cyclists and fishing enthusiasts and for those less adventurous who just want to drive around and experience the beauty and tranquillity. A concerted multi-agency and community effort is now underway with the aim of sustainably developing this tourist attraction.



Members of the Comeragh Mountain Forum, set up to maximise the economic potential of the area.

organisations are also represented.

Following a period of consultation and public meetings, the Comeragh Mountains Forum was established last year. The forum is co-ordinated by Don Tuohy of Waterford County Council and involves representatives from the county council, Coillte, Fáilte Ireland, Waterford Leader Partnership and the Irish Upland Council. Teagasc, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Waterford Community Forum and other community groups and rural

The Chairman of the Forum is distinguished public servant Dr Don Thornhill, former Secretary General of Department of Education and Science and current Chairman of the National Competitiveness Council. Dr Thornhill, the son of a forester, was born in the area and spent his early school years in Bennetschurch national school in the heart of the Comeraghs. He is a weekly visitor to the area.

The aim of the forum is to develop an agreed strategy to maximise the economic potential of the Comeraghs. It will address issues and concerns of the local community while optimising the potential for development, particularly in tourism-related activities.

Three working groups have been set up covering trails development, image and branding, and financing. One of the suggestions being explored is the designation of the area as the 'Comeragh Lake District' with a plan being put in place to sustainably manage the amenities.

There is wide agreement on the untapped potential of the area and on the scope of tourism and related services to provide much-needed employment. This is an over-riding priority of the forum.



The Comeraghs, a haven for hill walkers.

Wood Chip Company Expands

One of the presentations at the green economy event at the Tipperary Institute was by the recently established company, Tipp Wood Chip. Run by father and son team, Seamus and Brian Maher at Two-Mile-Borris, the company was established in September 2009.

It is now supplying over 1,000 tonnes of wood chip a year and orders are continuing to grow. Customers include Rockwell College, the Anner and Hayes Hotels in Thurles, a community centre, two mushroom farms and a number of private houses.

The company got a grant of €15,000 and a loan of a further €15,000 from the Tipperary Enterprise Board. Brian Maher said they are on target to break even this year and will hopefully start turning a profit in 2012.

Up to now, they purchased thinnings



Wood for chipping is stored in an exposed area to ensure maximum drying

from Coillte and private forests. The wood is stored in an exposed area to ensure maximum drying so that the chip can be sold at 20-25% moisture. Brian Maher said they are now moving away from thinnings and aim to get as much raw material as possible in the form of boxwood and sawmill log. "It dries quicker and there is less bark," he said.

Chipping is done on contract by Cork company, Ballynoe Agri-Services, which calls to the premises

at Two-Mile-Borris every month.

The Mahers are also involved in the renewable energy company, EcoCell Energy, which provides a range of biomass heating systems. These include a complete energy supply contract (ESCO) where EcoCell supplies the boiler, carries out the installation and maintenance and supplies the chip. According to Brian Maher, Rockwell College is one of the customers using the system where the installation of underground piping has been the only capital cost.

Support for Unique Themed Park in Meath



The 2,000 sq metre log building, a centre piece of the park.

Meath LEADER Partnership was centrally involved in the development of Ashbourne Visitor Centre, or 'Tayto Park', the unique American-themed park which opened last November on 55 acres outside Ashbourne, Co Meath.

Tayto Park is the brainchild of potato crisps magnate, Raymond Coyle, owner of Largo Foods. It cost over €8m and currently employs about 50. Meath Partnership provided €150,000 in grant-aid to the venture and also worked with Raymond

Coyle in progressing the project, providing advice on similar centres abroad and on ensuring financial sustainability.

The centre offers an exciting educational experience with North American wildlife and the heritage and customs of the native American people. It includes an Indian village with tipis and totem poles, adventure playgrounds and exotic animals, ranging from a herd of 250 buffalos to cougars, lynx, raccoons and coati mundi as well as exotic birds.

Extensive pathways are festooned with more than 400 plants and flora. It contains two lakes and a waterfall and visitors can also see rare breeds of sheep, cattle and pigs as well as rabbits, ducks, geese and pheasants. A special feature is the 2,000 sq metre log building with a restaurant and shops. You can also have tea in the 'treehouse' teahouse. Since it opened, the area devoted to the park has already more than doubled in size, to around 120 acres.

The park has a target of 200,000 visitors a year, which would represent a big boost to employment and the local economy. During the good weather weekends in March, over 4,500 went through the gates.



Buffalo, one of the many exotic animal attractions.

Grant for Rainwater Harvesting

The recently announced scheme of grant-aid for rainwater harvesting on farms offers an opportunity for high users of water to cut costs and benefit the environment. Applications for the scheme, which was announced by former Minister, Brendan Smith, opened on 1 March.

A total of €8m is allocated for the scheme which is part of the Rural Development Programme. The grant rate is 40% on an investment ceiling of €25,000. There is a rolling application system with the money allocated on a three monthly basis between now and end-December 2013 when the

scheme closes.

The application process will be based on a marking system with priority given to farming systems with heavy water usage. Trained farmers under 35 years of age also receive additional marks.

The scheme covers the collection, filtering and storage of rainwater in either underground or over ground tanks. It also covers further treatment of the water in order to make it suitable as drinking water for lactating cows or for other purposes such as washing milk machines and bulk tanks. This further treatment is optional under the scheme.

The scheme covers the harvesting of rainwater from roofs only. It can be collected from tiled, metal and fibre-cement roofs but not from asbestos-cement roofs. Application forms and full specifications are available on the Department of Agriculture website at www.agriculture.gov.ie

Rainwater harvesting has become a feature of some industrial and large buildings and even domestic homes in recent years. It is still fairly rare in farming. With the likelihood of increasing water costs, the scheme is worth serious consideration particularly by farmers with large dairy herds.

National Rural Development Conference



Conference speakers and participants, from left: William Kingston, dairy farmer and Chairman Kedco, Jim Power, economic consultant, Emer Howard, Avondu/Blackwater Partnership and Ryan Howard, South & East Cork Area Development Partnership

Agri-Food in a New Light

Over 250 rural development activists and rural entrepreneurs attended the National Rural Development Conference in Tullamore on 2 February. The conference, run by the National Rural Network (NRN), Teagasc and LEADER, discussed how the Rural Development Programme can create and sustain on-farm and off-farm jobs. It also explored how smart and green practices outlined in the Food Harvest 2020 report can contribute to job creation, enhanced rural income and economic growth.

In a keynote address, former Secretary General of the Department of Agriculture and Food, John Malone, said the economic slump has cast the agriculture and food sector in a new light. He said the 'visibility' of increased farm incomes will be felt in local economies throughout the

country over the coming year.

"Much of the increased income in 2010 was used by farmers to pay off debt incurred during the collapse in incomes in 2009. However, if the predictions of continuing buoyancy in 2011 are borne out, the agricultural sector will have increased purchasing power," said John Malone.

Food Harvest 2020

Referring to the Food Harvest 2020 report, he said the target of an increase of €1.5 billion in agricultural output was achievable. However, adding €3.5 billion to annual food output and €5 billion to exports is a challenging proposition.

"It will require optimum efficiency across all links in the chain and will

mean a significant step-change in processing efficiency, innovation and knowledge of the market place. Equally, there can be no weaknesses in regard to quality and in speed of response to consumer needs," he said

Food Enterprises

John Malone highlighted the 800 small food companies in the country, half of which have annual sales of more than €3.5 million, as evidence of the importance of small-scale food production to rural employment and economic output.

Recognising that many rural areas have suffered heavily from the economic downturn he said we are back to first principles in rural development.

Need to Work Together

Dr Cathal O'Donoghue, Head of the Teagasc Rural Economy and Development Programme, told the conference that rural areas, particularly in the commuting zones around the cities, were particularly hit by the recession while the more peripheral areas didn't benefit as much from the boom.

He stressed the importance of agencies working together to ensure that farm families, rural dwellers and rural businesses are fully supported in generating income and employment.

"The collaboration involving Teagasc, the National Rural Network and LEADER in organising this conference should serve as a springboard for the delivery of more co-ordinated services,"
- Cathal O' Donoghue

Economic consultant, Jim Power, said that while foreign direct investment will remain a very important driver of growth, agri-food, tourism, alternative energy, professional services, personal services and high-tech indigenous activities all offer tremendous potential.

"The striking regional imbalances make the nurturing of rural enterprise an essential component of a sustainable economic model. This recession and national crisis will have to be used to improve the structures of the Irish economy and create an environment where real risk-takers and real entrepreneurs will be given scope to take risks and create employment,"
- Jim Power



Conference speakers and panelists, Carmel Fox (left), Ballyhoura Development, with Dr Cathal O'Donoghue, Teagasc and Dóirín Graham, Clare Local Development Company.

Other Conference Quotes

"The role of LEADER is to get out there and nurture ideas from the earliest stage, helping farmers to make them a reality. Building skills is just as important for success as a grant for bricks and mortar."

Dóirín Graham, Chief Executive, Clare Local Development Company

"Farmers in general have good business acumen and there are good supports from programmes such as LEADER. Our surveys have shown that young farmers and farmers with higher levels of formal education are positively disposed to diversification."

David Meredith, Teagasc rural economy specialist

"There is no point in always looking for leadership from others. We have to become the leaders and push to make it happen."

William Kingston, Skibbereen dairy farmer and Chairman Kedco

"We put up a 20kW turbine last year. It saves us up to €15,000 a year in electricity costs but we don't get a cent for the surplus electricity we put into the grid."

Mike Pearson, Principal Gurteen Agricultural College

"Our annual fuel import bill is €6bn. We could replace much of this and create rural income and jobs."

Duncan Stewart, Earth Horizon

Highlights from Discussion Groups



The afternoon session of the conference was devoted to group discussions on key aspects of the agri-food sector and the rural economy. These resulted in lively exchanges. The following are the issues highlighted at some of the discussions.

Artisan Foods

Bord Bia works with around 350 small food businesses with combined annual sales on the home and export markets of some €475m and annual growth of 10%. These companies directly employ about 3,000. There are also a large number of part-time businesses selling locally. The challenge is to move these into sustainable enterprises with a capacity for job creation. Among the critical actions identified by the group were the need to relax regulations on production and processing; a reduction in 'red tape' in obtaining funding for food enterprises; and support for small producers in accessing markets.

Renewable Energy

One of the key challenges identified was the localisation of benefits from renewable energy. Leadership is needed at local level to ensure that benefits from wind and bioenergy in terms of income and employment are secured locally. The development of local markets is critical as is local co-ordination of planning, funding and development. Also, research needs to be undertaken on the job creation potential of the sector.

Rural Tourism

The range of organisations operating in the sector was seen as a handicap to the would-be entrepreneur. The lack of funding for developing accommodation is also a stumbling block. Among the actions identified was the need for models of good practice as 'demonstrators' for the sector



Delegates from North & East Kerry and South Kerry Partnerships, from left: Alison Healy, Elaine McKenna, Sean Linnane, Mary Stack and Bridie Buckley.

and for a focus on regional marketing and regional brands. The need for further development of walking-based tourism was highlighted as was the need for research on the co-operative tourism marketing model. Cost pressures from the hotel sector were regarded as a significant threat.

Community-Based Jobs

The group stressed that a combination of social and private enterprise is now needed at community level. The community sector has a history of balancing economics with the social and focusing on the outcomes of developments for people rather than solely on profit. However, the difficulty in accessing finance for community projects is stifling initiative. The lack of engagement by young people in community organisations and the draining of communities due to youth emigration has serious implications for innovation and vitality in communities. The negative attitude of the Department of Finance to credit unions is also a serious handicap.

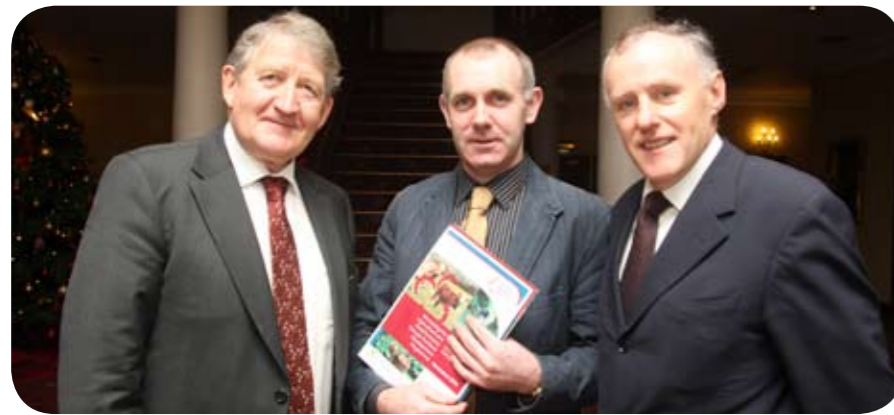
Dairy Restructuring

The most significant short-term challenge in achieving the Harvest 2020 target of 50% expansion in milk output is the

continuation of the quota regime until 2015. Cash flow during expansion, availability of skilled managers, lack of suitable entry routes for young people the ability of the processing sector to efficiently process the increased output were also listed as challenges. The development of new financing models, such as Chattel mortgages, and equity partnerships where older landowners would be given incentives to provide some of the equity or security for investment in expansion were suggested.

Drystock Farm Incomes

The huge dependence of drystock farmers on the Single Farm Payment for income was highlighted as was the big variation in productivity and output levels between the top-performing 30% and the rest. The importance to the rural and national economy of maintaining the suckler herd at its current level was stressed. However, fears were expressed that unless a new support for suckler cows was introduced the herd is in danger of falling. The decline in off-farm employment, which had become an important part of household income on thousands of drystock farms, is a threat to the viability of rural areas.



At the launch of the report on 'Stimulating the Agricultural and Rural Economy through the Rural Development Programme' were, from left: John Malone, Chairman of the working group, Dr Pat Bogue, the report's author and Gerry Gunning, IFA, a member of the working group.

A greater focus on rural enterprise and entrepreneurship in the delivery of the Rural Development Programme is recommended in a report published by the National Rural Network (NRN).

The report on '**Stimulating the Agricultural and Rural Economy through the Rural Development Programme**' was drawn up by a working group of representatives of rural development agencies and rural organisations. The group was chaired by John Malone, former Secretary General of the Department of Agriculture and Food. The report's author is Dr Pat Bogue of the NRN.

It addresses the dramatic changes in off-farm and rural employment in recent years and makes wide-ranging recommendations on the development of an enterprise culture that will enable rural areas to

play a role in economic recovery.

Collaboration

The report recommends greater collaboration between state bodies and local agencies providing services to farmers and rural dwellers as well as building shared services by Local Action Groups in the delivery of the LEADER programme.

It proposes that Government departments and Local Action Groups should work together to minimise and simplify application procedures for LEADER funding, within permitted EU guidelines. It calls for the development of a regulatory environment appropriate to the scale and innovative nature of local enterprise development. It also says that the funding gap that exists in the LEADER programme for enterprises with more than 10 employees should be addressed.

Among the other key recommendations are:

- Entrepreneurship should be included as a core module in all education courses, including mainstream agricultural courses provided by Teagasc.
- Specific enterprise development programmes should be provided for recently unemployed rural people who are eager to re-enter the workforce or develop an income earning idea.
- Focus Enterprises, similar to the Focus Farm concept, should be developed as vehicles for channelling advice and information to existing and potential entrepreneurs. The Focus Enterprises could be linked to Rural Innovation Centres which would act as a hub for entrepreneurial support.
- Mentoring and business coaching should be developed by Local Action Groups for existing and new rural enterprises.
- The Teagasc Options Programme needs to be revitalised and refocused and should be run on a partnership basis with FÁS, Local Action Groups and educational institutions in order to provide the best advice to farmers under financial pressure, especially those who have lost off-farm jobs.

The report can be downloaded on the National Rural Network website, www.nrn.ie. A limited number of hard copies are still available – email rdsu@tippinst.ie

Report from the EURDN Co-Ordination Committee

The Network was represented at a meeting of the EURDN Coordination Committee held in Brussels on the 11th February, 2011. This meeting included representatives of Managing Authorities, National Networks and a considerable number of NGOs. The overall purpose of the meeting was to consider the process for the development of the new CAP and the role of the networks within that process.

The view of most who commented on the matter was that the primary role of the networks was one of encouraging submissions to the process by network members rather than in generating or collating opinion.

NEWS ROUNDUP

More Support for Local Food Systems

Europe's commitment to rural development – one of the pillars of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) – would be greatly helped by more support for the creation of local food systems, the Committee of the Regions told EU Agriculture Commissioner Dacian Cioloş.

"There is a skewed balance of power in the agricultural and food sectors which is putting the survival of agriculture at risk. Around 80% of world food production is sold locally, but in the EU the figure is just 20%, because of the focus on large-scale, industrialised food production. The new challenges we face such as preventing global shortages of food, fodder and energy, and reducing the environmental damage of food production, strengthen the argument for a reappraisal of local food production as part of the Common Agricultural Policy," Mrs Dwarshuis said.
<http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/DetailTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=dfc6f867-52b2-40cc-88d8-db8db1172d43>

ELARD NEWS Issue 11

The latest issue of the ELARD Newsletter has been published and can be accessed in pdf format by clicking on <http://www.elard.eu/download/elard-news-issue-11>.

The newsletter contains information on ELARD's latest activities as well as the plans of the upcoming Finnish Presidency of ELARD. Past issues of

ELARD NEWS can be found at the Newsletter Archive section of the website
<http://www.elard.eu/en/NEWSLETTER>

CAP towards 2020

The 2003 reform and the 2008 'Health Check' decisions prepared the ground for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) till 2013. The Commission Communication "The CAP towards 2020: Meeting the food, natural resources and territorial challenges of the future", which was presented on 18 November 2010, launches the institutional debate and prepares the ground for the legal proposals to be adopted by the Commission during 2011
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-post-2013/communication/index_en.htm

Food Quality Package

Guaranteeing quality to consumers and a fair price for farmers are the twin aims of the "Quality Package" adopted recently by the European Commission. This Quality Package sets up for the first time a comprehensive policy on certification schemes, value-adding terms for agricultural product qualities and product standards. Until now these have been spread among numerous pieces of legislation.

With this Package, the Commission covers all facets of quality, from

compliance with minimum standards to highly specific products.

The Quality Package comprises:

- A proposal for a new 'Agricultural Product Quality Schemes Regulation', bringing coherence and clarity to the EU schemes: reinforcing the flagship scheme for protected designations of origin and geographical indications (PDOs and PGIs); overhauling the traditional specialities guaranteed scheme (TSGs), and laying down a new framework for the development of Optional Quality Terms to provide consumers with information they increasingly demand, such as 'free range' and 'first cold pressing'.
- A proposal to streamline adoption of marketing standards by the Commission, including the power to extend place of farming labelling in accordance with the specificity of each agricultural sector.
- New Guidelines on best practices for voluntary certification schemes and on the labelling of products using geographical indications as ingredients

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/1692&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

NEWS ROUNDUP



Study on Employment, Growth and Innovation in Rural Areas

The European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Regional Development (DG AGRI) has initiated this recently-published study which consists of four main parts.

Firstly, a trend analysis has been made of the trends on employment and growth in the rural areas throughout EU27 from 1995 onwards, based on literature and on NUTS3 data.

Secondly, rural areas have been clustered based on a set of socio-economic indicators which show the specifics of rural areas throughout Europe.

Thirdly, for 15 regional case studies more qualitative research has been done on the drivers and barriers for employment and growth in rural areas.

Fourthly, 80 good practices have been collected: all projects

stimulate employment and growth in rural areas and are funded with EU rural development funding (2000- 2007 and 2007-2013) that are regarded as good practices on stimulating employment and growth in rural areas

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/external/employment/index_en.htm

Do you have a story you would like us to feature in our newsletter or on our website?

If so, please email: rdsu@tippinst.ie



The National Rural Network on the web www.nrn.ie

Don't go looking for the news – let the news find you! Every time we publish an article or news item on the website, we will email it to you. The National Rural Network website (www.nrn.ie) publishes regular articles on all things relating to the Irish Rural Development Programme 2007 - 2013, including articles on:

- Improving the competitiveness of farm enterprises through support for restructuring, development and innovation
- Preserving and, where possible, enhancing the environment, biodiversity and the amenity value of the countryside
- Improving the quality of life in rural areas, diversification of the rural economy, support for rural business creation and development, encouragement of rural tourism activities
- The LEADER Programme in Ireland and lots more

Simply go to www.nrn.ie and enter your email address in the box below the picture on the right hand side.



The Rural Development Support Unit,
Tipperary Institute, Nenagh Road,
Thurles, Co. Tipperary.

Contact:
Ciaran Lynch
Paula Briody
John Kennedy

Tel: +353 504 28123
Fax: +353 504 28001
Email: rdsu@tippinst.ie
Web: www.nrn.ie
www.rdsu.ie



www.nrn.ie

follow us on
twitter

www.twitter.com/ruralnetwork

facebook

www.facebook.com/ruralnetwork

