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# Minister's Online Newsletter



September 2017

Welcome to the latest edition of my newsletter. I am continuing my work promoting and defending the agri-food and seafood sectors both at home and abroad.

## Trade Mission to the USA and Mexico

In June, I commenced the trade mission to the United States with a number of meetings on Capitol Hill. In meetings with Ray Starling, Special Assistant to the US President on Agriculture and Trade, and with senior officials in the US Department of Agriculture and the US Trade Representation, I focused on Irish agri-food trade with the United States and on the further development of EU/US trade in these sectors.

With a new administration bedding in to office in the US, relationships built at political and official level will be critically important in the context of developing commercial opportunity for Irish agri-food companies and for building a closer trading relationship with the US into the future. I was very pleased to be able to build on Ireland's profile as a producer of quality food and to raise a number of technical issues of importance to future trade development.

I also met with Senator Pat Roberts, a key political figure and Chairman of the US Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, as well as the Leadership of the National Farmers Union.

The day's events culminated with a Bord Bia reception in the Irish Embassy Residence, which focused on the promotion of Irish beef. The reception was attended by key stakeholders in the US Meat Industry and US retailers and processors. I availed of the occasion to announce an important marketing initiative for Irish beef in the US market which has been worked on extensively by Bord Bia, my Department and the Irish Agriculture Attaché in Washington.

The Trade Mission then moved from Washington DC to a series of events in Maryland & New Jersey. I met with Maryland State Government officials, including the Secretary of Agriculture, Joe Bartenfelder, and the Secretary of Natural Resources, Mark J. Belton and representatives of Biomass Heating Solutions (BHSL) to discuss BHSL's technology for poultry waste management.

On the final day of the Trade Mission in US, engagements focused on the drinks and dairy industries and included the promotion of Ireland's Origin Green strategy. The day commenced with a breakfast meeting where I introduced Origin Green to International dairy representatives.

Ireland is proud to be a global leader in dairy, with an unparalleled reputation for quality, safety and sustainability. Its hard earned reputation sees Irish dairy products exported

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to approximately 130 countries each year. The US was the fifth largest market for Irish Dairy in 2016, and exports have grown by over 50% since 2012-13. We are proud to have a mutually beneficial trade and commercial relationship with the US, and are using this trade mission to build critical relationships and develop even closer ties to US customers and consumers.

The day's programme culminated with a promotional event at Binny's Store in Chicago, which currently stocks products from 30 Irish brand owners across spirits, liqueurs, beer and cider. Irish beverages are one of the fastest-growing sectors of exports to the US. Irish whiskey exports to the US rose 17% in 2016.

This is a particularly exciting time in the development of the Irish drinks industry, with worldwide growth in spirits consumption and with new Irish distilleries coming on stream.

Just four years ago we had four distilleries in Ireland. Now we have eleven and a further eight in various stages of development and these are making a significant contribution to employment and exports and to the social fabric and tourism infrastructure in both rural and urban areas.



*From (L to R) Nicola O'Connell, Glanbia Ingredients Ireland, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed T.D., Tara McCarthy, CEO Bord Bia.*

I am privileged to be the first Irish Minister for Agriculture to visit Mexico as part of a Trade Mission. I met with Mexican Sub-Secretary for Trade, Juan Carlos Baker Pineda and the Mexican Secretary for Agriculture (SAGARPA), Mr Jose Eduardo Calzada Rovirosa as well as hosting a round-table working lunch with COMECARNE (The Mexican Meat Board) and PORCIMEX (The Mexican Pig Producers Confederation) to discuss co-operation and trade opportunities.

The Trade Mission marked the beginning of a major co-ordinated effort by my Department, Bord Bia, and our Agri-Food industry to target Mexico specifically as a potential trading partner. With a market of 127 million people, Mexico is an exciting developing market where we need to establish better ties and links. Against the backdrop of Brexit, developing opportunities in new markets is essential. Our meetings with our Mexican counterparts, as well as local experts, will help us to better understand the industry here and to make sure our offerings are appropriate and in line with the demands of the Mexican market.

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The CSO reported that dairy exports totalled over €52.5M in 2016, which represented over 91% of total agricultural exports to Mexico last year. We do not have market access for meat products to Mexico at present. Therefore I intend to present a detailed pigmeat questionnaire to the relevant authorities here, marking an important step along the road to achieving market access. I also intend to officially announce our intention to seek beef access to the Mexican market.



*Michael Creed, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine at the Origin Green event during the USA and Mexican Trade Mission.*

### **GLAS and TAMS II Payments Issued**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of July I announced that almost €10m in GLAS balancing payments issued to 15,000 farmers in the GLAS 1 and 2 scheme. This balancing payment represents the final 15% of the 2016 payment and completes the total payment for GLAS actions undertaken last year for 15,000 farmers.

While in August, the Department paid out over €3m to GLAS participants, bringing to €144m, the amount issued to GLAS participants to date in respect of 2016 actions.

I am delighted with these significant GLAS payments, especially the €3m we issued within a fortnight, as we continue to pay balancing payments to eligible farmers. 4,000 farmers received their balancing payment as a direct result of submitting their Farm Nutrient Management Plan (NMP). Further GLAS payments to GLAS I and GLAS II participants can only be made when their plan has been submitted and I would encourage all GLAS participants to work with their advisor and have this plan submitted as soon as possible.

My Department also issued payments to farmers under TAMS (the Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme II) at an average rate of over €1m per week in August bringing the total amount paid to date under TAMS II to over €21.25m.

I am delighted with the level of interest shown in the TAMS scheme and in these huge payment figures for August. It reflects the significant on-farm investment underway in Ireland as farmers here continue to develop their enterprises. We will continue to make payments on a weekly basis. I would urge all farmers to proceed with their approved investments and to submit these for payment as soon as the works have been completed to allow for payment to issue.

The online payments system remains open to participants to submit their payment claims as soon as the approved works are completed. Currently, over 1,500 farmers



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have received their payment with payments being processed on an ongoing basis. The current tranche of this scheme closes for new applications on 6 October 2017.

My Department will continue to make ongoing payments to farmers under the Rural Development Programme. I am delighted to see this surge in payments over the last few weeks with thousands of farmers around the country receiving new payments as a result of their participation in the various RDP schemes. We are committed to continuing these payments on a weekly basis to eligible participants.

### **€1.5 Million Weather Related Crop Loss Support Measure for Growers**

At the end of July, I announced the opening of a targeted crop loss support measure to assist growers most affected by the wet weather harvest conditions of September 2016.

While many farmers experienced difficult challenges last year, this was particularly the case for a number of cereal farmers who experienced an exceptionally difficult harvest and resulting yield losses for certain spring crops. *This is a very important sector to the agricultural economy, making a vital contribution to both the food and feedstuffs sector.* I have always stated that there was a will to support these farmers, the challenge was to find a way that ensured support was focused and targeted at those most impacted whilst also ensuring prudent expenditure of public finances, which was successfully achieved through positive dialogue and engagement.

This measure will provide a financial contribution towards the cost of spring cereals crop losses in excess of 30% by yield, experienced by cereal growers.

### **Meeting with new French Agriculture Minister in Paris**

In July, I met the recently appointed French Minister for Agriculture and Food Stéphane Travert, for talks in Paris. The discussions were primarily concerned with the two main challenges confronting the Irish and European agri-food sectors: Brexit and the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

I am delighted to have been able to meet Minister Travert so soon after his appointment, and to avail of the opportunity to both renew the traditionally close relationship between Ireland and France on agriculture matters, and to discuss our respective priorities as we face into what will undoubtedly be a very challenging period ahead. Brexit and the future of the CAP were, of course, top of the agenda. On Brexit, we had a very useful exchange on the potential implications for the agri-food sector and on the negotiation process. I conveyed to Minister Travert the critical importance to Ireland of continued unfettered access to the UK market for agri-food products. In overall terms, I was heartened by the degree of commonality in our concerns, which I hope will continue to characterise our engagement as the negotiations unfold.

I also had a good exchange with Minister Travert on fisheries issues including, of course, the recent UK announcement regarding the London Fisheries Convention and the wider potential impact of Brexit. We were both very much in agreement that we must maintain existing access and quota sharing arrangements for our respective fleets. We will continue to work together, as well as with the Barnier Task Force and other Member States, to ensure that both agriculture and fisheries issues remain a high priority in the negotiations to come.

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This commonality of approach was also evident from our discussion of the CAP, which focused on the need for a strong CAP budget and for a policy that deals effectively with the many challenges facing the agri-food sector, including the need to produce more food in a sustainable manner. Again, we agreed to remain in close contact as the discussions in this area progress over the coming months.

While in Paris, I also took the opportunity to meet with Gilles Gauthier, President and Xavier Macquet, Board Member, of the FNICGV - a French organisation representing meat processors, wholesalers and distributors, some of whose more than 300 members are important purchasers of Irish beef and lamb. I thanked them for their continued support and went on to explain Ireland's concerns around Brexit as well as our priorities for the negotiations. A useful exchange of views took place on a variety of trading issues pertinent to the meat sector.

### EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement

In early July, I very much welcomed the announcement of the Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and Japan, which provides for very significant access to the Japanese market for EU agri-food products.

This is a hugely important development for the EU agri-food sector, and will present very real opportunities for Irish agri-food exporters. The news is particularly good for the Irish beef sector, as the agreement contains very significant concessions in relation to Japanese market access for European Union beef.

I welcome the agreement in relation to beef, which provides for annual export quantities of 43,500 tonnes product weight (approximately 56,000 tonnes carcass weight equivalent) at tariff rates which will fall from the current level of 38.5% to 27.5% in the first year of implementation, and then to 9% over the remainder of the fifteen-year period of the agreement. The concessions achieved in relation to beef are particularly significant, and represent a huge opportunity which I am determined will be utilised to the maximum possible extent by the Irish beef sector. But the outcome is also extremely positive in relation to pigmeat, where Japan will significantly lower the tariffs applied through its import scheme over the period of the agreement, and for cheese and dairy products, where the agreement provides for the full liberalisation of tariffs on hard cheeses, including cheddar, over fifteen years.

I have emphasised the importance of this agreement against the backdrop of the challenges presented by Brexit. This is a particularly welcome development as we increase our focus on market diversification and the need to reduce our dependence on the UK market. The addition of Japan as a potentially important export outlet, particularly for sectors such as beef and dairy which are especially exposed to the impact of Brexit, is hugely important, and an opportunity which we will waste no time in exploiting.

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## Food Wise Steps to Success 2017

At the start of July, I launched the second progress report on Food Wise 2025: Steps to Success 2017.

Since its launch in July 2015, Food Wise 2025 has evolved from a high level strategy into a shared blueprint for all involved in the sector. My focus in the year ahead will be to support the agri-food sector (including forestry and fishing) to continue to make a vital contribution to the Irish economy, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner.

While the industry is currently facing significant uncertainty caused largely by Brexit, the sector's capacity for resilience and diversification in times of challenge should not be underestimated. The challenges posed by Brexit makes the actions proposed in Food Wise 2025 all the more relevant.

I chair the Food Wise High Level Implementation Committee (HLIC), with senior representatives from all relevant Government Departments and State agencies, ensuring a joined up approach. We will double-down on progressing relevant Food Wise recommendations, particularly those related to market development, competitiveness and innovation, as part of our Brexit response. Food Wise commits us to the highest standards of environmental protection, food safety and quality assurance, all of which are crucial to the sustainable development of the sector.

*Steps to Success 2017* highlights the progress achieved in year two in the implementation of the detailed Food Wise 2025 strategy. Of the 368 actions which were due to commence by 2017 or are ongoing actions, 46% have been achieved or substantial action has been undertaken; and a further 49% have commenced and are progressing well. This shows good progress but I will press on getting as many actions as possible complete within the next year.



*Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed T.D. at the launch of the second progress report on Food Wise 2025: Steps to Success 2017*

## Cork City announced as host city for European Maritime Day 2020

At the end of June I congratulated Cork City on being designated as the host city for European Maritime Day in 2020 by the Council of the European Union. European Maritime Day is the flagship event in the European Union's maritime calendar, consisting of a two day conference with over 1,000 stakeholders from across the European Union coming together to discuss the development of this sector. This will be the first time that Ireland has hosted this flagship event. SeaFest, Ireland's national maritime festival, will take place in Cork in conjunction with the conference.

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My congratulations to Cork City on securing this prestigious event for the city. Cork is the ideal location for European Maritime Day and it was my honour to support the nomination. Cork is a vibrant, bustling port city with a dynamic and energetic marine community, as well as rich maritime history.

European Maritime Day in 2020 will coincide with the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cork Royal Yacht Club, one of the oldest yacht clubs in the world. 2020 also coincides with a target date set in our national integrated maritime plan, Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth, and so presents an opportunity to demonstrate to our European colleagues how Ireland has developed this vital sector of our economy. In conjunction with the conference our national maritime festival, SeaFest, will take place in Cork. This festival has truly captured the public imagination with an attendance of 60,000 in Galway in July in 2016. It is this enthusiasm, this embracing of our maritime culture, that we can bring to the hosting of European Maritime Day in 2020.



*Michael Creed, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine pictured at SeaFest 2017 with Jim O'Toole and Gavan Duffy.*

### **National Farmed Animal Health Strategy 2017-22**

I launched the National Farmed Animal Health Strategy 2017-22 on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July. The Strategy sets out a comprehensive set of actions for all stakeholders in the agri-food industry to work in partnership to achieve optimal animal health in Ireland.

The National Farmed Animal Health Strategy is a significant initiative. Livestock production is at the heart of our agri-food industry and contributes hugely to the development of our Regions. Healthy animals produce and compete to their best potential.

Prevention of disease minimises financial losses to farmers, the broader agri-food industry and the country. Upholding Ireland's reputation for good animal health is vital to our ongoing efforts to secure access to the world's markets. At a broader societal level, zoonotic infections in animals and the avoidable use of antibiotics in animals may impact on public health. Less than optimal animal health can also negatively affect the environment.



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This Strategy has identified five high-level outcomes to be achieved. These focus on farm-level productivity; processor outcomes; market access; capacity to protect public health and capability to anticipate threats, mitigate risk and respond. My Department will play a pivotal coordination and leadership role, but the success of the strategy will depend on all stakeholders working together closely.

In recent years Ireland has made excellent progress with country-free status for Brucellosis and Aujeszky's disease, control of BSE and a substantial reduction in the incidence of TB. Animal Health Ireland, in partnership with industry stakeholders, is making substantial progress on BVD eradication and in improving milk quality with a focus on Somatic Cell Count reduction through the CellCheck programme. Additionally a new Johne's disease Control Programme is being developed and progressed. However, we must be mindful of ongoing threats to animal health, including the emergence of Schmallenberg virus and the resurgence of Bluetongue and Avian Influenza viruses across Europe.

I also launched the National Animal Health Surveillance Strategy 2016-21, one of the actions set out in the Health Strategy.

Increasing movement of people, animals and animal by-products around the world and changing farming practices mean it is inevitable that diseases are seen in parts of the world where they have never been seen before. Understanding the movement and early identification of threats is vital. The Animal Health Surveillance Strategy provides for the coordination of animal health surveillance activities.

I was pleased to announce funding of €125, 000 to support and enable Animal Health Ireland to commence work in the area of pig health. AHI's involvement has the potential to greatly complement my Department's work on control of zoonotic infections and the use of antimicrobial products in pig herds. I am looking forward to seeing further strides being made in export markets by our pig industry in the years ahead.

While welcoming the expansion in live trade, which gives an important competitive edge to the cattle trade in Ireland, this has also given rise to concerns being expressed about distances travelled within countries of destination, and slaughter methods employed. I announced the approval of additional multiannual financial support for the World Organisation for Animal Health in relation to their capacity building activities relating to the welfare of animals at the time of slaughter in third countries and long distance transport.

I highlighted that antimicrobial resistance is a further priority: Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) remains a major risk to public health. The most significant way to reduce AMR is to reduce antibiotic usage which will flow from a healthy animal population.

I was delighted to announce that Dr. Noel Cawley, Chairman of Teagasc, has agreed to chair the National Farmed Animal Health Strategy Review Body which will independently monitor the development and implementation of



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actions arising from the Strategy. Dr. Cawley, with his broad experience, is particularly well qualified to lead on this important role.

These health and surveillance strategies will play a vital part in our ongoing efforts to enhance Ireland's reputation for high standards of animal health and to continue to expand our markets abroad and are particularly important as my Department continues to work hard to prepare for Brexit and its potential trade implications for the agri-food and fisheries sectors.



*Michael Creed, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine pictured at the launch of the National Farmed Animal Health Strategy 2017-22.*

### **Registration of Succession Farm Partnerships Launched**

At the start of June, I launched the new succession farm partnership register following a meeting with the newly appointed President of Macra na Feirme, James Healy. The scheme, which was developed by my Department in conjunction with the Office of the Revenue Commissioners and Teagasc, is designed to facilitate formalised succession planning within farming enterprises through tax incentives and structured asset transference built in to the succession partnership agreement.

The scheme will encourage the generational change critical for the future of farming. By facilitating collaborative working in a way that assures the long term financial security of both the farmer and the successor, this scheme will increase operational efficiency on farm by supporting best practice in intergenerational transfer of the holding.

Under the scheme, partnerships on the Department's register may apply to join the succession farm partnership register. Partnerships on this register can benefit from an incentive of €5,000 for up to five years, during the Succession Agreement term, until the identified successor(s) reaches the age of 40. The scheme is designed to encourage the successor to become invested in the

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enterprise as early as possible to be fully ready to take over when the time is right.

This Succession Farm Partnership scheme is part of the Government's commitment to Rural Ireland.



*Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed T.D. at the launch of the new succession farm partnership register from (L to R) Pat Dillon, Head of Animal & Grassland Research and Innovation Programme, Teagasc, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine T.D. and Paul Smith, Macra Na Feirme*

### **Grant awards of €3.1 million to 13 Seafood Companies**

In July I announced the award of a further €3,100,055 in grants to 13 seafood enterprises in 7 different counties under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) Operational Programme for the seafood sector.

These grant awards are supporting both capital and innovation projects in seafood processing and aquaculture. For the first time we are supporting 4 capital projects specifically aimed at handling and storing fish landed under the CFP landing obligation. These specific projects are the first of their type to be approved under the EMFF Sustainable Fisheries Scheme, which aims to support fishermen, co-operatives and processors to implement the landing obligation.

This funding will assist 4 key players in the sector in providing infrastructure for the handling and cold storage of unwanted catches. By having such facilities in place, these parties will have more options for disposing of such unwanted catches, including sale to the high end pet food market, as bait for shellfish fishermen or in the longer term for the production of health care or pharmaceutical products. The projects are innovative in their approach and demonstrate foresight on the part of these businesses in planning ahead to address the challenges of the landing obligation.

The grant awards will support total investment of €6.9 million in 2017. The grants are awarded under 5 EMFF schemes and are co-funded by the Exchequer and EU and subject to terms and conditions. These grant awards contribute to the Action Plan for Rural Development.

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## ACORNS Programme and Social Farming Projects

At the end of August I welcomed the launch of the third year of ACORNS, a six month part time development programme for aspiring rural female entrepreneurs.

Once again, they will have the opportunity to avail of the tremendous supports it can give them to develop and grow their businesses, increase employment, and to make a real contribution to their local communities. I am greatly encouraged by what ACORNS has achieved to date, and I urge early stage female entrepreneurs in rural Ireland to apply.

Fully funded under my Department's Rural Innovation and Development Fund, the initiative is focused on developing the potential of female entrepreneurs living in rural Ireland who have recently started a business or who have taken concrete steps towards setting up a business. There is no charge for successful applicants.

ACORNS is based on a clear understanding that entrepreneurs learn best from each other and the initiative is focussed on peer support and collaborative learning. Participants work in interactive round table sessions facilitated by other female entrepreneurs who have started and successfully grown businesses in rural Ireland. Acting in a voluntary capacity, these Lead Entrepreneurs share their insights and experience with the group and support the participants to examine and address the issues and challenges they face in progressing their businesses.

Over 100 female entrepreneurs have taken part in ACORNS to date, and past participants testify to the difference this programme has made both to themselves and to their businesses.



*Pictured with the Minister were ACORNS voluntary Lead Entrepreneur Mary B Walsh, Ire Wel Pallets, previous participant Alma Jordan, Agrikids, Paula*

In addition, at the start of September, I announced that following a competitive public procurement procedure under the 2017 Rural Innovation and Development



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Fund, three successful projects will receive funding totalling €367,000, to promote and develop social farming projects in rural areas.

Social farming allows people, who are availing of a range of health service supports, the opportunity to participate in farming activities in their local area.

I know that working on farming and horticulture projects has helped many participants to improve their wellbeing and grow their confidence. For participating farm families, social farming has proved a very worthwhile and satisfying activity which contributes to the local community.

The awarding of funding announced is in addition to €350,000 already allocated to Ireland's Social Farming Network bringing total support for social farming initiatives to €717,000 this year. I am heartened to see that the three projects which have been awarded contracts have previously received funding from my Department and I am looking forward to seeing the fruits of this continued support in their next phase.

The first project contract was awarded to the Leitrim Integrated Development Company for the continuation of a national Social Farming Model of Best Practice Project (in collaboration with University College Dublin), with funding of €121,000 and which will continue with the delivery of evidence based learning, best practice and policy recommendations which should contribute to the promotion and development of social farming in Ireland.

The second project was awarded to South Kerry Development Partnership with funding of €123,000 for the provision of a Social Farming Project which will offer services for people with disabilities to engage with farm families and the community to meet personal development goals and choices and improve their wellbeing.

The third successful award is for Down syndrome Ireland (Cork Branch) who was awarded funding of €123,000. This will help with the next phase of 'Field of Dreams', a horticultural centre for adults with Down Syndrome. The facility is expected to provide hands-on work experience, training and promotion of social inclusion to adults with Down Syndrome.

### **Support Measure for Farmers Affected by Flooding**

Following the unprecedented rainfall at the end of August in the North West and particularly in parts of North Donegal. I witnessed first-hand some of the very significant problems that a number of farmers experienced as a result of the sudden flooding event, when I visited North East Donegal with my colleague Minister Joe McHugh. Whilst some of the most significant damage was to local infrastructure, businesses and homes, the farming community was also adversely affected in many cases.

I committed during my visit to supporting these farmers and I am satisfied that my Department in conjunction with other State Agencies have moved swiftly to offer practical solutions to those affected.

I am pleased to introduce this initiative to support the small number of farmers around the Inishowen Peninsula who bore the brunt of last month's adverse weather.

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This measure will provide farmers who were significantly affected by the flooding with a financial contribution towards losses or damage sustained.

Support under this measure will apply to losses of livestock, the loss of conserved fodder (Hay or Silage) and as a contribution towards the clean-up cost of agricultural lands, including repair to fences, damaged by debris washed up by the floods. Only losses not covered by insurance will be eligible for consideration.

The measure builds on the availability of support through the Animal Welfare Helpline and through the advisory assistance made available by Teagasc in the region.

While it is not possible to address all of the problems the floods caused on farms, this measures will specifically direct support to those that have borne the brunt of the flooding . I would particularly like to pay tribute to the tremendous community spirit of the people in Donegal in supporting those affected by the flooding.

Application forms will be available shortly with an early closing date proposed to allow prompt processing of requests for support.



*Minister of State at the Department of Culture with responsibility for Gaelige, Gaeltacht and the Islands Joe McHugh TD & Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Michael Creed TD meet farmer Wayne Armstrong in Whitecastle, Inishowen.*

### **Long term evaluation of Food Dude programme 2010-2016**

At the end of June I welcomed the findings of a long term evaluation of the Food Dudes Healthy Eating Programme 2010–2016, undertaken by the Institute of Food and Health, University College Dublin.

In the current environment where childhood obesity is a global concern, the Food Dudes Healthy Eating Programme is an effective initiative. This evaluation shows that the programme has a significant impact over a six year period and identifies the importance of parental support, to ensure that Food Dudes

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continue to have a lasting positive impact on children's fruit and vegetable consumption.

Funded by my Department and the European Commission and managed by Bord Bia, the initial Food Dudes programme was implemented in over 95% of national schools. A follow-up Food Dudes Boost programme is underway with a strong focus on the Junior Cycle as recommended by the Healthy Ireland: Obesity Policy and Action Plan 2016-2025. Food Dudes Boost was run in over 700 schools and reached more than 120,000 students in school year 2016/2017.

The report confirms the programme has a positive long-term impact on the behaviour of primary school children, encouraging them to eat more fruit and vegetables both in school and at home, and helping them develop a liking for these foods.



*The Minister is pictured with Aine Moran, Food Dudes Project Manager & pupils from Scoil Mhuire Kiskeam, Co Cork.*

### Important Dates

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>19—20 September:</b> | National Ploughing Championships, Scraggan, Tullamore, Co Offaly             |
| <b>20 September:</b>    | Dail resumes   |
| <b>25 September:</b>    | Dairy Forum, Agriculture House   |
| <b>28 September:</b>    | FoodWise 2025 High Level Implementation Committee meeting, Agriculture House |
| <b>4 October:</b>       | NDC Quality Milk Awards, Royal Hospital Kilmainham                           |
| <b>9—10 October:</b>    | AgriFish Council of Ministers Meeting, Luxembourg                            |

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