TEAGASC LAOIS-KILDARE-MEATH-LOUTH-DUBLIN ADVISORY REGION







164.000

DAIRY COWS

BREAKDOWN OF FARM STRUCTUREŞ 2020

	No of Farmers	Avg. Farm Size HA
LAOIS	3,200	38
KILDARE	2,500	44
MEATH	4,500	44
LOUTH	1,600	38
DUBLIN	700	47
LKMLD REGION	12,500	42
IRELAND	135,000	33

Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the Teagasc Laois-Kildare-Meath-Louth-Dublin Advisory Regional Review. This report summarises the main farming activities within the Region and looks at Teagasc advisory activities that support these activities.



Teagasc is but one cog in the agricultural wheel and I would like to acknowledge the dedication and

hard work of all the stakeholders in the industry: farmers, input providers, customers for farm output and all those who support farmers and farming in between, including private consultants and our own staff and support services. The number of agencies and individuals that help Teagasc do its work locally are too numerous to mention but are greatly appreciated. This report focuses primarily on this advisory region, but we are supported hugely by our colleagues in research (Grange beef research and Ashtown food, horticulture and forestry research units are located within this advisory Region) and by our education colleges (Ballyhaise, Gurteen and Kildalton are the closest colleges).

The big challenges in spring 2022 are availability and cost of inputs, in particular fertiliser, feed and fuel. More medium term, labour and mushroom compost are challenges for more intensive enterprises. A lot of work will need to happen to address these and all the other on-going issues of concern to farmers and farming.

David Colbourne, Regional Manager,

Teagasc Laois-Kildare-Meath-Louth-Dublin Advisory Region



TEAGASC LAOIS-KILDARE-MEATH-LOUTH-DUBLIN ADVISORY REGION

Teagasc advisory offices within the Region are based in Dundalk and Drogheda in Co. Louth, Navan and Grange in Co. Meath, Kinsealy in Co. Dublin, Naas in Co Kildare and Portlaoise in Co Laois. The map below shows the locations of the offices, and also marks the Signpost Farms. These Signpost farms have agreed to help us lead our environment programme and the have a critical role in getting the message out to farmers on the environment topic.

NAVAN

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NAAS

Naas Office Tel: 045 879203

N7

N8

Abbeyleix

Mountrath

Rathdowney

N8 M7

Borris-in-Osso

M9

N3

Athboy

(11)

Castledermot

Carlow

M7

Athy

Ballylynan

5

10

GRANGE

Grange Office Tel: 046 906110

PORTLAOISE

Portlaoise Office Tel: 057 8621326





A total of 13 Signpost farms have been identified for the Laois-Kildare-Meath-Louth-Dublin Region:

- Donal Kavanagh Kildare dairy 1.
- 2. Tom Fennelly Laois Glanbia dairy
- 3. Dermot Heaney Meath Lakeland dairy
- Matthew and Declan Mullen Meath Glanbia dairy 4.
- Bill George Laois organic dairy 5.
- 6. **Michael McGuigan Meath Future Beef**
- 7. Aidan Maguire Meath DairyBeef 500
- 8. Peter Byrne Kildare DairyBeef 500 9.
- **KEPAK Beef**
- Devenish Meath beef and sheep 10.
- 11. Tom Tierney Kildare tillage
- Vincent Macken Meath tillage 12.
- 13. KEPAK tillage

D/ RE-MEATH-LOUTH-DUBLIN ADVISORY REGION

Farming in the Region Census of Agriculture 2020

Farm Structures:

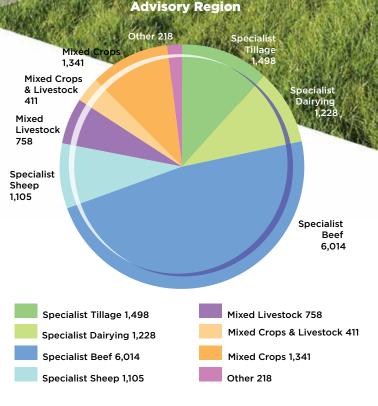
TEAGASC

The CSO Census of Agriculture indicates that there are 12,500 farmers in the Laois-Kildare-Meath-Louth-Dublin Region now compared with 13,000 in 2010, a decrease of 500 farmers or 4% since 2010, or 63% since 1915. This is just under 10% of the Republic's farmers.

20% Farmers Under	45 Yrs	33% Farmers 45 Yrs	
Average Farm Size	42 H a	Farm holdings 9%	

In 1991, 33% of farmers were under 45 and 23% were over 65. This improved to 35% under 45 and 20% over 65 in 2000, but these figures are now only 20% under 45 and a massive 33% over 55 in 2021. Some 13% of farmers are women compared with 10% in 1991.

Farm size across the Region is larger than the average in the state at 42 ha compared with 33 for the country. Dublin farms are the largest at 47 ha.



Farm Types – Teagasc Laois-Kildare-Meath-Louth-Dublin



Mission

To provide scientific leadership and support to Irish farmers and food companies in achieving a sustainable food system.

Vision

For Teagasc to be a globally recognised leader in developing innovative science based solutions for the sustainable transformation of our land resources into products and services for the benefits of society.

Our Values

Teagasc seeks to be professional, responsive, efficient, innovative, accountable, independent and scientifically excellent in carrying out its functions.

TEAGASC LAOIS-KILDARE MEATH-LOUTH-DUBLIN ADVISORY REGION



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Teagasc Regional Network Offices

Teagasc is the national body providing integrated research, advisory and training services to the agriculture and food industry and rural communities. The overall goal of the Teagasc Advisory Programme is to support the on-going development of sustainable family farms in Ireland, through efficient and effective knowledge transfer (KT) activities. The programme currently supports almost 140,000 individual farmers with 42,000 farmers contracted to Teagasc for services annually.

Beef Enterprise/Drystock

While dairy and sheep numbers rose in the region, suckler numbers fell by 21%, a bigger decrease than the national average

During 2021, beef and mart prices rose but so too did costs, so net margin rose only slightly. Beef finishers did better than suckler farms in terms of profit. No big change in beef prices is expected in 2022.





Rebecca Tierney Poultry Advisor, Teagasc

BREAKDOWN OF FARM STRUCTURES 2020

SUCKLER CO 6014 SPECIALIST BEEF FARME	
BEEF ADVISO	ORS
22 BEEF DISCUSSION OOC GROUPS	
SIGNPOST FARMS	
2 DAIRY BEEF 500 FARM 1 FUTURE BEEF FARMS	
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+ K) 89 000

Gross margin per hectare on cattle finishing farms rose by 10% with a modest increase in net margin per ha. (+ \in 72). Total numbers of cattle slaughtered dropped by approximately 90,000 head in 2021 and live exports reduced by over 12,000 head. The number of calves born to the suckler herd dropped by 1% compared to 2020.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

It is expected that there will be a further 12% increase in expenditure costs in 2022 on Irish beef farms driven again by increased fertiliser, feed and fuel costs. Beef prices are not expected to change significantly in 2022 due to current high global beef prices, a limit on EU imports due to high shipping costs and an overall drop in beef production within the EU.

	No of Farmers	Avg. Farm Size HA
AOIS	3,200	38
ILDARE	2,500	44
1EATH	4,500	44
OUTH	1,600	
UBLIN	700	47
KMLD REGION	12,500	42
RELAND	135,000	33
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Peter & Tom McGuinness Meath Sheep Walk 2022.

Sheep Enterprise

Sheep numbers are up 17% since 2010, and these are on 2775 farms in 2020 compared with 2516 farms in 2010. Louth, Kildare and Meath have the largest flocks in the region with over 109 sheep per flock on averages.

Irish lamb prices rose by 30% to record highs in 2021 over 2020 figures, but costs were up 20% so margins were up about 26%. Lamb prices will stay nearly as high in 2022 according to projections, but so too will costs.



Edard Egan Teagasc and Peter McGuinness, Co Meath



ACKOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the valuable information provided by and co-operation of:

> Census of Agriculture 2020 CSO Office

> > Teagasc National Farm Survey

Dairy Enterprise

Dairy cow numbers are up 45% since 2012, with numbers up 75% in Laois and Kildare. This compares with the national average herd size of 70 cattle.

Depending on county, dairy cow numbers went up 45-77 % on farms except in Dublin where numbers fell. The rate of increase in the Region is well above the national average during this period. Meath and Louth along with Waterford have the highest average number of cows per farm, at over 110 cows each, compared with a national herd size of 83 cows.

The year 2021 was a good year for dairying. Good weather, good yields and a good milk price meant average dairy farm income was €94,000, up 28% on 2020. Feed and fertiliser costs were up 16% and 10% respectively in 2021, and so far this year shows those costs even higher.



Grass walk Ballyroan Seamus and John Mulhall hosts plus Teagasc staff.

Profits in 2022 are expected to be lower than 2021 because of these higher costs, even with a projected milk price of over 40c/l. Teagasc has 10 dairy advisors and 5 dairy Signpost farms (3 Glanbia, 1 Lakeland, 1 organic) in the Region.

164,000 DAIRY COWS

3 GLANBIA

LAKE

AND

DAIRY CATTLE FARMS			
	Dairy Cow No's	Total Dairy Farm No's	
LAOIS	53,000	504	
KILDARE	21,000	190	
MEATH	66,000	600	
LOUTH	21,000	173	
DUBLIN	2,800	32	
LKMLD REGION	164,000	1,499	
	1,600,000	17,500	

AVERAGE DAIRY HERD 110 1,499 FARMS;

Pigs

The Region has about 8% of the country's pig farms and sows.

In addition, there are a number of specialist fattening units. In 2000, the average pigs produced per sow was 21.5; in 2022 this has risen to 27.5 pigs per sow. Genetics and management have led to this massive increase. Margins per sow are currently under huge pressure- feed price amounts to \notin 1.35-1.40 c/kg pigmeat sold, the sale price is \notin 1.42 per kg, so there is a 2 c margin over feed. The outlook on pig prices is an expected rise to \notin 1.60, giving a margin of 22 c/kg- this is the worst in decades, with a loss per sow \notin 700-800.

Farmers would need a 45 c margin over feed cost to cover other costs. Pig farmers in this region are served by Teagasc advisors Gerard McCutcheon based in Oakpark and Emer McCrum and Louise Clarke, both based in Ballyhaise

The Region has about 8% of the country's pig farms and sows.



Total commercial pigs (number of commercial farms)	Number of units with sows	Average sows per unit	Total sows
Laois	7	780	5457
Kildare	6	736	4420
Meath	8	412	3300
Louth	1	830	830
Dublin	0	0	0
LKMLD Region	22	636	14,007
Ireland	280	528	148,000

Poultry

NOP 1 10

The average commercial free range laying flock is 12,000 birds across Ireland. The average for the LKMLD region is approximately 7,700; the smallest is 160, while the largest is 16,000.

For table birds, the average turkey/duck site is about 5,200 birds in this region while broiler site is about 25,000. The average broiler flock is 40,000 across Ireland.

The poultry numbers are shown here: Total commercial poultry farm 2020 Layers Laois 0 Kildare 0 Meath 11 Louth 10 Dublin 0		Table Birds
Laois	0	7
Kildare	0	1
Meath	11	7
Louth	10	3
Dublin	0	0
LKMLD Region	21	18

The outlook for poultry is positive, the UN FAO forecast poultry meat will increase by 18.5 million tonnes by 2030 (ref Irish Farmers Journal feb22). There is challenges on the horizon however with the removal of the Enriched Cage systems by 2025, substantial investment will be required to convert existing systems to either barn or free range production. In 2021, feed prices increased considerably, alongside energy prices, leading to margins

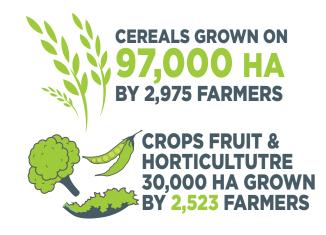
Teagasc farm walk with Tom Tierney, Prosperous

Crops

The number of cereal farmers has fallen 60% nationally and the area under cereals has fallen 12% since 1991.

This Laois-Kildare-Meath-Louth-Dublin Region grew 36% of the Republic's cereals in 2020. This Region grows almost 60 % of the country's wheat, with Laois being the smallest wheat grower within the region. Grain harvests were good in 2021 and prices were excellent, with margins up 90% on 2020.

This region grew 33% of the Republic's 'other crops, fruit and horticulture' in 2020, according to the CSO, indicating the big diversity of cropping in this eastern region. Prices are expected to be good in 2022, but high costs particularly fertiliser will erode margins and yields as less is used.

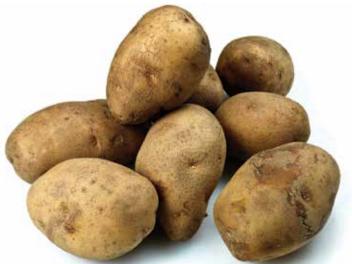


There are approximately 9000 ha of potatoes grown in Ireland every year with a large proportion of these grown in this region.

Most of the potatoes growers in the region are located in Louth, Meath and Dublin; Shane Kennedy Potato & Tillage Advisor is based in Drogheda office. Following a long period of decline in both the area of potatoes and the number of growers, both of these measures have stabilised in recent years. However the market is finely balanced and sensitive to oversupply whereby increases in area or yield can negatively impact price per tonne. Last season (2021-2022) was a challenging year for potato growers with lower than normal prices for ware potatoes on offer.

The season ahead will no doubt be further challenging given the increase in input costs – Teagasc Crops Costs and Returns figures estimate total variable costs of €10,357 per ha for Main Crop Potatoes in 2022. Another ongoing challenge for potato growers is the availability of quality seed. The area of certified seed production in Ireland is insufficient to meet native demand. Imports of Scottish seed in particular had helped fill the gap but following Brexit the import of seed potatoes from Britain into the EU has now been prohibited.

Other significant tillage crops would include oilseed rape (mainly winter crops), beans, and some fodder beet and maize that is grown on contract for livestock farmers or for digesters in Northern Ireland. These crops are useful break crops on tillage farms and rape and bean acreage has increased in recent years.



Horticulture

Bord Bia data states that in 1999 there were 377 vegetable growers in this Region growing 4,554 ha of field vegetables with a total farmgate value of €41.5 million, or just over €9000 per ha.

In 2014 (most recent Bord Bia data), the figures were 165 growers with 4,267 ha and a total farmgate value €80 million or just under €19,000 per ha. Of this, Dublin had 1847 ha and Meath 579 ha. The LKMLD region provided 70% of all the Republic's field crop production. Larger producers are increasing in size over time while the number of growers had more than halved in 20 years. The main field vegetables grown were carrots (Laois grew 26% of national production in 2014), cabbage (Dublin grew 40% of national production), broccoli (Dublin and Kildare grew 82% of national production), swedes parsnips and cauliflower (all big in Dublin especially). Across the top 8 crops, 60% was sold to retail multiples and 21% to wholesalers.



There were 566 full time or fulltime equivalents working in the sector in the Laois-Kildare-Meath-Louth-Dublin region (2/3 of these are in Dublin) out of 1106 nationwide. There were 19 organic growers nationwide in 2014 and the main organic crop was carrots.

The National Soft Fruit & Protected Vegetable Census conducted in 2013 states that there were 137 growers of soft fruit (mainly strawberries) and protected vegetables (mainly tomatoes, followed by lettuce) with a production area of 523 ha. Dublin and Wexford were the main strawberry areas, followed by Meath and Louth. Dublin had nearly 70% of the country's protected vegetable production, followed by Meath and Louth.

The National Apple Orchard Census 2017 indicates there were 50 commercial apple growers operating in Ireland in 2017 across 713 ha, selling apples for culinary, dessert and cider markets. Dublin and Kildare are big apple-growing counties. Advisors Eamonn Kehoe (soft fruit), Andy Whelton (veg and cut foliage), Donall Flanagan (nursery) and Eoin Sweetman (vegetables) service the vegetable and fruit sector.

There are three large mushroom producing farms in this region. Two farms are based in Meath and one in Kildare. These farms make up 12% of the total volume of mushrooms produced in the Republic of Ireland and produce 7,820 ton of mushrooms per year. These farms produce both white and brown cup mushrooms and are distributed to retails in Ireland and the UK. The combined farm gate value of these mushroom producers is €14,630,840. Some 233 people are employed on these farms with an additional 15 people employed in a packhouse facility

This region also has the largest mushroom compost facility in Ireland, Carbury compost which is owned by Monaghan Mushrooms. This compost facility produces 2,200 ton of Phase 3 mushroom compost per week. This compost yard takes vast amounts of wheat straw (will use barley, oat and oilseed rape straw also in lower volumes) from arable farmers in Louth and Meath. This compost yard employs 46 people. (Ref Donal Gernon, Teagasc, 2022). Donal Gernon, the Teagasc mushroom

advisor, is based in Dundalk

The big challenges in horticulture are labour availability, the shortage of peat as a plant medium, marketing and cost increases.



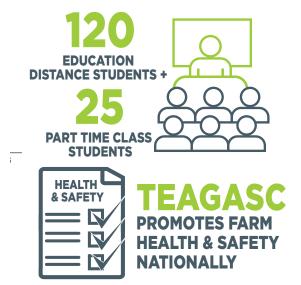
Teagasc farm walk with Tom Tierney Prosperous

Knowledge Innovatio Science Research Education

Education

Young people interest in learning about farming can attend agricultural colleges in Ballyhaise in Cavan, Kildalton in Kilkenny or Gurteen in Tipperary, or other colleges further away.

In addition, the College of Amenity Horticulture in the National Botanic Gardens in Glasnevin in Dublin offers horticultural education within the Region. Within the Laois-Kildare-Meath-Louth-Dublin Region, local agricultural education is provided in local offices. Normally 3 Distance Education courses are run in Naas, Navan and Grange; typically there are 40 students per class, and students are graduates of other coursesa lot of learning at home is involved, it is not a full-time course. A part time course is delivered in Grange too; this course happens typically 2 nights per week and is designed for students who cannot attend full-time day courses. There are 4 education officers running these courses in the Region. These staff also deliver Health and Safety courses for farmers.





Education awards night Tankardstown



Education awards night Tankardstown.

Farm Management

The Farm Management Department provide a range of supports to advisors, specialists and clients when completing specific tasks for their clients. The work is not enterprise specific, but the work is primarily focussed on key areas, which include:

- Financial Efficiency of the farm business using the Teagasc Profit Monitor analysis.
- Farm Planning
- Certification of Business Plans for Government Tax reliefs.
- Basic Payment Application
- Collaborative Farming support and promotion on collaborative farming methods
- Farm Succession
- Targeted Agricultural Moderinisaton Scheme (TAMS)



BPS	Basic Payment Scheme	€56,709,000
BDGP	Beef Data and Genomics Programme	€2,548,435
BEEPS	Beef Environmental Efficiency Programme	€3,521,000
BEAM	Beef Emergency Aid Measure	€950,000
TAMS	Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme	€960,000

In 2021 a major upgrade of the Teagasc Profit Monitor analysis software was completed. Last year advisors completed some 43,000 Basic Payment Scheme applications. Farm Succession is a challenge with the age profile of Irish farmers, and supporting families to make important decisions on this topic while keeping farms viable will continue to be prioritised in 2022.

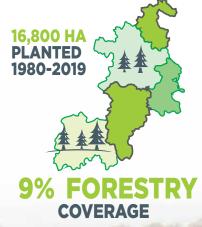


Forestry

Just over 70% of plantings is conifer and almost 30% is broadleaf. Planting is recent years has fallen, but there are big hopes for forestry as a carbon sink in future years.

Many private forests are approaching maturity and the forecasted net realisable timber volume is 1.74 million cubic metres (m3) for 2022, up from 1.46 million m3 in 2021. In 2020, exports of forest and wood based products (1.39 million tonnes, 78% to the UK) were valued at €446 million. Record high timber prices, linked to buoyant global demand and limited domestic supply, were achieved during 2021. Private forest owners, with

felling licences in place, availed of strong timber prices with well-managed conifer clearfells averaging €34,000 -€40,000 per ha (standing price). Growth in both domestic and export demand is expected to continue. Forest licencing remained under pressure during 2021.



Teagasc forestry advisor Kevin O'Connell covers Meath and Louth, Liam Kelly covers Kildare and Laois and Frances McHugh covers Dublin.

Teagasc staff on diverse swards, UCD, Kildare

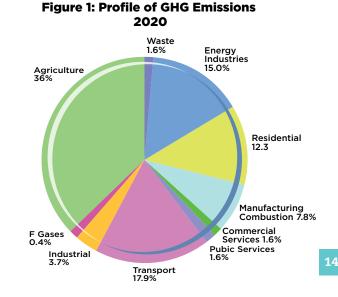
Environment

the Signpost Programme?

The Signpost Programme is a multi-annual campaign to lead climate action by all Irish farmers, reducing gaseous emissions from agriculture while improving water quality, maintaining biodiversity and lowering costs, leading to lowered costs and improved profitability and sustainability in farming. It will also act as a test-bed for om-farm carbon sequestration measurements so that this can be in time incorporated into the EPA national Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory. The Signpost Programme is a collaborative programme, led by Teagasc and including all relevant industry partners and state bodies. The Signpost farmers in this Region are listed elsewhere in this document.

Climate change:

This is one of the biggest challenges facing farmers over the next decade. Agriculture accounts for 36% of GHG emissions in Ireland, and this needs to be reduced by 22-30% by 2030. Teagasc has a roadmap developed on how to get there, and the Signpost programme has been set up to point the way with measures to be adapted by farms.



ASSAP:

Water quality is another environmental concern. Priority areas for action have been selected for a targeted campaign in certain catchments under the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme (ASSAP). We have 2 ASSAP advisors in this Region, based in Drogheda and Naas offices.

Hen Harrier:

Priority areas have been selected across the country to promote habitats for Hen Harrier. One such areas is in the Slieve Blooms on the Laois-Offaly border, with 32 participant farmers in this Region.



IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING FARMERS OVER THE NEXT DECADE

1,100 IN GLAS 400 in DEROGATIONS

Environmental schemes:

In this Region environmental schemes, while important, are not taken up to the same extend as in some other regions. There were about 1,100 farmers in GLAS (25% of our total clients in the Region) and about 70 in REAP (Results-Based Environmental Agri Pilot). We would expect a bigger interest in the years ahead as these schemes become a bigger part of EU payments.

There are about 400 farmers in derogation in the Region, with stocking rates over 170 kg organic N per ha. These take a lot of our time every Spring, checking records, applying for the next year and working out fertiliser plans.





Tillage walk with advisor Conor O'Calllaghan on farm of Ken McCarthy, St Margarets.

Rural Enterprise

The Region offers Options courses in various locations each year. Over 4-5 nights, speakers inform interested farmers of opportunities to develop income streams either on- or off-farm. Speakers would include those who have already diversified, financial providers, energy opportunities, local development agencies and marketing personnel.

Organic farming:

At present in Ireland there are about 90,000 ha farmed organically, which is about 2% of total farmed area. The current Programme for Government targets a 7.5% figure, which reflects the EU average. There are currently 1823 organic farmers registered in the DAFM Organic Farming Scheme. Funding for the 2022 Organic Farming Scheme is up €21 million from the €16 million 2021 allocation, allowing for more new entrants in 2022.

Equine:

Some 26% of the country's Thoroughbred broodmares are in Meath, Dublin and Kildare, with almost 3,500 mares and 54 stallions under 1400 registered breeders in these three counties. Bloodstock sales alone comes to almost €100 million. The region is a major bloodstock centre with

2 major sales companies Tattersalls and Goffs, 9 major racecourses including one in Dundalk, and the National Stud in Kildare.

The year 2021 was an excellent year with a record number of five figure sales returns at public auctions on online platforms. Teagasc is currently recruiting a new horse specialist to be based in Grange.



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Media and Social Media..

The Laois, Kildare, Dublin, Meath & Louth Region has an excellent profile on all media platforms.

The LKMDL region has a very active presence on YouTube, Twitter; Facebook. Most of our advisors manage WhatsApp groups with their clients, discussion groups; Grass10 courses. During Covid staff in our region used Zoom; LYNC to deliver discussion groups meetings, courses & amp; webinars. Our region also produces 20 videos per year. Videos produced in this region have proved very popular with our videos receiving over 80,000 views on YouTube; over 280,000 views on Facebook. Videos uploaded to our regions Facebook page have received over 144,000 views. Our regions Facebook page has 2,500 followers. Advisors in our region have produced a number of excellent publications including A Guide to Designing a Sheep Handling Unit; factsheets.

Communication Content

Articles Videos **Radio Interviews** Webinars Social Media Posts 4/Month 20/Year 2/Month 8/year Over 280,000 Views

Communication Media

Regional Webpage Social Media..... Zoom Local Radio Local Press Puca Whatsapp

Updated Weekly FB/ Twitter/ You Tube

1-2 Texts per Week



ZOOM + LYNC TO DELIVER DISCUSSION GROUPS MEETINGS. COURSES, WEBINARS.







FACEBOOK

The benefits of being a Teagasc client

Clients have access to Teagasc advisors by phone, arranged on-farm visits, discussion groups etc. Teagasc regional offices are also in regular



contact with clients via text and other media about deadlines and other urgent messages.

Teagasc clients receive technical newsletters, tailored to their enterprise mix, ten times per year through the post. In addition the Teagasc magazine Today's Farm is also delivered to clients six times per year.

The advice provided by Teagasc regional staff is underpinned by four research programmes

- Crops, Environment and Land Use • Food
- Rural Economy and Development
- Animal and Grassland Research and Innovation

The Teagasc annual research portfolio comprises some 300 research projects, carried out by 500 scientific and technical staff in our research centres throughout Ireland. In addition to the education officers in each region Teagasc education offers a wide range of agricultural, horticultural, equine and other courses at four Teagasc colleges and works closely with three private colleges.

How do you become a **Teagasc client?**

Contact your local Teagasc office



