

# Tipperary Advisory Region

## Strategic Plan

2015 - 2020



## Teagasc Mission Statement

To support science-based innovation in the agri-food sector and wider bioeconomy so as to underpin profitability, competitiveness and sustainability.

## Teagasc Goals

1. Improve the competitiveness of agriculture, food and the wider bioeconomy.
2. Support sustainable farming and the environment.
3. Encourage diversification of the rural economy and enhance the quality of life in rural areas.
4. Enhance organisational capability and deliver value for money.

## Teagasc Office Locations in the Tipperary Region



## Tipperary Advisory Region

Teagasc, Carrigeen, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary  
Teagasc, Dromin Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary  
Teagasc, Castlemeadows, Thurles, Co. Tipperary

052 6121300  
067 31821  
0504 21777



I am pleased to present the Teagasc Tipperary Advisory Region Strategic Plan 2015-2020 which sets out the priorities and strategic actions for Teagasc Advisory and Training Services in the region over the next 5 years.

The plan has been prepared in consultation with a range of stakeholders and staff and presents Teagasc response to the opportunities and challenges facing farmers in the region over this period.

Teagasc advisory and training services are ideally placed to instigate, lead and guide farming in the region to exploit the opportunities for growth and expansion while also addressing complex challenges around environmental sustainability.

At a time of growing demand for our services and the requirement to comply with the regulations on staffing as a result of the Employment Control Framework (ECF), we are determined to ensure that the region plays a key role in contributing to the ambitious targets identified in Food Harvest 2020 strategy.

We are committed to delivering high quality support to the industry and to working in close association with our farmer clients, state agencies and local partners to ensure that agriculture in the region benefits to the maximum from the current largely favourable external environment.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donal Mullane". The script is cursive and fluid.

**Regional Manager, Teagasc, Tipperary**

### Tipperary Regional Strategic Plan – Summary Actions

- Target 50% increase in milk output.
- Provide a one to one service and training for new entrants and expanding dairy clients.
- Collaborate with the milk processors in the region to support sustainable dairy expansion.
- Target actions to stabilise suckler cow numbers.
- Maximise participation in discussion groups.
- Key workshops and public events to the wider farmer audience.
- Increase the number of graduates in green cert/distance learning courses.
- Use BETTER/Monitor Farms and Green Acres project to promote best practise locally.
- Promote quality through the Bord Bia Quality Assurance Scheme.
- Joint approach with Animal Health Ireland to improve milk quality and disease status of livestock in the region.
- Target 50% of clients to move to lower carbon farming and completing carbon navigator.
- Facilitate the maximum number of clients applying for GLAS through working with our strategic partner.

## Executive Summary

Tipperary is a renowned agricultural region with a large percentage of the population involved in agricultural related industries, making a significant contribution to a national output.

Dairying, drystock and tillage are the main enterprises with significant activity in sheep, pigs and forestry and alternative enterprises.

With the abolition of milk quota in 2015 there is a great opportunity for farmers to expand dairy production while at the same time meeting the challenges of volatility and sustainability. To prepare for this our advisers have had serious engagement with clients with a view to planning farm businesses to maximise their farm profitability and to exploit the opportunity provided by the abolition of quotas. Substantial work has been completed in relation to financial planning, infrastructure planning and livestock planning. The key message is to maximise efficiency within the farm gate to ensure a solid platform to drive future profits and expansion. We expect to be able to support our dairy farmers to produce an extra 50% of milk over the medium term. Our analysis to date would suggest that the greatest expansion will take place in the Southern part of the County. We are working closely with the dairy processors in the County and operate Joint Programmes with most of the major Coops. All parties working together can ensure the greatest success for the dairy industry during this exciting period.

On the drystock side the challenge will be to maintain or stabilise suckler cow numbers and we will be promoting a significant increase in the production of calf to beef with a big proportion of the calves coming from the dairy herd. Our analysis suggests that there is scope for an increase of 5% in ewe numbers with good labour management being the key to sustainability.

A good education programme is the cornerstone of farming in our region. Our two education officers are currently overseeing two advanced certificate courses in agriculture in the region with an intake of 70 students for 2015. Our education officers will also place a big emphasis on farm safety training and internet training for farmers.

The Government embargo has placed serious pressure on our advisory resources resulting in Teagasc being unable to replace advisers who retire. This has led to a necessity to prioritise activities to ensure maximum delivery and value to our clients. For this reason Teagasc are using outsourcing to carry out non-core work such as derogation planning, GLAS planning and profit monitors to allow our existing advisers to focus on knowledge transfer and upskilling of clients in the region. Advisory activities by Teagasc advisers have changed over the last three years with increased emphasis on farmer discussion groups in beef, sheep and dairy. The effectiveness of the groups has been evaluated and indicates that farmers are benefiting strongly from discussion group activity. We will continue to upskill the maximum number of farmers through discussion groups.

There were 29 advisers in the county in 2008; there are currently 15 advisors and 2 vacancies due to retirements. A minimum of 17 advisers is required to deliver a meaningful programme to clients in Tipperary. Every effort is being made to ensure that the two vacancies are filled and the advisory numbers in the region will not fall below 17 in the coming years.

Agriculture has the potential to make an increased contribution to national economic recovery and the Tipperary region is to the forefront of this effort. Farmers will be strongly supported in their efforts by the Teagasc advisory and education services to improve their incomes while simultaneously contributing to economy of the region.



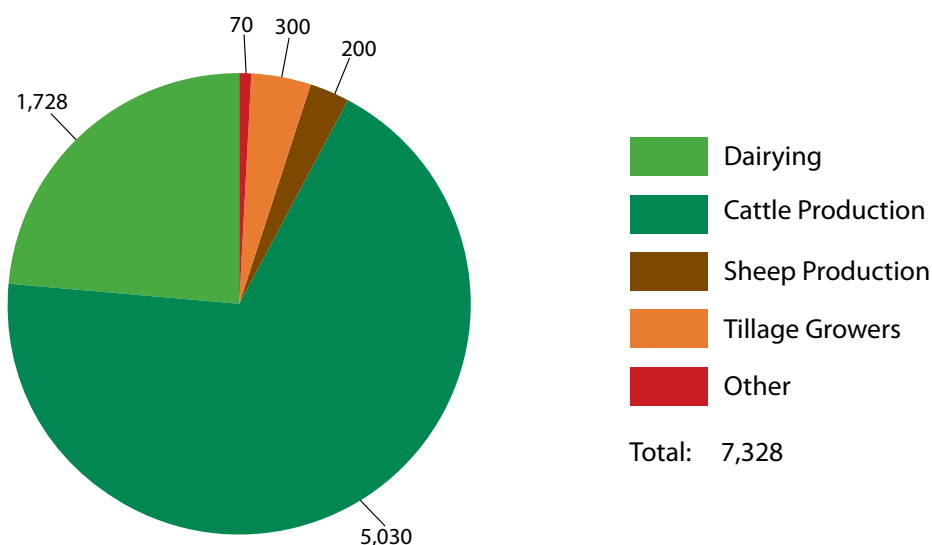
## Farming in the Region

The total number involved in farming as a percentage of the population in the region is 19%. Tipperary is hugely dependant on agriculture which contributes approximately 10% of national agricultural output.

### Farming Systems

There are over 7000 farmers in the region. 23% of farms are involved in dairy production, 70% are involved in cattle production while 4% of farms are involved in tillage production.

**Figure 1 - Farm classification by type of farm for Tipperary 2010**



*Source: CSO Census of Agriculture 2010*

### Land Type and Soil Fertility

Tipperary is mainly good quality limestone land interspersed with mountain ranges and rivers. There are some areas of heavy land in the County which require greater management skill to avoid poaching.

### Farm Size:

Average farm size is 41 hectares which is higher than the national average (32.7). Recent research shows that for every one hectare of land farmed in the Tipperary Coop catchment there is .6 of a hectare farmed away from the home farm. This indicates that there is plenty room for collaboration between farmers to ensure greater access to land.

### *Anticipated trends for the next 3 to 5 years:*

- We will support an increase of 50% of milk supplied from dairy farms, up to 60% in South Tipperary and 40 to 45% in North Tipperary.
- We will minimise the reduction in suckler cows with a view to stabilising numbers.
- We will support an increase in calf to beef farming.
- Some suckler farmers will convert to dairying where there is already a good farm yard set up.
- Sheep – We anticipate a potential increase of 10% in ewe numbers.
- Tillage – it is likely that the area under tillage could fall by up to 10% as some of the land under con acre and leasing will find its way into dairy farming. It is not anticipated that many tillage farmers will convert to dairying.

### Resources

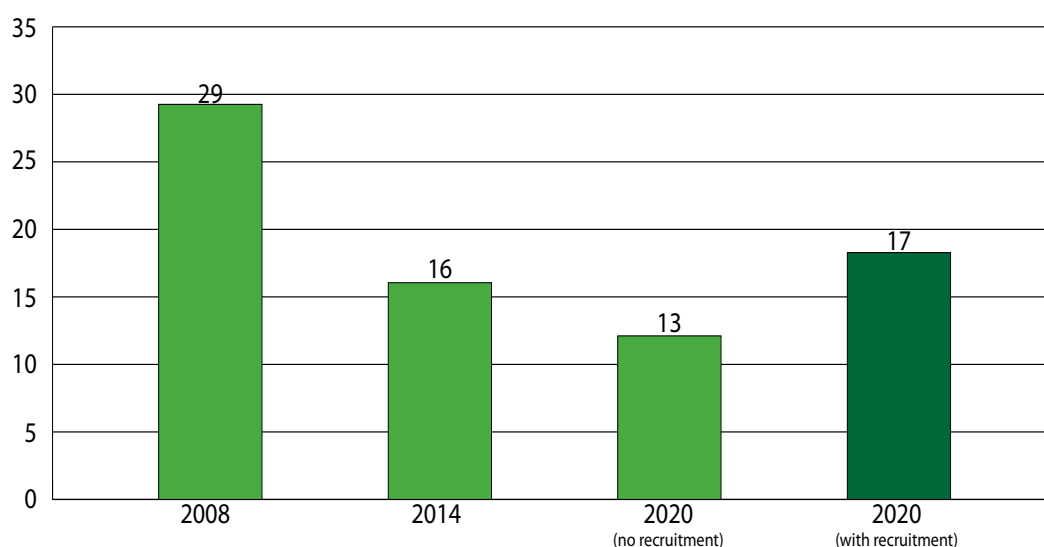
There are three advisory offices in the region, Clonmel, Thurles and Nenagh with a Clinic in Tipperary. The offices have had regular investment to ensure they are modernised and in good condition. The most recent investment has been the upgrading of the Thurles office.

### Staff

The trends and prediction of staff numbers from 2008 to 2020 and the staff required to achieve the targets set out in this Strategic Plan are outlined in Table 1 below. Between 2008 and 2014 Teagasc advisory staff numbers have fallen by 48%. This reduction is a consequence of retirements, redeployment, termination of contract and the embargo on recruitment in the public service. Figure 2 shows the resultant growth in clients per advisor and this measure is now at an unsustainable level.

Every effort will be made to secure additional advisory resources over the next number of years. This will remain top priority for management.

**Figure 2: Adviser Numbers in Tipperary Advisory Region**



**Table 1 - Trends and predictions Tipperary staff 2008-2020**

Staff Type	2008	2014	2020	Staff required to achieve 2020 targets
Advisor	29	16	13	17
Education	2	1	0	2
Administration	7	5	5	5
Support	1	0	0	0
<b>Staff Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24</b>

*It will be critical to maintain at least 17 advisors in the region.*

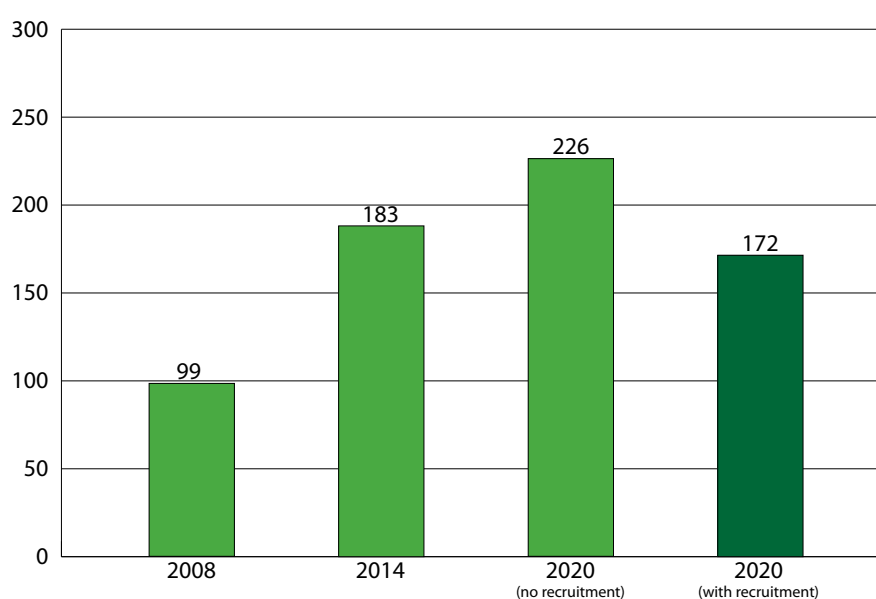
## Teagasc Tipperary Clients

Table 2 below presents the distribution of clients in the Teagasc Tipperary Advisory Region by farmer type and advisor. 64% of dairy producers, 32% of beef and sheep producers, and 50% of tillage farmers are Teagasc clients.

**Table 2 - Teagasc Tipperary Clients**

	Clients	Total Farmers in Region	Advisers
Dairy	1100	1700	7+1 DG Groups
Beef	1630	5030	6
Sheep	60	200	
Tillage	150	300	1
Other		70	

**Figure 3 - Ratio of Clients per Adviser in Tipperary Advisory Region**



## Education

The number of young farmers who have completed the Green Cert course in the region or at agricultural college is outlined in Table 3. Projections in enrolments reveal that there will be a 100% increase in the number of young farmers completing the Green Cert. Course in 2020.

**Table 3 - Young farmers from Tipperary completing Green Cert Courses - 2010 to 2020**

Training Location	2008	2014	2020
No of young farmers trained in the region	25	34	70
No of young farmers trained in colleges	72	94	120
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>190</b>

## Partners in the Region

- **Joint Programmes:** Joint technology transfer programmes are in place with six of the Dairy Processors in the region. The main purpose of the programmes is to ensure that milk suppliers are efficient and viable and capable of taking advantage of the emerging growth opportunities for dairying.
- **Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF):** There are strong linkages with ICBF in relation to the dairy, beef and sheep technology transfer programmes and the staging of events and seminars.
- **Agricultural Consultants:** Teagasc works in partnership with consultants and have outsourced REPS records, Profit Monitors and Green Cert course modules.
- **IFAC Accountants:** Provide accountancy services to many of the regions clients and there is a close working relationship with IFAC locally, especially in the sharing of data for the completion of Teagasc eProfit Monitors. We also have close contacts with FDC and other accountants and solicitors in the region.
- **Local Radio and Press** are used extensively to communicate with farmers.
- **LEADER:** There are close working relationships with LEADER companies with follow on “Introduction to Business” courses provided by LEADER to Options Workshop participants. Staff from the region sit on LEADER boards and the new LCDC boards.
- **Collaborations & Joint Events:** Seminars, demonstrations, workshops and farm walks are organised on an on-going basis in collaboration with a wide number of organisations. Among the organisations collaborated with are: Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Farm Organisations, Bord Bia, AI Breeding Companies, Meat Processing Companies, Irish Farmers Journal, Livestock Marts, Irish Grassland Association, Animal Health Ireland, Local Veterinarians and Producer Groups





### Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Dairy for 2020

Teagasc in Tipperary will play a key role in supporting profitable Dairy farming and will facilitate the achievement of the Harvest 2020 goals in the major enterprises.

Based on consultation with Teagasc clients, dairy advisers and milk processors we are targeting a 50% increase in milk supplied by farmers which includes an increase of 60% in the areas of South Tipperary supplying Glanbia and Dairygold Coop.

### Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Working closely with the Co-Op's in the region will be top priority. These partners may also be in a position to provide resources to support our programmes to ensure that the target 50% increase in milk supply in the region is met.
- Teagasc will implement activities to support new entrants/significant expanders:
  - Prioritise time for one-to-one support
  - Provide training for up to 20 new entrants annually
  - Expand outsourcing of non-core work – Derogation, Nitrates Records
  - Collaborate with Drystock Advisers in the identification of potential new entrants
- Discussion groups will continue to be the key knowledge transfer tool. A campaign to increase numbers participating in dairy discussion groups will be implemented
- The provision and support of financial and business planning to milk suppliers in the region to ensure sustainable farm businesses and expansion.
- Teagasc will provide training for clients to ensure that they meet Bord Bia Quality Assurance standards.
- Teagasc will work jointly with Animal Health Ireland to improve milk quality and disease status of livestock in the region.



### Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Beef for 2020

Lack of profitability, a high dependency on EU payments, increased production costs and the age profile of operators are some of the major challenges facing the region's beef farmers. Scales of enterprise and land fragmentation also pose significant challenges.

Based on consultation with stakeholders and Teagasc advisers it is anticipated that suckler cow numbers, at best, will stay static and that there will be an increase in the number of farmers with a dairy calf to beef enterprise. We will target a number of clients to commence contract rearing of heifers for dairy farmers to allow them to make full use of the milking platform on their farms.

### Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Utilise discussion groups as the main vehicle for knowledge transfer to beef farmers in the region. We aim to run 30 discussion groups for drystock farmers. These groups will focus on:
  - Farm management & efficiency
  - Animal health and welfare
  - Breeding management
- Stage additional public events and workshops for non-discussion group members to in lieu of reduced individual farm visits due reductions in advisor numbers. These events will focus on reseeding, cross compliance, drainage and soil fertility.
- Increase collaboration with the local District Veterinary Office and factories to feedback relevant information to clients and discussion groups.
- Focus on financial management and breeding during one to one farm contacts to help stabilise suckler cow numbers.
- Promote contract rearing in association with dairy advisors.
- Teagasc will implement a BETTER Farm Programme in the region to ensure that Tipperary clients can see best practice in operation locally.
- Teagasc will provide training for clients to ensure that they meet Bord Bia Quality Assurance standards.





### Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Sheep for 2020

The challenges facing the region's sheep farmers are similar to those of beef farmers. Teagasc Tipperary Advisory Region is targeting a 5% increase in sheep numbers.

### Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Teagasc will promote sheep as a profitable enterprise for clients and will target a 5% growth in ewe numbers.
- Discussion groups will be used as the main vehicle for knowledge transfer to sheep farmers in the region.
- Stage additional public events and workshops for non-discussion group members to in lieu of reduced individual farm visits due reductions in advisor numbers.
- One lowland sheep BETTER Farm will be operated in the region.
- Teagasc will provide training for clients to ensure that they meet Bord Bia Quality Assurance standards.



## Strategy for Tillage

### Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Tillage for 2020

Availability of land will be an issue in the Region due to the expanding dairy industry. However, we expect that the acreage under tillage with our clients will remain the same or slightly increase. There will be an increase in farm to farm sales of grain which will improve returns to growers

### Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Continue focus on profitability for tillage clients through one to one and group activities.
- Ensure that tillage clients meet the criteria of Greening.
- Targeted farm walks and seminars on key dates.
- Reorganise communications to clients utilising smart farming initiatives.

## Strategy for Education

### Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Education for 2020

Teagasc provides a key education and training service to farming in the region. There is exceptional demand for distance learning education and part time education courses at present. This will remain high with the education incentives under the Common Agricultural Policy. We have recruited a second education officer in the region with a view to delivering two distance education/green cert type courses per year to meet the demand.

### Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Provide Green Cert/Distance learning courses to meet exceptional demand. 80 students will commence in 2015
- Provide short courses on: Farm Safety, Internet Management, Cross Compliance, Farm Management & Forestry
- Provide Options Workshops and follow on initiatives.





## Strategy for Forestry

### Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Forestry for 2020

The new Forestry Programme will be key to delivering an increase of 10% in Forestry in the Region. With increasing emphasis being placed on the carbon benefits of forestry, we expect to see a steady increase in the area under forestry within the region.

### Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Create Public awareness for new forestry support schemes.
- Educate forest owners on forest management, timber harvesting and marketing of timber.
- Monitor and support the health status of our forests.
- Expand land area under private forestry – currently 23,013 ha

## Strategy for Environment

### Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Environment for 2020

Low carbon farming will also move centre stage and the Sustainable Use Directive for sprays will be implemented during this period. There will be a continued focus on improving water quality. Teagasc will provide a GLAS planning service to all clients.

### Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Educate and inform clients of the requirements on eligibility for:
  - Basic Farm Payments
  - GAEC
- Facilitate the maximum number of clients applying for GLAS through working with our strategic partner.
- Educate clients on cross compliance through a series of public events and promotional campaigns.
- Help farm enterprises move towards low carbon farming with a target Teagasc completing a Carbon Navigator for 50% of clients.
- Provide training courses in the Sustainable Use Directive (Pesticides Regs.), biodiversity and water quality protection.



### Other activities:

There is a sizeable horticultural industry mainly centred in South Tipperary involving mushroom production, apples and soft fruit and vegetable production. The mushroom growers in Tipperary (10 sizeable growers) have a turnover of approximately €40 million and are working closely with Teagasc. This arrangement will continue for the foreseeable future.

### Diversification

Tipperary has a strong tradition of successful on and off farm diversification. We will continue to train 30 to 40 potential farm entrepreneurs through the OPTIONS programme each year, we expect that many of these will go on to establish successful rural businesses. Food and tourism are the main diversification channels while the horse industry accounts for over €100m turnover annually.

## Main Research Requirements Specific to the Tipp Advisory Region

There are strong links between research and the region particularly in relation to Moorepark and Solohead Research Farm. As well as having a Greenfields Dairy Monitor farm in the region we have a heavy soils programme farm which will be very beneficial to all livestock farmers working with difficult and heavier soils. There is on-going research with some of the Coops to help identify the barriers and opportunities for the farmers and processors relating to Dairy Expansion which provide the foundation for joint programme advisory activities.

The region will carry out applied research in beef and sheep through the network of three BETTER farms and we will establish a new “Green Acres” demo farm to promote top class calf to beef systems.

## Engagement with Stakeholders

To review progress and performance the following meetings and consultations with stakeholders will take place:

- Meeting once per year with the chairman of Dairy, Beef and Sheep discussion groups to obtain feedback.
- More joint events collaborations with stakeholders.
- Closer links with Producer Groups, Veterinary Ireland with a view to holding more public meeting/ events.
- Local stakeholders to be invited to staff meetings throughout the year.





## Tipperary Advisory Region Staff Details

### Clonmel Office

Donal Mullane	Regional Manager	087 2503290
Kevin Barron	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 2231353
Leonard Betts	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 6258027
James Mullane	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 7790422
John Crosse	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 7745047
Michael Fitzgerald	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 2861524
Meadhbh Freaney	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 9122184
Gordon Peppard	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 7790618
Josie Hughes	Administration	052 6121300
Breeda O'Donnell	Administration	052 6183350

### Nenagh Office

Michael Hogan	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 7632729
Claire Mooney	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 7935643
Michael Daly	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 2581476
Catherine Ryan	Administration	067 31821

### Thurles Office

Billy Gleeson	Education Officer	087 9121463
Marcella Phelan	Education Officer	0504 21777
Tom Downey	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 4182075
Sandra Hayes	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 6458504
Joseph Hand	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 2413170
Michael White	S&E Adviser	087 3295070
James O'Neill	Tillage Adviser	087 6624485
Mary Maher	Staff Officer	0504 29237
Marie Harnett	Administration	0504 21777
Susan Kennedy	Administration	0504 21777
Paula Ryan	Administration	0504 21777



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