

Advisory
Programme

Waterford/Kilkenny 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.

Vision for Waterford Kilkenny Region

The farmers of counties Waterford and Kilkenny will exploit their natural advantages and become world leaders in sustainable agricultural production.

Teagasc Waterford Kilkenny Region Mission Statement

To develop and update the skills of farmers in Counties Waterford and Kilkenny, so that they will farm in a sustainable, resilient and efficient manner.

Teagasc Waterford Kilkenny Region Statement of Values

We will be professional, responsive, efficient, accountable and independent in working to meet the needs of Waterford and Kilkenny farmers.

Teagasc Office Locations in the Waterford/Kilkenny Region

Waterford/Kilkenny Advisory Region

Teagasc, Shandon, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford
Tel: 058 41211

Teagasc, Kells Road, Kilkenny
Tel: 056 7721153

Teagasc, Mullinavat, Co. Kilkenny
Tel: 051 898137





Waterford Kilkenny, with its natural advantages of soil and climate, is among the most intensive farming region in the country. The farmers of the region are traditionally very progressive however over the past 30 years the milk quota regime held back development.

The next five years present great opportunities for dairy farms to expand, for those locked out of dairying to now engage, for new forms of partnerships, for share farming, for new enterprises such as contract heifer rearing and an opportunity to reduce farm fragmentation.

Teagasc will be at the forefront of this development ensuring that it is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. We will work closely with our stakeholders to ensure that the agricultural economy of the region makes maximum gains from these opportunities.

This strategic plan is ambitious and has been developed against a background of declining Teagasc resources. Despite maximising cooperation with our stakeholders and outsourcing non-core work, our resources are now stretched to the limit. Any further erosion of staff resources in the region will seriously impair our ability to deliver on this plan and limit the exploitation of the opportunities by the agricultural economy of the region.

I am confident that as the fortunes of the national economy are turning the government will provide the resources required by Teagasc to develop and expand the agricultural sector. In the 1970's and early 1980's when we last had unrestricted opportunity to develop, the farm advisory service and the farmers of Waterford and Kilkenny were to the forefront of that development. It is my intention that the Teagasc advisory service and the farmers of today will similarly carry on that tradition.

John Moloney

Regional Manager, Teagasc, Waterford/Kilkenny

Waterford/Kilkenny Regional Strategic Plan – Summary Actions

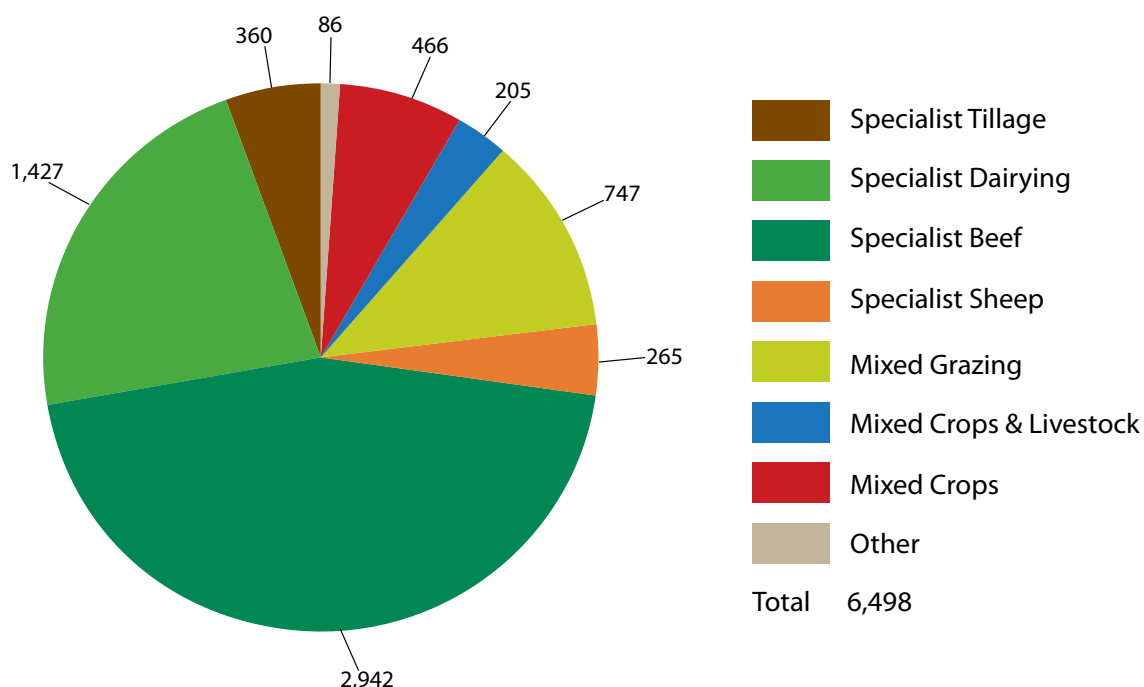
- Milk output will increase by 60%
- Suckler cow numbers will be maintained while increasing the calf to beef enterprise
- Ewe numbers will increase by 10%
- All development will be carried out in harmony with the environment
- All clients will complete Carbon Navigator and use it to guide their farming activities
- The health and safety of farmers and their families is paramount and will be emphasised at every opportunity
- Monitor farms and BETTER farms will be central to demonstrating the adoption of new technologies from research across all enterprises
- Discussion group membership will be increased across all enterprises to extend the ability of the advisory service to transfer knowledge
- We will work closely with stakeholders to ensure that development takes place in line with market demand
- Improve soil fertility by increasing the level of soil sampling and encouraging greater use of soil analysis and nutrient management planning by presenting results in a more user friendly manner
- We will work with our strategic partners FRS to facilitate our clients who wish to apply for GLAS
- A Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Agriculture distance learning course will be provided for 35 non-agricultural award holders each year as well as short courses

Farming in the Region

Farming and farm related industries are of major importance to the economies of both Counties Waterford and Kilkenny and there is a strong tradition of progressive farming in the region. The average farm size of 44.7ha is the largest of any region in the country and the standard output per farm as measured by the CSO is almost double the national average. The region has an ideal climate and soil type for growing grass and grazing enterprises predominate. Dairying is the dominant enterprise in the region from an economic point of view although only one third of farms have a dairy enterprise. There is a cattle farming enterprise on almost all farms in the region. Ten per cent of the agricultural area used is devoted to crops. There are also major food processing plants in the region such as Glanbia, Kilkenny; Dawn Meats, Kilkenny and Waterford; ABP Foods, Waterford and Flahavans, Waterford.

Farming Enterprises

Figure 1: Farm classification by type of farm for Waterford/Kilkenny 2010



Source: CSO Census of Agriculture 2010

Land Type and Soil Fertility

The majority of the soil in Waterford and Kilkenny is of a free draining loamy type and is suited to most farm enterprises. In Co. Waterford 30% of the land is above 150m mainly in two mountain ranges in north Waterford; the Comeragh Mountains and the Knockmealdown Mountains. This land is only suitable for grassland enterprises and hill sheep on the mountain slopes. In Co. Kilkenny the soil of the Castlecomer Plateau in north Kilkenny is a difficult poorly drained soil suitable only for grassland enterprises.

Soil analysis shows that only 14% of soils of the region are optimum for phosphorous, potassium and lime. Improving soil fertility is a focus for Teagasc in order to increase output across all enterprises.

Table 1: Farm classification by type of farm for Waterford/Kilkenny 2010

	Kilkenny	Waterford	WD/KK Region	Ireland
Dairying				
No of Suppliers	857	752	1,609	16,727
No of cows	66,708	64,290	130,998	1,104,112
Quote (mil.l)	286	279	565	5,362
Average herd size	78	85	81	66
Suckling				
No of herds	1,366	839	2,205	62,889
No of cows	35,798	24,982	60,780	990,753
Average herd size	26	30	28	16
Sheep				
No of flocks	551	434	985	34,304
No of ewes	48,988	42,260	91,248	2,458,600
Average flock size	89	97	93	72
Tillage				
No with s. barley	670	250	920	9,058
No with w. barley	100	70	170	2,210
Total ha cereals	15,062	7,458	22,520	274,000
General 2010				
Total area farmed (ha)	165,121	125,900	291,021	4,400,000
Total area grass (ha)	134,000	115,000	249,000	360,000
* Total no of farmers	2,878	2,059	4,937	95,481
Average farm size	44.1	45.6	44.7	32.7
** Standard output	€50,567	€61,693		€30,726

* Sole or major occupation is farming

** Standard Output is the average monetary value of the agricultural output at farm-gate prices



Facilities

The Teagasc Waterford Kilkenny Advisory Region has three offices located in Dungarvan, Mullinavat and Kilkenny. Each of the premises is owned by Teagasc and they all have been substantially upgraded in the last 12 years. As well as office facilities, each centre has a substantial meeting room used for farmer meetings and education and training courses.

Staff Resources

The trend and prediction of staff numbers 2008 -2014 are outlined in Figure 2 and Table 2.

The reduction of 23% in Teagasc advisory staff over the last 7 years is due to retirements, redeployment, termination of contracts and the embargo on recruitment in the public service.

Figure 2: Adviser Numbers in Waterford/Kilkenny Advisory Region

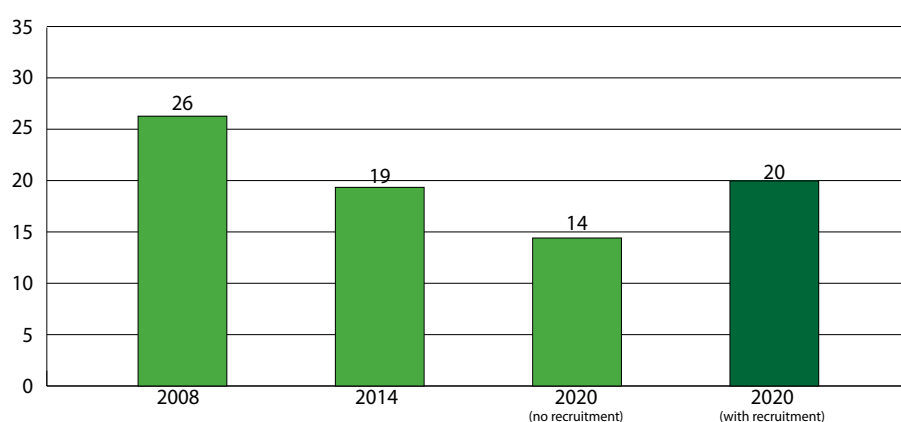
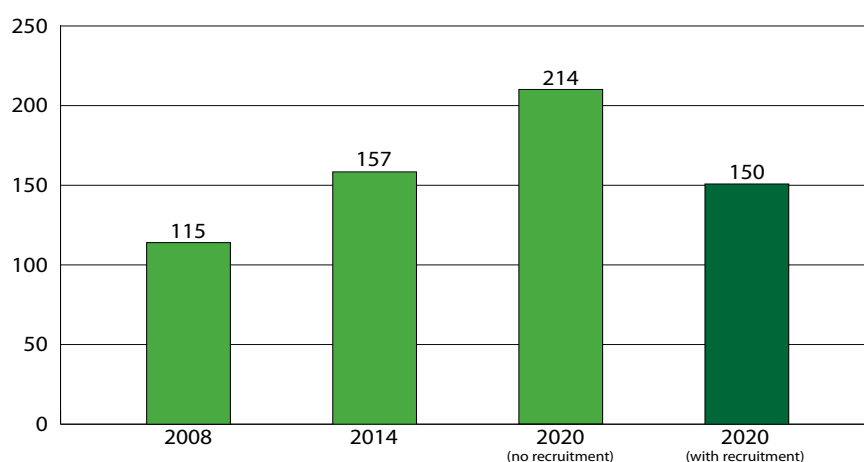


Table 2 - Trends and predictions Waterford/Kilkenny staff 2008-2020

Staff Type	2008	2014	2020	Staff required to achieve 2020 targets
Advisor	26	19	14	20
Education	2	1	1	1
Administration	7	5.1	5.1	5.1
Manager	1	1	1	1
Staff Total	36	26.1	21.1	27.1

Figure 3: Ratio of Clients per Adviser in Waterford/Kilkenny Advisory Region



Teagasc Waterford/Kilkenny Clients

The distribution of Teagasc Waterford Kilkenny Clients by farmer type and by adviser is shown in Table 3. 92% of dairy farmers, 56% of suckler farmers and 87% of farmers with winter cereals in the region are Teagasc clients. 59% of all farmers in the region are Teagasc clients.

Table 3 - Distribution of Waterford/Kilkenny Clients by Farm Type 2014

Type of Farming	Client No	Total No of Farmers	No of Advisors
Dairy	1,484	1,609	11
Sucklers	1,238	2,205	4
Winter Cereals	148	170	1
Soils & Environment	567	-	3
Total	2,906 (contracts)	4,937	19

Education

Teagasc Kildalton College is situated in the centre of the region and meets the agricultural needs of all students in the region who want full time agricultural training. The Waterford Kilkenny education officer teaches some modules to level 5 and 6 Advanced Certificate in Agriculture (ACA) students in the college. In the region the educational focus is on providing Level 6 ACA distance training to non-agricultural award holders. In addition there are also short courses on farm health and safety, financial management, dairy new entrant, environmental and options courses. The education officer also provides succession advice to farm families.

Table 4 - Young farmers from Waterford/Kilkenny completing Green Cert Courses - 2010 to 2020

Course	2008	2014	2020
On-Line Distance Learning (ACA)	45	36	36





Partners in the Region

Our mission is to develop and update the skills of farmers in counties Waterford and Kilkenny. We recognise that this is best achieved through cooperation with other bodies working with and for farmers in the region.

Glanbia: Joint technology transfer programmes between Teagasc, Glanbia and Glanbia's predecessors have been in place and working successfully since the early 1990's. The overall aim of the current joint programme is to ensure that GIIL suppliers are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to sustainably and profitably develop their dairy farm businesses. The joint programme ensures that Teagasc and GIIL advisers cooperate in delivering consistent advice to milk suppliers.

Dawn Meats: Teagasc has had a research programme on finishing systems for dairy beef which was carried out in Teagasc Johnstown Castle in recent years. Currently Dawn Meats are supporting the development of a suckler demonstration farm in Athenry, Co. Galway. Within the Waterford Kilkenny region Dawn Meats staff regularly participate in seminars, farm walks and discussion group meetings helping to keep farmers updated on market requirements.

Agricultural Consultants: Teagasc works in partnership with agricultural consultants and has outsourced REPS records, and nitrates derogation work.

Accountants: There is cooperation between Teagasc and many of the accountancy services in the region through sharing data in order to complete profit monitors for clients.

Farm Relief Service: Teagasc dairy advisers help to deliver milking skills courses with the Farm Relief Service. When the new GLAS scheme is opened FRS will be completing plans on behalf of Teagasc. A staff member acts as secretary to Waterford FRS.

Local Press and Local Radio: A weekly Teagasc column is printed in three local newspapers every week communicating with farmers. There are also regular interviews on the farming programmes of WLRFM and KCLR96FM on current topics and promoting Teagasc events.

Public Bodies: Teagasc cooperates with many publicly funded bodies in the region. Staff members work on boards or subcommittees of Leader companies, LCDC and the South Eastern Regional Assembly. We also work closely with the two county councils and regularly work on subcommittees with them. We provide work experience for students from the local second level schools and for third level students studying agriculture.

Farmer Organisations: Teagasc works closely with all of the farm organisations in the region. We regularly host meetings and farm walks with the IFA, we cooperate with the Macra na Feirme land mobility service which is based in Kilkenny and we jointly host events with the local marts.

Collaboration and Joint Events: Seminars, demonstrations, workshops and farm walks are organised on an on-going basis with a wide number of other organisations such as, Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine, Bord Bia, AI Breeding companies, Irish Farmers Journal, Irish Grassland Association, Animal Health Ireland, local vets and many other local companies.



Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Dairying for 2020

2015 heralds the dawn of a new era of opportunity for farmers in Waterford/Kilkenny. The abolition of milk quotas, changes in income tax reliefs for land leasing, a broadening of partnership rules and the introduction of share farming combined with a growing demand for food all provide an opportunity for farmers to exploit the natural advantages of the people, land and climate in the region. Teagasc will be to the forefront in leading the exploitation of these opportunities on farms in the region.

The Teagasc strategy is to achieve an increase of 60% in milk output in the region over the next 5 years. This will be achieved by increasing the average herd size in the region by 23% and the average milk yield by 30%. It is vital that this is achieved in a financially and environmentally sustainable manner and that it does not impact negatively on lifestyle. Teagasc programmes will incorporate financial planning and monitoring, grassland management, compact calving, nutrient management planning, labour management and farm safety. There will also be more volatility in milk prices than before and Teagasc will assist farmers to manage this volatility.

Table 5 - Targets for Waterford/Kilkenny 2013-2020

County	Dairy Cow No		Quota (L)		No of Suppliers		Average Herd Size		Average Yield	
	2013	2020	2013	2020	2013	2020	2013	2020	2013	2020
Waterford	64,290	78,802	279,000,000	446,400,000	752	752	85	105	4,340	5,665
Kilkenny	66,708	81,374	286,000,000	457,600,000	857	857	78	95	4,287	5,623
Total	130,998	160,176	565,000,000	904,000,000	1,609	1,609	81	100	4,313	5,644

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Maintain the high level of penetration of the service among dairy farmers in the region.
- Use discussion groups as the primary vehicle for knowledge transfer and expand participation in groups especially through the recruitment of new entrants.
- Use the three Teagasc Glanbia Joint Programme monitor farms in the region to disseminate new research innovations and the adoption of best practice. Monitor farms will also be used as a hub for workshops for farmers not willing to participate in discussion groups.
- Cooperate with Glanbia to help farmers to meet the ever increasing milk quality standards required by consumers.
- Promote land mobility, farm consolidation and long term leasing to increase the average farm size around the main farm hub thereby increasing the opportunity for investment and development.
- Promote greater use of financial analysis tools and encourage greater involvement of financial professionals in providing data for this analysis.
- Encourage collaborative farming arrangements as a means of increasing incomes and improving lifestyles.
- Work jointly with Animal Health Ireland to improve animal health.
- Provide support to avail of development schemes, outsourcing this work where necessary.

Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Beef for 2020

Lack of profitability, a high dependency on EU payments, increased production costs and the age profile are some of the challenges facing the regions beef farmers. Teagasc strategy is to stabilise suckler cow numbers in the region by improving profitability and where appropriate to exploit the opportunity of an increasing number of beef calves from the dairy herd. A target gross margin of €1,000 per hectare will be achieved by increasing stocking rate and reducing costs. Teagasc programmes will incorporate financial monitoring, increasing stocking rate, compact calving, nutrient management planning and farm safety.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Further develop discussion groups as the primary vehicle for knowledge transfer and expand participation in groups especially if the current BTAP scheme is renewed.
- Use the two Teagasc Irish Farmers Journal beef BETTER farms in the region to promote the adoption of new technology and best practice on farms. As well as annual farm walks, discussion groups will be encouraged to visit and to examine developments on the farm in more detail.
- Focus on financial management, increasing output, reducing costs, environmental sustainability, farm safety, and collaborative farming at its seminars, discussion groups and other events.
- Promote land mobility, farm consolidation and long term leasing to increase the average farm size around the main farm hub thereby increasing the opportunity for investment and development.
- Encourage greater use of ICBF HerdPlus and eProfit Monitor to identify areas of improvement which will give the greatest return.
- Run on-farm events on an annual basis demonstrating reseeding, drainage, soil fertility and cross compliance.
- Support clients to maximise income from schemes which are such an important part of family farm income. This work will be outsourced as required.
- Teagasc will develop closer links with the industry modelled on the joint programmes with the dairy industry to improve the communication of market requirements to the producer.



Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Sheep for 2020

The challenges facing the regions sheep farmers are similar to those of beef farmers. The vast majority of flocks in the region are farmed in conjunction with a beef enterprise. The flocks in Kilkenny and Waterford are very different as the Kilkenny flocks are lowland sheep only and the Waterford flocks are predominantly hill sheep. Teagasc strategy is to increase ewe numbers by 2% per year. Teagasc programmes will focus on increasing profitability and sheep numbers in the region by increasing stocking and weaning rates in lowland flocks and increasing weaning rates in hill flocks.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Further develop discussion groups as the primary vehicle for knowledge transfer and expand participation in groups especially if the current STAP scheme is renewed.
- Support clients to maximise income from schemes which are such an important part of family farm income. This work will be outsourced as required.
- Develop a scorecard to benchmark the physical measures of performance in association with the use of eProfit Monitor.
- Use discussion groups and the BETTER sheep farm in Kilkenny to increase stocking rate and weaning rate on farms and to disseminate any developments which may come from the research of new genotypes in Teagasc Athenry.
- Cooperate with Sheep Ireland in developing a flock register for hill sheep breeds which will help to improve weaning rates and promote greater use of star rated rams.



Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Tillage for 2020

Tillage crops are grown on only 10% of the agricultural land in the region and less than 100 farmers in the region have tillage as their main farm enterprise. Tillage crops are concentrated in three main areas in the region, the Blackwater Valley in west Waterford, The Suir Valley in south Kilkenny and in mid-Kilkenny.

The opportunities for cereal crops include the expansion in the number of microbreweries and micro distilleries leading to an increase in demand for malting barley and an increase in demand for oats for human consumption from Flahavans in Waterford and from Glanbia. The challenges to be met are price volatility, land availability and environmental management. Teagasc strategy is to increase profitability by more rotation of crops, use of protein crops as break crops and growing a wider range of crops while protecting the environment.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Help farmers to select suitable crop rotations, to reduce inputs and increase yields to give greater diversity and resilience.
- Encourage the growing of protein crops which will help diversity but also become a source of native protein in Irish livestock feeds.
- Use the BETTER tillage farm in Waterford to demonstrate new rotations, crops and other technologies to farmers.
- Establish a tillage discussion group and use eCrops and the Teagasc machinery cost programme to benchmark performance of discussion group members and promote discussion.
- Support clients to maximise income from schemes which are such an important part of family farm income. This work will be outsourced as required.



Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Education and Training for 2020

Teagasc Kildalton College is situated in the centre of the region and meets the agricultural needs of all students in the region who want full time agricultural training. In the region the educational focus is on providing Level 6 agricultural distance training to non-agricultural award holders. In addition there are also short courses on farm health and safety, financial management, dairy new entrant, environmental and options courses. Teagasc strategy is to continue to provide this suite of courses and to react quickly to the need for new courses.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Offer a distance learning Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Agriculture course to 35 non-agricultural award holders each year.
- Provide short courses on financial management, dairying for new entrants, farm safety, options and GLAS courses.
- Continue to contribute to courses run by other organisations.
- Develop new courses as needs are identified

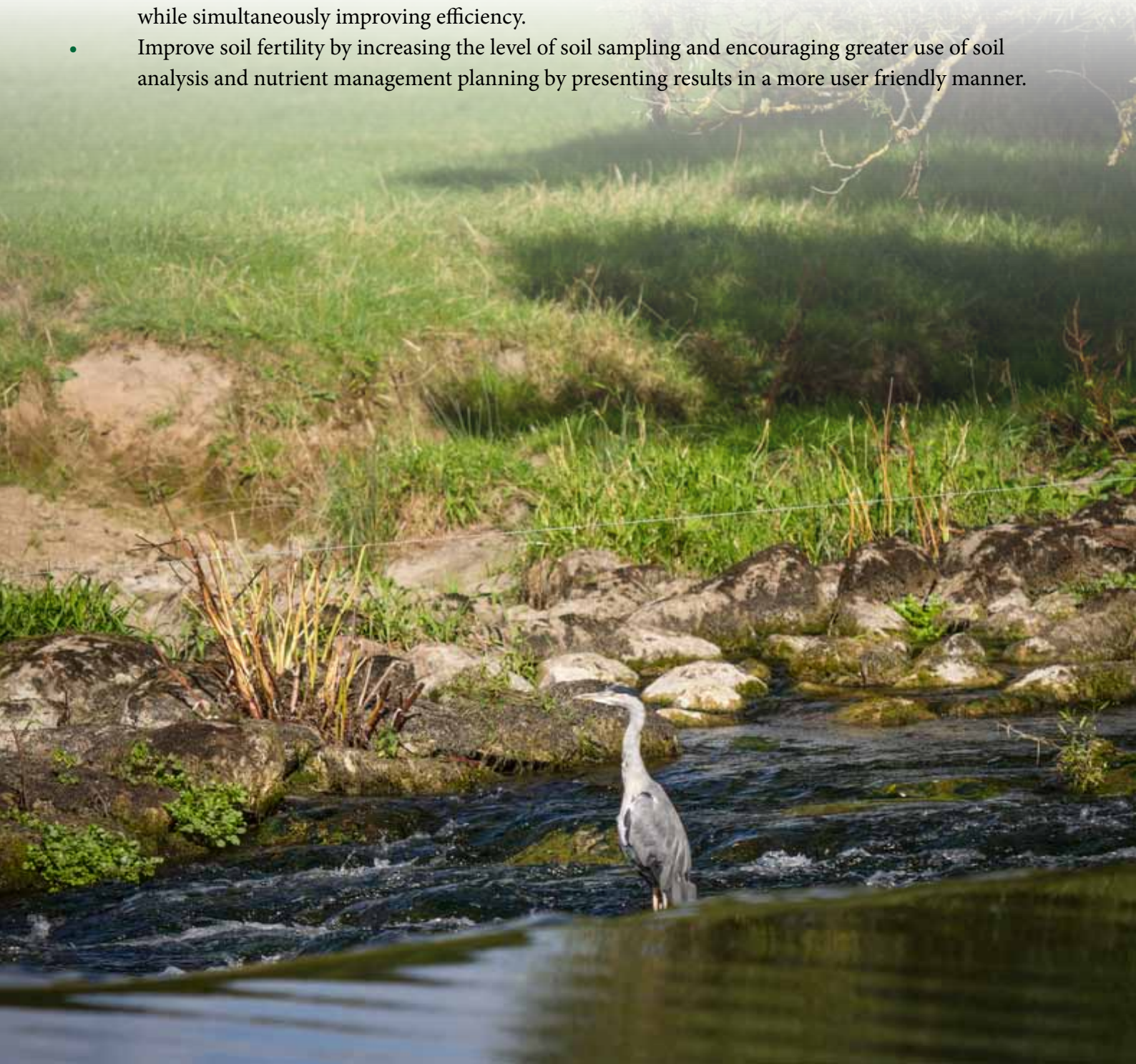


Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Environment for 2020

It is anticipated that up to 500 Teagasc clients in the Kilkenny/Waterford Region will be planned into GLAS over the period of this plan by our strategic partner. Derogation planning will move onto a common regulated platform hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, involving stricter deadlines and compliance monitoring. Low carbon farming will also move centre stage and the implementation of the Sustainable Use Directive for pesticide users will be implemented during this period.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Inform clients of the eligibility requirements for the Basic Farm Payment Scheme and Greening.
- Facilitate the maximum number of clients applying for GLAS through working with our strategic partner FRS.
- Educate clients on cross compliance through public events and promotional campaigns.
- Use the Teagasc Carbon Navigator on all clients farms over 5 years to promote low carbon farming while simultaneously improving efficiency.
- Improve soil fertility by increasing the level of soil sampling and encouraging greater use of soil analysis and nutrient management planning by presenting results in a more user friendly manner.



Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Farm Safety for 2020

The rise in farm accident deaths nationally in 2014 to 30 is a very concerning trend. 53% of all workplace deaths take place on farms while the level of fatal accidents to children on farms doubled in 2014. Work organisation has a major impact on farm accident rates. Teagasc will assist farmers to actively manage farm safety and health and will be actively including the topic in discussion groups and farm demonstrations.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Continue to run farm safety training courses in each of our offices every autumn where farmers will complete the farm safety self-assessment for their own farm as required by law.
- Work closely with the Health and Safety Authority to support and educate farm families on farm health and safety.
- Discuss farm safety at every alternate discussion group meeting across all enterprises.
- Emphasis on farm safety at all public events.



Main Research Requirements Specific to this Region

Dairying

Teagasc Moorepark is located close to the region and operates on a similar soil type and climate to much of the region. The dairy research that is being carried out there in areas such as grassland management and breeding is highly relevant to the majority of dairy farmers in the region.

The Greenfield Farm in Kilkenny and the three monitor farms demonstrate the new technologies developed by researchers at farm level and are visited by dairy farmers in the region, through discussion groups or open events, on a regular basis each year. This will continue.

Research from the Teagasc Ballyhaise research farm and from the Teagasc heavy soils programme is more relevant to the dairy farmers on the Castlecomer plateau where the soils are poorly drained. We will encourage farmers through discussion groups in this area to make better use of the information coming from this research.

Beef

Beef research is carried out in Teagasc Grange, Co. Meath. This is located a prohibitive distance from much of the region and only a minority of beef farmers in the region travel there. The primary means of transferring the knowledge of technologies developed in Grange to farmers in the region is through the two BETTER farms, discussion groups and open events and this will continue.

Sheep

Sheep research is carried out in Teagasc Athenry, Co. Galway which is quite distant from the region. Research being carried out there on grassland management, stocking rate and evaluation of new genotypes is very relevant to the lowland sheep farmers in the region. The sheep BETTER farm is used to demonstrate the technologies developed in Athenry to local farmers. More use will be made of this farm with discussion groups as well as farm walks on other farms in the region that have adopted new technologies.

Tillage

Tillage research carried out in Teagasc Oak Park, Carlow, is within easy reach of the region and is used well by the major tillage farmers in Waterford Kilkenny. The research on crop rotations, alternative crops, disease control etc is all very relevant to farmers in the region. Cereal variety testing is also carried out in Kildalton College and there is a BETTER demonstration farm in Co. Waterford. Tillage farming in the region is well serviced by research and new innovations are readily adopted.

Waterford/Kilkenny Advisory Staff Details

Dungarvan Office

John Moloney	Regional Manager	087 9180729
Patrick O'Brien	B&T Drystock Adviser	058 43923
Mark Slattery	B&T Drystock Adviser	058 43924
Brian Hilliard	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 0998278
Seamus Kearney	B&T Dairy Adviser	058 43926
William McCarthy	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 0998296
Owen Power	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 0998083
Catriona Foley	S&E Adviser	058 43929
Frances Carroll	Staff Officer	058 41211
Dorothy Ahearne	Administration	058 41211
Ann O'Donovan	Administration	058 43920

Kilkenny Office

Loretto O'Driscoll	Education Officer	086 8847839
Terence Carroll	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 6624913
Patrick Moylan	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 9266042
Richard O'Brien	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 2836182
Mark Trimble	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 2349585
Thomas Turley	B&T Dairy Adviser	086 3013637
Marianne Mulhall	S&E Adviser	087 9292850
Richard O'Shea	Tillage Adviser	087 9176581
Ann Bevins	Administration	056 7721153
Teresa Walsh	Administration	056 7789357

Mullinavat Office

Austin Flavin	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 0565654
Thoms Fallon	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 2749643
Michael Freaney	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 2339859
Hugh McEneaney	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 2388358
Maurice Walsh	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 2339006
Deirdre Glynn	S&E Adviser	087 0998052
Stella Dalton	Administration	051 898650

Waterford/Kilkenny Advisory Region

Teagasc, Shandon, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford

Teagasc, Kells Road, Kilkenny

Teagasc, Mullinavat, Co. Kilkenny

058 41211

056 7721153

051 898137