

Westmeath/Offaly/Cavan/Monaghan Advisory Region

Strategic Plan

2015 - 2020



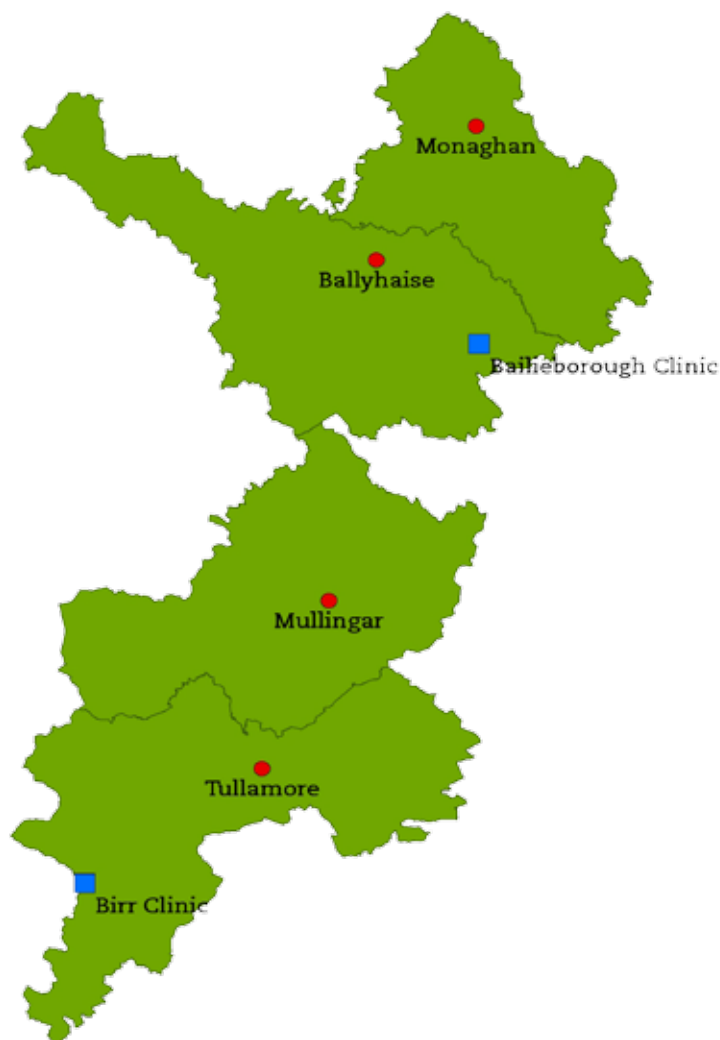
Teagasc Mission Statement

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 Westmeath/Offaly/Cavan/Monaghan Region



Westmeath/Offaly/Cavan/Monaghan Advisory Region

Teagasc, Clonminch, Tullamore, Co. Offaly

057 9321405

Teagasc, Bellview, Dublin Road, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

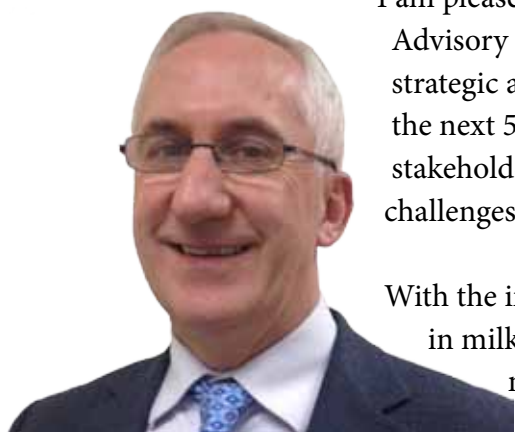
044 9340721

Teagasc Advisory Office, Ballyhaise College, Ballyhaise, Co. Cavan

049 4338300

Teagasc, Coolshannagh, Monaghan

047 81188



I am pleased to present the Teagasc Westmeath/Offaly/Cavan/Monaghan 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.

With the imminent abolition of milk quotas we anticipate an increase of 40% in milk supplies in the Region. We also anticipate a large increase in the number of farms involved in calf to beef with extra calves available from the dairy herd.

Teagasc advisers in the Region are key to ensuring these targets are achieved. Teagasc supports our 3,800 clients through farm visits, consultations, discussion groups, farm walks, seminars and open days. Training is important component of our strategy.

This strategic plan outlines the targets and critically states the minimum resources required by Teagasc in the Region to deliver on objectives set out in the strategy.

Con Feighery

Regional Manager, Westmeath/Offaly/Cavan/Monaghan

Westmeath/Offaly/Cavan/Monaghan Regional Strategic Plan – Summary Actions

- Our Dairy Programme will deliver an increase of 40% in milk supplies
- Increase the numbers participating in discussion groups- target 30% drystock clients
- Provision of a one to one service for new entrants to dairying and expansion clients
- Set up a “Calf to Beef” Monitor Farm and assist farmers expanding this enterprise
- Increase liaison with the two Agricultural Colleges in/ adjacent to Region (Gurteen & Ballyhaise) to create better linkages to students leaving Agriculture education
- Set up Tillage Discussion Groups, target client efficiencies at highest levels in Europe
- Focus on labour efficiency on drystock farms
- Continue the BETTER Farm Programme in Region
- Continue high quality public events (public good)
- Continue two Joint Programmes operating in Region (Lakeland & Aurivo)
- Continue to work with partners in the Region: - Merchants, Marts, Genetics Companies, IFAC, ICBF, AHI, DAFM, Banks etc.
- Provide training to increased numbers of new entrants & adult training courses
- Set target of 40% of Discussion Group Members to complete the Carbon Navigator
- Provide Health/ Safety and Quality Assurance Courses in all office areas.

The Importance of Farming in the Westmeath/Offaly/Cavan/Monaghan Region

The total number involved in farming as a percentage of the population in Region is 4.62%.

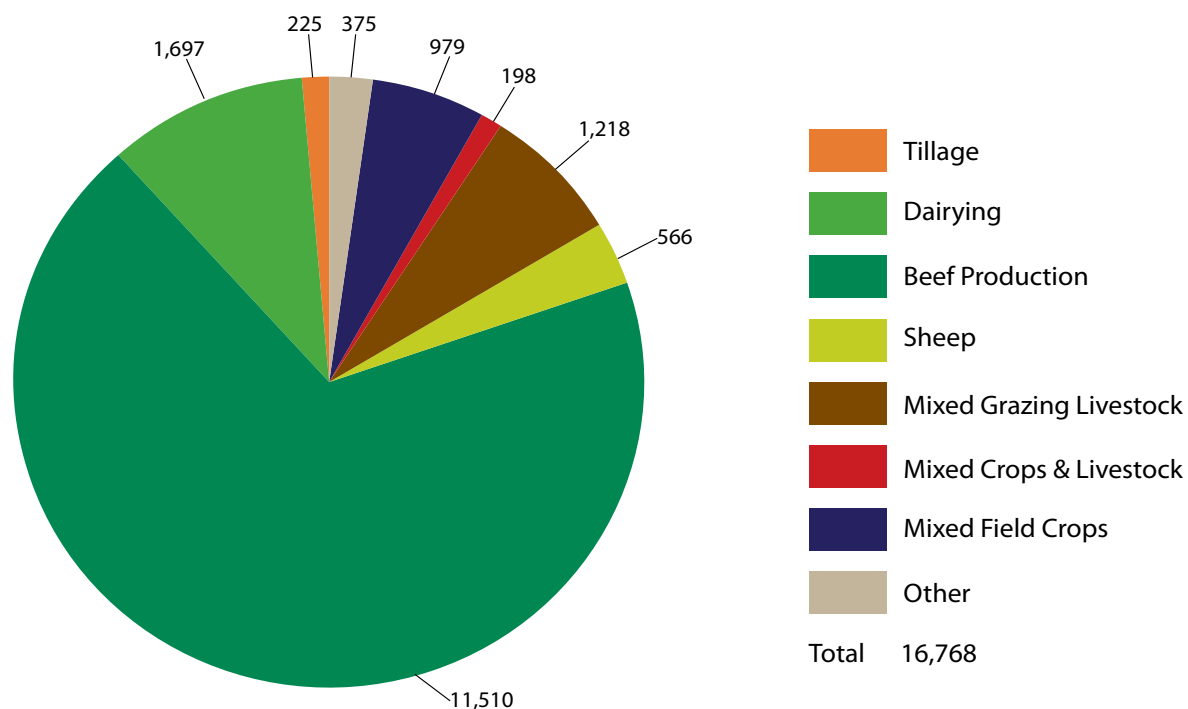
Westmeath/Offaly/Cavan/Monaghan Region is large and diverse with 16,768 farmers (CSO 2010).

Cattle production is the largest enterprise based on 76% of farm holdings. Dairying is the main enterprise on 12% of farms with larger numbers of dairy farms in Cavan and Monaghan compared to Westmeath and Offaly.

Farming Systems

- 12% of farmers are involved in dairy production
- 76% of farmers involved in cattle production
- 6% of farmers involved in tillage production

Figure 1 - Farm classification by type of farm for Westmeath/Offaly/Cavan/Monaghan



Source: CSO Census of Agriculture 2010

Land Type and Soil Fertility

The region is split in two with cattle/ drystock bias in the south and a cattle/ dairying bias in the northern counties.

The counties of Cavan and Monaghan have heavier wetter type of soils compared to Offaly Westmeath.

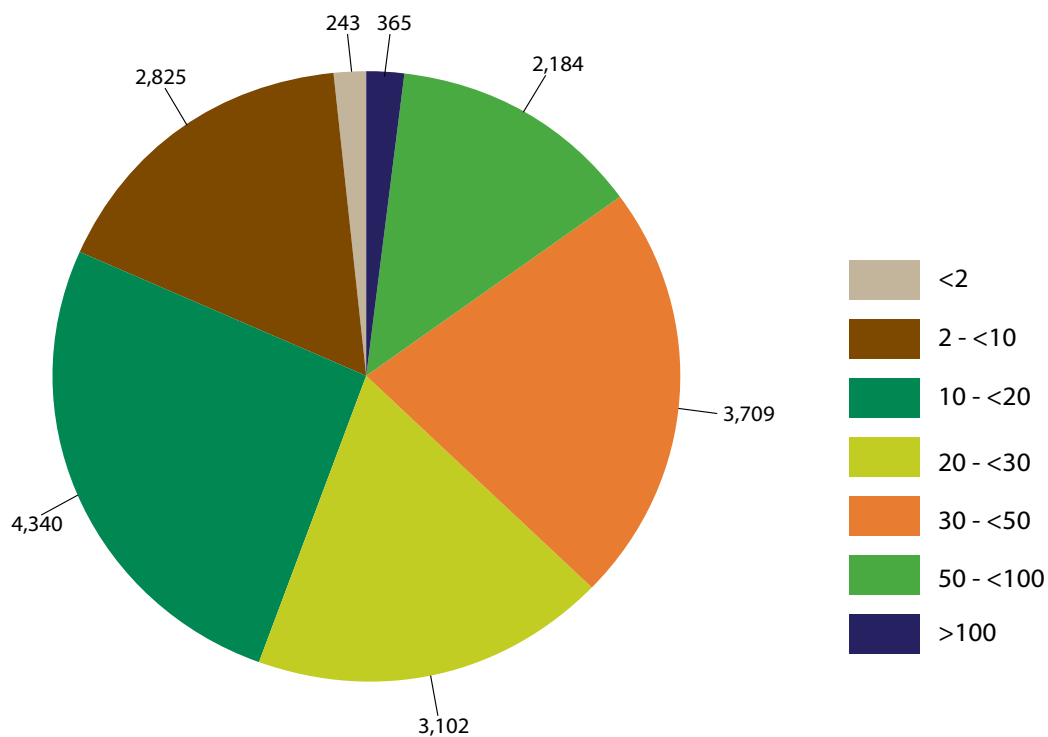
Farm Size

Average farm size at 31 ha is lower than national average (32.7)

Fragmentation:

- Nationally: 3.8 parcels/ farm
- Region: 3.4 parcels/ farm

Figure 2 - Farm size in Westmeath/Offaly/Cavan/Monaghan (hectares)



Source: CSO Census of Agriculture 2010



Facilities

There are four offices in the region. The main Office locations are in Tullamore, Mullingar, Ballyhaise and Monaghan. We have two clinics in Birr and Baileboro.

Staff Resource

The trends and predicted numbers of staff and clients are set out below.

Figure 3: Adviser Numbers in Westmeath/Offaly/Cavan/Monaghan Advisory Region

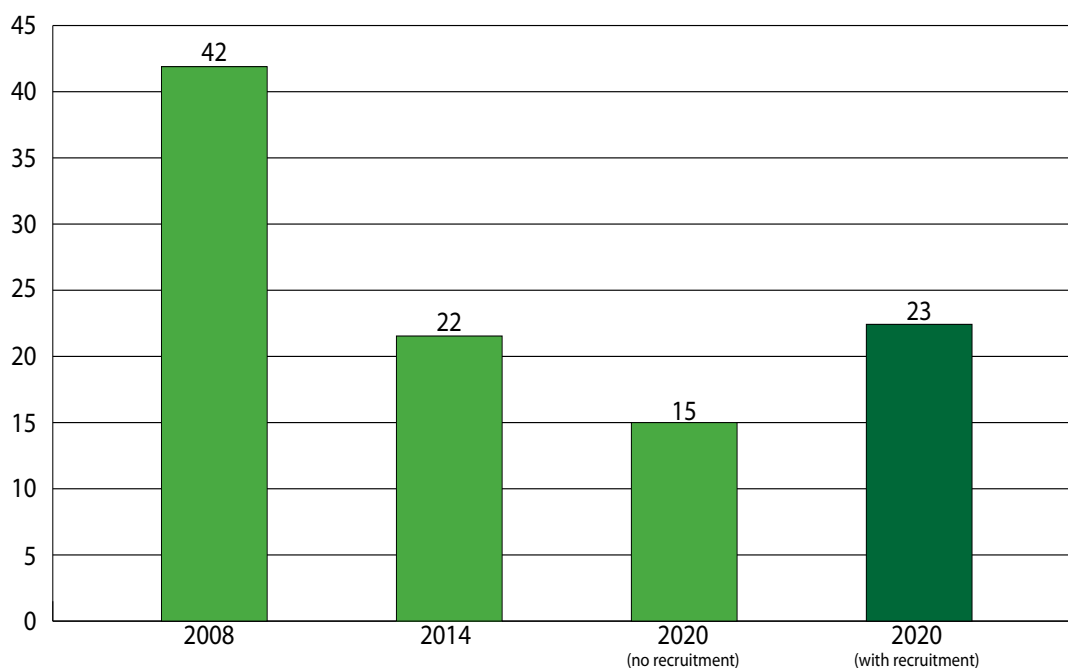


Table 1 - Trends and predictions Westmeath/Offaly/Cavan/Monaghan staff 2008-2020

Staff Type	2008	2014	2020	Staff required to achieve 2020 targets
Advisor	42	22	15	23
Education	2	1	1	2
Administration	15	6.5	6.5	6.5
Support	1	0	0	0
Staff Total	60	29.5	21.5	31.5



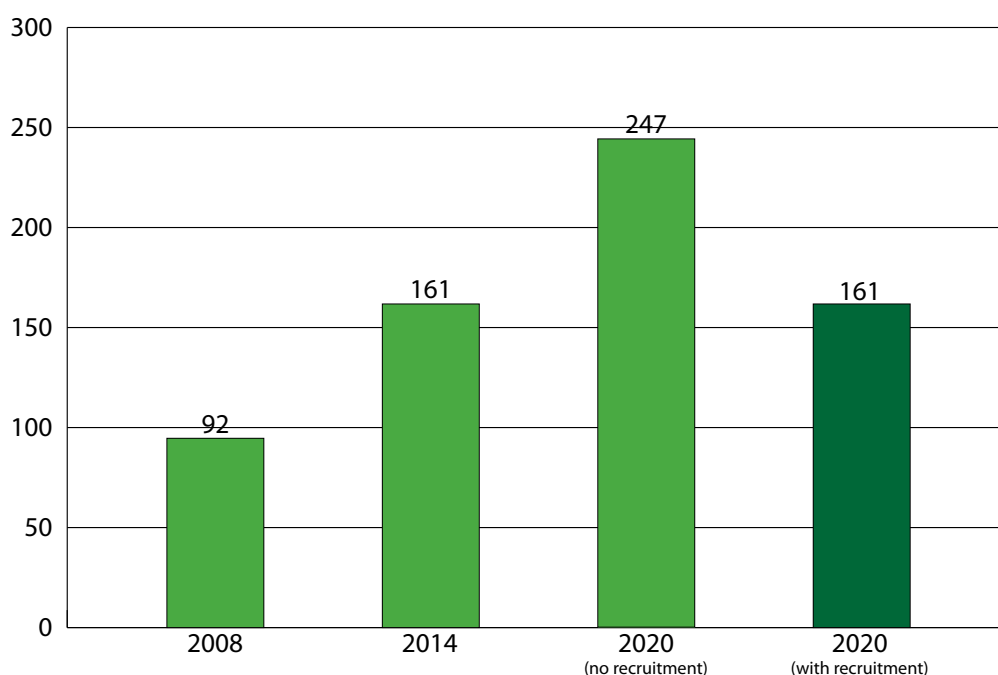
Teagasc Westmeath/Offaly/Cavan/Monaghan Clients

Table 2 below presents the distribution of Teagasc clients in the Region by farmer type and advisor. 46% of dairy producers and 20% of beef producers are Teagasc clients.

Table 2: Distribution of Region Clients by Farm Type

Type of Farming	Client No	Total No of Farmers	No of Advisors
Dairy	785	1,697	6 + 2 (Joint Prog Advisers)
Beef	2,714	12,926	14
Sheep	150	375	1 (FTE)
Tillage	130	979	1 (FTE)
Total	3,779	15,977	

Figure 3: Ratio of Clients per Adviser in Westmeath/Offaly/Cavan/Monaghan Advisory Region



Education

The numbers of young farmers who have or are expected to complete the Green Cert course in the region or at agricultural college from 2008 - 2020 is outlined in Table 3.

Table 3 - Young farmers from Westmeath/Offaly/Cavan/Monaghan completing Green Cert Courses - 2010 to 2020

Training Location	2008	2014	2020
No of young farmers trained in the region	33	40	40
No of young farmers trained in colleges	144	145	150
Total	177	185	190

Partners in the Region

- **Joint Programmes:** There are currently two Joint Programmes in place with (1) Lakeland Dairies and (2) Aurivo which complement the objectives of the Teagasc Dairy Advisory programme in the Region. There is currently (2014) no Joint Programme in place with either Arrabawn or Town of Monaghan, however Teagasc has developed a close working relationship with both milk processors.
- **Private Merchants:** We have a good relationship with private merchants in the region and run some joint public events.
- **Private Agricultural Consultants:** There are a limited number of private agricultural consultants in the Region.
- **IFAC:** IFAC Accountants offers accountancy services in the region and there is currently a relationship between Teagasc and IFAC to facilitate the provision of data for Profit Monitor.
- **Other collaborations:** AI companies, AHI (which can also provide opportunities to work with local vets), ICBF, Farm Relief Services (FRS), banks, DAFM, meat processor, LEADER Companies. We have a good relationship with local marts where some events are hosted (Suckler Cow events, breeding events, fodder events etc).
- Important internal stakeholders are the two Agricultural Colleges at Ballyhaise and Gurteen.



Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Dairy for 2020

Our Dairy Programme will support the delivery of a 40% increase in milk supplies in the Region. Based on consultation with Teagasc dairy advisers and milk processors, it is anticipated that a 50% growth in milk supplies will occur in Westmeath/Offaly with a 30 – 35% growth in Cavan/Monaghan.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Teagasc will target a 40% increase in milk output in the region.
- Prioritise time for one-to-one support of new entrants and significant expanders.
- Time to be freed up through the outsourcing of non-core work such as Derogation Planning, Nitrates Records, SPS/Basic Payment Scheme.
- A minimum of eight dairy advisers are required to implement the dairy programme in the region; consequently it is important that the Joint Programme with Lakeland Dairies is renewed;
- A big part of the dairy programme will continue to be delivered through Discussion Groups – with support for Knowledge groups through the new Rural Development Programme over the next 3 years, Teagasc will target to maximise numbers in dairy groups and keep groups fresh through training and innovative methodologies.
- A key Advisory activity will be the provision and support of business and financial planning to milk suppliers in the Region.
- Teagasc will provide training for clients to ensure they meet Bord Bia quality assurance schemes
- Teagasc will work with Animal Health Ireland to improve milk quality and disease status of livestock in the region.
- Finally, the Dairy Advisers will increase their involvement with the two Colleges in/adjacent to the Region (Ballyhaise and Gurteen Agricultural Colleges).



Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Beef for 2020

Based on consultation with Teagasc drystock advisers and stakeholders, it is anticipated that there will be increased farmer interest and expansion in calf to beef enterprises with extra calves available from the dairy herd.

Our drystock programme will help stabilise Suckler Cow numbers in the Region and assist farmers who are setting up or expanding a calf to beef enterprise. We will develop a Calf to Beef Monitor Farm in the Region to demonstrate a sustainable system for clients.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Teagasc will target to stabilise suckler cow numbers and foster an expansion in calf to beef production
- Teagasc will provide training on appropriate blueprints for successful calf to beef enterprises and develop a “Calf to Beef” monitor farm in the Region.
- Prioritise establishment of more discussion groups in Region (target 30% of drystock clients in groups).
- The new KT Discussion Group Programme (to be launched in 2015) with support for Discussion Groups will be key to maintaining and increasing group numbers particularly in the drystock sector.
- Teagasc will develop stronger linkages with drystock students leaving agricultural education.
- Teagasc will increase focus on improving labour efficiency (return/hour worked) on drystock farms.
- We will continue with the BETTER Farm Programme in the Region.
- Workshops will be provided to non-Discussion Group members.
- Continue with a high level of public events in Region (public good).
- Non-core work will be subcontracted to private consultants.
- Investigate possibility of a joint programme with industry on Calf to Beef System.



Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Sheep 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 sheep farmers.

We will deliver a programme that will target an increase of 7 to 10% in ewe numbers and also target to increase lambs weaned per ewe.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Teagasc will target a 7% increase in ewe numbers:
- It is important that STAP or new equivalent is kept in place to continue to drive technology transfer with significant sheep clients. Groups will target a 2% pa. increase in lambs weaned per ewe.
- We will recruit new farmers to existing and new sheep groups.
- Programme will focus on labour efficiency on sheep farms.
- We will establish a sheep BETTER farm in the region.



Strategy for Tillage

Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Tillage for 2020

Our Tillage Programme will target high levels of production efficiency and help stabilise the number of farmers involved in tillage in the Region. Tillage clients are mainly located in Westmeath and Offaly.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Teagasc will target to keep production efficiency among the highest levels in Europe
- Tillage Discussion Groups will be reformed.
- Programme will focus on time critical public events for tillage farmers in association with tillage specialists.
- Tillage farmers will be supported to ensure they comply with the Sustainable Use Directive.

Strategy for Education

Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Education for 2020

Teagasc provides a strong education and training service to farming in the region. Demand for Distance Learning Courses and Part Time Certificate in Farming Courses to remain high. A major challenge will be to deliver on the demand for courses with diminishing staffing resources.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Provide Distance Learning course annually for 40 students in Mullingar.
- Provide short courses on:
 - Farm Safety
 - Cross Compliance
 - Farm Management
 - Forestry
- Provide Options Workshops and follow on initiatives.



Strategy for Forestry

Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Forestry for 2020

Estimated number of farmers with forestry in region is 1,500. Ha in Forestry - 24,000 (8,000 Coillte and 16,000 Private). The new Forestry Programme will be key to delivering an increase of 10% in Forestry in the Region.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Teagasc will undertake a public awareness campaign regarding the new Forestry Support Schemes.
- Continue knowledge transfer of good forest management in the context of forest health.
- Educate forest owners on forest management, timber harvesting and marketing timber.

Strategy for Environment

Overall Expected Changes/Targets for 2020

Teagasc will facilitate the maximum number of clients applying for GLAS through working with our strategic partner. Low carbon farming will also move centre stage and the Sustainable Use Directive for sprays will be implemented during this period.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

We will educate and assist clients regarding existing and new developmental and environmental schemes and directives:

- Assist clients with BPS/GAEC.
- Facilitate the maximum number of clients applying to GLÁS through working with our strategic partner – FRS.
- We will educate clients on Cross Compliance including the Nitrates Regulations through public events and through our Discussion Group network.
- We will target 40% of our Discussion Group members to complete a Carbon Navigator to move towards low carbon farming.
- A continued focus on improving soil fertility in the Region through the promotion of soil testing.



Main Research Requirements Specific to this Region

From a dairying and drystock perspective, the main research requirement is in relation to heavy soils/ drainage – there is a requirement to have a demonstration farm/ site within the Region.

There is a Catchment Study being carried out in Monaghan to evaluate the impact of farm management practices on water quality in heavy soil areas.

These findings are being used on an on-going basis in our knowledge transfer activities.

We will continue to work with and inform clients of the research outcomes from the Teagasc Sheep Research farm in Athenry and Beef Research Centre in Grange.

Engagement with Stakeholders

There are currently two Regional Unit Stakeholder groups within the Region. An annual meeting takes place with all Stakeholders in the Region. There is potential to increase the membership of these groups in the future.



Westmeath/Offaly/Cavan/Monaghan Advisory Region Staff Details

Tullamore Office

Con Feighery	Regional Manager	087 2626435
James Moyles	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 2432682
Mark Coyne	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 9393211
Bernard Doorley	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 9326058
Mark Gavin	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 9403191
Patrick O’Gorman	B&T Drystock/Tillage Adviser	087 6700047
John Paul Fox	B&T Drystock/Tillage Adviser	087 4174325
Brendan Dooley	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 9326058
Catherine McGrath	Staff Officer	057 9329431
Ann Kearns	Administration	057 9329430

Mullingar Office

Thomas Daly	Education Officer	087 9091716
Patrick Gowing	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 9050804
Paul Gibney	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 9858511
Christy Jones	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 9842616
David Webster	B&T Drystock/Tillage Adviser	087 9843022
Brendan Connolly	S&E Adviser	087 9389115
Margaret Cusack-McCormack	Administration	044 9333000

Ballyhaise Office

David Colbourne	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 1217680
Domhnall Kennedy	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 1218752
Martina Moran	B&T Dairy Adviser - Joint Prog	087 9031069
Roslyn Fay	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 6148001
Andrew McNamee	B&T Dairy Adviser - Joint Prog	047 81188
Niall McCabe	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 1218743
Cathal Dolan	S&E Adviser	087 7449267
Eileen McCabe	Administration	049 4338631

Monaghan Office

Trevor Dunwoody	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 6593684
James O’Donoghue	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 7885108
Mairead Kirk	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 4158715
Jane McConnon	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 9042245
Conal Murnaghan	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 7798634
Melissa Corey	Administration	047 77378
Ann Murphy	Administration	047 77380
Marie Doherty	Administration	-

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