

Environmental Sustainability on Dairy Farms - how to better communicate messages at farm level.

Abstract – Aoife Leader

Farmland biodiversity defines the agricultural landscape and plays an integral role in dairy farm sustainability. This role has been recognised at Global, European and National levels in the UN SDGs, Farm-to-Fork and EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, Food Wise 2025 and the Climate Action plan for Ireland. Improving the management of biodiversity on dairy farms with simple and effective practice adoption can contribute greatly to the efforts being made to improve sustainability. In this study a participatory action research approach, involving the Teagasc-Glanbia Open Source Future Farm monitor farmers, has been taken to identify methods that are effective in communicating biodiversity management to Irish dairy farmers. There are four-phases to the study; firstly, biodiversity baseline establishment, secondly biodiversity management plan cocreation, thirdly implementation and communication, and finally a measurement of change. Early findings suggest that farmers, although interested in biodiversity management, are cautious due to uncertainty regarding future requirements and possible incentivisation. This study involves the piloting of an intervention on biodiversity management that has the potential to provide a framework for the implementation of farm specific biodiversity management plans and inform advisory services on effective approaches to communicating biodiversity management, contributing to the overall improvement of the sustainability of Irish dairy farms.