

An analysis on the barriers of agricultural mitigation measures on dairy farms in Ireland

Martin Ryan

Abstract

Greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture in Ireland is among the highest in Europe, this is a direct cause from the increase in dairy cow numbers since the abolishment of the milk quota in 2015. Now Ireland has a mandate to meet in order to fix the problem in relation to emission's. Currently there is a lot of farming practices that reduce GHG but uptake on the mitigation measures is very low.

The main objective of this study was to examine what are main barriers to the uptake of mitigation measures on dairy farmers in Ireland, and also to see if progressive farmers are more likely to adopt the practices than less progressive farmers. This study was carried out in the summer of 2020 in conjunction with Dairy gold and some of it milk suppliers, Dairy gold is an Irish dairy co-operative based in Mitchelstown, county Cork.

It was discovered that dairy farmers have an average knowledge with regards to the impact dairying has on greenhouse gas emissions and lacked the correct information on the topic, the main barriers the farmers stated were, the cost on introducing the new mitigation measures and the lack of information on the new measures. The findings also showed that farmers who are more progressive, i.e. those involved in discussion groups, have greater levels of production, more labour on farmers, were the farmers who use mitigation measures in low emission slurry spreading and spreading Protected Urea.

The paper concludes that they must be more tailored information made available to farmers, on the impact dairying has on GHG and the mitigation measures that are available to them that will help with the reduction in levels on farms. Milk bonus as an incentive that must be considered that will increase adoption rates along with having more information nights and farm walks about the mitigation practices and how they work.