

November 2024



IFA

2024 General Election

CENTRAL Asks

CAP - CAP funding must remain a stand-alone allocation within the EU budget. It needs to be substantially increased and used to support farmers, food production and food security. The global demand for grain, meat and dairy is rising. If these products are not produced in Ireland, they will be made elsewhere with higher (negative) environmental impact. A separate EU environment fund, in addition to the CAP, must be created to support environmental action on farms. This fund should include support for farmers with designated land and any actions that may arise from the EU Nature Restoration Plan. Future generations will not commit to farming without more certainty on funding streams.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCHEME - The ACRES scheme has been shambolic and has failed to deliver for farmers. We need a revamped environmental scheme that provides farmers with a payment of up to €15,000.

NITRATES DEROGATION - The nitrates derogation is pivotal for the Irish farming sector and must be retained long-term. Over 30 measures have been introduced at farm level since 2020. These must be given time to work. Farmers need certainty to justify making ongoing environmental investments on their farms.

TRADE DEALS - There must be a level playing field on any EU Trade Deals. The proposed Mercosur agreement must be opposed by the Irish Government. We cannot have double standards within the EU market that undermine EU food quality and standards.

REGULATION - Irish farmers are being regulated out of business. The constant escalation in regulations is turning away potential successors and new entrants. We need stability with no further increase in regulations, including CAP conditionality, such as proposed GAEC 2 restrictions on peatlands. There must be proper engagement with farmers to ensure that policy is fair and implementable at farm level, including the Government's proposed land use policy.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE SECTORS - Our most vulnerable sectors struggle for viability, with farm incomes at historically low levels in many cases. These sectors need extra support, as outlined overleaf, to avoid their total wipeout.

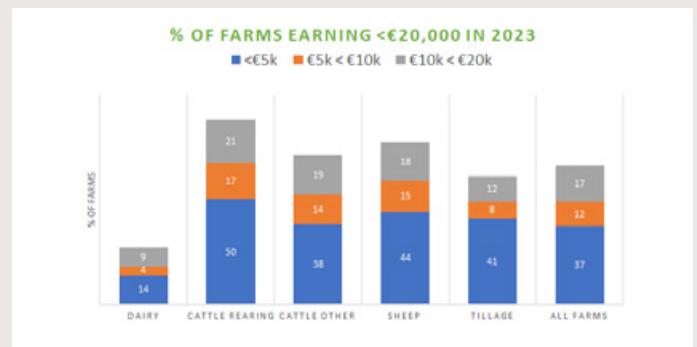
LAND TAX - actively farmed land must be exempt from the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT). It is penal, unjust and disproportionate. The proposed solution offered as part of Budget 2025 only provides a temporary respite for impacted farmers. We need a permanent solution that excludes actively farmed land. All taxation measures to support farming and earlier land transfer must be maintained and targeted towards genuine farmers.

Table 1: % change in family farm income and total farm costs 2017-2023

Sector	% change in costs	→	% change in income
Sheep	+37%	→	-28%
Suckler	+46%	→	-31%
Cattle Other	+55%	→	-9%
Dairy	+86%	→	-45%
Tillage	+106%	→	-41%
All	+73%	→	-34%

(Source: Teagasc National Farm Survey, various years)

Table 2: % of farms earning <€20,000 (National Minimum Wage) in 2023



(Source: Teagasc National Farm Survey, 2024)

ANC

Given no direct link to production, at least a return to past commitments - Budget (€300m+) and permitted eligible areas (45ha).

Beef

To provide economic viability and long-term sustainability to this crucial sector:

- **Suckler cow:** Targeted support of at least €300/cow (incl. multiannual National Exchequer schemes) without cost incurred, income foregone approach.
- **Dairy Beef:** Multiannual scheme providing €100/calf for the rearing of dairy-beef calf (incl from dual breeds).
- **Beef Sustainability Scheme:** Multiannual scheme providing at least €100 per head to support measures that maximise performance; rearing/finishing weanling and store cattle born in suckler and dairy herds.

Sheep

- Targeted support of at least €30/ewe [€40 for Hill ewes] (incl. multiannual National Exchequer schemes) without the cost incurred; income foregone approach is needed to sustain the sector.

Tillage

- A 5-year plan to ensure the economic survival of the tillage sector.
- 5Yr Tillage Survival Scheme (€250/ha/yr) for commercial growers.
- Tillage Expansion Scheme (€400/ha Yr1; €250/ha Yr2) to encourage new land and farmers into the sector.

Pigs / Poultry

A more practical solution to 4-day notification of organic nutrient movements; increased TAMS investment ceilings and grant rates for all, together with immediately available and increased financial supports in the event of a disease outbreak.

Horticulture/Potatoes

A fit-for-purpose seasonal work permit scheme and a Horticulture Crisis Fund to help alleviate labour and cost of production challenges. Temporary derogation on seed potato coming in from the UK.

Forestry

Full review of Forestry Programme (32% allocation to biodiversity and broadleaf planting is excessive); Ash Dieback (Reconstitution and Roadside Removal) schemes needed; Amendment to State-aid guidelines to allow farmers to receive compensation for loss of timber earnings and income foregone as a result of ash dieback.

Aquaculture

Adequate funding and resources to implement recommendations regarding Aquaculture Licencing; tertiary treatment is prioritised for all coastal Wastewater Treatment Plants.

Designated Lands

Compensation for restrictions, loss of income and asset devaluation.

Cross-Sectoral Supports

LESS: Defer and review mandatory use of LESS for farms stocked at 100-130kg Organic N. Not practical, economically viable, or safe.

Agri-Food Regulator: Greater powers to address price in food supply chain (incl. below cost selling) and get info from companies.

TAMS: Increased investment ceiling and reference costs to keep in line with inflation. Extra items: dribble bar; rubber mats; safety cages.

Agri Rainy-Day Fund: available for all farm sectors and farming types (incl. Limited Companies).

Residential Zoned Land Tax: actively farmed land must be permanently exempt from RZLT. It is penal, unjust and disproportionate.

GAEC-2: Delayed implementation post-2025 until proper engagement occurs and an adequate financial package is in place to reward farmer endeavour and compensate for any reduction in farming activity, lost income and or asset value. Maximum flexibility is needed.

Animal Health: 0% VAT on non-oral animal medicines and vaccines; adequate resources to ensure effective implementation of Deer Management Strategy; Wildlife Control (with focus on density reduction), BVD, Johnes, IBR and Parasite Control Programmes.

Organics: Increased investment toward developing markets and outlets for existing organic produce and projected increase in supplies.

Live exports: Vital for trade and must be protected. Irish farmers must not be exposed and excluded from EU and international markets.

State aid threshold: increased to €50,000 (from €20,000 today). Opportunity for more targeted nationally financed schemes.