

4th AKIS Coordination Group Meeting

10.10.2025

Teagasc, Grange, Co. Meath

Enhancing the uptake of solutions to challenges in the beef value chain

Pre-meeting Site Visit

Meeting attendees had an opportunity to participate in a guided tour of the Teagasc Grange Beef Research Programme farm and learn about ongoing activities, prior to the meeting.

Introduction and Welcome

Cormac McGann (CSP Division, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM)) welcomed those in attendance and thanked them for their ongoing participation in the AKIS Coordination Group. The key role of AKIS in the future CAP proposals was highlighted, two articles from a total of 20 focus on AKIS. It is positive for Ireland that we have an AKIS Coordination Group that takes into account the needs of stakeholders to plan our future AKIS strategy. Cormac thanked Teagasc for hosting the event and Avion Phillips and Mark Gibson (Teagasc/modern AKIS) and Leo Mc Grane (CAP Network Ireland) for their work in preparing the meeting content.

Avion Phillips outlined the agenda for the day, drawing the group's attention to the activities of modern AKIS and resources available on their website. Full details are available in the following presentation.



Irish AKIS CG
Meeting 10.10.2025.p

Presentation by Pearse Kelly, Head of Drystock Knowledge Transfer Department, Teagasc – Current knowledge exchange pathways in the beef value chain

One third of all agricultural output is beef and 80% of all Irish farmers have beef animals while 55% of farms are beef specialists. There is currently a huge amount of positivity in the market due to price improvements. The Beef Knowledge Transfer Programme was described with its aims to improve the livelihood of farmers and the sustainability of the beef sector. The importance of personal sustainability was highlighted as most farmers are now part time which presents challenge due to their competing needs, Teagasc have employed a range of methods in transferring information such as podcasts, webinars, the Demo Farm Programme which benefits from industry support, workshops, farm walks, Dairy Beef 500 and strong linkages with demo farms run by industry, for example Newford Farm operated by Dawn Meats.

Collaboration is key such as in recent workshops run with Irish Cattle Breeding Federation, Animal Health Ireland and Quality Assurance Bord Bia. A number of tools are also available for use by the farmer such as HerdPlus and AgNav and farmers are encouraged to make use of these resources.

Despite challenges in profitability and sustainability, there are many available solutions for farmers, this is a chain where every link matters. Full presentation below.



Irish AKIS
Coordination Group C

Questions were invited from the group.

Shane Whelan IFA: *As an industry, do we need to prioritise what we want to achieve?*

Pearse noted that there is a fine balance between a scatter gun approach which can lead to farmers getting confused with many deadlines and the risk of having an industry without diversity.

Helen Sheridan UCD: *As more advice moves online, how do we facilitate the cohort that are not so digitally literate?*

It was noted that there is a need to recognise that the move to online cannot happen too fast, so a monthly printed newsletter is issued and was highly rated in a recent survey of farmers.

Cian Condon, Teagasc: *Is there any insight into the usage of AgNav?*

There will be a broader rollout of AgNav next year and farmers now have access to the platform.

Michael Ryan ACA: *The numbers presented suggest that only 10% of farmers are reached through current channels and private consultants lack the link to research knowledge leading to a gap in the knowledge reaching farmers.*

Teagasc acknowledged that they would like to reach more farmers and there is a need to adapt communication to people's needs.

Darren Carty Irish Farmers Journal: *There is too much paperwork associated with schemes leading to a reliance on the advisor and a disconnect from the farmer.*

It was noted that similar challenges are being experienced across all Member States and simplification is an area where focus is required.

Patsy O'Conghaile INHFA noted that many farmers left SCEP before the scheme was up and running and noted the need to assess stakeholder needs.

Leo McGrane CAP Network advised that this topic would be further explored in the afternoon workshops and could be used to provide feedback into CAP discussions.

Hugh Farrell ICSA raised the point that by reducing the number of larger events, many farmers may be losing out on access to information.

Teagasc advised that they were not reducing bigger events but have found that smaller groups offer a more targeted approach and that evidence shows that demonstration is key.

Cormac Farrelly Agriland: *Is there more commercial support given to dairy rather than beef?*

Pearse Kelly acknowledged that the dairy sector does get a lot of attention as it is profitable but in fact Teagasc have more dry stock advisors. The messaging and challenges faced are different for each sector.

Panel Discussion moderated by Mark Gibson (Teagasc) – panel members Declan Hanrahan IFA, Tom Canning ACA, Helen Sheridan UCD, Dr. Willie Ryan DAFM.

Mark Gibson introduced the panel discussion. The challenge is connecting knowledge; innovation is not reaching the broader farmer public; this may be due to many factors such as the diversity of the audience or the size of the enterprise. Previous efforts have shown that a shotgun approach will not work, a targeted approach is required. Input from the panellists and other members of the group ensured a robust discussion with both issues and suggestions raised.

The ability of the current system to connect the actors was discussed, with the challenges of generational renewal, stability, clarity of purpose and the need for leadership highlighted. It was noted that Ireland has the highest rate of engagement with advisory services in Europe and advisers have built up trust, so it is essential that they are involved in the process. The opportunities for supporting innovation were discussed, such as utilising what is already available in the beef sector and the need to improve connectivity. It was noted that the EIPs provide one to one contact between researchers and farmers. There is a need to make research relevant, measures must work both financially and from an environmental perspective. Farmers should be involved in discussions early in the process and at every level. Opportunities to show innovation working on the ground and the need for reward were also suggested. Simple consistency of messaging, language used, real time data and a focus on basics are key to the process. Communication is key, it is essential that we know the target audience and have a clarity of purpose.

The experience of the processing industry is that collaboration and simple messaging works. Farmers will react to measures where money is invested, they are responsive to incentives. All blocks in the chain must be considered to ensure that implementation can be successful.

In the area of future policy, it was noted that information has not changed, the challenge is the uptake of these technologies. Each farmer responds to different sources. Simplification of the system will bring more buy in from farmers, if the benefits are clear, the farmer will engage. There may be a need to use discretion to adapt to local environments and the capability of some land. Experience has shown that local data empowers farmers. Researchers may need to be asked if they can disseminate their information down and the support of influencers such as Fliara ambassadors could be utilised. It was suggested that we as the AKIS Coordination Group pick one high priority challenge and follow it through to learn where the gaps occur.

DAFM advised that consultation has commenced on new CAP Post 2027 proposals and that stakeholder's opinions are welcome, the Department is aware of the competing needs and the demands faced by farmers and would like to see further funding and support in this area.

Workshop Sessions

Leo Mc Grane CAP Network opened the afternoon workshop session which had the aim of developing Impact Pathways for Solutions to Beef Sector Challenges- full presentation below.



AKIS Coordination
Group Impact Pathway

Each group was allocated a solution/suite of solutions to a challenge in the beef sector.

Climate Challenge: Decreasing Age at Slaughter

Economic Challenge: Improving the Genetic Performance of the Suckler Herd

Productivity Challenge: Calving Heifers at 2 Years of Age

Labour Challenge: Generational Renewal and Labour on Beef Farms

Full reports of each session are below.



AKIS CG Beef



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Workshop - Climate Workshop - Economic Workshop - Productivity Workshop - Labour

Closing of meeting and next steps:

Patrick Barrett (Research and Codex, DAFM) thanked Teagasc and the CAP Network for their support in facilitating a very productive day. The Group have met on a number of occasions and there is a need to now move beyond the talking to real solutions. The aim is to develop a model and bring this back to the CAP consultation process. Patrick thanked everyone for their input and effort. A report will be circulated to members shortly and feedback is welcome.

Attendance list

Organisation	Nominee
Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht	Marie Duffy
NPWS	Robert Edge
Teagasc Knowledge Transfer	Cian Condon
Teagasc Knowledge Transfer	Avion Phillips
Teagasc Knowledge Transfer	Pearse Kelly
Teagasc Knowledge Transfer	Mark Gibson
Irish Farmers Association	Shane Whelan
Irish Farmers Association	Declan Hanrahan
Irish Natura and Hill Farmers' Association	Patsy O'Conghaile
Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers' Association	Hugh Farrell
Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association	Brian Delaney
Agricultural Consultants Association	Michael Ryan
Agricultural Consultants Association	Tom Canning
Irish Cooperative Organisation Society	John Brosnan
CAP Network Ireland	Claire Kearney
CAP Network Ireland	James Claffey
CAP Network Ireland	David Barry
CAP Network Ireland	John Murphy
CAP Network Ireland	Sarah Glascott
CAP Network Ireland	Leo Mc Grane
Macra na Feirme	Flor Mc Carthy
Macra na Feirme	Maria Snell
Environmental Pillar	Charles Stanley Smith
Climate Kic Ireland	Stewart Gee
Natural Capital Ireland	Noreen Byrne
UCD	Prof Monica Gorman
UCD	Helen Sheridan
UCD	Gary Ryan
University of Galway	Prof Maura Farrell
SETU	John Geraghty
ATU Galway/Mayo	Michael Gill
Kepak	Mick O'Dowd
Dawn Meats	Matthew Murphy
IFJ	Darren Carty
AgriLand	Cormac Farrelly
Organics & Market Supports DAFM	Niall Ryan
Agricultural Environment & Structures DAFM	John Muldowney
Feedingstuffs, Fertilisers, Grain & Poultry DAFM	Lorraine Fitzgerald
Meat & Milk Policy DAFM	Laura Crooke
Meat & Milk Policy DAFM	Michael G Gleeson

Research & Codex DAFM	Dr. Willie Ryan
Research & Codex DAFM	Patrick Barrett
Research & Codex DAFM	Matthew Halpin
CAP Strategic Plan DAFM	Cormac Mc Gann
CAP Strategic Plan DAFM	Edel Meenan
CAP Strategic Plan DAFM	Caroline Dardis