

From: secretary's inbox [secretarygeneral@justice.ie]

Sent: 09 January 2015 15:33

To: 2025strategy

Cc: circulations@justice.ie

Subject: Observations of the Department of Justice and Equality on 2025 Agri-Food Strategy

Dear Sir/Madam,

I refer to the letter dated 27 November, 2014, from the Secretary General of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, in relation to a public consultation on the 2025 Agri-Food Strategy.

I can confirm that your request was circulated to all Divisions in the Department of Justice and Equality. It should be noted that the attached response is applicable to two questions within part 4 of the Questionnaire, specifically:

"How can we maximise job creation within a competitive agri-food sector over the next ten years?" and "What areas should we prioritise to encourage increased innovation in the agri-food sector?".

Yours sincerely,

D. Griffin

Private Secretary to the Secretary General Department of Justice and Equality

Observations of the Department of Justice and Equality

RE: 2025 Agri-Food Strategy

An established business case holds that diversity is good for innovation.

This is reflected in the National Women's Strategy 2007-2016, as well as in the Europe 2020 strategy.

The current draft of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is being coordinated by the Department of Agriculture, notes that there is a significant gender imbalance within agriculture in Ireland, "... with more than 90% of farm holders being men. Women have higher education at school and university and this is manifested now in the employment rate of women under 35 being higher than for men. Within farm households, women are now generating significant market incomes and are often main breadwinner within the household, in addition to undertaking traditional non-market activities within the household. A continuation of this gender imbalance is thus detrimental in terms of the human capital capacity of the sector and may also inhibit technology uptake and structural change."

There are differing reports of the number of people employed in the sector and a gender breakdown is not routinely provided. The Food Harvest progress report for 2014 quotes the CSO QNHS for Q2/2014 as estimating 110,000 to be employed in the primary agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector. The CSO "men and

women in Ireland report 2013" found women made up only 11% of approx 87,000 employees in the sector, which is much lower than the EU average of 37%.

The 2014 progress report on the implementation of Food Harvest 2020 highlights areas for future skills development and opportunities for business leaders in the sector to scale up their companies, with food marketing, research and innovation flagged as critical areas, and notes that major expansion is planned for 2015-2020 in the dairy and aquaculture sectors.

There is scope, therefore, for substantial growth of female employment in this sector, bringing with it the potential for increased innovation and diversification.

It is suggested that:

- The new AgriFood strategy should explicitly aim to encourage more women into the industry at all levels from farm to marketing, and particularly in product development and entrepreneurship.
- The current low participation of women points to a major source of untapped potential for innovation which should be exploited by highlighting the opportunities for female entrepreneurship in the sector, in cooperation with agencies such as Enterprise Ireland and Teagasc.
- All targets set in the Strategy and the indicators tracking progress against those targets should be disaggregated by gender where possible, in order to identify where measures impact differently on men and women and to allow for adjusting of interventions where needed to maximise the benefit to both men and women.

9th January, 2015

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