Ireland’s Agri-Food Strategy to 2030

The European and Global Policy Environment – A Stocktake

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What to watch for?

- Outcome of the EU’s multilateral financial framework 2021-2027.
- The budget for the CAP within this framework.
- Progress on the reform proposals to the CAP
- The composition of the European Commission and the policy priorities for its term of office.
Multi-annual financial framework

• “Europe’s” budget for the period 2021-2027
• Difficult environment – BREXIT, net contributors Vs net beneficiaries.
• New demands – migration, security.
• Cohesion
• European Council on 17 October - next steps.
The CAP budget

- Good outcome in the difficult circumstances of the MFF negotiation.
- Direct payments well protected.
- Modest cutbacks in rural development.
- CAP will always survives!
Key priorities for President VDL

✓ A European Green Deal
✓ An economy that works for people
✓ A Europe fit for the digital age
✓ Protecting our European way of life
✓ A stronger Europe in the world
✓ A new push for European democracy
A European Green Deal:

✓ Europe to strive to be 1\textsuperscript{st} climate-neutral continent
✓ Proposal in the first 100 days in office
✓ 1\textsuperscript{st} European Climate Law to enshrine the 2050 climate-neutrality target
✓ Proposal to extend the Emissions Trading System
✓ Introduce a Carbon Border Tax
✓ World leader in circular economy
✓ “Farm to Fork Strategy” on sustainable
Modern and sustainable agriculture

Your task over the next five years will be to ensure that the agricultural sector continues to deliver on its enduring commitments while supporting it to adapt to changes in climate, demographics and technologies. I also want you to have a specific focus on healthier and more sustainable food production. This will be an important part of the European Green Deal.

✓ I count on your support to swiftly conclude negotiations on a modern and simplified Common Agricultural Policy for the post-2020 period. The final agreement must be ambitious in terms of food security and environmental and climate objectives. It should incentivise the uptake of digital technologies and ensure the sector can remain competitive, provide a fair income and support young farmers.

✓ Once negotiations are concluded, you should focus on the full implementation of the new policy. You will work closely with Member states on their Strategic Plans to ensure that they strike a balance between EU-wide objectives and national priorities. You will pay particular attention to the benchmarks and requirements on environment- and climate-related objectives.
I want you to **contribute** to the new ‘**Farm to Fork**’ strategy for sustainable food, looking at how the agri-food sector can improve the sustainability of food production across the food chain, including through **organic** production.

As part of our **zero-pollution** ambition, you should ensure that agriculture and food production contributes to our climate, environmental and **biodiversity** goals, notably by **reducing the use of pesticides, fertilisers and chemicals** in Europe and beyond.

I would also like you to look at ways to strengthen the system of **geographical indications**. It is a key part of maintaining high food quality and standards and ensuring that our **cultural, gastronomic and local** heritage is preserved and certified as authentic across the world.

You will develop a new long-term vision for **rural areas**, working closely with the Vice-President for **Democracy and Demography**. You will ensure that the needs of rural areas are specifically catered for in national Strategic Plans under the new Common Agricultural Policy.

As the world’s biggest food importer and exporter, you should promote **Europe’s high-quality food standards worldwide**.
Mission letter to Vice-President Timmermans

As Executive Vice-President, you will have a dual function. You will set the strategic direction and chair the Commissioners’ Group on the European Green Deal. In addition, you will be responsible for the climate action portfolio. In leading the work on the European Green Deal, you will ensure all policy dimensions are fully taken into account.

A European Green Deal

✓ Along with our climate-neutrality commitments for 2050, we have to be more ambitious when it comes to our 2030 emission reduction target. This should increase to at least 50% by 2030, up from the 40% currently agreed.

✓ In parallel, I want you to lead international negotiations to increase the level of ambition of other major emitters by 2021. By then, you should put forward a comprehensive plan to increase the EU’s target for 2030 towards 55% in a responsible way. This must be based on social, economic and environmental impact assessments that ensure a level playing field and stimulate competitiveness.
✓ The European Green Deal can only work if it brings people along and supports the most affected, such as those in industrial, coal and energy intensive regions. In this spirit, you will coordinate the work on the new **Just Transition Fund**.

✓ ... You will ensure we mainstream **biodiversity** priorities across all policy areas, notably trade, industry, **agriculture** and maritime affairs. To do this, you will coordinate the work on the **Biodiversity Strategy for 2030**.

✓ You will be responsible for coordinating the Commission’s work on our **zero-pollution ambition**. This will require a wide-ranging approach looking at **air**, **water**, and noise pollution from transport, **agriculture** and **food** production, **water** quality, hazardous chemicals and other key areas.

✓ I want you to coordinate the work on **reducing the carbon footprint** of our transport sector...

✓ You will coordinate our work on the **circular economy**, as well as on the new ‘**Farm to Fork’ strategy’ for sustainable food. This will cover every step in the food chain **from production to consumption**, looking at **consumer information**, **food safety**, animal and plant health, fisheries and the **agri-food** sector...
Mission letter to Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Mme Kyriakides

**Food safety and animal and plant health**

- I want you to **lead on a new ‘Farm to Fork’ strategy** for sustainable food. This will cover every step in the food chain from production to consumption, and feed into our circular economy objectives. It should combine regulation with communication and awareness campaigns and have full buy-in from local, regional and sectoral actors, as well as Member States and European institutions.

- As part of delivering on our zero-pollution ambition and ‘Farm to Fork’ strategy, I want you to work on protecting plant health, **reducing dependency on pesticides** and stimulating the take-up of low-risk and non-chemical alternatives. You should help protect citizens from exposure to endocrine disruptors.

- Part of your work will be to focus on **improving consumer information**, notably by looking at ways to address demands for more visible and complete information, especially on the health and sustainability of food products.

- **Animal health and welfare** is a moral, health and economic imperative. You will ensure Europe is equipped to prevent and fight against animal diseases that can be transmitted.

- You should also ensure the **enforcement** of animal welfare legislation, review our current strategy and promote European standards globally.

- I want you to focus on the implementation and enforcement of the extensive legislation in the areas of food safety and animal and plant health. **Audits will be a crucial** tool for this, notably to ensure that food imports meet our safety standards.

- You should work with the Member States to develop a strategy with concrete **measures against food fraud**, drawing on the work of the European Anti-Fraud Office in this area.
Other societal considerations

Heavy emphasis in Parliament hearings on:

• Need for a level playing field in trade.
• The creation of a “trade enforcer”.
• Less intensive food production and farming.
• Opposition to imports of (GM) soya and palm oil.
• Deforestation and the role of imports.
The “message” from the hearings?

- **Keywords?**
  - Sustainability, climate change, environment….
  - Agriculture expected to play its part.
  - Specific proposals on a “Green Deal” and a new “farm to fork food strategy”.
  - Scepticism about the benefits of trade.
- **The expectations of concrete follow-up are high.**
- **Risks should not be overlooked.**
Trade Priorities

- Support for the multi-lateral framework.
- An updated, reformed and fit-for-purpose WTO.
- Support for more open markets.
- A level playing field, using trade defence.
- Sustainability, especially on climate change.
International Policy environment

- US tariffs arising from the Boeing WTO case
- EU counter-measures
- WTO’s functioning under threat
- Sensitivity of food-related trade disputes
- Scepticism towards trade is worrying.
BREXIT

- A withdrawal agreement remains the best outcome.
- A no-deal BREXIT puts at risk the €24 bn agri-food trade surplus with the UK.
- Prudence requires contingency plans for no-deal.
- Post-BREXIT trading relationship will be challenging.
Operation of Markets

- The EU internal market – the place to be.
- Current regulatory environment.
- Newly emerging societal demands.
- Local production and short food chains.
- Risks and opportunities.
EU agri-food standards

- EU regulatory model increasingly the international benchmark.
- EU standards increasingly seen as the benchmark for quality.
- Limitations on the applicability of certain EU standards internationally, e.g. animal welfare.
Technology + Innovation

• Agri-food production has beaten the Malthusian challenge, i.e. productivity > population growth.
• European citizens’ concerns with the level of intensive production and length of the food chain.
• Climate change challenge cannot be met without greater innovation.
• Approval of new breeding techniques proving difficult
Do not lose sight of food security!

• *World cereals production is about 2,1 – 2,2 billion tonnes per annum.*
• *This is what feeds animals and in turn humans.*
• *World stocks are just over 600 million tonnes, i.e. just over three months consumption.*
• *A reminder that food security cannot be taken for granted.*
Food safety, animal health standards

- Vigilance remains essential.
- Painful reminders from the past – BSE, FMD.
- ASF in China (but also EU!) a current disruption.
- New and resurgent diseases remain a threat.
- Reputations can be quickly lost.
General Conclusions

Food will remain central to policy:

- economic and employment importance
- political sensitivity for citizens
- potential for conflict in trade negotiations
- role in relation to climate change
- nutrition and health
A direction for Ireland?

• A good outcome to the MFF and CAP budget negotiations.
• Agreement on the CAP reform.
• A constructive approach towards climate change/sustainability.
• Support for open, market-based, trading system.
• Investment in agri-food, especially innovation.