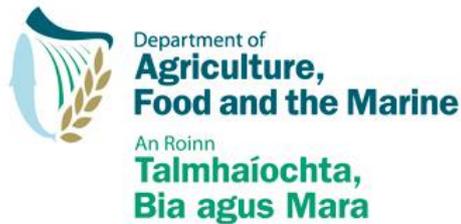


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25 August 2016

### **CREED WELCOMES AGREEMENT ON €500M EU AID PACKAGE FOR FARMERS**

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed T.D., has welcomed agreement at the EU Commission's Management Committee today on proposals to give effect to the aid package for farmers agreed at the July Council. The package is designed to support market stabilisation across the EU's dairy sector. Today's agreement puts in place the legal framework for the exceptional adjustment aid to milk producers and a package for the provision of aid for milk production reduction. This step paves the way for their adoption by the Commission College in early September.

Commenting on the measures, Minister Creed said *"The finalisation of these proposals is very welcome and we can start to progress their implementation at national level. I have engaged intensively with Commissioner Hogan and Agriculture Ministers from other EU member States before and after the July Council which agreed this €500m package and am delighted with the outcome and what it means for Irish farmers. Volatility in dairy markets is a global, EU and Irish problem, for which there is no single silver bullet."*

The Minister added *"I have always said that the solutions have to emerge at EU level and today's commitments will be of great assistance."*

The key measures agreed in Brussels today were:

- Exceptional Aid to milk producers and farmers in other livestock sectors. This is a €350m package with individual MS allocations for them to undertake measures which best reflect their national circumstances. Ireland has been allocated €11.1m
- Aid for Milk Production reduction: this proposal will fund aid to farmers who agree to temporarily reduce their milk output at a level of 14c/L. The budget for this scheme is €150m and there are no individual MS allocations.
- An extension of the intervention period for SMP to the end of January 2017 and the next period beginning immediately after.

Commenting on these measures, the Minister said *“These supports build on previous measures implemented at both EU and national level, including the €26.4m in targeted direct aid payments to dairy farmers, and the advance payment of some €1.2billion in 2015 BPS payments. Advance payments are also planned for this October, and this will be of significant assistance in easing cashflow concerns on farms. I am also very pleased to see that intervention for SMP has been extended. This sends a very important signal to the market place that the Commission will continue to deploy market support tools when this is necessary.”*

Concluding the Minister said *“the focus now turns to implementation of these measures at national level. Some Irish dairy farmers may wish to avail of the aid to temporarily curb production and my Department will continue to engage with stakeholders including co-ops and farm organisations now on how best to implement this. Likewise, the €11m direct aid package offers an opportunity to deliver a meaningful measure which can assist farmers. The priority must be to deliver a measure which achieves value for money while offering structural assistance to farmers in helping to tackle ongoing liquidity issues. My Department will be consulting with stakeholders and I expect to be making further announcements on both of these measures in the very near future”*.

**ENDS**