Public Consultation on the Draft Climate Change Adaptation Sectoral Plan for Agriculture, Forest and Seafood Sector

Consultation Questionnaire

☐ Details:

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Organisation where applicable: The Barna Way

or

Member of the public: ☐

Subsector:

- Dairy ☐ Mixed ☐ Fisheries ☐
- Beef ☐ Arable ☐ Industry ☐
- Sheep ☐ Horticulture ☐ Prepared Consumer Foods ☐
- Other: Community projects ☐

☐ What do you think are the changes in climate that are having the most impact on those working in the agriculture, forest and seafood sector?

- Extreme Rain ☐ Storminess ☐
  - ☐
  - ☐
  - ☐
Drought
Flooding
Extreme heat
Seasonal stability

What do you think the main impacts from climate change will be on the agriculture, forest and seafood sectors?

Please Explain: Poor government planning is exacerbating the situation e.g. Last year in the drought, the hose pipe ban effectively penalised those trying to grow their own food. We should be supporting people who grow food, not punishing them.

The removal of the quota has led to a wreckless overstocking of livestock in the country with and overemphasis on grassland (an effective moniculture which has anhilitated our biodiversity). This has also caused subsequent pollution of waterways with effluent, fertilisers and pesticides.

How are those working in the sector currently adapting to climate change?

Please Explain: There is a real desire to find solutions at local level but all European and Irish policies have only exacerbated the problem - by encouraging beef and dairy monocultures. Even those who want to go into organic farming are actively discouraged. The scheme was only open for applications in a 3 week period in the run up to Christmas.

Where do you get climate related information?
What additional information do those working in the sector need to adapt to a changing climate?

Please Explain: There needs to be a massive shift to organic farming. Ireland could be an organic island with diverse and premium products. Farming would no longer be polluting the soil. There is a need for public information about the nutritional benefit of local organic food.

How do you perceive and use weather and climate information to inform management decisions?

Please Explain: Climate Change is completely unpredictable and we can only speculate on the scale of the destruction. Storm Hannah managed to wipe out most of our fruting trees in 2 hours. It is virtually impossible to plan, except to build shelter beds and ensure good drainage.

Is the source of inputs to your farm or business affected by climate change; if so what supply chains?

Please Explain: Lack of grants and supports for horticulture. The organic scheme is far too small and limited. There is no government investment in promoting organic food. Organic seeds are also an issue. We need to ensure that we are protecting our heritage seeds and support organisations such as Sedsavers, Fruithill Farm and Brown Envelope Seeds.

When making investments and management decisions how far ahead do you plan?

- 0 - 1 year
- 1 - 5 years
- 10 years +
5 -10 years

Please Explain: We are waiting for the government to come up with a final plan that will support growers and farmers to build a sustainable farming system in this country.

☐ Does the Draft Climate Change Adaptation Sectoral Plan adequately demonstrate the potential impact climate change may have on Agriculture, Forestry and Seafood in Ireland (see section 4 of Draft Plan)?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ X Need more information

Please Explain: We need to become more self sufficient in our food production encouraging more local, organic food. We also need to greatly expand our support for food systems in the countries around the world who are most susceptible to climate change. What happens when your farm is underwater and your food source is completely cut off? We need to take our international responsibilities very seriously and support those most in need.

☐ The Adaptation Plan’s focus is on actions that can be undertaken over the next five years. Therefore, do you think the Adaptation Objectives are appropriate for the duration of this plan (see section 2 of Draft Plan)?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ X Unsure

Please Explain: We need to move from beef and dairy to more diversification and organic horticulture. The current system of food production is unsustainable for farm families, rural communities and is detrimental to biodiversity and the climate. Farmers need to be supported to bring back biodiversity into farms and grow native woodlands.
What three things could the Department do to help you be better prepared to adapt to future climate change?

1. More tangible support for growers of organic vegetables. Organic food production builds rather than depletes soil, is more healthy and nutritious and avoids pollution of our land and water sources. We need to be able to meet the growing demand for organic vegan and vegetarian diets around the world. Why can’t Ireland become the Leading Clean Green Organic Food Producer in the world?

2. Policies which make it mandatory for all state institutions to provide local organic food in their restaurants or food service. They did this in Copenhagen in 2007 and now 80% of food in public institutions is coming from local organic food producers.

3. Help create a market for local organic food in Ireland. At the moment we are importing 70% of all organic produce which results in increased air miles and carbon footprint. There is no marketing of clean organic food in Ireland and this must change. We need to support growers to reach their consumers through a range of measures from farmers markets to traditional retail outlets.

Any other comments?

Here is a link to my book called The Local Food Project which emphasizes the importance of eating local food especially at the critical moment in history:

http://lisafingleton.com/the-local-food-project

30 Day Local Food Challenge: Encouraging people to eat food grown in the island of Ireland

https://lisafingleton.com/project/30-day-local-food-challenge/

https://www.facebook.com/groups/30daylocalfoodchallenge/

https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/the-30-day-local-food-challenge-1.2429064