



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine

# Agriculture, Food and the Marine Action Plan 2021





Charlie McConalogue, T.D.,  
Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine

## Minister McConalogue Introduction

I welcome the publication of the Department's Statement of Strategy 2021-2024. It sets out the Department's Vision and Mission, as well as the goals, strategic actions and indicators against which progress will be measured during my time as Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine. This Action Plan for 2021 sets out 75 priority actions to be implemented this year to drive the development of a sustainable, innovative and competitive agri-food, forestry and seafood sector.

I wish to acknowledge the central contribution of staff and stakeholders to the development of the Department's Strategy and their commitment and passion to ensuring both the Strategy and this Action Plan are implemented in the time ahead.

This is a significant time for our sector, with an array of major issues requiring attention. The key priority for me as Minister is the protection of incomes and the enhancement of our sector. Policy development in the coming years will take place against the background of COVID-19 and Brexit impacts, new Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies, increased climate and environmental ambition and the emergence of transformative digital and other technologies. The important policy work of the Department on these and other issues will be shaped by the commitments set out in the *Programme for Government: Our Shared Future*.

Our farmers, fishers, food producers and foresters, face many challenges as they continue to provide food, fish, timber and a range of ecosystems services, while playing a central role in the transformation of our economy and society towards a long-term sustainable future. The Department is guiding the sector's contribution to this transformation. This is done while providing a policy platform that protects incomes, ensures that our food offering is safe and of the highest quality and that our industry is efficient and competitive. Our great sector contributes effectively to supporting rural and coastal communities through economic development and employment creation.

I look forward, together with my colleagues Minister of State for Land Use and Biodiversity: Senator Pippa Hackett; and Minister of State for Research and Development, Farm Safety and New Market Development: Martin Heydon T.D., to working closely with the Secretary General and the staff of the Department in implementing the new Statement of Strategy and the priorities included in this Action Plan for 2021.

**Charlie McConalogue, T.D.,  
Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine**



**Minister of State Hackett**

As Minister of State with special responsibility for Land Use and Biodiversity, I welcome the publication of the Department's Statement of Strategy 2021-2024 and this Action Plan. They provide us with a clear outline of what is required to progress action on climate and biodiversity, and the means by which we integrate them into all aspects of the Department's work. From nature-friendly land use, to reducing emissions and enhancing our farmland biodiversity – these and other actions are vital to the continued health of our society, economy, species and planet.

I look forward to working with the Minister and Minister of State Heydon, along with the Secretary General and his staff, to deliver on the Strategy and this Action Plan for 2021.

**Senator Pippa Hackett,  
Minister of State for Land Use and Biodiversity**



**Minister of State Heydon**

As Minister of State with responsibility for Research and Development, Farm Safety and New Market Development, I am happy to endorse the new Department Statement of Strategy. It provides a concise and accessible foundation from which to advance our ambition to support strategic investment in research and development; identify, negotiate and develop new market access; and improve health, safety and wellbeing outcomes on Irish farms.

I look forward to working with the Minister and Minister of State Hackett, together with the Secretary General and his staff to give effect to the Strategy and this Action Plan for 2021.

**Martin Heydon T.D.,  
Minister of State for Research and Development, Farm Safety and New Market Development**



**Brendan Gleeson**  
Secretary General

## Secretary General Foreword

The Department's Statement of Strategy has been shaped by our dedicated staff, who work tirelessly in the service of the State and its citizens. I am grateful for their extraordinary effort, particularly over the past year. We look forward to implementing the actions contained in this Action Plan for 2021.

The Statement of Strategy is also the fruit of extensive consultation with stakeholders and reflects the full breadth of the Department's activities. These range from the development of policy, to regulation in areas such as food safety, animal and plant health, animal welfare, forestry, fisheries management and the environment. The Department contributes to food industry and international trade development, provides a variety of public good laboratory services and supports research and innovation. It also provides vital supports to the farmers, fishers and foresters that are the lifeblood of the rural and coastal economy and community.

The Strategy comes at a critical inflection point for the agri-food and fisheries sectors. Global population, and therefore demand for food is increasing and this will present significant opportunities for Ireland's agri-food sector. At the same time, we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air and water quality and reverse the decline in biodiversity.

Concerns about climate change, animal welfare, health and nutrition and the sustainability of our food systems, will be significant considerations in determining consumer preferences and shaping policy. EU and International policy instruments, including the Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies, and the EU's Green Deal, are being reformed or newly developed to reflect societal priorities. Ireland is also a signatory to the United Nations 2030 Agenda, which, together with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, will also help to shape the Department's agenda.

The COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit have required the Department to be agile and responsive to new demands from stakeholders and society generally. Maintaining that agility remains a key objective. In addition, the Department will continue to modernise its administrative systems and to use digital systems and information to improve its analytical capability, reduce costs, and improve services.

In addressing these various challenges, the Department will continue to support its people, to build a culture that encourages learning and development, that recognises the value of diversity and gender equality, and that bases everything it does on a traditional public service ethos of independence, integrity and impartiality.

**Brendan Gleeson**  
Secretary General



# Strategic Goals



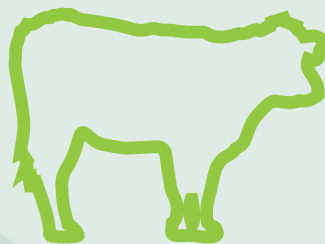
## Goal One

To promote and safeguard public, animal and plant health and animal welfare for the benefit of consumers, producers, the economy and wider society



## Goal Two

Provide income and targeted supports to farmers and others in the agri-food sector to underpin the rural economy and optimise environmental sustainability



## Goal Three

Provide the optimum policy framework for the sustainable development of the agri-food sector



## Goal Four

Deliver a sustainable, competitive and innovative seafood sector, driven by a skilled workforce, delivering value added products in line with consumer demand



## Goal Five

Maintain and develop strategic, operational, regulatory and technical capacity and capability to deliver excellent services to our customers

Underpinned by actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve water and air quality and reverse biodiversity decline

# Goal 1

To promote and safeguard public, animal and plant health and animal welfare for the benefit of consumers, producers, the economy and wider society



No	Action	Quarter	Statement of Strategy reference
1	Finalise and publish Animal Welfare Strategy and begin implementing associated Action Plan	Q1	1.1
2	Deliver on prohibition of fur farming in Ireland	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	1.3
3	Bring forward initiative on responsible pet ownership	Q2	1.3
4	Initiate a series of measures to support the welfare of equidae including undertaking a census of Equidae; reviewing equine identification and traceability system; and advancing plans to amend the Control of Horses Act	Q3, Q4	1.3
5	Advance an action plan for the introduction of new Veterinary Medicines legislation in January 2022, including issues concerning optimal distribution channels of anti-parasitics	Q2, Q3, Q4	1.2
6	Deliver efficient and effective control and certification systems that support trade in animals and products of animal origin with GB and through the land-bridge	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	1.4, 3.8
7	Develop and bring forward, with the Department of Health, the second Ireland's National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance – iNAP2	Q2, Q3	1.2
8	Implement the Food Safety and Food Authenticity Action Plan	Q2, Q3, Q4	1.2
9	Implement the National Plant Health Strategy	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	1.1

# Goal 1

To promote and safeguard public, animal and plant health and animal welfare for the benefit of consumers, producers, the economy and wider society



No	Action	Quarter	Statement of Strategy reference
10	Initiate plans to renew the National Farmed Animal Health Strategy (2017 – 2022)	Q3, Q4	1.1
11	Continue, in cooperation with stakeholders and facilitated by Animal Health Ireland, the drive towards eradication of BVD from the national herd	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	1.1
12	Advance the TB eradication programme in partnership with stakeholders through the TB Forum	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	1.1
13	Renew Animal Health Surveillance Strategy for Ireland (2016 – 2021)	Q2, Q3, Q4	1.1
14	Develop improved traceability system for cattle through introduction of Electronic Identification (EID)	Q2, Q3, Q4	1.1, 1.2
15	Introduce a calf welfare action plan	Q3	1.3
16	Support the establishment of Ireland's first Chair in Animal Welfare and Veterinary Ethics at the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine	Q1	1.3
17	Provide responsive and high quality analytical and advisory scientific support to DAFM and external clients across diagnostic, regulatory and reference laboratory functions	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	1.2
18	Continue redevelopment of regional laboratories and commence implementation of a new Laboratory Information Management System	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	1.2
19	Ensure Programme for Government commitment to a veterinary presence on all live export consignments to third countries	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	1.3, 1.4
20	Establish a system to monitor and report on the level of enforcement being achieved with regard to existing Animal Welfare legislation	Q3, Q4	1.3

## Goal 2

Provide income and targeted supports to farmers and others in the agri-food sector to underpin the rural economy and optimise environmental sustainability



No	Action	Quarter	Statement of Strategy reference
21	Deliver on payments and entitlements to farmers in line with commitments in the Farmers' Charter	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	2.1
22	Implement the roll-over arrangements for 2021 for the Green, Low-Carbon, Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS), the Beef Data Genomics Programme (BDGP), the Targeted Agricultural Modernisation scheme (TAMs), the Organic Farming Scheme (OFS) and the European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs)	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	2.1, 2.2
23	Design and commence new transitional schemes for 2021 including a results-based Pilot Project, Biodiversity, Climate, Environment and Farm Safety Training, and European Innovation Partnerships (EIP) local actions	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.4
24	Design and commence new transitional schemes for 2021 including a results-based Pilot Project, Biodiversity, Climate, Environment and Farm Safety Training, and EIP local actions	Q1, Q2	2.1, 2.2
25	Implement rollover of Sheep Welfare Scheme, providing valuable support to farmers for undertaking actions which make a positive contribution to flock welfare	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	2.1, 3.1
26	Commission a major Feasibility Study on Wool to identify domestic and international market opportunities for wool based products	Q2	1.4
27	Deliver the Beef Environmental Efficiency Programme – Sucklers (BEEP–S) and Dairy Beef Calf measure under the new Beef Sector Efficiency Pilot for 2021	Q1, Q2	3.1, 3.4
28	Roll-out scheme of support for incorporation of straw by tillage sector	Q1	2.1, 3.4
29	Tillage - Engage with stakeholders on development of alternative crops (including Protein and Hemp)	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.4

## Goal 2

Provide income and targeted supports to farmers and others in the agri-food sector to underpin the rural economy and optimise environmental sustainability



No	Action	Quarter	Statement of Strategy reference
30	Work with the horticulture industry to develop a strategy to encourage greater expansion and growth, supplying both the domestic and international market	Q3	3.2, 3.3
31	Work with colleagues in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to build a seamless funding structure for horticulture producers who wish to move new product development from the primary through secondary and tertiary development stages	Q3	3.2
32	Support the development of native seed production in the potato sector	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.4
33	Work with dairy farmers and other stakeholders through the Dairy Forum to consider emerging challenges and will continue to focus on developing new markets	Q1, Q3	3.4, 3.6
34	Actively monitor EU trade negotiations and work with colleagues in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to ensure that Ireland's agri-food interests are represented effectively, and explore ways to more fully exploit the opportunities created for the Irish agri-food sector by EU Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.9
35	Continue to prioritise market access; retention and development work, including by planning and leading trade missions, facilitating inward visits, and technical market access negotiations	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.6
36	Implement the MacKinnon Report and deliver Project Woodland to tackle issues in forestry in Ireland and drive forward the planting of trees	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	2.3
37	Advance a new Forest Strategy for Ireland	Q4	2.3

## Goal 2

Provide income and targeted supports to farmers and others in the agri-food sector to underpin the rural economy and optimise environmental sustainability

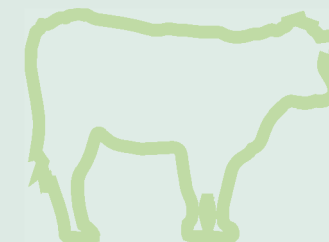


No	Action	Quarter	Statement of Strategy reference
38	Analyse and review data and prepare National Forest Inventory 2021 results for publishing	Q4	2.3
39	Deliver Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan for submission to the European Commission, taking account of the objectives of the EU Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies	Q4	3.6
40	Under new Farm Safety European Innovation Partnership (EIP), support innovative ways of dealing with farm health, safety and wellbeing challenges	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.4.5
41	Work with stakeholders and the Health and Safety Authority on additional initiatives in the area of farm safety with the aim of ensuring attention to safety becomes central to everything that is done on Irish farms.	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.3
42	Deliver the on-farm Biodiversity study and roll-out farm soil sampling programme	Q3	3.2
43	Reopen the Organic Farming Scheme and plan for achieving alignment of Ireland's organic area with that of the current EU average	Q1,Q2	2.2



# Goal 3

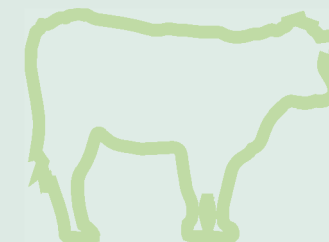
Provide the optimum policy framework for the sustainable development of the agri-food sector



No	Action	Quarter	Statement of Strategy reference
44	Finalise and publish the new sectoral strategy to 2030	Q2	3.1, 3.2
45	Establish a new Office to improve market price transparency, implement the Unfair Trading Practices Directive; and hold a public consultation on additional functions, which will require primary legislation.	Q2, Q3, Q4	3.1, 3.4
46	Respond effectively to developments arising from the agreement of the EU-UK future relationship from 1 January 2021	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.8
47	Develop and implement appropriate supports for the agri-food and fisheries sectors, given the competitiveness and other challenges which will arise from Brexit outcomes.	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.8
48	Engage effectively in the progression at EU level of issues that have an impact on CAP implementation, including the planned review of EU marketing regulations, and the evolution of the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies.	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.6
49	Engage with stakeholders and industry on implementation of the Ag-Climatise roadmap	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.2
50	Develop a Strategic Roadmap to improve Nature within the agricultural sector	Q4	3.2
51	To lead the development of agri- sector contribution to Climate Action Plan 2021, supported by extensive stakeholder engagement across DAFM and other Government Departments	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.2
52	Develop the land use knowledge project to inform policy and decision making and to facilitate the implementation of the CAP Strategic Plan	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.3

# Goal 3

Provide the optimum policy framework for the sustainable development of the agri-food sector



No	Action	Quarter	Statement of Strategy reference
53	Work with the National Biodiversity Data Centre and the National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) to publish an All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and fund a Farmland Project Officer to support the implementation of the farmland actions	Q2	3.2
54	Reduce the risk from agricultural use of pesticides in line with the EU Farm to Fork Strategy requirements by implementing the principles of integrated pest management	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	1.1.3
55	Conclude review of the Nitrates regulations, in collaboration with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage , and renegotiation of nitrates derogation facility	Q4	3.3
56	Scope out policy on a national ‘Fertiliser User register’	Q3	3.3
57	Commence development of new research agenda taking account of Agri-food 2030 and Innovation 2025 strategies	Q3, Q4	3.5
58	Implement work programme on bioeconomy, including facilitation of new bioeconomy forum	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.5
59	Negotiate and approve Grant awards under revised thematic research call 2021	Q4	3.5
60	Explore and develop potential opportunities for farmers from Anaerobic Digestion	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.2
61	Engage at international level on agriculture (with a particular focus on biogenic methane) and land use opportunities including opportunities to share information and showcase climate action in the Irish agri-sector with a particular focus on COP26	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.3

## Goal 4

Deliver a sustainable, competitive and innovative seafood sector, driven by a skilled workforce, delivering value added products in line with consumer demand



No	Action	Quarter	Statement of Strategy reference
62	Progress EU & Irish policy agenda in the fisheries area in the context of the outcome of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement; participate in the Fisheries Council and North Western Waters Member States Group to ensure effective delivery of the Reformed CFP & implications of the EU/UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	4.1
63	Establish a Seafood Sector Taskforce to make recommendations to the Minister on measures to mitigate the impacts of the fish quota share reductions, arising from the EU/UK TCA, on the Irish fishing industry and on the coastal communities that depend on the industry	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	4.2
64	Prepare and progress through the Oireachtas the Bill to implement the EU Points system for Masters	Q2	4.3
65	Administer and deliver the 2021 Harbours Capital Programme, including an enhanced Local Authority Programme, completing Castletownbere, Killybegs and Howth middle pier in 2021	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	4.3
66	Roll out new 2021-2027 seafood development schemes	Q4	4.3
67	Progress Finfish Licensing and keep Shellfish licensing up-to-date	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	4.3
68	Support the inshore fishing fleet in generating greater marketing and promotional capacity by facilitating the establishment of Producer Organisations for these smaller fishing vessels, thereby providing additional opportunity for the island and coastal communities involved in the inshore sector	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	4.3
69	Continue to modernise and streamline the aquaculture licensing process in compliance with EU law, including the development of an electronic aquaculture licensing data management system	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	4.2

## Goal 5

Maintain and develop strategic, operational, regulatory and technical capacity and capability to deliver excellent services to our customers



No	Action	Quarter	Statement of Strategy reference
70	Provide the support function for farmers using the on-line services portal	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	2.1, 5.2
71	Ensure the development of the necessary export certification arrangements (administrative and IT systems, and staffing) ahead of new UK import requirements coming into effect	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	3.8, 5.1
72	Publish a new Statement of Strategy for the Department for the period 2021-2024 in line with the Programme for Government	Q2	5.1
73	Develop new 2021-2023 IMT Strategy to ensure that IMT services can respond to the expected increase in demand from initiatives relating to Animal Health and Welfare, Climate Change, Data Analytics and Food Safety	Q2	5.2
74	Support the progress of priority legislation	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	5.1
75	Introduce new measures that will improve efficiency in dealing with forestry appeals including enhanced IT	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	2.3

# Supporting Climate Action, improve Water Quality and Biodiversity



The Programme for Government commits every Minister to making climate action a core commitment of their new Departmental strategies. Climate and environmental actions permeate all five business areas, making climate action a core pillar of our new Statement of Strategy.

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# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out a bold vision for a safer, fairer, more prosperous and sustainable world by 2030.

This Strategy is developed in the context of our role in contributing to the delivery of the SDGs.

We will:

- Embed the SDGs into the programmes and policies of the Department including the 2030 Agri-Food Strategy
- Take Ireland's commitments under the SDGs into account in our policy development and implementation
- Align our policies with the specific goals where we have a lead role by placing the SDGs at the heart of these policies
- Encourage and support an agri-food sector that is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, in line with the SDGs
- Contribute to progressing the SDGs, leading on 12 targets and sharing responsibility for another 21 targets across the following Goals:

**Goal 2** Zero Hunger

**Goal 12** Responsible Consumption and Production

**Goal 14** Life Below Water

**Goal 15** Life On Land

**Goal 17** Partnerships for the Goals







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