

2016

NATIONAL ECONOMIC DIALOGUE

6. Delivering on Foodwise 2025

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Breakout Session 6

“Delivering on Foodwise 2025”

Chair: Minister of State Andrew Doyle T.D.

Rapporteur: Joe O’Toole

Potential Issues/Questions for Discussion

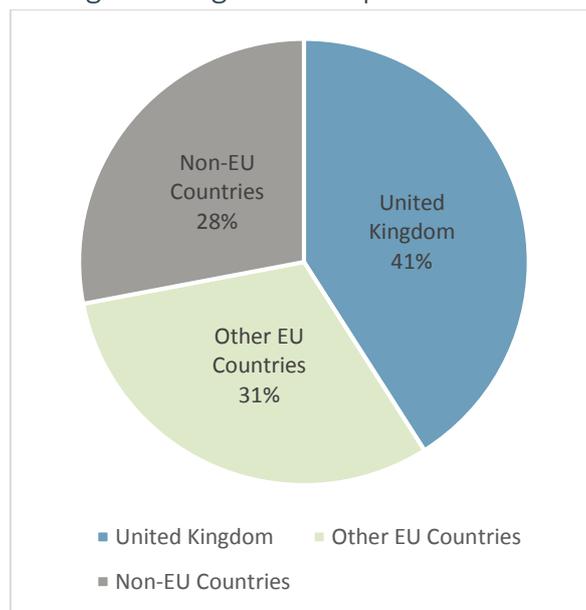
1. How can the expansion anticipated in Food Wise 2025 be achieved while meeting Ireland’s emission targets and preserving our environment?
2. Based on your experience, what is the best approach to reducing costs and developing scale in the agri-food sector?
3. Based on your experience, how can the agri-food sector attract, retain and develop talent, and promote itself as a career path of choice?
4. How can the agri-food sector draw on Irish business and community networks in key markets to gain consumer insights and communicate our key message?
5. How best can we translate research into practical application or commercial opportunities?

Background: Importance of the Agri-food Sector

The agri-food sector is the largest indigenous industry in Ireland and continues to play a key role in Ireland’s export-led recovery. The sector contributes approximately 7.6 per cent of gross value added in the economy and accounts for 8.4 per cent of total employment.

The Irish agri-sector has a longstanding focus on international trade. Despite domestic and international economic instability, exports from the sector have grown by over 51 per cent (or by €3.7 billion) since 2009. The EU remains the largest market for Irish food and drink exports accounting for 72 per cent of exports in 2015. Within the EU, and as illustrated in Figure 1 below, Irish food and drink exports are particularly dependent on the UK market which accounts for 41% (€4.4 billion) of total agri-food exports.

Figure 1: Agri-food Export Markets



Foodwise 2025: Overview

Foodwise 2025 set out a comprehensive ten-year plan for the agri-food sector. Building on the progress made under Food Harvest 2020, Foodwise 2025 recognises the unique position of the agri-food sector within the Irish economy and sets out the key actions required to maximise the contribution of the sector to the economy and support the growth of exports in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Foodwise 2025 has set a number of ambitious targets for the sector to be achieved over the next ten years. These include:

- Growth in the value of exports to €19 billion by 2025, representing an increase of 85 per cent.
- Increasing value added in the agri-food, fisheries and wood products sector by 70 per cent.
- Increasing the value of primary production by 65 per cent to approximately €10 billion.
- Creating an additional 23,000 jobs along the supply chain from producer level to high-end value added product development.

To achieve these targets, Foodwise 2025 sets out specific recommendations designed to enable individual segments of the agri-food sector to capitalise on domestic and international developments.

Strategic Approach

In addition to the specific sub-sectoral recommendations, Foodwise also focuses on a number of cross-cutting strategic actions or themes that will facilitate the achievement of growth opportunities out to 2025. These are set out below.

- *Sustainability:* Environmental protection and economic competitiveness are equal and complementary to one another. It is essential that Ireland continue to seek out and implement effective solutions to reduce agri-food emissions, protect water quality and bio-diversity. Foodwise sets out a range of specific measures designed to achieve growth in a sustainable way whilst protection and supporting the natural environment.
- *Human Capital:* The attraction, retention and development of skills and talents along the supply chain is key to the development of the agri-food sector. At the producer level, Foodwise identifies actions that support the development of ongoing lifelong education, training and knowledge transfer programmes. At the processing level, the focus is on enabling Irish agri-food companies to attract the necessary skills to absorb new research and access the necessary human capital need for further growth.



- *Market development:* Targeting Irish products at the right markets and at the right segments within these markets is key to the expansion of the sector. Foodwise identifies the need for the optimal deployment of human resources in priority markets, the importance of increased coordination on a cross governmental approaches to promote Ireland positioning in emerging markets, supporting the Origin Green sustainability programme and maintaining Irelands high animal safety and food quality standards.
- *Competitiveness:* A number of persistent challenges at the farm and processing level undermine the competitiveness of the agri-food sector. Foodwise recognises the need to minimise the impact of price and income volatility, the need to review and update agri-taxation measures, aid farm restructuring and land mobility, to prioritise sustainable productivity improvements at the producer level and to improve access to finance and support the development of scale.
- *Innovation:* Translating research into production/practice is key to the future development of agri-sector. Foodwise highlights the need for enhanced consumer insight, so as to improve the transition of research into production. At the producer level, the plan emphasises the importance of prioritising investment in processes that enhance productivity and sustainable production. Foodwise also recognises the importance of increased coordination between industry, state agencies and research institutions in supporting research and driving commercial output and production.

Implementation

Implementation of Foodwise 2025 is driven by the High Level Implementation Committee (HLIC), chaired by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine and involving senior officials from relevant Government Departments and state agencies. The role of the HLIC is to drive joined-up state implementation, encourage industry and private sector activation and act as a clearing house for issue affecting the development of the sector. A sustainability sub group is focused on monitoring and driving the sustainability recommendations.