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Department of Agriculture,
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Eco-Scheme, CSP Article 31.

FAS Advisor Training

29th June 2022

Background

- From 2023 onwards, Mandatory for Member State – voluntary for farmers.
- Funded within Pillar 1, 25% ring fencing of Direct Payments allocation, c.€297m.
- List of 8 agricultural practices beneficial for climate, environment, water quality & biodiversity.
- Payment only for interventions going beyond Conditionality and baseline requirements.
- Annual payment per eligible Ha – not linked to entitlements.

Administration of the Eco-Scheme

- The Eco-Scheme application process will be integrated with the BISS application and administered by Direct Payments in Portlaoise.
- Intended that Eco-Scheme payments will issue to farmers annually, in late November/early December.
- Eligibility – All active farmers who make commitments to observe agricultural practices beneficial for the climate and the environment.
- Farmer can opt in/out on annual basis, can change agricultural practices annually.
- Farmer must deliver at least two agricultural practices to qualify for Eco-Scheme payment.
- Agricultural practices are subject to agreement with EU Commission.

Administration of the Eco-Scheme

- Scheme costed based on income foregone and costs incurred in accordance with Art 31 (7) (b).
- Intend to only partially compensate but some flexibility to increase payment rates if uptake is low.
- In as much as possible trying to avoid overlap of actions with ACRES from double funding, administration, compliance etc.
- Assuming 85% take up (c. 110,000 farmers), planned payment rate is €77/ha/yr.

Proposed Agricultural Practices

1. Space for Nature (Non-productive areas and landscape features)

Increasing requirement of land devoted under GAEC 8 to 7%. Enhanced Option: Increasing to 10% (counts as 2 actions)

2. Extensive Livestock Production

Maximum overall stocking rate of 1.5LU / ha for the calendar year. Minimum stocking rate requirements similar to ANC (0.10LU/ha). Based on 2022 stocking rate, with further checks in 2023.

3. Limiting Chemical Nitrogen Usage

Stocking rate band will be presented based on previous year's data. Tillage farmers will have limit of 139.41kgs N/ha .

Grassland stocking rate in 2022 (kgs organic nitrogen per ha)	Max permitted application of chemical Nitrogen in 2023 (kgs per ha)
≤90	73
>90-130	89
>130-170	165
>170-210	240
>210	214

Proposed Agricultural Practices

4. Planting of Native Trees/Hedgerows

A minimum planting rate of 3 native trees OR 1 metre of hedgerow per eligible hectare per annum.

Enhanced Options (counts as 2 actions):

- *6 native trees/ha OR*
- *2 metres of hedgerow/ha OR*
- *3 native trees AND 1 metre of hedgerow/ha*

5. Use of GPS Controlled Spreader and/or Sprayer

Application of 60% of chemical fertiliser (compound or liquid) and/or plant protection products to be applied with a GPS controlled spreader or sprayer. Can be own machine or contractor service.

Proposed Agricultural Practices

6. Soil Sampling & Appropriate Liming

Carry out soil sampling on all eligible hectares and apply lime in accordance with the soil test results where appropriate (only available as an Eco-Scheme action every 3 years once selected).

7. Planting a Break Crop

Planting of a break crop (beans, peas, OSR or Oats or any combination of these crops) on at least 20% of the arable area.

8. Sowing a Multi Species Sward

Sowing of a multi species sward on at least 6% of eligible hectares in the year the action is selected.

Thank you

Aidan Mullally