

## **Agriculture Water Quality Working Group**

### **Minutes 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

**Date:** 18/07/2023

2:15pm to 6:00pm

**Venue:** The Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise

Attendance: See Appendix I.

#### **1. Welcome and Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Chair (Bill Callanan) opened the meeting by welcoming the various stakeholders.

The draft minutes of the previous meeting were approved with any comments to be submitted by email to [agwatergroup@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:agwatergroup@agriculture.gov.ie) before the end of the week.

#### **2. European Court of Auditors Report and Commission Response**

Ted Massey gave a brief overview of the recently published Court of Auditors report on “EU efforts for sustainable soil management” which included manure management. In addition he highlighted key elements in the European Commission’s response which also had been circulated to the Working Group. He then opened the floor for questions.

#### **3. Workshop on Issues Discussion paper themes**

The Working Group divided into 3 breakout groups to discuss a number of questions in relation to each of the following themes:

- Improving awareness and education
- Improving compliance and enforcement
- Reducing N surpluses and addressing nutrient losses to the environment

The Working Group engaged constructively around the themes with a number of useful suggestions emerging from the groups. These will feed into deliberations regarding the Interim Review of the Nitrates Action Programme.

**Action:** Working Group’s suggestions to be fed into Government Department’s deliberations regarding the Interim Review.

#### **4. Engagement with the European Commission regarding 220 – Groups views on next steps**

The Working Group were advised that engagement with the Commission is on-going and becoming more focussed now the map regarding the two-year review is available. The Chair invited the Working Group to come back by the end of the month with submissions/views regarding what they believe Ireland's ask should be in seeking flexibility regarding the Commission's two-year water quality review and associated restrictions in the maximum stocking rate.

Working Group members made a number of suggestions which included the need to use the best available science to guide approaches to improve water quality, the idea of reducing chemical nitrogen limits rather than livestock manure nitrogen limits and the need to keep farmers on board in terms of the need to improve water quality.

**Action:** By the end of July, Working Group members are invited to submit views to DAFM regarding what they believe Ireland's ask should be in seeking flexibility regarding the Commission's two-year water quality review.

#### **5. AOB and Date of next meeting**

##### **AOB**

No AOB items were raised.

##### **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the group was proposed for the week beginning 28<sup>th</sup> August 2023. The group will be contacted in due course when details are confirmed.

## Appendix 1: Agriculture Water Quality Working Group Attendance List 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Representative in Attendance</b>
IFA	Tadhg Buckley
IFA	Paul O'Brien
MACRA	Derry Dillon
MACRA	Maria Snell
ICMSA	Denis Drennan
ICMSA	Alisha Ryan
ICSA	Eddie Punch
Irish Grain Growers	James P Kelly
ICOS	Eamonn Farrell
ACORN	Barry Larkin
Dairy Industry Ireland	Alice Moffitt
Carbery	Aoife Healy
Dairygold	Billy Cronin
Tirlán	Thomas Ryan
Tirlán	Matthew Moylan
Teagasc	David Wall
Teagasc	Edward Burgess
DHLGH	Marie Archbold
ACA	Tom Canning
LAWPRO	Anthony Coleman
LAWPRO	Eoin McAleer
DAFM	Bill Callanan
DAFM	Ted Massey
DAFM	Bernard Harris
DAFM	Joanne Purcell
DAFM	Eoghan Heffernan
<b>Apologies</b>	
DAFM	Noeleen McDonald
MACRA	Liam Hanrahan
Dairy Industry Ireland	Conor Mulvihill
INHFA	Thomas O'Toole

DHLGH	David Flynn
Meat Industry Ireland	Dale Crammond
An Forum Uisce	Matt Crowe
LAWPRO	Ruth Hennessy