

8th Meeting of Food Vision 2030 High Level Implementation Committee

Thursday 05 October 2023

Attendance:

Minister Charlie McConalogue

Minister of State Pippa Hackett

Agencies: Jim O'Toole, Bord Bia; Caroline Bocquel, BIM; Professor Frank O'Mara, Teagasc; Laura Burke, EPA; Dr Pamela Byrne – FSAI

Other Departments: Gary Ward, DETE

DAFM: Brendan Gleeson, Secretary General; Colm Hayes Assistant Secretary; Bill Callanan, Chief Inspector; Jack O'Donnell, Advisor to Minister of State Hackett; John Clarke, Gerard Kelly, Mary Callan, Adam Houlihan, Economics and Planning Division.

Presenters: Barry O'Reilly, Matt Dempsey, Deirdre Fay, Tamsen Harward Sheila Nolan

Secretariat: Seán Bell and Finbar Brown, Economics and Planning Division.

Apologies: Marie Mulvihill, DPER, Leo Clancy, EI.

1. Introduction by Minister McConalogue

The minutes from the seventh meeting on 10 May 2023 were agreed.

The Minister informed the meeting that Colm Hayes, Assistant Secretary has taken over responsibility for 'Agri-Food Sectoral Policy and Strategy Development' within the Department and Finbar Brown has joined the Secretariat of the HLIC.

The Minister updated the Committee on recent events and of note in terms of Food Vision goals since the last meeting on 10 May:

- In the context of Nitrates Directive, an 'Agriculture Water Quality Stakeholders Group', has been established to build consensus around how best to improve water quality as we look to the renewal of the derogation in 2026.

- Funding of a €60 million project to improve water quality at local, catchment and national levels. This is a collaborative approach between DAFM with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in partnership with industry. Through a WATER European Innovation Partnership (EIP) project, the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) with Teagasc and Dairy Industry Ireland will work with farmers on an individual basis to improve water quality. This is the largest funding that the Department has provided to a single EIP, recognising the importance of this project to enhancing sustainable agricultural practices and contributing in a significant way to improving water quality at a national level.
- The opening of the National Fertiliser Database was announced. The database will provide for accurate tracking of fertiliser sales and will assist with the regulation of the industry. This will contribute to the national targets to reduce fertiliser use and should encourage improved nutrient use efficiency.
- The budget for the Liming Programme 2023 was doubled in response to the large number of applicants. This increase brings the budget for the scheme to €16 million, a 100% increase on the original €8 million allocated to the scheme in Budget 2023. The Liming Programme was introduced earlier this year to incentivise the use of Lime, to correct soil acidity, make nutrients more available for plant uptake, and improve overall soil health.
- The Minister welcomed the signing into law of the Agricultural and Food Supply Chain Bill 2022 by President Michael D. Higgins and announced the selection of Niamh Lenihan as the CEO for An Rialálaí Agraibhia (The Agri-Food Regulator), a new independent statutory Office that will have two main functions: a price and market analysis and reporting function, and a regulatory enforcement function concerning the enforcement of prohibited unfair trading practices.
- The publication of the new Forestry Strategy 2023-2030 and Implementation Plan was announced. The new Forestry Programme 2023 – 2027 is an integral part of the strategy implementation plan and this Programme is underpinned by a Government commitment of €1.3 billion, making it the best-funded Forestry Programme in the history of the State.
- Minister of State Hackett announced a call for expressions of interest to participate in a new Timber in Construction Working Group. The group will be tasked with examining

conditions to increase the use of timber in construction, assessing regulatory and standardisation challenges to greater use of timber in construction, and maximising the use of home-grown timber.

- The Tillage Capital Investment Scheme under the Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme (TAMS 3) of the €10 million Tillage Incentive Scheme 2023 for applications were opened.
- The Minister announced the support from the EU Agriculture Reserve fund for the tillage and horticulture sectors in light of the significant challenges being faced in 2023. The overall package of €7.148 million for the tillage sector and €2.383 million for the horticulture sector will support growers in these strategically important sectors.
- Minister McConalogue and Minister of State Hackett, launched a new National Strategy for Horticulture 2023-2027 at Bloom 2023.
- Minister McConalogue met with Cindy McCain, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) during her visit to Dublin, where they discussed the importance of the flexible funding provided by the Irish government in relation to tackling hunger and malnutrition, supporting vulnerable communities, and building more resilient food systems.
- Animal Health Surveillance Strategy (2023-2028) was launched. The new strategy builds on the previous Animal Health Surveillance Strategy (2016 – 2021), reaffirming our commitment to animal health surveillance for the future and reinforcing the key recommendations and achievements already accomplished by it.
- Minister of State Hackett announced the opening of a public consultation process on the new strategic plan for the development of the Organic Sector 2025 – 2030. It is expected the Organic Sector strategy will be presented in the first quarter of 2024.
- FoodCloud Growers Project will receive funding of nearly €200,000 to support its crucial work in reducing food waste.
- Details of a €26.8 million investment in 44 seafood processing projects were announced which are helping drive transformational change in the sector.
- Last week, at the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) headquarters in Rome, attending their 1st Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation, emphasising the critical role sustainable livestock and animal-sourced foods must play

in meeting the basic food security and nutritional demands of vulnerable groups, especially in the context of a globally increasing population.

- Minister McConalogue recently announced the opening of the Public Consultation in relation to the development of a Carbon Farming Framework to support putting farmers, landowners, and foresters at the centre of meeting our National Climate objectives. This framework aims to increase the ambition and participation of our land managers in the areas of carbon removal, emission reductions, and ecosystem services. Public consultation is an essential element to the development of this important framework.

Mission 2: Viable and Resilient Primary Producers, with Enhanced Wellbeing

2. Food Vision Tillage Group

Barry O'Reilly, Crop Evaluation & Certification Division, DAFM and Matt Dempsey, Chair of the Food Vision Tillage Group attended.

Barry O'Reilly presented on the work of the Food Vision Tillage group to date, including:

- Food Vision Tillage group objectives
- Membership
- Crop Areas 2012- 2023
- Possible Interim Report actions, including Tillage Supports, Cooperation with Livestock Sectors, Taxation, Sustainable use of Pesticides Regulation, Feeding Value and Sustainability of Irish Feed Ingredients, Quality Assurance Schemes / Sustainability Initiatives, Price Risk Management, Opportunities in both the Drinks Sector and the Food Sector, Organic Tillage and Management of Wastewater Sludge.
- It is hoped that the final Interim Report will be available before the end of December.

Matt Dempsey acknowledged the good level of consensus and discussions ongoing within the group, whilst also noting that there are aspects that will require further attention, including;

- Need to encourage land retention for tillage farmers

- Anaerobic digestion policy
- Lack of balance in competitiveness
- Nitrates
- Encouragement of contactors supplying tillage services
- Some form of income stabilisation scheme
- The equivalent of a sustainability payment as in the beef quality assurance scheme

A discussion followed.

3. National Strategy for Horticulture 2023-2027

Deirdre Fay, Plant Health and Horticulture Division, DAFM

Minister Hackett opened this item on the National Strategy for Horticulture 2023-2027 which was recently introduced with 8 strategic actions which will provide a potential for growth in the sector.

Deirdre outlined the strategies ambition and alignment with Food Vision 2030 and discussed as follows;

- Challenges and Opportunities.
- The 8 Key Strategic Actions.
- Strategic Interventions, Outputs and Inputs.
- Timeline of actions.

A discussion followed.

Mission 1: A Climate Smart, Environmentally Sustainable Agri-Food Sector

4. Food Vision Environmental Working Sub-Group & Environmental Update

Bill Callanan, Chief Inspector, DAFM

The Food Vision Environmental Working Sub-Group is a standing item on the HLIC agenda. The monitoring and implementation process of Food Vision is key to ensuring

delivery of the strategy and key part of implementation of Mission 1 is the work of this group.

Bill Callanan informed the meeting that a draft Monitoring and Indicator Report from the Environmental Working Sub-Group (EWSG) is currently being worked on and they intend to have a draft in place for consideration at the next HLIC meeting in December.

5. National Fertiliser Database

Sheila Nolan, Feedstuffs, Fertilisers, Grain & Poultry Division, provided an update on the National Fertiliser Database outlining;

- Aim of the National Fertiliser Database.
- Legislation involved.
- Key Dates.
- Database breakdown along with the method of providing data.
- Information around registrations to date.
- Next steps, including Data Sharing, Reporting, Clinics for farmers and inspections to verify compliance.

A discussion followed.

Food Vision 2030 Monitoring

6. FV2030 Actions Report

John Clarke, Economics & Planning Division provided a progress report on Food Vision 2030 as follows;

- Summary of Action progress
- Mission progress
- Details of Targets Achieved
- Next requests for updates in Dec with a second Annual report in early 2024.

A discussion followed.

7. AOB and Date of next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 06 December 2023.