

To Whom it may concern,

After attending the CAP meeting in Portlaoise I would like to make the following comments.

#### 1. Environment.

Farmers are being used as an easy target to blame for all the environmental issues we have. Whilst we accept that we have to play our part, it's not the Farmer's job alone to save the world.

It's increasingly difficult to take successive Governments seriously about climate change when they refuse to take the 'low hanging fruit' measures that are available.

For example, we would have a Solar industry and Biogas Industry in this country only for the Government is being held to ransom by the ESB on feed-in tariffs. Yet the Government refuses to grasp the nettle. Our wind energy industry is about 10% of its potential for an island nation.

Green energy is going to cost extra money, accept that and move forward. Look what Germany has done in the last 20 years.

Astonishingly, this government plans to allow hundreds of millions of euros to be spent on storage facilities for Fracked Gas- yet farmers get blamed for all the methane. They're talking out of the two sides of their mouth.

The TAMS scheme, while in theory is correct, is not fit for purpose.

Expecting farmers to be able to pay for TAMS eligible machinery and equipment out of cash flow is not possible in most cases. This type of expenditure is normally financed through Lease and Hire Purchase arrangements on farms.

It's the only way Farmers can afford it.

Part-time farmers are getting the most out of this scheme- because they have the resources.

This equipment/machinery, in the hands of full-time farmers, will do a lot more for the environment. Many full-time farmers are at breaking point financially and convergence will only make this worse.

#### 2. Capping and Convergence

Convergence is going to make many family farms unviable.

Essentially it penalizes farmers who have worked hard to maximize their output, particularly beef farmers.

In turn, it rewards farmers who have done the opposite. How can this be fair?

This will signal the end of many family farms.

Eventually, convergence will do big damage to the environment.

Over time, very intensive farming systems will walk away from the CAP altogether.

Getting beaten with the Cross Compliance stick for small money just won't be worth it for these farmers.

Capping is another measure that the Dept. and Politicians just use for grandstanding.

In the vast majority of cases, farmers with large payments lease most of the land they farm.

In essence they are rent collectors for their landlords. All this money, and more get passed on.

The Government even decided to let the landlords have it tax-free. Certainly no reward for the active farmer there.

If the Salary Allowance is not brought in, all these leases will be broken and the land returned.

Revenue implications will result.

I thought the Assistant Secretary General's comment, when he suggested it would be "a lot of hassle" for claimants to submit employment salary records with their claim, was an extremely lame view and poorly thought out.

I'm sure if his salary was going to be halved by a similar measure he would think differently.

The age profile of farmers is a big problem.

Young people have too many barriers to entry and older farmers have no incentive to step back.

There should be an upper age limit on claimants of premia with the appropriate retirement tools put in place for them.

This would create a continuous fund for new entrants.

There are not many votes in this I know, but sometimes you just have to do the right thing.

This would also improve Health and Safety in our industry beyond recognition as a huge percentage of farm accidents happen with elderly farmers.

The Dept. has a huge role to play in the future of agriculture in Ireland.

Everybody keeps referring to agriculture as The Backbone of Ireland.

It certainly was the most resilient sector in our very recent recession. We can't be sacrificed by other bigger countries where agriculture is less relevant.

Farmers are being asked to do more for a lot less. Inflation alone has eroded the value of their payments by half, that's before all the other cuts.

The more intensive farms have the biggest environmental requirements, yet these farms are suffering the biggest financial hits.

This cannot work and will not work.

Yours Sincerely

Tomas Codd