



Comhshool, Oidhreocht agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Heritage and Local Government



A Climate for Change

Opportunities for Carbon-Efficiency Farming

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Climate Change Agenda

- **International agenda**
 - UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992);
 - Kyoto Protocol (1997);
 - (Commitment period 2008-2012)
 - IPCC – 4th scientific assessment report (2007).
- **EU agenda**
 - European Climate Change Programme.
- **National agenda**
 - 1st National Climate Change Strategy published 2000.
 - 2nd Strategy (2007-2012) published April 2007.
 - Commitment to the Climate Change Bill 2010.



Ultimate objective

- Ultimate objective of UN convention:
 - *stabilisation of atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations at levels that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.*
- Convention strengthened by Kyoto Protocol in 1997; but Protocol targets expires at end 2012.



International negotiations

- Focused on finding a successor to Kyoto Protocol
- EU pressing for a comprehensive treaty based on keeping global temperature within 2° C of pre-industrial levels.
- Copenhagen Accord (Dec '09) contains positive commitments on action but falls well short of EU ambition.
 - Not legally binding!



Future negotiations

- 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention – Mexico, December 2010.
 - EU position - a stepwise approach, building on Copenhagen Accord.
 - Need decisions to anchor the Copenhagen Accord in the UN process.
- 17th Conference in South Africa in 2011.
 - Possible agreement on new treaty.



Existing EU policy for 2020

- Unilateral target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020.
 - Underpinned by the 2008 EU Climate and Energy legislative package.
- Conditional offer to step up to 30% as part of a global & comprehensive international agreement for the post-2012 period.



Agriculture/climate change in EU

- Agriculture emissions & post-1990 forest sinks included in target for 2008-2012 commitment period.
- Agriculture emissions only for 2013-2020 period; forest sinks excluded pro tem.
- Agriculture emissions not covered by EU-ETS; policies & measures on mitigation a matter for Member States



Ireland's GHG targets

- In the period 2008-12, limit total national emissions to 13% above 1990 levels.
- In 2013-20 period:
 - emissions covered by EU-ETS to be reduced by 21% compared to 2005; and
 - other (non-ETS) emissions – which includes agriculture – by 20%.



Agriculture sector emissions national

- Agriculture emissions:
 - 27% of total national emissions in 2008;
 - 40% of non-ETS emissions in 2008 and projected to be 35% by 2020; and
 - in 2020, agriculture and transport sectors projected to account for 70%+ of non-ETS emissions.
- Agriculture emissions were 19.6mt CO₂e in 2005 and projected to be 17.5Mt in 2020.



National Policy Development

- National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012 (published April 2007)
 - mitigation, and
 - adaptation.
- Annual Carbon Budget
 - Introduced 2007 to progress policy development.
- Climate Change Bill to provide, i.a.:
 - statutory basis for policies and principles; and
 - national mitigation and adaptation plans.



Stakeholder input to policy

- Opportunities for stakeholder input on Climate Change Bill when details of Heads are announced.
- Bill will address both mitigation and adaptation.
- Potential impact of historic and current greenhouse gas emissions:
 - major issue for agriculture sector; and
 - underscores importance of mitigation and need for adaptation.



Conclusion

- Climate change – key cross-cutting policy issue for Government.
- Agriculture emissions – significant element of total national emissions.
- Global GHG emissions must be halved by 2050; developed countries in aggregate must reduce emissions by 80% or more.
- EU targets determine ambition for Ireland.
- Transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient and resource-efficient future essential.
- CC Bill – next major step in national policy development.



Further debate

- Opportunities for carbon-efficient farming?
- Climate change – threat, challenge and opportunity:
 - threat from global greenhouse gas emissions;
 - challenges of global mitigation and national adaptation; and
 - opportunities in a low-carbon future.
- Knowledge transfer essential.