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CUSTOMER SERVICE ACTION PLAN  
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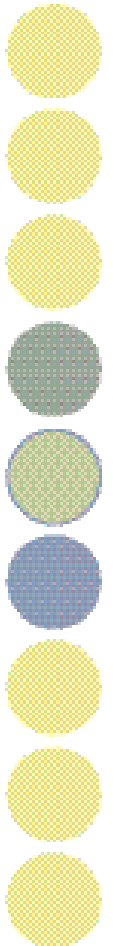
2004 - 2006



AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
FORWARD	3
MISSION STATEMENT	5
1. INTRODUCTION	6
2. HOW WE DELIVER SERVICES	7
3. PRINCIPLES OF QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE	15
4. CUSTOMER CHARTER	17
5. ACTION PLAN FOR SERVICE IMPROVEMENT	20



# FORWARD



Quality of service is of paramount importance to Teagasc, its customers and the public in general. While Teagasc has always focused on the quality of its services, we have recently undertaken an initiative to review, enhance and measure the kind of service we provide and to make definite written commitments on quality of service. To this end, we are publishing a Customer Charter and a Customer Service Action Plan. The Charter outlines commitments regarding the standards of service we will give customers, which are broadly based on the principles underpinning the delivery of quality customer services in the Public Service generally. The Action Plan outlines special measures that we will take to ensure that the commitments in the Charter are met.

The agri-food sector is entering a period of significant change following the recent radical reform of the Common Agricultural Policy including the introduction of the decoupled single farm payment, the liberalisation of world trade and changes in consumer attitudes toward food choices, food quality and safety. Teagasc is refocusing its services to meet these new challenges and quality of service will be the key to future success and customer satisfaction.

Teagasc depends on its staff to deliver services, and a highly trained and motivated staff is vital to deliver quality service. The organisation is very fortunate in having staff of the highest quality. This customer service initiative also focuses on staff as internal customers and the action plan includes action steps designed to ensure that staff remain motivated and dedicated to delivering the highest standards of service. Action steps are also included which are aimed at improving the standards of the facilities at our various centres for the benefit of both customers and staff.

I am very pleased to present this Customer Service Action Plan in the confident belief that it will make a significant contribution to Quality Customer Service in Teagasc.

Jim Flanagan  
Director

# MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission is:

**“To provide an independent and authoritative research knowledge base, technology transfer and training services for the sustainable development of agriculture and the food processing industry to enable it to respond profitably to consumer demands and requirements and contribute to a vibrant rural economy and society”.**

## TEAGASC IS COMMITTED TO:

- Delivering quality research, advisory, education and training services to all our customers.
- The ongoing development of our staff who provide these services.
- The continued development and upgrading of Teagasc centres and support facilities used in the delivery of services.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

This plan, the first Customer Service Action Plan for Teagasc, is a road map for our customer service developments over the next three years. It is one of the key strategies in our goal to become a more capable, efficient and effective organisation. This Action Plan supports our Customer Charter, which was developed in response to the Customer Charter Initiative launched in December 2002 by the Taoiseach, and takes account of the twelve principles guiding delivery of services by public service organisations.

The Teagasc Customer Charter is included in this document on pages 17-19 and our Action Plan for service improvements is detailed on pages 20-30.

The preparation of the Customer Charter and the Customer Service Action Plan involved extensive consultation with staff, and included two surveys of external customers, i.e. a survey of 500 students attending Teagasc training courses and one of 4,000 of our advisory service clients. These complemented the ongoing feedback from our widespread involvement with all strands of the agri-food sector.

Teagasc is conscious of the evolving needs of the agri-food industry and the consequent need to be responsive and innovative in our approach to service delivery. Excellence in customer service requires the full engagement and co-operation of all our staff. Staff will, following customer service training and

consultation, be fully involved in the development of specific customer service objectives for inclusion in individual Business Unit plans for 2005, and annually thereafter. This will ensure that the organisational objectives for improving customer service specified in this Customer Service Action Plan will be implemented and measured at Business Unit level, as they become the everyday responsibility of staff.

We welcome feedback on our services from customers, farm organisations and all sectors of the agri-food industry. We intend to set up customer panels in the near future and undertake more frequent surveys of customers to guide us in the continuous improvement of our services.

# 2. HOW WE DELIVER SERVICES

## 2.1 Our Mandate and Responsibility

The Agriculture (Research, Training and Advice) Act 1988 states that the statutory responsibilities of Teagasc are to:

- 'Provide, or procure the provision of educational, training and advisory services in agriculture, horticulture and forestry.'
- 'Obtain and make available to the agricultural industry the scientific and practical information in relation to agriculture required by it'.
- 'Undertake, promote, encourage, assist, co-ordinate, facilitate and review, agricultural research and development (including research and development in relation to food processing and the food processing industry)'.

These responsibilities involve meeting the technology needs of the whole food chain from 'fork to farm'. Through the provision of integrated research, advice and training services.

## 2.2 Our Research Services

Teagasc research services provide an independent and authoritative knowledge base for the development and sustainability needs of the agri-food sector. It supports the industry to respond to consumer demands through the generation of new knowledge and by serving as a conduit for knowledge generated by the international scientific community. The research services are a critical force in leading technological development, informing policy development for the agri-food sector and rural areas and helping the industry to meet the increasingly exacting needs of consumers.

The programme, which is undertaken at nine different centres (see Appendix I), includes 300 projects, involving both food processing and agriculture – of which half are undertaken in collaboration with Irish and European partners. Over a quarter of projects include the direct involvement of, or liaison with, the agri-food industry.

### 2.2.1 Food Research

Almost 180 staff are engaged in research at our two food research centres namely,

- The National Food Centre, Ashtown, Dublin 15.
- The Dairy Products Research Centre, Moorepark, Fermoy, Co. Cork.

The objectives of the food research, technology development services and training programmes are to:

- Generate the knowledge and technologies necessary for competitiveness and innovation in the Irish food processing industry and to underpin food safety and quality
- Transfer technology to food companies and increase skill levels in the food sector.

### 2.2.2 Agriculture Research

Over 500 staff are involved in agriculture research at the following centres:

Mellows Centre, Athenry, Co. Galway.	(Sheep Production, Cattle Reproduction)
Grange, Dunsany, Co. Meath.	(Beef Production)
Moorepark, Fermoy, Co. Cork.	(Dairy and Pig Production)

Oak Park, Carlow.	(Crop Production)
Johnstown Castle, Wexford.	(Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture)
Kinsealy, Malahide Road, Dublin	(Horticulture /Forestry)
Rural Economy Research Centre, Athenry, Co. Galway	(Economics and Rural Development)

The objectives are to generate the knowledge and technologies necessary to:

- underpin competitive and innovative agricultural production and to inform policy
- ensure a vibrant rural economy and society
- underpin the sustainability of Irish agriculture and horticulture.

### 2.3 Advisory Service

The primary purpose of the Teagasc Advisory Service (involving some 680 staff) is to develop the unique human capital resource within family farms in order to achieve international competitiveness, optimise on and off farm income and protect the environment. The service has the capacity and flexibility to guide its customers to deal with ongoing change and adjustment and, in particular, the repositioning now required to combine competitive farming with good farm practice.

## TEAGASC CUSTOMER SERVICE ACTION PLAN 2004-2006

Teagasc delivers its advisory services from a network of 90 offices nationally. A list of the main local offices is given in Appendix II. Services provided include advisory farm visits, office and telephone consultations, regular technical newsletters, seminars, discussion groups, farm walks and a client web site. In addition the organisation publishes a bi-monthly magazine for client farmers called "*Today's Farm*". About 65,000 farm families are now availing of the Advisory Services, more than half of whom receive an intensive service.

Our Advisory Service delivers the following four priority programmes:

### 2.3.1 Options Analysis Programme For Farm Families

This programme is directed at enabling farm families to take stock of their present farm business and household position, analyse the options available to them and identify development pathways in the context of the separation of EU supports from agricultural production and other structural changes. A recent survey shows that 73% of our clients felt it 'very important' that Teagasc should develop and deliver such a service, with an additional 20% deeming it 'important'.

### 2.3.2 Environment and Good Farm Practice Programme\*

This programme provides farmers with environmental, food quality and animal welfare advisory and training services. This includes REPS planning and support, and nutrient management planning services.

### 2.3.3 Technology and Business Programme\*

This programme provides technical and financial support services required by farmers to make the necessary adjustments to their enterprises to remain competitive.

### 2.3.4 Adult Training Programme

This programme upgrades the knowledge and skills of farm families on an ongoing basis so that they can comfortably meet the challenges of a rapidly changing environment. It supports the other three advisory programmes outlined above.

\* The service for this programme are delivered as part of a service contract, which incurs an annual fee.



## 2.4 Education and Training Services

The overall objectives of the Education and Training Services are to meet the education and training needs of young entrants to agriculture, horticulture and related enterprises, provide for the up-skilling and lifelong learning needs of farm families and address the training needs of Irish food companies.

### 2.4.1 Young Entrants

The Education and Training Services, involving about 280 staff, in Teagasc and private agricultural colleges (see Appendix III), provide a range of nationally accredited third-level and vocational courses for young people entering careers in agriculture, horticulture, related land-based enterprises and the agri-food industry. Approximately 800 young people enrol annually in these courses; a key feature is the opportunity to progress to degree level.

In recognition of the increasing trend towards part-time farming, courses will continue to be delivered, where resources permit, outside of normal working hours. In addition, e-learning and distance learning will be facilitated and further developed.

Courses for young entrants are directed towards the development needs of:

- **Future commercial farmers and those seeking employment in industries and services ancillary to agriculture**  
Almost 200 young people enrol on joint Teagasc/Institute of Technology programmes accredited by HETAC. Both National Certificate and National Diploma-level awards are available to learners as a result of a partnership arrangement between the various agriculture and horticulture colleges and nearby institutes of technology.
- **Future full and part-time farmers**  
Vocational Certificate programmes in agriculture, horticulture, forestry and horses, which are accredited by FETAC, attract approximately 600 young people annually. In addition to these, a comprehensive programme of 100 hour and 80 hour training is provided across the Advisory Service and colleges to facilitate part-time farmers with third-level training who wish to avail of state aids and incentives.

#### 2.4.2 Adult Farmer Training

A comprehensive adult farmer training programme (see also Page 9) is aimed at equipping farm families with the latest technology and information on production, financial management, environmental control, food safety and quality, information technology and rural diversification. A modular approach, with standardised syllabi and assessment procedures, is used for all adult training programmes.

#### 2.4.3 Food Industry Training

The food industry in Ireland is increasingly knowledge intensive requiring the sector to maximise its human resource potential in order to retain competitiveness and to innovate. Teagasc supports this goal through the provision of nationally accredited, science-based training for food sector staff. Training is provided in accordance with a published training schedule each year and by way of customised training delivered on an in-company basis.

#### 2.5 Our Management Structure

Our management structure consists of an eleven-member Authority, which determines policy, with the Director as Chief Executive Officer whose responsibility it is to manage all aspects of the organisation. The Director is assisted in the implementation of policy by a Management Committee, consisting of the Heads of the six Directorates and an Administration Committee drawn from the Heads of Corporate Functions and Departments at Head Office. The Management Committee has five sub-committees that have detailed terms of reference.

The management of operations is carried out through a management structure (Appendix IV) with clearly defined lines of responsibility, authority and accountability. The Heads of Directorates, Heads of Research Centres, Area Managers (Advisory Services) and College Principals meet regularly to ensure that staff are kept informed of, and have a forum for discussing all developments affecting the organisation.



## 2.6 Teagasc Goals

In delivering its services, Teagasc has a clear strategy in place directed at six high-level goals: -

### **Goal 1: Competitiveness and Innovation in Agricultural Production**

To achieve an internationally competitive and innovative agricultural production sector consistent with high standards of sustainability.

### **Goal 2: Competitiveness and Innovation in Food Processing**

To achieve a market orientated, internationally competitive and innovative food processing sector.

### **Goal 3: Rural Viability**

To build the capacity of farm households to achieve viability and contribute to a vibrant rural economy and society.

### **Goal 4: Sustainable Systems of Agriculture**

To achieve systems of agriculture and food production that are sustainable in terms of the environment, animal welfare, occupational safety and the work environment.

### **Goal 5: Integrity of the Food Chain**

To support the production of Irish food that meets consumers' expectations of quality, safety and wholesomeness.

### **Goal 6: A More Capable, Efficient and Effective Organisation**

To become a more efficient and effective organisation with the capacity to change and develop so that we can deliver on our Mission and Goals.

## 2.7 Our Action Plan Under "Sustaining Progress"

As required by the national social partnership agreement, "Sustaining Progress", Teagasc has produced an Action Plan setting out the modernisation initiatives it intends to take over the course of the agreement. This is to enable us to become a more efficient and effective organisation with the capacity to change and develop so that we can deliver on the achievement of our high-level goals. This Action Plan includes some 60 commitments related to:

- quality customer services
- efficient use of resources
- providing information to the farming and rural communities in an accessible manner on farm safety, food safety, changes in environmental standards (e.g. Nitrates Directive) and animal welfare.
- stable industrial relations
- performance management systems
- modernisation and flexibility
- team and cross functional working
- use of IT
- atypical working arrangements
- attendance patterns
- redeployment of staff
- management of the introduction of change and new development
- staff training
- strengthening partnerships
- equality of opportunity for staff.

### 2.8 Training and Developing our Staff

Teagasc recognises that training plays a vital role in enabling staff to deliver on the commitments contained in the Action Plan referred to above. To this end, each Head of Directorate will establish a project team to produce a staff development programme on an annual basis. The plan will ensure that training needs identified through the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) coincide with organisational priorities and are delivered within the available budget. A staff training and development unit, established in 2005, will act as a resource for non-technical training and will support Heads of Directorates in their programme development. The unit will also take responsibility for the delivery of organisational wide non-technical training initiatives.

To support the roll out of the Customer Service Action Plan all staff, irrespective of area or grade, will receive one full day of special training in 2004 and 2005.



## 2.9 Our Internal Customer Values and Operating Principles

Our Research, Advisory, Education and Training Services are knowledge and information products delivered by our staff, who, as internal customers receive support services provided by the organisation. The excellence of our staff and the standard of support services provided to them are recognised as the most important factors in providing quality services to our external customers. The Teagasc Human Resource Management Strategy (December 2003) identifies the guiding values that inspire people in the organisation to support our staff and influence their everyday behaviour in the workplace. These include:

- **Service Driven** – demonstrated by a commitment to leading edge services that are sought after by our clients and stakeholders.
- **Respect and Esteem** – between management and staff, between colleagues and between staff and clients.
- **Participation** – so deeply embedded within the culture of the organisation that it becomes the accepted modus operandi.
- **Commitment to Continuous Improvement** – innovative people finding a better way.
- **Supportive Working Environment** – genuine care for the individual from management and colleagues.
- **Public Sector Ethos** – we will do what is right in the long-term and in the best interests of our stakeholders.

The following **Operating Principles** now guide our strategic actions in this regard:

- We employ and promote the **best people** based on their competency to perform the job and provide opportunities, development and recognition equally across the organisation.
- We give the highest priority to protecting the **dignity of staff** in the workplace and providing them with a quality work life. Only behaviour that demonstrates respect and esteem for colleagues and clients is acceptable.
- We utilise **leading edge HR Systems** to support the performance and development of our people.
- We engage staff by facilitating their **full participation** in the development of Business Plans in their work area. We ensure **partnership structures** operate in a way that untaps the potential of staff to maximise their contribution to the development of their own working environment and the achievement of organisational objectives.
- We recognise the importance of working together at all levels in the organisation and this is reflected in a **team-based approach** within and across disciplines, divisions and geography.

## TEAGASC CUSTOMER SERVICE ACTION PLAN 2004-2006

- We understand the critical nature of **staff development** as a key requirement in a knowledge organisation. The organisation and the people who work in it share responsibility for staff development.
- We endeavour to build our organisation from within in the context of a **competency-based approach**. We utilise competency systems to support career and succession planning.
- Within a public sector context, we **recognise the contribution of individual staff** to the achievement of business excellence in ways that are consistent with the ethos of our organisation.
- We recognise the right of staff to have full, **accurate and timely information** on issues pertaining to their work environment.
- Conference proceedings
- General Teagasc reports
- Advisory fact sheets
- General information on the agri-food industry
- Information related to employment opportunities in the organisation and details on current vacancies to be filled
- General information about the organisation, including copies of our recent Annual Reports, our Statement of Strategy, Five Year Rolling Business Plan and obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997 (FOI)
- The names and addresses of key staff in all of our business units, including telephone and fax numbers and email addresses.

### 2.10 Our Websites

Teagasc maintains a general public website at [www.teagasc.ie](http://www.teagasc.ie)

This includes

- Details of our research, advisory and training services
- Copies of all press releases
- Details of all upcoming public events
- Details of Publications available to the public
- End of project research reports

A special client website for client farmers is also maintained. This site contains a wealth of technical information and interactive services for client farmers.

An Intranet website is maintained for our staff as internal customers. The site provides staff with comprehensive information on the internal support services available to them.

### 2.11 Freedom of Information (FOI)

We comply with obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 1997 (FOI). This provides the right to individuals, subject to certain exclusions/restrictions, to: -

- access records held by Teagasc
- have inaccurate or incomplete information on personal records corrected
- obtain reasons for decisions affecting them.

FOI requests to Teagasc are firstly examined by our Freedom of Information Officer before referral to one of the staff persons assigned functions of FOI Decision Maker.



Oak Park House

# 3. PRINCIPLES OF QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

In setting standards for the delivery of quality services, Teagasc will, in line with all Civil Service Departments and Public Service organisations, take into consideration the following twelve principles:

## Quality Service Standards

Publish a statement that outlines the nature and quality of service which customers can expect and display it prominently at the point of service delivery.

## Equality/Diversity

Ensure the rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation and accommodate diversity so as to contribute to equality for the groups covered by the equality legislation (under the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community).

Identify and work to eliminate barriers to access to services for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion and for those facing geographic barriers to services.

## Physical/Access

Provide clean, accessible public offices that ensure privacy, comply with occupational and safety standards and, as part of this, facilitate access for people with disabilities and others with specific needs.

## Information

Adopt a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely and accurate, is available at all points of contact, and meets the requirements of people with specific needs. Ensure that the potential offered by Information Technology is fully availed of and that the information available on public service websites follows the guidelines on web publication.

Continue the drive for simplification of rules, regulations, forms, information leaflets and procedures.

## Timeliness and Courtesy

Deliver quality services with courtesy, sensitivity and the minimum delay, fostering a climate of mutual respect between provider and customer.

Give contact names in all communications to ensure ease of ongoing transactions.

## Complaints

Maintain a well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided.

## Appeals

Similarly, maintain a formalised, well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of appeal/review for customers who are dissatisfied with decisions in relation to services.



### **Consultation and Evaluation**

Provide a structured approach to meaningful consultation with, and participation by, the customer in relation to the development, delivery and review of services. Ensure meaningful evaluation of service delivery.

### **Choice**

Provide choice, where feasible, in service delivery including payment methods, location of contact points, opening hours and delivery times. Use available and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice and quality of delivery.

### **Official Languages Equality**

Provide quality services through Irish and/or bilingually and inform customers of their right to choose to be dealt with through one or other of the official languages.

### **Better Co-ordination**

Foster a more co-ordinated and integrated approach to delivery of public services.

### **Internal Customer**

Ensure staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.

## 4. CUSTOMER CHARTER

### 4.1 Introduction

As the main provider of research, advisory and training services to the agri-food sector, Teagasc plays a central role in supporting innovation, productivity, quality and skills development in the sector.

Teagasc has clear strategic goals, objectives and strategies, which it is following in pursuit of this role. A commitment to the delivery of **Quality Customer Services** is one of the core strategies. We have consulted widely with our stakeholders and staff in the development of our standards for the following issues:

- Commitments to our customers
- What our customers can expect when they contact us
- How our customers can help us
- How we deal with comments and complaints.

### 4.2 Commitments to our Customers

#### In the provision of services we will ensure that

- Our staff work in a professional and ethical manner.
- Customers are treated with dignity and respect.
- Any information we have pertaining to our customers' business is kept strictly confidential.
- Clear, detailed and timely information is provided in all our services.

#### We will strive to ensure that facilities for customers

- Are clean, comfortable and comply with health and safety regulations.
- Are accessible for all people including people with disabilities.
- Where appropriate, have bio-security arrangements in place.

#### In our contact with customers through office visits/farm visits

- Staff will be available for appointment during normal working hours.
- If customers have a pre-arranged appointment, they will be seen at the scheduled time. If there is a delay, they will be kept informed.
- Staff will be fully prepared for the meetings and will be helpful and courteous.

Customers are encouraged to contact our staff in order to arrange consultations/visits.

#### In arranging events, we will

- Ensure customers are notified of events a minimum of three days in advance.
- Ensure event locations are well signposted (where required) and events start punctually.



#### **In providing information, we will**

- Strive to ensure that technical information is presented to customers in a format that is easy to understand.
- Ensure our website is easy to navigate and is maintained up-to-date.
- Work to ensure quality and consistency in the delivery of information to customers.

#### **In order to maintain the quality of our services, we will**

- Request feedback from our customers on services delivered, and consult with them on an on-going basis to ensure the relevance of services to industry needs.

#### **In working to maintain high research standards, we will**

- Undertake international peer review of our research services on a regular basis.
- Promote publication of research results in international peer reviewed journals.

### **4.3 What our Customers can expect when they contact us**

#### **By telephone**

- We will be available to answer customers' calls during normal office hours.
- Telephone callers can expect to be met with courtesy and a helpful manner and will be listened to with respect.

- If the staff member requested is not available, we will connect the customer with another person who can help, or take details of the query and ensure the customer is called back at a time suitable to him/her.
- Telephone and voice-mail inquiries will be responded to within one working day. If a definite answer to queries cannot be provided within this timeframe, the customer concerned will be notified as to when to expect a detailed reply.

#### **In writing**

- We aim to respond to all written communications within five working days. If for any reason we cannot respond within this time, we will send an acknowledgement, which will state when to expect a full reply.
- Staff will include their name and full contact details on all correspondence.
- E-mail inquiries will be answered within two working days.

#### **Service through Irish**

- We will endeavour to accommodate customers who wish to deal with us through Irish.

### **4.4 How our Customers can help us**

#### **Customers can greatly assist us by**

- Notifying us in the event of delay or cancellation of appointments

- Treating our staff with courtesy and consideration.
- Notifying our staff member in advance of the issue for discussion thereby enabling us to prepare adequately.
- Providing without delay information/documentation requested by our staff.

#### 4.5 How we Deal with Comments and Complaints

We aim to deliver a high quality service at all times and we welcome feedback from customers on how we can improve our service. If, for any reason customers are not satisfied, we invite them to tell us, as they have the right to complain. Customers' complaints will be treated fairly and without bias, will be promptly investigated, and if we find we have made a mistake, we will apologise and work to rectify the situation as quickly as possible. We promise that customers' complaints will not affect how we

might treat them in the future.

We operate the following simple and easy to follow **complaints procedure:**

- Customers are requested to tell the staff member they normally deal with that they are not satisfied. They can do this in person, on the phone or in writing.
- The customer will receive a response within five working days. If for any reason this is not possible, we will explain why.
- If customers are still not happy, they can make a formal complaint in writing to the relevant Head of Centre, Area Manager or College Principal, as appropriate. (See Appendix I, II and III for details). A written response will be issued within five working days.

# 5. ACTION PLAN FOR SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

## 5.1 Introduction

Teagasc will undertake, in the period 2004 to 2006, a range of actions to improve the quality of its services. The actions to be undertaken take account of the twelve principles of quality customer service outlined in Chapter 3.

## 5.2 Quality Service Standards

Publish a statement that outlines the nature and quality of service which customers can expect and display it prominently at the point of service delivery.

ACTION STEP	CUSTOMERS TO BENEFIT	TARGET DATE	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Prepare a Customer Charter	All	2005	The Customer Charter will be finalised by January 2005
Adopt a Teagasc policy that "competency in customer service" will be a key skill requirement for all incoming staff	All	2006	Proportion of job specifications including "competency in customer service" as a skill requirement
Train seven staff members as internal trainers to deliver customer service awareness training to staff	All	2004	Seven staff trained as internal trainers
Deliver Customer Service Awareness training to all existing and new staff	All	Ongoing	Proportion of staff trained
Invite views and suggestions from key stakeholders on the content of Customer Charter and Customer Service Action Plan	All	Jun - Aug 2004	Completion of consultation process
The provision of Quality Customer Service to be included in the business planning process of all Business Units.	All	2005 to 2006	Proportion of Business Units/Plans with Quality Customer Service activity targets.
Report annually on progress in achieving service standards	All	Ongoing	Customer surveys

### 5.3 Equality/Diversity

Ensure the rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation, and accommodate diversity, so as to contribute to equality for the groups covered by the equality legislation (under the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation,

religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community). Identify and work to eliminate barriers that deny access to services for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, and for those facing geographic barriers to services.

ACTION STEP	CUSTOMERS TO BENEFIT	TARGET DATE	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Ensure equality/diversity awareness among staff	All Staff Customers	2006	Proportion of staff having legislation
Gender-proof all Teagasc publications, procedures and correspondence	All Customers	Ongoing	Procedures in place for gender proofing publications and correspondence
Put in place actions to make more effective use of Information Technology to help transcend physical or geographic barriers to our services	All	Ongoing	Number of actions developed

#### 5.4 Physical Access

Provide clean, accessible public offices that ensure privacy, comply with occupational and safety standards and, as part of

this, facilitate access for people with disabilities and others with specific needs.

ACTION STEP	CUSTOMERS TO BENEFIT	TARGET DATE	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Review/Audit (a) physical access barriers for our customers, both internal and external (b) standard of waiting areas in advisory service offices	All	2005	Number of Building audits completed at all locations
Cost and make provision for structural changes/upgradings identified in the audit process	All	2005	Action list, specifying priority areas agreed and financial provision made in business unit budgets
Ensure that physical access is a priority concern in the refurbishment of Teagasc offices	All	Ongoing	Proportion of centres meeting accessibility needs
Ensure Teagasc buildings comply with occupational Health and Safety legislation	All	Annual Review	Proportion of centres with relevant and up-to-date safety statement
Ensure locations can offer clients privacy if required	All	Ongoing in 2005 and 2006	Proportion of locations with facilities 2005 and 2006 to enable clients privacy

**5.5 Information**

Take a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely and accurate, is available at all points of contact, and meets the requirements of people with specific needs. Ensure that the

potential offered by Information Technology is fully availed of and that the information available on public service websites follows the guidelines on web publication. Continue the drive for simplification of rules, regulations, forms, information leaflets and procedures.

ACTION STEP	CUSTOMERS TO BENEFIT	TARGET DATE	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Train staff to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attributes to deliver a quality service	All	Ongoing	Proportion of staff trained.
Further develop and promote the Teagasc client website in consultation with customers	Advisory service clients and learners	Ongoing	Survey of clients on quality of web-site
Adopt "Plain English" approach to all our customer publications	All	Ongoing	Proportion of publications complying
Develop and implement a good practice guide for communications	All	2005 and 2006	Proportion of business units that have adapted a code of good practice
Develop and implement a 'Work Practices and Procedures' manual for the Advisory Services	All Advisory clients	2005	Proportion of business units that have adapted the Work Practices and Procedures

### 5.6 Timeliness and Courtesy

Deliver quality services with courtesy, sensitivity and the minimum delay, fostering a climate of mutual respect between

provider and customer. Give contact names in all communications to ensure ease of ongoing transactions.

ACTION STEP	CUSTOMERS TO BENEFIT	TARGET DATE	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Adhere to protocols regarding timeliness and courtesy specified in the Customer Charter	All	Ongoing	Satisfaction levels among customers
Develop and implement a system to regularly inform clients awaiting service of the expected time of service delivery.	All	2005	System in place to monitor the number of clients awaiting service and the expected time of service delivery.
Ensure public notification of events at least ten days in advance and ensure personal invitations to clients are received by them at least three days in advance for events in their area	All	Ongoing	Proportion of notifications issued on time

5.7 Complaints

Maintain a well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-

to-use system of dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided.

TABLE 6

ACTION STEP	CUSTOMERS TO BENEFIT	TARGET DATE	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Develop and make available a quality-of-service feedback form, to be available in local offices and on the client web-site	All	2005	Proportion of centres with customer feedback forms available
Develop and implement a protocol for dealing with complaints registered by customers	All	2005	Proportion of business units implementing protocol
Deliver training to all line managers on handling and resolving complaints	All	2005	Number of managers trained
Develop and implement a procedure for dealing with complaints from staff about internal support services	Internal Customers	2005	Number of complaints registered by HR Department

### 5.8 Appeals

Similarly, maintain a formalised, well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of appeal/review for customers who are dissatisfied with decisions in relation to services.

ACTION STEP	CUSTOMERS TO BENEFIT	TARGET DATE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
Develop and implement an appeals procedure	All	2005	Appeals procedure in place

## TEAGASC CUSTOMER SERVICE ACTION PLAN 2004-2006

### 5.9 Consultation and Evaluation

Provide a structured approach to meaningful consultation with,

and participation by, the customer in relation to the development, delivery and review of services. Ensure meaningful evaluation of service delivery.

ACTION STEP	CUSTOMERS TO BENEFIT	TARGET	DATE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR.
Establish customer panels for the purpose of consultation on future service delivery		Internal and external customers	2005	No. of panels established.
Devise a schedule of external customer surveys to be conducted over the life of the plan, results of which will be published on the Intranet and client website		All	2005	Number of surveys conducted by the dates specified. Publication on the Intranet of a planned schedule of customer surveys and results as they become available
Continue to consult with industry advisory groups and farm organisations		All	Ongoing	Number of meetings with industry advisory groups and farm organisations
Establish a monitoring group (to meet annually) to monitor and advise on charging relative to service delivery in advisory services		All	2005	Internal group established. Publication of a transparent pricing structure

### 5.10 Choice

Provide choice, where feasible, in service delivery including payment methods, location of contact points, opening hours and delivery times. Use available and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access, choice, and quality of delivery.

ACTION STEP.	CUSTOMERS TO BENEFIT	TARGET DATE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
Deliver training courses outside of normal working hours	Customers unable to attend training during normal working hours	Ongoing	Number of training courses delivered outside of normal working hours
Develop a plan to give customers more choice	All	2006	Plan developed

### 5.11 Official Languages Equality

Provide quality services through Irish and/or bilingually and inform customers of their right to choose to be dealt with through one or other of the official languages.

ACTION STEP	CUSTOMERS TO BENEFIT	TARGET DATE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
Prepare and publicise a list of staff capable of delivering services through Irish	Customers who choose to avail of services through Irish	2005	List published
Publish major corporate publications in Irish	Customers who choose to avail of services through Irish	Ongoing	Number of major corporate publications in Irish

5.12 Better Co-ordination

Foster a more co-ordinated and integrated approach to delivery of public services.

ACTION STEP	CUSTOMERS TO BENEFIT	TARGET DATE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
Continue to develop and implement joint programmes with industry	Advisory service clients	Ongoing	Number of joint programmes
Work in partnership with all sectors of the agriculture and food industry in the delivery of services	All	Ongoing	Number of linkages with : Department of Agriculture and Food; Other Government Departments; Government agencies; International organisations; Higher Education Institutions; Industry representative bodies; Local Development Agencies; Cross-border organisations.

### 5.13 Internal Customer

Ensure staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.

TABLE 12

ACTION STEP	CUSTOMERS TO BENEFIT	TARGET DATE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
Ensure training needs identified through the PMDS process are delivered	All customers	Ongoing	Delivery of annual training plan
Ensure full implementation of the Teagasc HR Strategy	All customers	Ongoing	Achievement of key objectives of the HR Strategy

# APPENDICES

TEAGASC CUSTOMER SERVICE ACTION PLAN 2004-2006

- APPENDIX 1** RESEARCH CENTRES
- APPENDIX 2** MAIN LOCAL ADVISORY OFFICES
- APPENDIX 3** COLLEGES AND LOCAL TRAINING CENTRES
- APPENDIX 4** TEAGASC MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE
- APPENDIX 5** MAP OF TEAGASC CENTRES

# APPENDIX 1

## RESEARCH CENTRES

### FOOD RESEARCH CENTRES

Dairy Products Research Centre, Moorepark, Fermoy, Co. Cork.  
Tel : 025 42222 Fax: 025 42340

The National Food Centre, Ashtown, Dublin 15.  
Tel : 01 8059500 Fax 01 8059550

### AGRICULTURE RESEARCH CENTRES

Mellows Centre, Athenry, Co. Galway. (Sheep Production, Cattle Reproduction)  
Tel : 091 845845 Fax : 091 845847

Grange, Dunsany, Co. Meath. (Beef Production)  
Tel : 046 9061100 Fax 046 9026154

Moorepark, Fermoy, Co. Cork (Dairy and Pig Production)  
Tel : 025 42222 Fax : 025 42340

Johnstown Castle, Wexford. (Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture)  
Tel : 053 71200 Fax 053 42004

Kinsealy, Malahide Road, Dublin 17. (Horticulture and Forestry)  
Tel : 01 8460644 Fax 01 8460524

Oak Park, Co. Carlow. (Crop Production)  
Tel: 059 91 70200 Fax: 091 844296

Rural Economy Research Centre, Athenry, Co. Galway. (Economics and Rural Development)  
Tel : 091 845200 Fax 091 844296

# APPENDIX 11

## TEAGASC CUSTOMER SERVICE ACTION PLAN 2004-2006

### MAIN LOCAL ADVISORY OFFICES

Carlow :	The Green, Tullow. Tel. (059) 9151210
Cavan:	Advisory Office, Ballyhaise. Tel. (049) 4338300
Clare:	Station Road, Ennis, Tel. (065) 6828676
Cork East	Farranlea Road, Cork. Tel. (021) 4545055
Cork West	Kilbarry Road, Dunmanway. Tel. (023) 45113
Donegal	Cavan Lower, Ballybofey. Tel. (074) 31189
Dublin	Kinsealy Research Centre, Malahide Road, Dublin 17. Tel. (01) 8460644
Galway	Advisory Office, Athenry. Tel. (091) 845800
Kerry	The Pavillion, Austin Stack Park, Tralee. Tel. (066) 7125077
Kildare	Friary Road, Naas. Tel. (045) 879203
Kilkenny	Kells Road, Kilkenny. Tel. (056) 7721153
Laois	1 Park Villas, Portlaoise. Tel. (0502) 21326
Leitrim	Bridge Street, Carrick-on-Shannon. Tel. (071) 9620028
Limerick	Parnell St., Limerick. Tel. (061) 415922
Longford	Town Centre, Longford. Tel. (043) 41021
Louth	Dublin Road, Dundalk. Tel. (042) 9332263
Mayo	Michael Davitt House, Castlebar. Tel. (094) 9021944
Meath	Kells Road, Navan. Tel. (046) 9021792
Monaghan	Coolshannagh, Monaghan. Tel. (047) 81188
Offaly	Clonminch, Tullamore. Tel. (0506) 21405
Roscommon	Abbey Street, Roscommon. Tel. (0906) 626166
Sligo	Riverside, Sligo. Tel. (071) 9142286
Tipperary Nth.	Dromin Road, Nenagh. Tel. (067) 31225
Tipperary Sth.	Carrigeen, Clonmel. Tel. (052) 21300
Waterford	Shandon, Dungarvan. Tel. (058) 41211
Westmeath	Bellview, Dublin Road, Mullingar. Tel. (044) 40721
Wexford	Advisory Office, Johnstown Castle, Wexford. Tel. (053) 42622
Wicklow	Wentworth Place, Wicklow. Tel. (0404)67315

# APPENDIX 111

## COLLEGES AND LOCAL TRAINING CENTRES

### AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

Ballyhaise Agricultural College, Ballyhaise, Co. Cavan.  
Tel: 049 4338108 Fax : 049 4338540

Clonakilty Agricultural College, Darrara, Clonakilty, Co. Cork.  
Tel: 023 33302 Fax 023 34449

Kildalton Agricultural College, Piltown, Co. Kilkenny.  
Tel: 051 644400 Fax 051 643797

Gurteen Agricultural College, Ballingarry, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary.  
Tel: 067 21282 Fax 067 21290

Franciscan Brothers Agricultural College, Mountbellew, Co. Galway.  
Tel: 0905 79205 Fax 0905 79276

Salesian Agricultural College, Pallaskenry, Co. Limerick  
Tel: 061 393100 Fax 061 393005

### HORTICULTURAL COLLEGES

Kildalton Horticultural College, Piltown, Co. Kilkenny  
Tel: 051 643105 Fax 051 643797

College of Amenity Horticulture, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9  
Tel 01 8374388 Fax 01 8366329

Salesian College of Horticulture, Warrenstown, Drumree, Co. Meath  
Tel: 01 8259392 Fax: 01 8259632

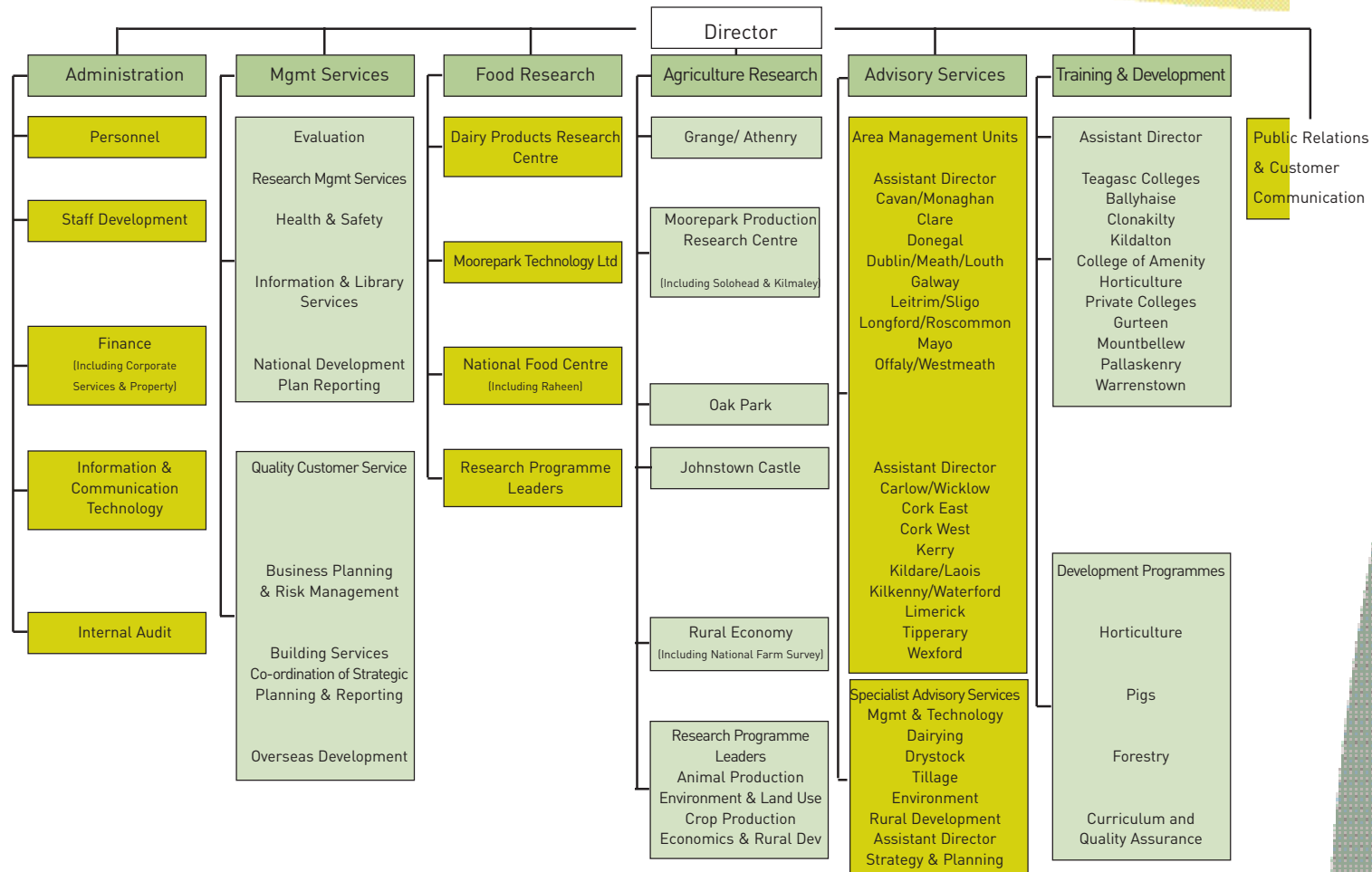
### LOCAL TRAINING CENTRES

Contact the main local advisory offices listed in Appendix II.

# APPENDIX 1V

## TEAGASC CUSTOMER SERVICE ACTION PLAN 2004-2006

### TEAGASC MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



# APPENDIX V

