Department of Agrifood Business and Spatial Analysis

Dr Maeve Henchion, HOD
Vision

- That AFBSA be the
  - key partner in national and EU networks that analyse socio-economic and environmental issues relating to innovation in agriculture, food and the bioeconomy.
  - With the objective of producing high quality social science research and spatial analyses to support the central role of innovation in addressing contemporary societal challenges
Objectives

- To collect timely, quality information, inform decision-making by stakeholders and support the broader Teagasc research agenda
  - Undertaking research, interpreting market and policy developments, enabling stakeholders make better decisions
    - Identifying strategic market opportunities and understanding consumer behaviour
    - Understanding the socio-cultural context framing farmer behaviour
    - Evaluating the impacts of rural restructuring for farm and non-farm households
    - Applying new geospatial understanding and technology to support sustainable agriculture practice and policy at all scales
Structure and Resources

Market and consumer research
*Teagasc Goal 1*
expertise in relation to consumer behaviour and strategic marketing, strong links with the Food Programme

Spatial & environmental analysis
*Teagasc Goal 1 & 2*
expertise in spatial analysis, earth observation & remote sensing, strong links with CELUP

Rural development research
*Teagasc Goal 3*
expertise in rural geography & spatial analysis, strong links to KT specialists

Agri-innovation & learning
*Teagasc Goal 1*
expertise in sociology, psychology and value chains, strong links to the knowledge transfer directorate
Agri-innovation & learning

- Macro (AKIS) and micro (individual farmer decision making) analysis re innovation

- Wide perspective on innovation, e.g. organisational innovations, digitisation, animal health and production issues

- Consideration of required support frameworks

- Socio-culturally sensitive approaches to understanding and supporting farm-level change

- Co-design of policy and extension tools

- Strong link to KT Directorate
  - Informs design and implementation of programmes
  - Supports evaluation of programmes and extension mechanisms and activities
Market & consumer research

- Address multi-disciplinary themes which cross the supply chain, e.g. sustainability, innovation, food quality

- Support Food Programme and industry support bodies
  - New market opportunities in the wider bioeconomy
  - Food and Health
  - Consumer behaviour and attitudes, and taste preferences
  - Acceptance of novel food technologies and ingredients
  - Innovation and technology transfer processes and behaviour
Rural development research

- Working with national and local rural policy stakeholders focusing on issues arising from rural economic restructuring and their implications for rural development.

- Links to the Teagasc Farm Health & Safety Programme

- Close working relationship with institutes / universities across Ireland and the EU and amongst policy stakeholders in Ireland, particularly LEADER companies and the Department of the Environment.
Spatial Analysis

- Spatial analysis and remote sensing of rural Ireland
- Knowledge and tools to develop SMART agriculture
- Geo-informatics infrastructure to support agricultural, environmental and rural development policy.
- Strong inter-programme research ties.
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(Reamonn Fealy currently on secondment to DAFM)