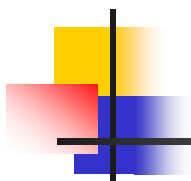


Progressing a Producer Group



Michael Ryan

Limerick and Tipperary
Woodlands Owners Group



LTWO

- The Limerick and Tipperary Woodland Owners Group" was formed in October 2010.
- Built around IFA and Teagasc - ***to foster awareness and scale***
- Have had 3 AGMs
- Over 100 members in total – not all current
- Set up 10 clusters. Each nominates a member to the Management Committee



LTWO

- The Group has held numerous local events and is now involved in a joint first thinning
- Website:
www.limerickandtipperarywoodlandowners.ie
- Recently acquired a Leader funded manager
- Currently forming a Company Limited by Guarantee
- ***Moving towards a commercial role***



Issues

- Discussion Group or Producer Group??
- Bottom Up or Top Down
- Role of small groupings – Clusters
- Membership



Discussion Group or Producer Group??

- **Discussion groups** – (*awareness and scale*)
 - Built around clusters
 - Share information
 - Access outside training eg Teagasc
 - Access a central secretariat/facilitator



Discussion Group or Producer Group??

- **Discussion groups** – (*awareness and scale*)
 - Individual/joint harvesting/selling may follow
 - Need committed group leaders
 - A timetable/schedule of the dates, venues and topics for the discussion group is needed at the start of the year



Discussion Group or Producer Group??

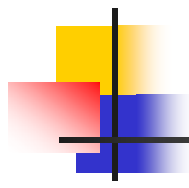
- **Producer Group(s) (*commercial role*)**
 - May develop from discussion groups;
 - Should have a clear objective - ie WHY??
 - To satisfy a market niche?
 - Achieve scale economies?
 - Shorten the supply chain?
 - To provide member services?
 - To become master of our own affairs



Discussion Group or Producer Group??

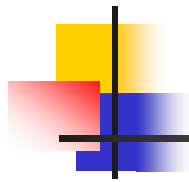
Producer Group(s) (*commercial role*) *contd*

- Not simply because it is the "usual" next step
- Not simply because funding is available
- Not simply to satisfy egos
- Should evolve from member's needs



Bottom up or top down?

- Needs Leaders/facilitators at discussion stage
- Needs members to articulate needs at later stages
- Will need a manager at commercial stage



Role of small groupings – Clusters

- Crucial
 - Nucleus of “Umbrella group”
 - Small enough to meet and discuss
 - Can form a cohesive unit
 - Should be self managed with some facilitation



Membership

- Committed membership is critical
- Needs to start at discussion stage
- Funding required to promote this
 - Already there for Dairy and Beef
 - Provided for in the EU Rural Development Programme



Lessons

- Role of clusters is vital for discussion and awareness – needs a lot of support
- Requires lots of liaison with members
- Members need to be committed particularly at Commercial stage
- Difficult – but without cooperation individuals will be mercilessly taken advantage of by some unscrupulous middle men



Summary

- Discussion Group to Producer Group
- Requires early leadership
- Clear evaluation of Group requirements
- Control of our own valuable resource