Summary of topics covered were...

Local impact of SME’s

Co-ordination between agencies can help spread the load of responsibility and assist in facilitating new businesses.
Rural Innovation Survey

- Main challenges – regulation, grants and marketing.
- ‘Where to get help???’
- Lack of business skills and knowledge
- Travel to mentoring and training.
- Ways to increase business survival:
  - access information quickly
  - access training locally
  - access to finance
  - building confidence
Innovation and Enterprise:

• Keep it simple
• Export – deliver it cheaper and faster
• It’s all about sales
• Problem gap – selling skills – make a sales plan.
• Profit is sanity, turnover is vanity
• Finances and cash flow require firm management skills.
Innovation and Enterprise cont...

• Train yourself and train your staff
• Professional presentations
• Employ expertise
• Be prepared for problems such as insurance claims.
Open Discussion:

• Don’t underestimate how difficult it is to start a business.
• All agencies need to work together to deliver more effective services.
• Lack of confidence is a serious problem for start-up’s – self-belief.
• Education and training boards need to address I.T supports for farmers i.e. using Google
• Diverse education levels.
Teagasc NFS viability and regional results:

- East West divide is a growing issue
- Viability is at 37%
- The Gap is widening between regions
- Average age gap is also widening
- Investment of €1.7 billion in 10,000 jobs
- Large regional differences in farm viability
Innovation and commercialisation:

The Canadian speaker Bill Ashton spoke about

• Innovation ecology
• Supports are not coordinated
• Culture is risk diverse
• Learning innovation by driving and encouraging it in secondary schools
Rural Economic Development Zones

• Potential for bottom up planning
• 154 travel to work areas
• Demand and supply for local labour
• Filling jobs from outside – need for skills training
• Important information for education and training boards
• Regional skills forum
In summary

The essential elements necessary to move from innovation to enterprise are...

• Idea generation
• Development of a business model
• Coordination of necessary skills and supports
• Development of financial skills
• Provision of clear access to knowledge i.e. regulation, grants and marketing.
• Confidence building / self belief
• Access to finances