

Advisory
Programme

Cork East Advisory Region

Strategic Plan

2015 - 2020



Teagasc Mission Statement

To support science-based innovation in the agri-food sector and wider bioeconomy so as to underpin profitability, competitiveness and sustainability.

Teagasc Goals

1. Improve the competitiveness of agriculture, food and the wider bioeconomy.
2. Support sustainable farming and the environment.
3. Encourage diversification of the rural economy and enhance the quality of life in rural areas.
4. Enhance organisational capability and deliver value for money.

Teagasc Office Locations in the Cork East Region



Cork East Advisory Region

Teagasc, Knockgriffin, Midleton, Co. Cork	021 4631898
Teagasc, Percival Street, Kanturk, Co. Cork	029 50886
Teagasc, Advisory Office, Moorepark, Fermoy, Co. Cork	025 42244
Teagasc, Sandfield, Mallow, Co. Cork	022 21936



I am pleased to present the Cork East Advisory Region Strategic Plan 2015 which sets out the goals, priorities and strategic actions for the regions publically funded advisory service for the period 2015 – 2020.

The plan has been prepared in consultation with staff and a range of stakeholders and represents our response to the opportunities and challenges facing farming in the region over the next five years.

Teagasc advisory service is ideally placed to instigate, lead and guide farming in the region to exploit the opportunities for growth and expansion while also addressing complex sustainability challenges.

At a time of growing demand for our services while meeting the requirements to comply with the regulations on staffing as a result of the Employment Control Framework (ECF), we are determined to play a key role in ensuring that the ambitious targets identified in Food Harvest 2020 are reached in the region.

We are committed to delivering high quality support to the industry locally and to working in closer association with our farmer clients, state agencies and local partners to ensure that agriculture in the region benefits to the maximum from the current favourable external environment.

Gerard MacMahon

Teagasc, Regional Manager, Cork East

Cork East Regional Strategic Plan – Summary Actions

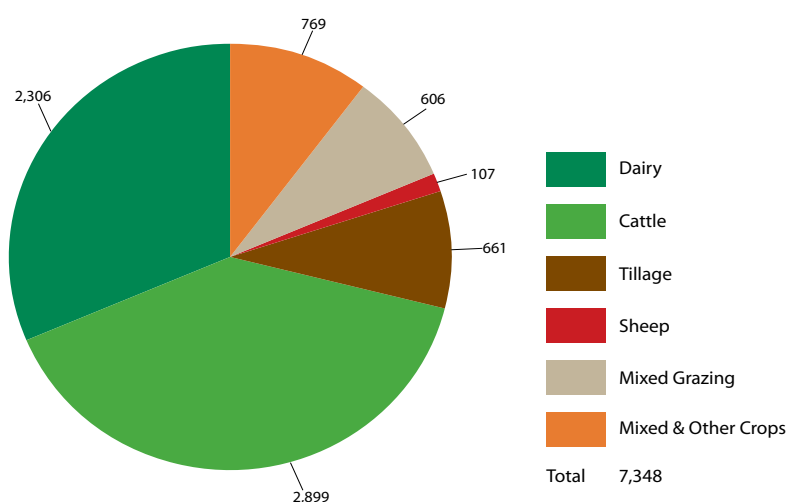
- Target 60% increase in milk output
- Increase numbers in discussion groups in all enterprises
- A soil fertility improvement plan should be put in place for all high stocked enterprises
- Expanding dairy farms should be targeted for one to one advice
- Targeted short financial course for expanders and new entrants in all enterprises
- Optimum output should be established for each dairy advisors client farmers
- Increase profit on drystock farms through improving technical performance through the knowledge transfer process
- Teagasc will work closely with the Health and Safety Authority to support and educate farm families on farm safety.
- Promote soil sampling for agronomic in addition to regulatory uses
- Maximise retention of Direct Farm Payment – BPS, Greening and GLAS
- Identify actual machinery costs for tillage farmers
- Work closely with Dairygold, Kerry, Glanbia and North Cork Co-Op on Joint Programmes to increase farm profit through dairy efficiency and expansion
- Promote collaboration between dairy, drystock and tillage farmers
- Target 50% of clients to move to lower carbon farming and completion of the Carbon Navigator
- Integrate and mainstream farm safety at all our interactions with farmers

Cork East is an intensive farming area with a diverse range of farm activities with both arable and livestock enterprises and a strong dairying tradition. Land quality is variable with a general deterioration as you head north-eastwards, where drought rarely is an issue compared to the area south of Midleton where most year's drought restricts grass growth in the summer months. There is a diversity of soil types from heavier soils in the Duhallow area to more free draining soils further east. Average farm size is 34Ha which is above the national average.

Farming Systems

30% of farmers are dairy farmers with a decreasing number of winter milk producers located near Cork city. Almost 40% of farmers are involved in cattle production, suckling, calf to beef and bull beef production. There are more than 600 tillage farmers in the region. The pie chart below gives a visual representation of the distribution of the farm systems.

Figure 1 - Farm classification by type of farm for Cork East 2010



Source: CSO Census of Agriculture 2010

Soil Fertility

Soil fertility is a limiting factor on livestock farms with only 10% of soil being optimum for Lime, Phosphate and Potash. Soil fertility is generally satisfactory on tillage farms.

Farm Size:

The average farm size in Cork East is 34Ha, slightly above the national average of 32.7Ha. Almost 20% of farmers have in excess of 50Ha. See Table 2. Some of the largest, most intensive and productive dairy and tillage farmers are located in Cork East.

Table 1 - Farm size in Cork East - Statistics - June 2010 - Source 2010

Farm Size (Hectares) - Utilised Areas	No of Farms	% of Farms	% Nationally
<10	1,032	13.70%	18%
10 - <20	1,167	15.50%	24%
20 - <30	1,192	15.80%	18%
30 - <50	1,939	25.70%	22%
50 - <100	1,846	24.50%	15%
> = 100	361	4.80%	3%
Total	7,537	100%	100%

Facilities

The Teagasc Cork East advisory region has four offices at Fermoy in the Moorepark campus, Midleton and Mallow, these 3 offices are owned by Teagasc. Teagasc in Cork East also operates in a leased building in Kanturk which has recently had a meeting room added. Prefab elements of the Midleton and Mallow offices need replacement in the next 5 years.

Staff

The trends and prediction of staff numbers from 2008 to 2020 are outlined in Table 3. The reduction of 44% in Teagasc frontline adviser numbers from 2008 to 2014 has resulted from retirement, termination of contract and the embargo on recruitment in the public service. There has also been a long lag time in filling the advisory positions that had become vacant.

Figure 2 - Adviser Numbers in Cork East Advisory Region

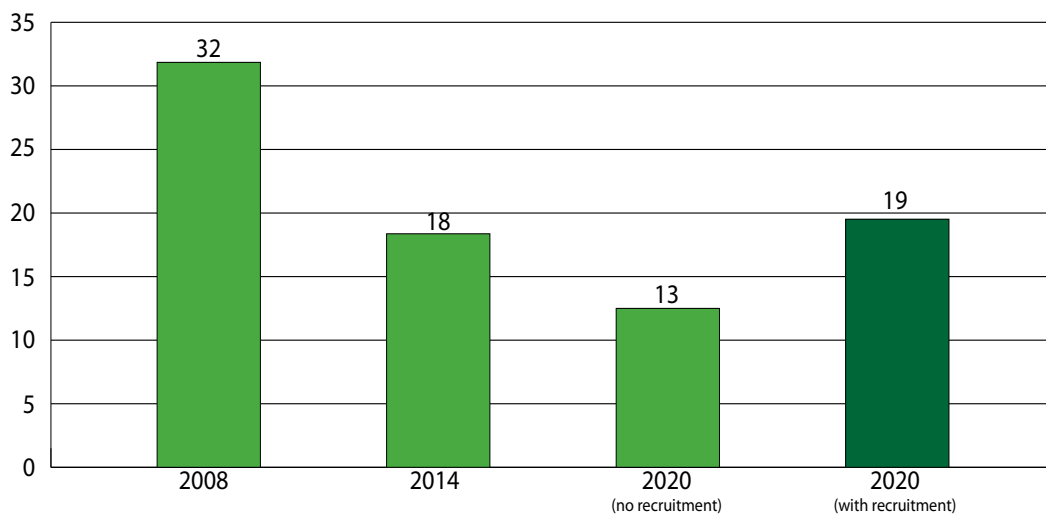


Table 2 - Trends and predictions for Cork East staff 2008-2020

Staff Type	2008	2014	2020	Staff required to achieve 2020 targets
Advisor	31.8	17.7	13	19
Education	3	2	1	2
Administration	9	6.4	6.4	6.4
Staff Total	43.8	26.1	20.4	27.4



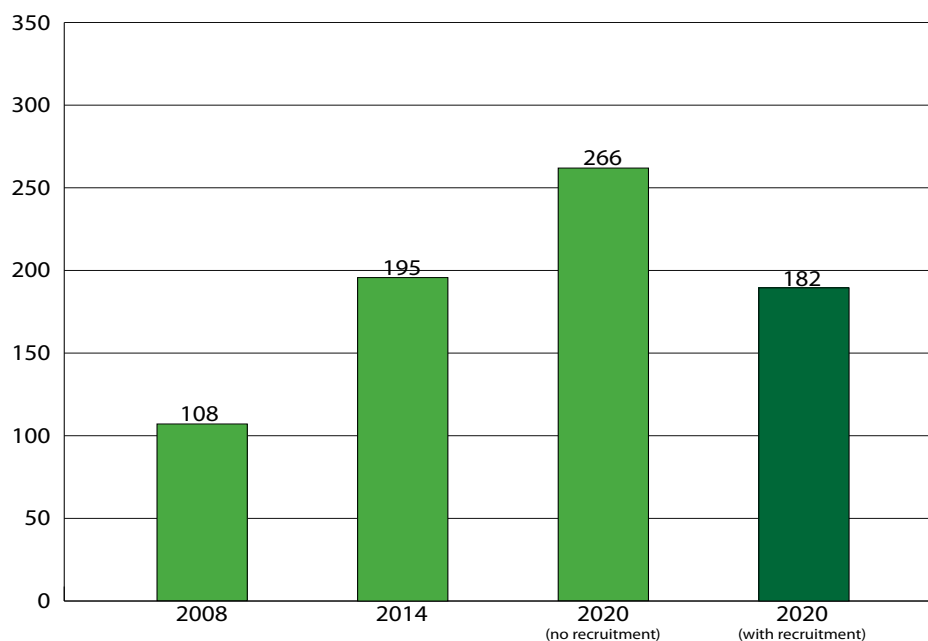
Teagasc Cork East Clients

The distribution of Teagasc Cork East clients by farmer type and advisor is outlined in Table 3. 50% are dairy producers, 44% are drystock farmers and 8% are tillage farmers.

Table 3 - Distribution of Cork East Clients by Farm Type

Type of Farming	Client No	Total No of Farmers	No of Advisers
Dairy	1,800	2,300	9.6
Drystock	1,480	4,348	6
Tillage	300	660	1.4
Total	3,580	7,308	17

Figure 3 - Ratio of Clients per Adviser in Cork East Advisory Region



Education

The number of young farmers who have completed the Green Cert course in the region or at agriculture college from 2010 to 2014 is outlined in Table 4.

Table 4 - Young farmers from Cork East completing Green Cert Courses - 2010 to 2020

Training Location	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
No of young farmers trained in the region	22	49	48	11	1
No of young farmers trained in colleges	54	50	41	54	41
Total	76	99	89	65	42

There is currently 76 young farmers in training in Cork East regional unit, 55 through distance learning, 22 through part-time courses.

Partners in the Region

- **Co-Operatives:** Major joint programmes are in place with Dairygold, Kerry and Glanbia. Joint Programmes focus on efficient sustainable production; this involves discussion group monitor farm and workshops focussing on the middle third of farmers who are not involved in discussion group. An additional collaboration is being developed with North Cork Farmers Co-op. The programme with North Cork Farmers Co-op, involves farm walks and public meeting with a focus on milk quality.
- **Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF)/ Sheep Ireland:** There are strong linkages with ICBF and Sheep Ireland in relation to the dairy, beef and sheep technology transfer programmes and the staging of events and seminars.
- **Agricultural Consultants:** Teagasc works in partnership with consultants and have outsourced REPS records, Profit Monitors and Green Cert course modules.
- **IFAC Accountants** provide an accountancy services to many of the regions clients and there is a close working relationship with IFAC locally, especially in the sharing of data for the completion of Teagasc E-Profit Monitors.
- **Local Radio** is used extensively to communicate with farmers and promote activities in the region. Teagasc Cork East contributes to a twice weekly farming programme which is aired on Wednesday evening and Saturday morning.
- **Leader:** There are close working relationships with Leader companies with follow on “Introduction to Business” courses provided by Leader to Options Workshop participants. Staffs from the region sit on Leader boards.
- **Collaborations & Joint Events:** Seminars, demonstrations, workshops and farm walks are organised on an on-going basis in collaboration with a wide number of organisations. Among the organizations collaborated with are: Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Bord Bia, Farm Relief Services, AI Breeding Companies, Meat Processing Companies, Irish Farmers Journal, Livestock Marts, Irish Grassland Association, Animal Health Ireland, Local Veterinarians and Producer Groups.
- **Clonakilty Agricultural College:** for skills, training and assessment



Launch of Dairygold
Joint Programme at
Burnfort
(September 2014)

Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Dairy for 2020

There are currently 2,300 dairy farmers in Cork East of which 1,800 are clients of Teagasc. There is a diversity of farm scale with a significant number of herds in excess of 100 cows. Dairy farmers tend to have more intensive production systems than other livestock farmers and have to meet more demanding technical and environment standards. There is likely to be increased production in region with expansion in cow numbers. Most dairy farmers plan to increase production by 20 to 50 % over the next five years.

The main challenges are price volatility, managing cash flow during expansion and growing extra grass to support high stocking rates. Labour availability and workload issues will also need to be managed. The focus is to have sustainable dairy units in the region.

Anticipated trends: It is expected that there will be an increase of 50% in milk production in the region.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Main focus on developing simple and sustainable dairying systems.
- Focus on financial management using financial management tools to assess performance.
- Promote one to one support and establish with dairy farmers the optimum output for their farms through individual farm plans.
- Teagasc will work jointly with Dairygold, Glanbia, Kerry and North Cork Farmers Co-ops to promote sustainable dairy expansion in the region and target an expansion of milk production of 60% +.
- Teagasc will implement activities to support new entrants/significant expanders:
 - Prioritise time for one-to-one support
 - Provide training for up to 20 new entrants.
 - Expand outsourcing of non-core work – Derogation, Nitrates Records.
 - Collaborate with Drystock Advisers in the identification of potential new entrants.
- Teagasc will promote collaborative farming opportunities and land mobility in partnership with key stakeholders – Dairygold, Glanbia, Kerry and North Cork Co-Ops and Macra na Feirme.
 - A pilot project will be implemented with dairy farmers seeking to expand and used for demonstration purposes.
- A campaign to increase numbers participating in dairy discussion groups and expand the present number of 53 dairy discussion groups will be implemented. Focus areas will include financial management, cashflow management during expansion, managing price volatility, and growing more grass.
- Teagasc will work jointly will Animal Health Ireland to improve milk quality and disease status of livestock in the region.
- Open days/seminar on facilities and labour.
- Provide technical advice on growing more grass, improving soil fertility, and sustainable stocking rates.
- Provide simple financial information for farmers i.e pattern of expenditure.

Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Beef for 2020

Beef production is characterised by low profitability and high dependency of EU support payments.

Improving profitability and meeting changing market specifications and compliance with regulations are the main challenges facing beef farmers.

Anticipated trends: It is expected that there is likely to be a 10% reduction in suckler cow numbers, these will be counterbalanced by a 10% increase in dairy calf to beef enterprises. Up to 2% of beef farmers will enter into contract rearing for dairy farmers.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Teagasc will use discussion groups as the main vehicle for knowledge transfer to beef farmers in the region. Teagasc will aim to run 13 drystock discussion groups. These groups will focus on:
 - Farm management & efficiency to improve profits
 - Animal health and welfare
 - Breeding management
- Stage additional public events and workshops for non-discussion group members to in lieu of reduced individual farm visits due reductions in advisor numbers.
- These events will focus on reseeding, cross compliance, drainage and soil fertility.
- Increase collaboration with the local District Veterinary Office and factories to feedback relevant information to clients and discussion groups.
- Teagasc will focus on financial management and breeding during one to one farm contacts to help stabilise suckler cow numbers.
- Teagasc will continue to implement Beef BETTER Farm Programme in the region to ensure that Cork East clients can see best practice in operation locally.
- Teagasc will provide training for clients to ensure that they meet Bord Bia Quality Assurance standards.



Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Sheep for 2020

Sheep production in Cork East is predominately early and mid-season lamb production. There are also a number of store lamb finishers. Lamb output is marketed to local Craft Butchers and English Market. Factory procurement agents for Irish and export meat plants provide other market outlets

Anticipated trends: Ewe numbers are likely to remain similar

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Enhance knowledge transfer to drive farm efficiency
- Target 15+ lambs reared/ha
- Increase production efficiency through grazed grass and adopt best practice in relation to animal health
- Promote the Ovigen project to increase genetic progress through genomic evaluation
- Promote the use of star rated rams from Sheep Ireland



Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Tillage for 2020

The major challenges for tillage farmers will be competition for dairy farmers for land and the overall profitability. Tillage farmers historically have shown great resilience by increasing yields and scale to secure viability.

Anticipated trends: Hectares under tillage are likely to remain static with some increase in yields/output and with an increase in collaborative arrangements with dairy farmers.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Promote collaborative arrangements with livestock farmers for produce sales and slurry imports
- Establish benchmark costs on tillage farms in the region with particular emphases on machinery costs and assist farmers in reducing these costs.
- Ensure tillage farmers in the region comply with the all the regulations of the new basic payment scheme particularly crop diversation and ecological focus area's to ensure they receive the maximum available payment from the scheme.
- Continue to monitor the evolution of disease resistance in the region particularly septoria and implement best practice protocol from research on farms.
- Continue to have a high level of contact with tillage farmers through farm visits, consultations, discussion groups, seminars and crop walks.



Overall Expected Changed/Targets for Education and Training for 2020

Teagasc provides a strong education and training service to farmers in the region. Approximately 76 students are enrolled between Level 5 and Level 6 FETAC courses.

Anticipated trends: Increased demand for education and training especially Green Cert Courses

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Run Distance Learning ACA courses for 50 students per annum in Cork East
- Have 30 students in training through Part-Time Green Cert courses annually
- Provide short courses on:
 - Farm Safety
 - Cross Compliance
 - Farm Management
 - Forestry
- Provide Options Workshops and follow on initiatives.



Strategy for Forestry

Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Forestry for 2020

The new Forestry Programme will be key to delivering an increase of 10% in Forestry in the Region. With increasing emphasis being placed on the carbon benefits of forestry, we expect to see a steady increase in the area under forestry within the region.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Create Public awareness for new forestry support schemes.
- Educate forest owners on forest management, timber harvesting and marketing of timber.
- Monitor and support the health status of our forests.
- Expand land area under private forestry

Strategy for Environment

Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Environment for 2020

Low carbon farming will also move centre stage and the Sustainable Use Directive for sprays will be implemented during this period. There will be a continued focus on improving water quality.

Teagasc will provide a GLAS planning service to all clients.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Educate and inform clients of the requirements on eligibility for:
 - Basic Farm Payments
 - GAEC
- Facilitate the maximum number of clients applying for GLAS through working with our strategic partner
- Educate clients on cross compliance through a series of public events and promotional campaigns.
- Help farm enterprises move towards low carbon farming with a target of 50% of clients completing the Carbon Navigator
- Provide training courses in the Sustainable Use Directive (Pesticides Regs.), biodiversity and water quality protection



Main Research Requirements Specific to this Advisory Region

Research Needs

- Basic research reviews of original work on soil fertility fertiliser balance on all demonstration, monitor and research farms
- Publication of industry and farm level results on dairy fertility related issues
- Major simplification of grass budgeting process
- A broader study on all the factors that affect farmer's profitability
- Sustainable balanced beef production systems capable of being adopted by larger numbers of drystock farmers.
- Slurry usage on tillage farms

Drainage

Poorly drained and impeded soils are a major concern to dairying and drystock producers in the region. In 2013 a *Heavy Soils Demonstration Farm*, as part of the Teagasc Heavy Soils Programme was established in the region and this will be used to demonstrate best practice in drainage from 2015 onwards.

Engagement with Stakeholders

To review progress and performance the following meetings and consultations with stakeholders will take place:

- Quarterly meetings of Joint Teagasc/Industry co-ordinating committees
- Meeting once per year with the chairman of Dairy, Beef, Tillage and Sheep discussion groups to obtain feedback
- More joint events collaborations with stakeholders.



Cork East Advisory Region Staff Details

Fermoy Office (Tel: 025 42244)

Gerard MacMahon	Regional Manager	087 2892176
Ciaran Collins	B&T Tillage Adviser	087 9201908
Padraig Costigan	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 2938161
Edward Moakley	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 9246715
Mary Riordan	Education Officer	087 9255285
Eithne Gowen	Administration	025 42244

Kanturk Office (Tel: 029 50886)

James Fleming	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 1776112
James Lyons	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 2902185
Noreen O'Rahilly	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 6572262
Josephine O'Donoghue	Administration	029 50886

Midleton Office (Tel: 021 4631898)

Elizabeth Duffy	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 9679115
Ruth Fennell	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 9602537
John Horgan	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 1776130
Eamonn Lynch	B&T Tillage Adviser	087 0609284
Fergal O'Mahoney	Dairygold Joint Prog Facilitator	087 9130307
Brendan Smiddy	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 2432309
Sharon O'Mahoney	Education Officer	087 7856932
Siobhan Luttrell	Staff Officer	021 4635465
Eleanor O'Keefe	Administration	021 4635461

Mallow Office (Tel: 022 21936)

Patrick Beecher	S&E Adviser	022 52367
Patrick Cashman	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 1778223
Eimear Connery	S&E Adviser	087 9053198
Timothy Doody	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 9329697
Michael Healy	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 0571814
Shane McCarthy	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 7645170
Adrian O'Callaghan	Dairygold Monitor Farm Adviser	087 9833679
Colette O'Donoghue	Administration	022 52363
Catriona Twohig	Administration	022 52360

Cork East Advisory Region

Teagasc, Knockgriffin, Middleton, Co. Cork	021 4631898
Teagasc, Percival Street, Kanturk, Co. Cork	029 50886
Teagasc, Advisory Office, Moorepark, Fermoy, Co. Cork	025 42244
Teagasc, Sandfield, Mallow, Co. Cork	022 21936