

Advisory  
Programme

# Mayo 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 Mayo Region



## Mayo Advisory Region

Teagasc, Bunree Road, Ardnaree, Ballina, Co. Mayo	096 22077
Teagasc, Newport Road, Westport, Co. Mayo	098 28333
Teagasc, Abbey Road, Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo	094 2541125
Teagasc, Clar Business Park, Claremorris, Co. Mayo	094 9371360



I am pleased to present the Teagasc Mayo Advisory Region Strategic Plan 2015 - 2020 which sets out the priorities and strategic actions for Teagasc Advisory Services in the region over the next five years. The plan has been prepared in consultation with a range of stakeholders and staff and represents Teagasc's response to the opportunities and challenges facing farming in the region over this period.

Teagasc Advisory Services are 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 and the requirement to comply with the regulations on staffing as a result of the Employment Control Framework (ECF), we are determined to ensure that the region plays a key role in contributing to the ambitious targets identified in Food Harvest 2020 strategy.

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

*Peter Leonard*

### Mayo Regional Strategic Plan – Summary Actions

- Target 30%+ increase in milk output
- Increase numbers participating in discussion groups in all enterprises
- Work with Aurivo and collaborate with local engineering services to support dairy expansion
- Promote expansion in sheep as a profitable enterprise
- Targeted actions to stabilise suckler cow numbers
- Provide a one to one service for new entrants and expanding dairy clients
- More workshops and public events in lieu of reduced one to one visits
- Educate clients to achieve Bord Bia Quality Assurance Scheme standards
- Teagasc will work jointly with Animal Health Ireland to improve milk quality and disease status of livestock in the region
- Target 50% clients to move to lower carbon farming and completing Carbon Navigator
- Support the maximum number of clients applying for GLAS through working with our strategic partner
- Provide additional Green Cert courses for part-time farmers
- Implement BETTER Farm Programmes for cattle and sheep

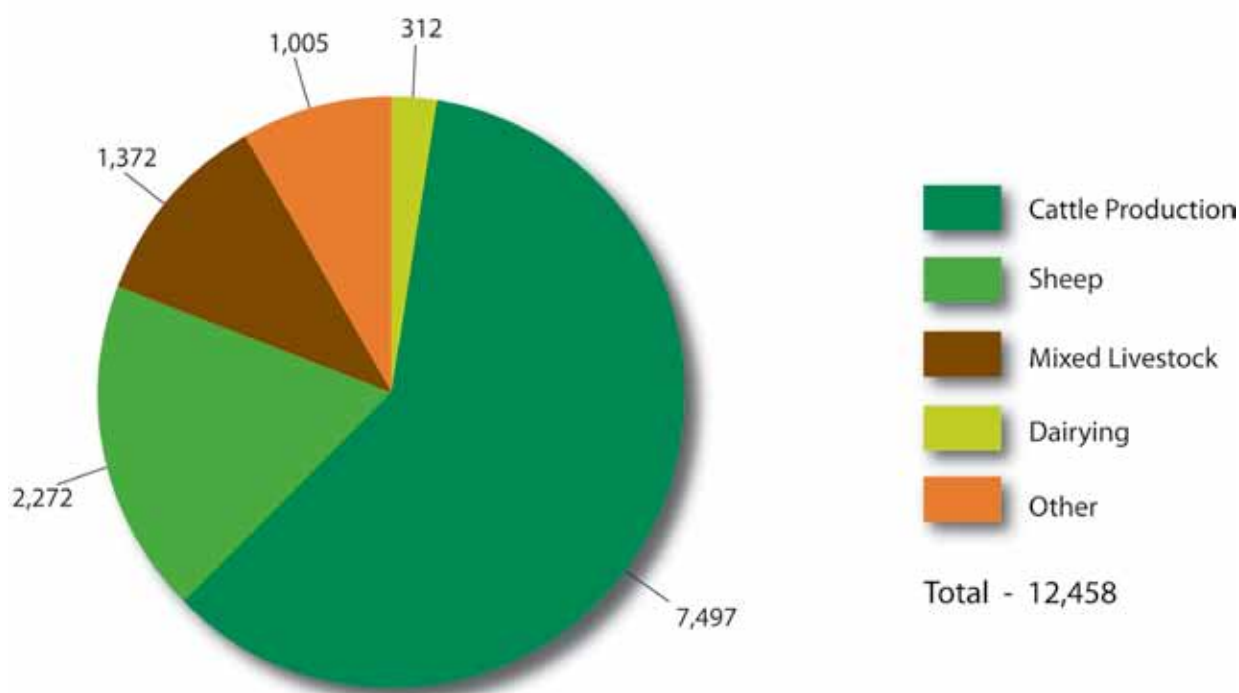
### The Importance of Farming in the Mayo Region

Mayo is a predominantly rural based society with a high dependency on agriculture with a significant proportion of the population living in rural communities. Farming is a major generator of economic activity in the rural areas, providing raw materials for processing and marketing and a corresponding inflow of money to stimulate other business through the purchases of goods and services. The population of the county is 130,552 according to the 2011 Census of Population and it is estimated that 10,890 of these are active farmers - 8.3% of the total population.

### Farming Systems

The predominant drystock nature of farming in Mayo is reflected in Figure 1 below, which shows a breakdown of the main farm enterprises in the region. Specialised cattle production systems account for the largest proportion farms in the region - 60% of total farms. Specialised sheep farming accounts for 18% of all farms while specialised dairying is carried out on 3% of farms. Tillage farming plays a very minor role in the region.

**Figure 1 - Farm classification by type of farm for Mayo 2010**



*Source: CSO Census of Agriculture 2010*

**Table 1 - Farm classification by type of farm for Mayo 2010**

Type of Farming	Mayo		State	
	No	%	No	%
Tillage	19	-	4,795	3
Dairying	312	3	15,654	11
Cattle	7,497	60	77,738	56
Sheep	2,272	18	13,555	10
Mixed Livestock	1,372	11	14,697	10
Crops and Livestock	33	-	2,443	2
Mixed Crops	913	8	9,635	7
Other	40	-	1,343	1
<b>All</b>	<b>12,458</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>139,860</b>	<b>100</b>



## Land Type and Soil Fertility

There are distinct differences in land and soil type between the north and west and the south of the Mayo region. The north and west is dominated by extensive hill areas covered by blanket bog where sheep production is the main enterprise. The south is largely a limestone landscape with more productive land.

Analysis of soil samples taken from farms in the region in 2013 showed that only 12% were at the optimum index for P and K and lime. This situation reflected across all enterprises and underscores the necessity for regular soil sampling on farms. Teagasc has identified soil fertility as a key efficiency factor for Irish farms. Teagasc in the Mayo Region will continue to work with farmers in the region to achieve optimum soil fertility status on their farms.

## Farm Size

The average farm size in Mayo is 22.4ha of Agricultural Area Used (AAU). The national average is 32.7ha. When compared nationally, farm size in Mayo is relatively small with only 6% of farms in excess of 50 ha as against 15% for the country as a whole.

**Table 2 - Farm size in Mayo and State 2010**

Size Ha	Mayo		State	
	No	%	No	%
>2	170	1	2,341	2
2 - <10	3,018	24	23,133	16
10 - <20	4,230	34	33,581	24
20 - <30	2,245	18	24,687	18
30 - <50	1,954	16	30,668	22
50 - <100	687	6	20,755	15
> = 100	154	1	4,695	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,458</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>139,860</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: CSO Census of Agriculture 2010*



## Facilities

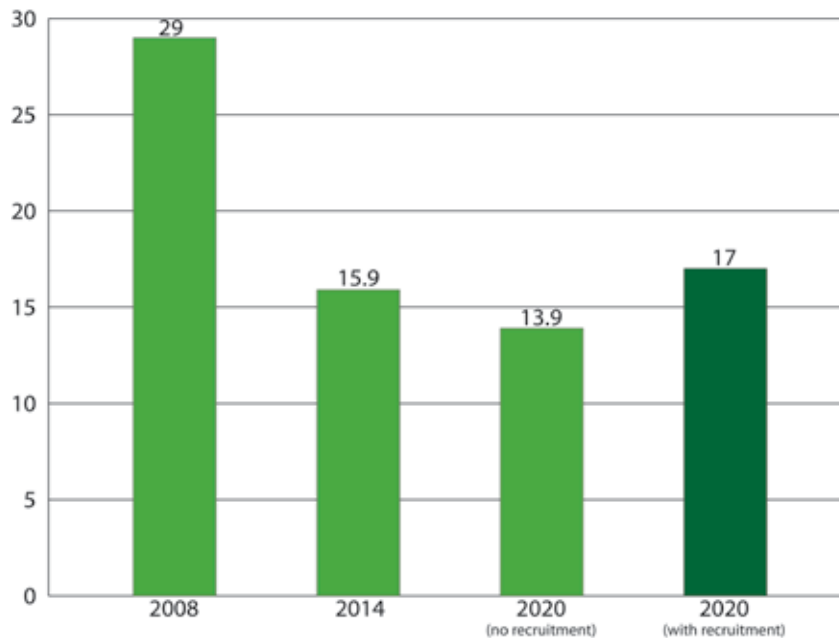
The Teagasc Mayo Advisory Region operates from four offices located in Ballina, Claremorris, Westport and Ballinrobe. In addition clinics are provided each Tuesday and Thursday in Belmullet and Swinford.

The Ballina office is an owned premise containing spacious classroom facilities, accommodation for up to 9 staff and good car parking. From 2015 it will host a Green Cert course. The Claremorris office is a leased premise with a classroom, accommodation for up to 7 staff and good car parking facilities. The Westport office is an owned premise with classroom facilities, accommodation for up to 9 staff and also with good car parking. The Ballinrobe office is an owned premise with accommodation for up to 9 staff. Its classroom and car park require expansion to cater for the growing numbers of Green Cert students.

## Staff Resource

The trends and prediction of staff numbers from 2008 to 2020 and the staff required to achieve the targets set out in this Strategic Plan are outlined in Table 3 and Figures 2 & 3 below. Between 2008 and 2014 Teagasc advisory staff numbers have fallen by 45%. This reduction is a consequence of retirements, redeployment, termination of contract and the embargo on recruitment in the public service. Figure 2 shows the resultant growth in clients per advisor and this measure is now at an unsustainable level.

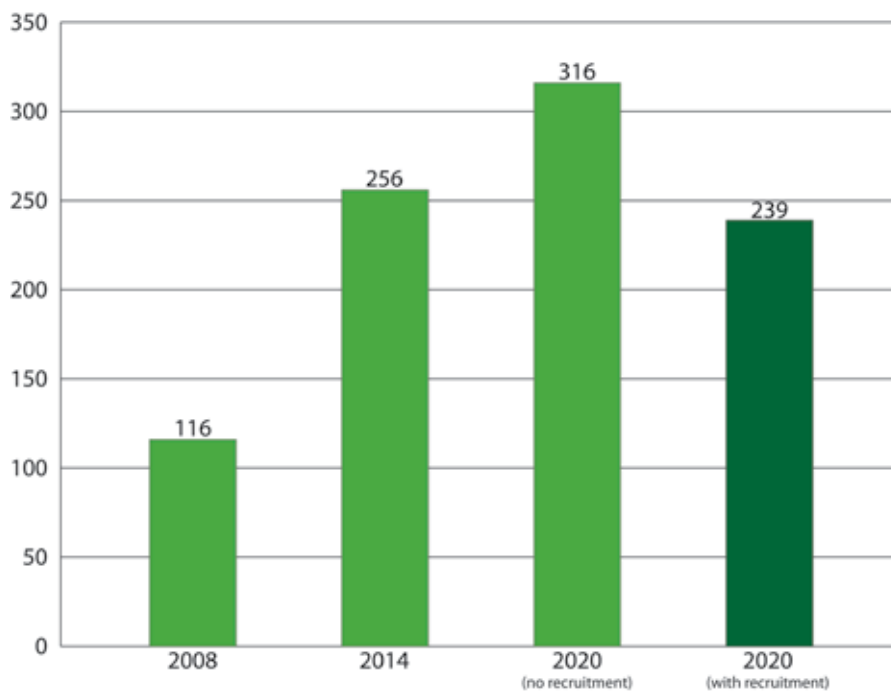
**Figure 2: Adviser Numbers in Mayo Advisory Region**



**Table 3 - Trends and predictions Mayo staff 2008-2020**

Staff Type	2008	2014	2020	Staff required to achieve 2020 targets
Advisor	29	15.9	13.9	17
Education	1	1	1	2
Administration	8	7.6	3	5
<b>Staff Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>24.0</b>

**Figure 3: Ratio of Clients per Adviser in Mayo Advisory Region**



### Education

The numbers of young farmers who have completed the Green Cert course in the region or at agricultural college from 2010 -2013 is outlined in Table 4. Projections in enrolments reveal that there will be a 100% increase in the number of young farmers completing the Green Cert. Course in 2020.

**Table 4 - Young farmers from Mayo completing Green Cert Courses - 2010 to 2020**

Training Location	2010	2013	2020
No of young farmers trained in the region	30	30	60
No of young farmers trained in colleges	13	24	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>90</b>

### Teagasc Mayo Clients

Table 5 below presents the distribution of Teagasc clients in the Mayo Region by farmer type and advisor. 50% of dairy producers, 38% of cattle and sheep producers, and 32% of sheep only producers are Teagasc clients.

**Table 5 - Distribution of Mayo Clients by Farm Type 2014**

Type of Farming	Client No	Total No of Farmers	No of Advisors
Dairy	223	374	2
Beef	3,461	9,305	12.9
Sheep	363	1,211	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,047</b>	<b>10,890</b>	<b>16.9</b>



## Partners in the Region

- **Aurivo Co-op:** Teagasc operates a joint technology transfer programme in conjunction with Aurivo Co-op. The objective of the programme is to support Aurivo milk suppliers in driving efficiency and profitability on their farms, and in positioning themselves to exploit the emerging growth opportunities for dairying.
- **Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF):** Teagasc has developed strong linkages with the ICBF in relation to the dairy, beef and sheep technology transfer programmes. The Mayo Advisory Region will build on this through the staging of joint events and seminars.
- **Agricultural Consultants:** Teagasc works in partnership with agricultural consultants and has outsourced parts of its REPS records, Profit Monitor work as well as selected Green Cert course modules.
- **IFAC Accountants:** Provide an accountancy services to many of the regions clients. Teagasc Mayo Advisory Region has developed a close working relationship with IFAC locally, especially in the sharing of data for the completion of Teagasc eProfit Monitors for clients.
- **Mid-West Radio:** Local Radio is used extensively to communicate with farmers in the region. Each evening, Monday to Friday at 6pm and on Wednesday night on the farming show Teagasc advisers present slots on farming topics on Mid-West Radio.
- **LEO & LEADER:** There are close working relationships with the Local Development Office (LEO) and Leader with follow on “Introduction to Business” courses provided by LEADER to Teagasc Options Workshop participants. Staff from the Mayo Advisory Region also 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 and agencies. Among the organizations collaborated with are: Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Bord Bia, AI Breeding Companies, Meat Processing Companies, Irish Farmers Journal, Livestock Marts, Irish Grassland Association, Animal Health Ireland, Local Veterinarians and Producer Groups.





### Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Dairy for 2020

The age profile of the region's dairy farmers, access to land, land mobility and the overcoming of fragmentation obstacles will be critical if the dairy expansion envisaged for the region is to take place. Also important will be strategies to deal with margin erosion, weather extremes, price volatility and compliance with environmental regulations.

**Anticipated trends:** Based on consultation with Teagasc dairy advisers and milk processors, it is anticipated that an increase of 30% in milk supplies in the region can be achieved.

### Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Teagasc will work jointly with Aurivo Co-op to promote sustainable dairy expansion in the region and target an expansion of milk production of 30% +.
- Increase Teagasc dairy client numbers and contact time with dairy farmers in the region by 10%.
- 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 – Aurivo and Macra na Feirme.
  - A pilot project will be implemented with dairy farmers seeking to expand which will be used for demonstration purposes.
- A campaign to increase numbers participating in dairy discussion groups will be undertaken. Focus areas will include financial management and managing price volatility.
- Teagasc will work with local engineering services in the design of new buildings for expanding dairy farmers.
- Teagasc will provide training for clients to ensure that they meet Bord Bia Quality Assurance standards.
- Teagasc will work jointly will Animal Health Ireland to improve milk quality and disease status of livestock in the region.



### Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Beef for 2020

Lack of profitability, a high dependency on EU payments, increased production costs and the age profile of operators are some of the major challenges facing the region's beef farmers. Scales of enterprise and land fragmentation also pose significant challenges.

**Anticipated trends:** It is anticipated that suckler cow numbers, at best, will stay static; that there will be a small increase (1%) in the number of farmers with a dairy calf to beef enterprise. A small number of clients (<1%) will begin contract rearing of dairy heifers.

### 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 30 beef discussion groups. These groups will focus on:
  - Farm management & efficiency to increase output and profit per Ha.
  - Animal health and welfare
  - Breeding management
- Stage additional public events and workshops for non-discussion group members 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 implement a BETTER Farm Programme in the region to ensure that Mayo 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

The challenges facing the region's sheep farmers are similar to those of beef farmers.

**Anticipated trends:** Ewe numbers in the region are anticipated to increase by 1-2%.

### Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Teagasc will promote sheep as a profitable enterprise for clients and will target a 2% growth in ewe numbers.
- Increase numbers of lambs weaned per ewe by 2% pa.
- Discussion groups will be used as the main vehicle for knowledge transfer to sheep farmers in the region with emphasis on better integration between hill and lowland flocks with regard to:
  - Breeding Replacements
  - Finishing lambs
- Stage additional public events and workshops for non-discussion group members to in lieu of reduced individual farm visits due to reductions in advisor numbers.
- One lowland and one hill sheep BETTER Farm will be operated in the region.
- Support the Lakeland umbrella producer groups in the marketing of lambs.
- Teagasc will provide training for clients to ensure that they meet Bord Bia Quality Assurance standards.



### Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Education for 2020

Teagasc provides a strong education and training service to farming in the region. In recent years, up to 30 students annually have graduated from the Ballinrobe Education centre with Level 5 and Level 6 FETAC awards in agriculture.

In addition a wide range of short courses and events are also provided on a range of topics.

**Anticipated trend:** Increased demand for education and training especially for the Green Cert courses.

### Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Provide a new Green Cert course for 30 part-time students in Ballina in addition to the existing courses in Ballinrobe.
- Provide short courses on:
  - Farm Safety - Cross Compliance - Farm Management - Forestry
- Provide Options Workshops and follow on initiatives where participants will have the opportunity to network with local development and training agencies





### Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Environment for 2020

It is anticipated that 750-1000 Teagasc clients will be planned into GLAS over the period of this plan.

Low carbon farming will also move centre stage and the Sustainable Use Directive for sprays will be implemented during this period.

### 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 Teagasc completing a Carbon Navigator for 50% of clients.
- Provide training courses in the Sustainable Use Directive (Pesticides Regs.), biodiversity and water quality protection.



## Main Research Requirements Specific to the Mayo Advisory Region

### Dairying

Under the Dairy Development Programme with Aurivo Co-op a new Dairy Demonstration Farm was also established in 2014. This Demonstration Farm will be used to promote the achievement of efficiency gains by dairy farmers in the programme. The Teagasc Mayo Advisory Region will continue to work closely with dairy research colleagues in identifying areas for further research.

### Water Quality

The Cregduff Agricultural Catchment Programme, run by Teagasc, is evaluating the effects of farm management practices on the transfer of nutrients from source to water and their impact on water quality in the Cregduff catchment near Ballinrobe. The findings from the programme are being used on an on-going basis to underpin profitable, sustainable farming through a series of local advisory and technology transfer initiatives.

### Drainage

Poorly drained and impeded soils are a major concern to dairying and drystock producers in the region. In 2014 a *Teagasc Heavy Soils Demonstration Farm*, as part of the Teagasc Heavy Soils Programme, was established in the region. This will be used to demonstrate best practice in drainage from 2015 onwards.

### Beef

Work with and inform clients of the research outcomes from newly established suckler herd in Teagasc Athenry.

### Sheep

Work with and inform clients of the research outcomes from Teagasc Sheep Research farm in Athenry.

## Engagement with Stakeholders

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

- Meeting once per year with the chairman of Dairy, Beef and Sheep discussion groups to obtain feedback.
- More joint events collaborations with stakeholders.
- Closer links with Producer Groups, Veterinary Ireland with a view to holding more public meeting/ events.
- Local stakeholders to be invited to staff meetings throughout the year.

## Mayo Advisory Region Staff Details

Ballina Office		
Thomas Kelly	Drystock	087 6683608
Anne O'Malley	Drystock	087 6943704
Brendan Garry	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 9957761
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Seamus Mulchrone	S&E Adviser	087 1384343
Mary McAndrew	Education Support	096 60320
Alan O'Brien	Education Officer	096 60327
Michelle Lavelle	Administration	096 60322
Bernadette Lynn	Discussion Group Administrator	096 60321
Pauline Staunton	Administration	096 22335
Westport Office		
Peter Leonard	Regional Manager	087 6294417
John Noonan	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 2789936
Mary Roache	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 1227990
Andy Ryder	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 7371419
Thomas Gill	S&E Adviser	087 6684886
Jacinta O'Neill	S&E Adviser	098 50252
Marian Deasy	Administration	098 50259
Kathleen Maloney	Administration	098 50253
Ballinrobe Office		
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Eamonn Patten	B&T Drystock Adviser	094 9542482
Padraig Walsh	Education Officer	087 9329764
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Claremorris Office		
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Geraldine Hynes	B&T Drystock Adviser	087 1223898
Peter Comer	B&T Dairy Adviser	087 6949079
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Mary Clarke	Administration	094 9372330

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