

Advisory
Programme

Roscommon/Longford 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 Roscommon/Longford Region



Roscommon/Longford Advisory Region

Teagasc, Abbey Street, Roscommon

090 6626166

Teagasc, St. Patricks Street, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon

094 9620160

Teagasc, Town Centre, Longford

043 3341021



Land Drainage Principles

Problem Diagnosis



Test pits (at least 2.5m deep)
ground water or shallow
age problem?
enters in permeable layers
layers impermeable

Ground Water Drainage System



Conventional or deep pipe drains:

- Where a permeable layer will trap water
- Where water can percolate to water table
- Most effective way to discharge water

Shallow Drainage System

Mole/Gravel Mole drain/Subsoiling:

- Aim to fracture and crack the soil
- Effectiveness dependent on:
 - Soil clay/stone content
 - Implement used
 - Weather conditions
- Used in tandem with collector drains





I am pleased to present the Roscommon/Longford Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020 which sets out the goals, priorities and strategic actions to be implemented in the region up to 2020. The plan has been prepared in consultation with staff and a range of stakeholders, and sets out the priorities for Teagasc in delivering an Advisory and education programme over the next five years.

The Teagasc Advisory service is ideally placed to lead and guide farming in the region, where highly trained Advisers have access to latest research and emerging technologies, and can impart this knowledge to farmers in the region. Teagasc will lead the farming enterprises in efficient, sustainable production, conscious of the challenges presented such as water conservation, environmental protection and greenhouse gas abatement.

At a time of growing demands for our services, coupled with reductions in Advisory numbers and a recruitment embargo due to the Employment Control Framework (ECF), Teagasc in this region is determined to ensure that the region contributes to achieving the ambitious targets set in Food Harvest 2020. We will work closely with farmer clients, state agencies and local stakeholders. Stakeholder input is essential in delivering a relevant and suitable Advisory programme.

Tom Kellegher

Regional Manager, Teagasc, Roscommon Longford

Roscommon/Longford Regional Strategic Plan – Summary Actions

- Target 20% increase in milk production with 20+ new entrants
- Promote an expansion in sheep output by up to 20%
- Maintain and further develop the joint programmes with Aurivo and Lakeland Dairies. Evaluate similar options with Arrabawn Co-op.
- Increase numbers participating in discussion groups in all enterprises.
- Maintain and develop educational training to meet increased demand and continue to provide an on line distance learning option for students.
- Implement a programme to increase profit in beef and stabilise suckler cow numbers.
- Continue to develop the BETTER farm programme in both beef and sheep.
- Further develop the Kepak/Supervalu programme with emphasis on grassland management, breeding, profitability and carbon footprint awareness.
- Continue with the Sheep Technology Adoption Programme in conjunction with the sheep BETTER Farm Programme.
- Develop a dairy calf to beef focus farm in the region.
- Evaluate contract rearing options for the region.
- Work closely with the Health and Safety Authority in educating farm families on farm safety.
- Organise more public events or meetings in lieu of less one to one visits, and accommodate clients who do not participate in discussion groups.
- Facilitate maximum entry to GLAS for Teagasc clients.
- Educate clients to meet Bord Bia Quality Assurance Scheme standards.
- Foster rural development through our Options Programme.

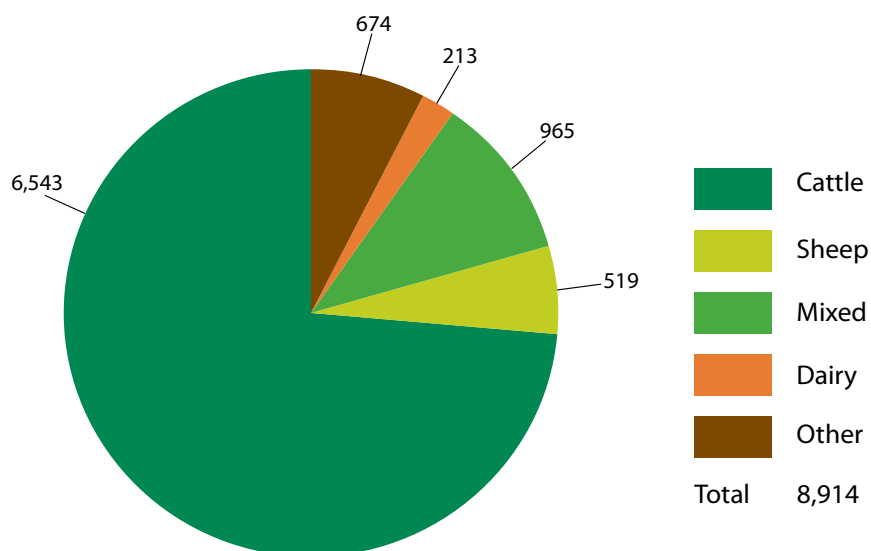
Farming in the Region

The Roscommon/Longford Region is predominantly a rural based society with a high dependency on agriculture. Farming in the Region is very much focused on beef and sheep production. Land quality is good in the southern parts of the region and a little heavier and wetter in the northern part. The average farm size in the region is just over 27 Ha per holding. The national average is 32.7 Ha per holding.

Farming Systems

Drystock farming is the predominant farming system in the region. While there are minor changes in the numbers since the census, the overall picture remains the same – a very high level of cattle production in the region.

Figure 1 - Farm classification by type of farm for Roscommon/Longford 2010



Source: CSO Census of Agriculture 2010

Table 1 - Farm size in Roscommon/Longford and State 2010

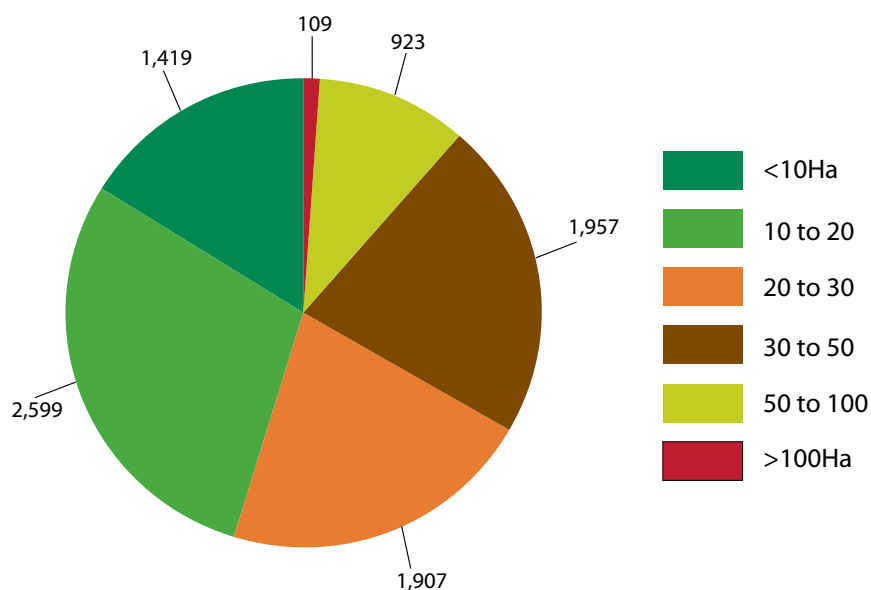
Type of Farm	Roscommon/Longford		State	
	No	%	No	%
Tillage	22	0	4,795	3
Dairying	213	2	15,654	11
Cattle	6,543	74	77,738	56
Sheep	519	6	13,555	10
Mixed Livestock	965	11	14,697	10
Crops and Livestock	34	0	2,443	2
Mixed Crops	573	6	9,635	7
Other	45	1	1,343	1
All	8,914	100	139,860	100

The total number of farms in Roscommon/Longford is 8,914 of which:

- 5,925 are less than 30 Ha in size.
- 2,534 of these farmers are over 65 years of age.
- The total area of land farmed is 243,526 Ha (plus 1,784 Ha commonage).
- The average farm size is 27 Ha.

Drystock farms (Beef, sheep and mixed) account for over 90% of all farming in the region, with dairying accounting for only 1% of farms in Roscommon and 5% of farms in Longford. There is a very strong tradition of beef and sheep production in the region. The percentage of forest cover in Roscommon/Longford is 9% or approximately 21,000 Ha. Teagasc has 2,791 clients in the region accounting for just over 31% of all farms.

Figure 2 - Farm Size in Roscommon/Longford 2010



Source: CSO Census of Agriculture 2010



Facilities

Teagasc operates from three offices in the region in Longford, Roscommon and Castlerea. All three offices are well equipped with modern classrooms which are used to deliver a comprehensive education programme in the region. The Roscommon office has a suite of computers used to deliver elements of the QQI Level 5 & 6 courses.

Staff Resources

There are currently 22 staff (Full Time Equivalents) in the region; the table and charts below show the changes in clients per adviser since 2008, and the changes in total number of advisers in the region since 2008. Adviser numbers have fallen by 36% since 2008 and further retirements will bring this reduction to 45%. A minimum of 14 Advisers are required to implement programmes to support the achievement of Food Harvest 2020 targets.

Figure 3: Adviser Numbers in Roscommon/Longford Advisory Region

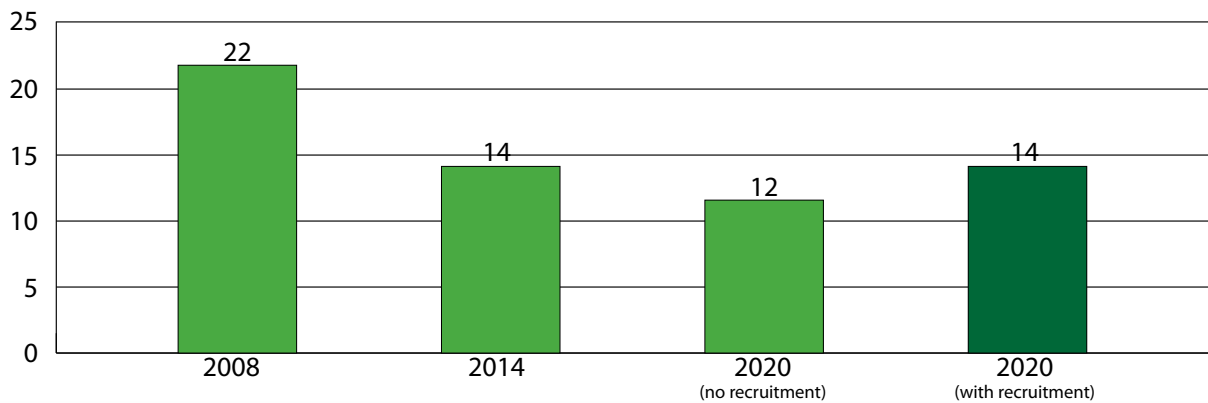


Table 2 - Trends and predictions Roscommon/Longford staff 2008-2020

Staff Type	2008	2014	2020	Staff required to achieve 2020 targets
Adviser	22	14	12	14
Education	2	3	2	3
Administration	8.5	5	4	5
Staff Total	32.5	22	18	22



Figure 4 below shows the number of clients per adviser in 2008, the current number of clients per adviser, and the likely number of clients per adviser by 2020 if no new advisers are appointed to the region. The level of 232 clients per adviser would not be sustainable. Any further erosion of staff resources in the region will seriously impair our ability to deliver on this plan and limit the exploitation of the opportunities by the agricultural economy of the region.

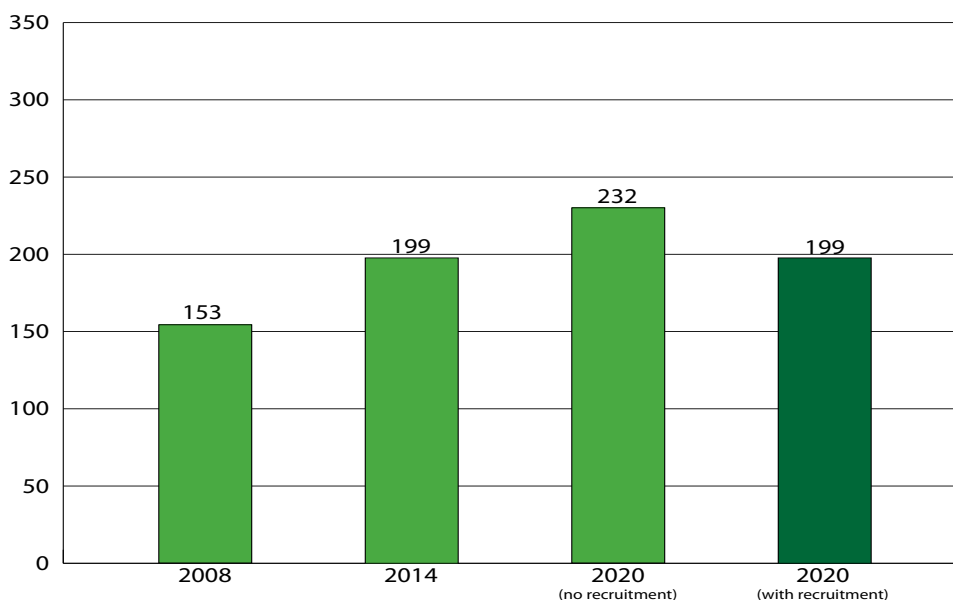
Teagasc Roscommon/Longford Clients

The distribution of clients by main farm type and Adviser is outlined in table 3 below. Approximately 55% of dairy farmers, 33% of cattle and sheep, and 42% of sheep only producers are Teagasc clients.

Table 3 - Roscommon/Longford Advisory Region Clients

	Clients	No. of Farmers	% Clients	Advisers
Dairy	119	213	55%	1
Beef & Mixed	2,453	7,508	33%	10
Sheep	219	519	42%	2
Other (SAE)				1

Figure 4 - Ratio of Clients per Adviser in Roscommon/Longford Advisory Region



Education

The number of young farmers who have completed training in the region for the years 2008, 2014 and expected numbers in 2020 is outlined in Table 4. Teagasc has delivered a comprehensive education programme in the region, through the Green Cert and the distance learning on line. As a result the Region has a high number of trained farmers. Teagasc must target these young trained farmers as future clients and leaders. Studies have shown a strong link between education, and technology adoption on farms by trained farmers. Demand for training is increasing substantially year on year as there are many financial incentives for young trained farmers.

Table 4 - Young farmers from Roscommon/Longford completing Green Cert Courses - 2010 to 2020

Training Location	2008	2014	2020
No of young farmers trained in the region	94	80	120
No of young farmers trained in colleges	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	94	80	120

Partners in the Region

- **Joint Programme with Aurivo Co-op:** A joint technology transfer programme is in place with Aurivo Co-op. Teagasc advisers contribute to a comprehensive Advisory programme with Aurivo milk suppliers, assisting them to adapt an efficient and sustainable milk production system, and embrace any expansion opportunities as we enter a quota free era.
- **Joint programme with Lakeland Dairies Co-Op:** Similarly with Lakeland Dairies, Teagasc contribute to knowledge transfer and the adoption of the most efficient and sustainable production systems. This model needs to be explored with Arrabawn Co-op.
- **Supervalu/Kepak programme:** Teagasc provide an intensive Advisory service to these 2 farms in the region: Gerard Coyle, Athleague, and David Auchmuty, Ballygalda. The aim of this programme is to promote sustainable and environmentally friendly farming, producing a quality product for consumers.
- **BETTER Farms:** Teagasc, in association with the Irish Farmers Journal, FBD, Kepak, ABP and Dawn Meats, delivers a comprehensive knowledge transfer programme using these 3 farms in the region. Each farm, two in beef and one in sheep, receives an intensive Advisory service. The farms are used to demonstrate best practice in efficient sustainable beef and sheep production.
 - John Curley, Carntleva, Four Roads, Co Roscommon (Sheep)
 - Joe Murray, Gortnacloy, Elphin, Co Roscommon (Beef)
 - Frank & Des Beirne, Ballykenny, Longford, Co Longford (Beef)
- **Local Marts:** Teagasc Advisers in conjunction with local marts deliver many training events and technology/information updates at meetings in the marts. Teagasc works closely with the following marts in the region: Roscommon; Elphin; Castlerea; Ballinasloe, Granard, Ballymahon.
- **Animal Health Ireland (AHI):** Events are organised annually in conjunction with AHI, where Teagasc and AHI experts update farmers on many key factors in animal production and herd health.
- **Other stakeholders:** There is also interaction with farm organisations, particularly the IFA & ICOSA, DAFM, meat factories (Kepak and Dawn Meats), local Vets, Pharmed in Elphin, DVO, Leader (Education and Training Boards), Local Community Development Committees in Roscommon and Longford, accountants and Agricultural Consultants.



Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Dairy for 2020

Following consultation with stakeholders and Teagasc staff it is estimated that there is capacity to increase milk production in the region by 20%+. This will come mainly from existing farmers with some new entrants (20+). There is significant interest in contract rearing options with work already underway with farmers evaluating this option. Overall dairy farmers are low in number in the region. Teagasc has identified that there is an opportunity to increase contact with dairy farmers in the county.

Main Strategic Actions to be Implemented

- Teagasc will target a 15%-20% increase in milk production from existing suppliers through increased milk yields and herd size and through an additional 20+ new entrants to dairying.
- Teagasc will actively promote its services with dairy farmers in the region with the aim of increasing dairy client numbers by 25%.
- Teagasc will continue to grow the joint programmes with Aurivo and Lakeland Co-Ops, to promote sustainable dairy production and expansion in the region. We will explore similar opportunities with Arrabawn Co-op.
- Teagasc will work with Aurivo in the development of Focus Farms to represent their local areas, to carry out best management practises according to research.
- Teagasc will support new entrants and significant expanders by:
 - Prioritising one to one support
 - Collaborating with Drystock Advisers in identifying new entrants.
- Teagasc will continue to support participation in discussion groups by dairy clients, as the best method of keeping clients abreast of newest technologies. These groups will continue to focus on profitability, with a major focus on grassland management contributing to a low cost production system. Teagasc will encourage greater participation by farmers in discussion groups.
- Teagasc will continue to up skill group facilitators through on-going in service training on technical issues and on conducting effective group meetings.
- Teagasc will provide on-going targeted financial and business planning support to dairy clients.
- Teagasc will provide training for clients to ensure that they meet Bord Bia Quality Assurance Standards, in particular the Bord Bia Sustainable Dairy Assurance Scheme.
- Teagasc will continue to work jointly with Animal Health Ireland to improve milk quality and reduce the disease status of livestock in the region. This will include calf care events and research update events.



Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Beef for 2020

Beef production is of the utmost importance in this region. However, lack of profitability, a high dependency on EU payments, increased production costs and the age profile are some of the challenges facing the regions beef farmers. Teagasc programmes will focus on sustainable production, targeting increasingly efficient, market orientated beef producers.

Suckler cow numbers, after some reduction in 2014, will at best remain static. Teagasc in the region aims to secure one of the new 'Greenacres' farms focussing on dairy calf to beef opportunities as an essential focus farm in this regional unit.

The new Knowledge Transfer Groups under the RDP will be embraced by Teagasc in the region as the platform for continued training and up skilling of our clients. The Discussion Group model has impacted not only on group members, but also on the wider farming community as farmers discuss with one another knowledge arising from group meetings.

The BETTER Farm programme will be extended to satellite groups linked to the existing farms. The link with research in Grange is essential for beef production, and dissemination of this relevant information to clients is a key role for B&T advisers.

Main Strategic Actions or Changes Required

- Target improved profitability on beef farms through better practice adoption.
- Promote increased participation in knowledge transfer groups; this requires increasing total number of groups from the current level of 22. The target is to reach at least 30 groups in the next year.
- Assist group members with targeted individual farm plans, addressing soil fertility, breeding plans, grass measurement and profit monitoring.
- Teagasc knowledge transfer will focus on four key areas:
Breeding, Herd Health, Grassland management & Finance
- Secure the continuance of the BETTER Farm programme beyond 2015 as essential to further develop beef production in the region.
- Provide Group facilitators with on-going in service training on technical issues and on conducting effective group meetings.
- Secure a 'dairy calf to beef' focus farm in the region.
- Evaluate contract rearing options as an additional/alternative production system for suckler farmers.
- Contribute to local or national beef events to accommodate non discussion group members.
- Deliver events for all clients on soil fertility, reseeding, cross compliance and land drainage.
- Teagasc will provide training for clients to ensure that they meet Bord Bia Quality Assurance Standards.
- Evaluate the potential of producer organisations or purchasing groups to give the farmer more strength as a group member than as an individual, particularly when it comes to selling produce.
- Promote the use of Information Technology, in particular eprofit monitor and budgeting.

Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Sheep for 2020

Similar to Beef, lack of profitability, a high dependency on EU payments, increased production costs and the age profile are some of the challenges facing the regions sheep farmers. On a national level, sheep output is expected to increase by 20% by 2020. Sheep production is very important in the region and again the role for Teagasc will be to promote the adoption of best practise by farmers, primarily through the Sheep Technology Adoption Programme in conjunction with the latest technology from the BETTER Farm Programme. STAP groups are of the utmost importance and a key conduit of knowledge transfer to clients. It is essential that relevant research outputs are applied at farm level. Ewe numbers are expected to increase by 15-20%.

Main Strategic Actions or Changes Required

- Target improved profitability on sheep farms through better practice adoption.
- Encourage increased sheep production by 15-20% in line with FH2020 targets.
- Deliver the STAP programme as a key knowledge transfer platform for sheep production.
- The BETTER farm will remain a key focus point for training and knowledge transfer for clients. This will focus on all aspects of profitable sustainable sheep production with a particular focus on breeding replacements and grassland management.
- Provide appropriate training and facilitation skills for advisers working with sheep farmers.
- Teagasc will provide training for clients to ensure that they meet Bord Bia Quality Assurance Standards.
- Teagasc will provide public meetings and workshops to accommodate those farmers who are not part of discussion groups.
- Further develop the Supervalu/Kepak programme with emphasis on sustainable production.



Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Education for 2020

Education in the region is extremely important. There are two courses being delivered presently – the Certificate in Agriculture part-time course and the Advanced Certificate in Agriculture on line course. Each course runs for approximately 18 months. Two new courses will commence in 2016. Research has shown that students who engage in education and training are much more likely to adopt new technologies, and improve farm profitability. Demand for education is growing strongly as there are many incentives for young farmers to be trained. The availability of the on line distance learning option is a bonus in this region.

Main Strategic Actions or Changes Required

- Provide a distance learning course on an on-going basis accommodating approximately 50 students, alongside the part time course accommodating approximately 30 students, both leading to FETAC Level 6 qualification for all students.
- Advisory staff in the region will continue to contribute enormously to the success of education & training in the region. Over 200 days teaching will be delivered each year.
- Deliver Health & Safety training in the region with a renewed focus in areas of greatest risk.
- Deliver Options workshops on an annual basis in the Longford office.
- Deliver cross compliance workshops for all clients.



Strategy for Tillage

Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Tillage for 2020

Tillage in the region is very small with less than 20 clients with a significant tillage enterprise. The role for Teagasc is to ensure these clients are familiar with Greening requirements and GLAS options over the next couple of years.

Main Strategic Actions or Changes Required

- Promote profitable tillage systems and crops which are environmentally sustainable.
- Promote collaborative arrangements with livestock farmers for produce sales and slurry imports.
- Ensure tillage farmers in the region comply with the all the regulations of the new basic payment scheme particularly crop diversification and ecological focus area's (EFA's) to ensure they receive the maximum available payment from the scheme.

Strategy for Forestry

Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Forestry for 2020

With the introduction of new Forest Schemes in 2015/2016, and low farm incomes, this will generate interest in new planting. Teagasc will hold regional open days to inform land owners of the various options.

Main Strategic Actions or Changes Required

- Inform clients of the new forestry schemes which are being introduced in 2015/2016 through local meetings and events.
- 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 Soils & Environment

Overall Expected Changes/Targets for Soils & Environment for 2020

Low carbon farming will 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 or Changes Required

- Educate and inform clients of the requirements and eligibility for:
 - Basic Payment System
 - GAEC
- Facilitate the maximum level of entry into 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, and encourage the uptake of completing the carbon navigator for 50% of clients.
- Promote soil fertility as key in driving efficiencies at farm level and the role of Teagasc is to make clients acutely aware of the effect this has on production efficiency. There will be a campaign on soil testing to raise awareness of soil fertility issues.
- Provide training courses on the implications of the Sustainable Use Directive (SUD), biodiversity and water quality protection.

Strategy for other areas

Rural Development:

- Continue our contribution to Rural Development, through our links with Local Community Development Councils in the region. This is in addition to delivery of an Options Programme annually.

Organic Production:

- Continue delivery of an organic course in the region on an annual basis. The unit has the highest level of participation in organic courses delivered in the last five years with in excess of 150 farmers having completed the training. Teagasc will develop a discussion group for organic farmers.

Public Relations:

- It is proposed to raise our profile in the region in all the main farming enterprises by having a regular presence in local media. This involves a technical article being placed in local press on a regular and on-going basis. (Roscommon People, Roscommon Herald, Longford Leader).

Main Research Requirements Specific to this Region

Beef

Continue to work closely with the BETTER beef farms in the region, evaluating best practise for sustainable beef production, targeting increasingly efficient, market orientated beef producers. Teagasc specialists play a very important role in the success of these farms.

Greenacres calf to beef demonstration farm in the region will offer clients a new production option to complement existing beef production system.

Contract rearing is an option requiring further evaluation, which may also offer a production system to compliment an existing beef production system.

Continued interaction with Grange for all beef Advisers is essential so that Advisers are equipped with the latest knowledge from research findings.

Teagasc Grange will continue to develop knowledge on soil fertility, grass measurement and budgeting, land drainage, reseeding options and ensure Advisers are trained on latest or emerging technologies.

Dairying

A demonstration farm is required in the region, which can be used to promote milk production in the region from new and existing dairy farmers.

The Aurivo and Lakeland joint programmes will continue to contribute significantly to an efficient and sustainable milk production system in the region.

Development of a focus farm in the region in conjunction with Aurivo, for a farm in expansion phase, will require input by the Dairy Research team.

Sheep

Continue to work closely with the BETTER sheep farm in the region, evaluating best practise for sustainable sheep production. The research farm in Athenry must be used to educate Advisers in the latest research findings, which can be imparted to farmers through public events and through the STAP.

Environment

Teagasc Grange and Johnstown Castle will continue to develop knowledge on soil fertility, land drainage, reseeding options and ensure Advisers are trained on latest or emerging technologies.

Organic Options

Organic farming will continue to evolve and farmers who opt for organic farming will continue to get additional financial supports through various schemes. Teagasc must lead the development of organic farming as consumers will demand higher quality organically produced food.

Engagement with Stakeholders

Stakeholder input is essential in delivering a relevant and suitable Advisory programme. Stakeholders will be consulted annually (in January) so that they can be briefed on current activities, and give direction to future Advisory activities. The key stakeholders are named earlier in this document.

Roscommon/Longford Advisory Region Staff Details

Roscommon Office

Ciaran Beatty	B&T Adviser	090 6628551
Catriona Corcoran	Education Officer	090 6628550
Brian Daly	B&T Adviser	090 6628553
Catherine Divilly	Education Officer	090 6628550
James Kelly	B&T Adviser	090 6628544
Noel Mannion	B&T Adviser	090 6628554
Mary McDermott	Staff Officer	090 6628545
Finola Finn	Administration	090 6628541
Claire O'Brien	Administration	090 6628540

Castlerea Office

Gerard Cregg	B&T Adviser	094 9625088
Charles Devaney	B&T Adviser	094 9625087
Kieran Kenny	S&E Adviser	094 9625086
Seamus Nolan	B&T Dairy Adviser	094 9625085
Michael Clogher	S&E Adviser	094 9625082
Enda O'Hart	S&E Adviser	094 9625084
Maura Conroy	Administration	094 9625080
Martina Dunne	Administration	094 9625081

Longford Office

Tom Kellegher	Regional Manager	087 2997195
Michael Conroy	B&T Adviser	043 3328518
Shane Devaney	B&T Adviser	043 3328517
Therese Hilliard	Education Officer	043 3328521
James Murtagh	Education Officer	043 3328515
Deirdre Glennon	Administration	043 3328510

Ballinasloe Office

Joe Curtin	B&T Adviser	090 9648180
------------	-------------	-------------





Roscommon/Longford Advisory Region

Teagasc, Abbey Street, Roscommon

090 6626166

Teagasc, St. Patricks Street, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon

094 9620160

Teagasc, Town Centre, Longford

043 3341021