

September 2021

Submission on Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Introduction

Founded in 1973, the National Women's Council (NWC) is the leading national women's membership organisation. We represent and derive our mandate from our membership, which includes over 190 groups and organisations from a diversity of backgrounds, sectors and locations across Ireland. Our mission is to lead and to be a catalyst for change in the achievement of equality for women. Our vision is of an Ireland and of a world where women can achieve their full potential and there is full equality for women.

Women want to continue to be part of rural Ireland and be valued for their contribution to the economic and social fabric of rural communities. Our work has identified an undervaluing of the contribution of women to rural communities and a lack of access to power and resources. Resourcing and supporting the engagement and participation of women in all their diversity, is essential to the sustainability and viability of rural communities. Agriculture is an important part of rural life and women on Irish farms make a substantial contribution. Positive action and strong targeted measures matched with expenditure priorities are required to address the persistent gender gap in land ownership and ensure that young women can benefit from the investment and strategies developed to tackle generational renewal and deliver on our climate justice obligations.

We welcome the opportunity to make this submission to Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027. This significant investment offers a real opportunity to support women in agriculture, countering the perception that farming is a male occupation and shifting the cultural bias from male successors. This can be achieved through providing equal access to schemes, payments, land ownership and decision making. Our recommendations align with existing obligations under the National Strategy for Women and Girls (NSWG) and the United Nations Convention Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women 2017 Concluding Observations.¹

The National Women's Council welcomes the Minister for Agriculture Charlie McConalogue's commitment to make significant progress in this area, noting that gender equality is a key commitment of his department and his openness to work collaboratively and to hear

¹ "The Committee recommends the State Party to ensure the integration of a gender perspective in the new Action Plan for Rural Ireland currently being developed and to provide information in its next periodic report on the overall situation of rural women highlighting the impact of the measures taken to improve on rural women's land ownership and participation in agriculture as well as access to social services including public transport childcare, health services, employment, education and training."

suggestions to improve the situation.² We have seen considerable progress in many sectors for women in Irish business and society, the struggle for gender balance in farm ownership continues and the time has come for the role of women in agriculture to change too.³ We welcome the opportunity for further engagement on this issue.

This work is kindly supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development through the Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO) administered through Pobal.

Women and Land Ownership

Ireland has the fifth lowest number of female farmers in Europe and only one farm organisation has a concrete Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) to encourage more women to enter into farming.⁴ Women's contribution to farming can go largely unnoticed and unrecognised in statistics and policies despite the fact that over a quarter of those working on farms (71,700) are women.⁵ Women farm holders account for just 12% (16,100) of the 137,100 family farms in the country. Just 3.8% of farms are registered with the Department of Agriculture in joint ownership. There has been no increase in women's ownership of land since 2010. By way of contrast, in Austria, 33% of women are farm owners. In Norway, to increase access to land for women; they introduced a law in 1974 where the eldest child is the legal heir. Inheritance continues to be based not on ability or interest but on gender. A 2017 study undertaken by Macra supported by the Irish Farming Association (IFA) on Land Mobility and Succession, showed that this imbalance is unlikely to change in the short to medium term, as only 11% of those identified in the report as potential successors, are women.⁶ Teagasc has acknowledged that young women account for just 10% of their students. In another study, 57% of all men responded to say gender did not influence succession plans, however only 35% of all women respondents agreed with this. 63% of women said gender does influence succession plans.⁷ The patriarchal and traditional succession system of passing farms from father to son has been a huge barrier for women's access to land, as recognised in the work of Dr Sally Shortall.⁸ Irish farms are still transferred to sons and most women enter farming through marriage.

² <https://www.kildarestreet.com/debates/?id=2021-0715a.136&s=gender+balance+on+agri+food#g139>

³ <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2021/0308/1201597-women-land-rights-ownership-ireland/>

⁴ <https://www.farmersjournal.ie/women-overlooked-in-next-cap-624482>

⁵ Anne Byrne, Nata Duvvury, Áine Macken-Walsh, Tanya Watson (2013) Gender, Power and Property: In my own right. The Rural Economy Development Programme (REDP) Working Paper Series. Working Paper

⁶ IFA Submission to the National Strategy on Women and Girls 2017 - 2020

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/cmef/farmers-and-farming/pilot-project-exchange-programmes-young-farmers_en

⁸ <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2021/0308/1201578-ireland-women-farmers/>

In 2014, Tanya Watson, NUI Galway reported in her study, that state subsidised training and knowledge transfer is mainly directed at the land owner, which despite the reality of farm living being a household process, typically remains male. Just 3,173 women (out of 19,576 applicants) took part in the Knowledge Transfer (KT) scheme.⁹ Women were slightly older than their male counterparts, with an average age of 62 compared to 56 for men. 31% of women farmers are over 80 years of age.¹⁰ The age of women farmers suggested many come to inherit farms when they become widowed and affirms that they are not actively considered for succession. The Rural Development Programme in 2014 recognised that men account for more than 90 per cent of farm holders and this could be '*detrimental in terms of the human capital capacity of the sector and may also inhibit technology uptake and structural change.*'¹¹ We did not see the scale of ambition necessary to achieve change over the course of the previous programme.

Common Agricultural Policy Reform

The farm owner who receives the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) payment is the public face, just eight percent of the €1.2 billion of Ireland's EU CAP Single Farm Payments went to women farmers in 2012.¹² Only 10% of the land in women's ownership is eligible for basic payments. Analysis reveals further inequalities in payment amounts; on the top and bottom 60 CAP payments across 5 counties in the North/West Irish women farmers make up on average 3% of the top payments while making up on average 20% of the lowest payments.¹³ There are very few areas of public expenditure, where 90% of public investment is going to one gender. Data from a publication on direct payments, broken down by age and gender from the Ministry for Agriculture in Spain show that 36% of Spanish farmers were women and that they received 27% of total Single Farm Payments.¹⁴ The gender of CAP recipients across the EU should be recorded. Such data would allow for more meaningful inter-regional comparisons and allow progress to be tracked over time. The European Economic and Social Committee Evaluation on the CAP's impact on territorial development of rural areas¹⁵ reported that the role of CAP in contributing to gender equality and generational renewal needed to be

⁹ <https://www.agriland.ie/farming-news/glas-e1bn-paid-to-farmers-to-date-with-50000-contracts-active/>

¹⁰ <https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/publications/2017/AnnualReviewandOutlookFinal270717.pdf>

¹¹ Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (2014). Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2014–2020 (2014), p. 29.

¹² Anne Byrne, Nata Duvvury, Áine Macken-Walsh, Tanya Watson (2013) Gender, Power and Property: In my own right. The Rural Economy Development Programme (REDP) Working Paper Series. Working Paper

¹³ Research courtesy of Bridget Murphy

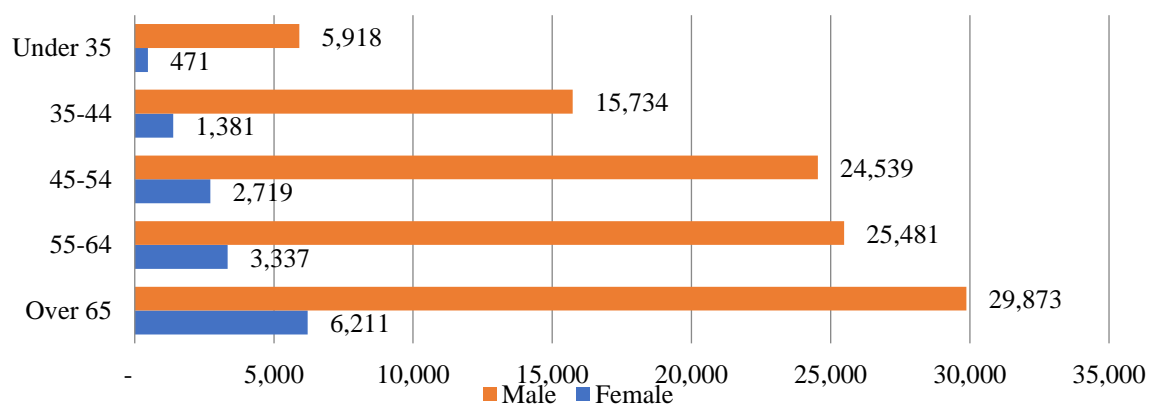
¹⁴ <https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/publications/2015/AROFinalVersion2015Amended210915.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/08e60401-71a0-11eb-9ac9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

strengthened in particular through access to land, co-ownership for women and design and revision of policies to include a gender perspective.

“young women should be encouraged to take on the responsibility of management in agriculture and to settle in rural areas and play a full and active role in the agricultural sector through the promotion of female ownership, networks of female young farmers, etc.”

Farms in receipt of Basic Payment Scheme payments by Gender, 2015¹⁶



It is estimated that there 3,000 joint herd numbers. Women generally experience difficulties accessing a herd number and cannot qualify for other schemes, subsidies and supports without a herd number. Information from the Young Farmer Scheme shows that in 2018 only 819 out of 4213 participants were women.¹⁷ The Targeted Agriculture Modernisation Schemes (TAMS) grant has been in operation since 2016 and just 751 of 20,612 payments have gone to women, 97 of these to women under 35.¹⁸

The contribution of women in the farming household is often hidden, taking place in the private realm-completing accounts and administration work for example. The role of women in completing the domestic and caring labour necessary for the farming household is not counted at all of course. Their professional roles and contributions are often downplayed and

¹⁶Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

¹⁷ September 2019 Response to parliamentary question

¹⁸ <https://www.independent.ie/business/farming/news/less-than-4pc-of-tams-grants-go-to-female-farmers-40802682.html>

'undercounted' thereby reinforcing the identity of the farmer and decision maker as male.¹⁹ Generation renewal is one of the main objectives for CAP reform programme. CSO figures published in 2018 showed that over half of Irish farmers are over 55 years of age, with 30 per cent of farmers over the retirement age. From 2013 to 2018, the number of farmers under 35 fell from 8,200 to 7,100. The agri-taxation working group identified barriers to greater participation of women in agriculture.²⁰ Supporting women in agriculture in the context of generational renewal is also identified in Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025

*"The farming sector cannot reach its full potential without the active engagement of women and proactive efforts to facilitate their participation."*²¹

Incentives and specific measures for girls and young women must be prioritised including seats at the decision-making tables.

*"The family nature of most farming businesses in Ireland is recognised but not adequately supported in terms of ensuring the visibility and voice of women on farms. Many aspects of farm productivity and profitability as well as health and safety could be more effectively supported through engagement of advisory and support services with farm women".*²²

Gender and Equality Budgeting

The NSWG contains a commitment to develop a process of budget and policy proofing as a means of advancing equality, reducing poverty and strengthening social and economic rights as well as ensuring the institutional arrangements are in place in government departments to support this work. The Department of Agriculture was not one of the departments that participated in the Gender and Equality Budgeting pilot project. However, given the Department's role in recognising the value of diversity and gender equality²³, it is particularly important that its resources are allocated in a way that promotes gender equality. While there is currently no statutory obligation on government departments to carry out gender and equality proofing, the OECD have included this in its recommendations to Ireland.²⁴ In light of the highly gendered nature of public investment in this aspect of the Irish economy, the

¹⁹ Shortall, S. (2017) Changing Gender Roles in Irish Farm Households: Continuity and Change Irish Geography, 50(2), 175–191, DOI: 10.2014/igj.v50i1.1321

²⁰ <https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/agri-foodindustry/agri-foodandtheeconomy/agri-foodbusiness/agri-taxation/>

²¹ <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/132413/433aebac-f12a-4640-8cac-9faf52e5ea1f.pdf#page=81>

²² UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science Submission on Review of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Post-2020

²³ DAFM Statement of Strategy 2021 – 2024

²⁴ <https://www.oecd.org/gov/budgeting/equality-budgeting-in-ireland.pdf>

Department of Agriculture should as a matter of urgency review the expenditure of public monies under their control and ensure they are supporting the development of more equal and diverse agricultural sector. All government departments have an obligation to promote equality and protect human rights under the Public Sector Duty.²⁵

Recommendations

Land mobility, generation renewal and succession

- Promote farming as a career option for women through subject choice and positive measures in agricultural education programmes
- NWC supports the proposal that a top-up payment should be provided to Knowledge Transfer groups under the next CAP who have at least three women participants. This top-up payment should be in the region of 15% per participant.
- Given the low number of joint female/male farm holders, only 3.8%, NWC is proposing that all joint farm partnerships where a woman is a named partner should receive a 60% Targeted Agriculture Modernisation Schemes (TAMS) grant, in the next evolution of TAMS in CAP. This is similar to the current young farmers scheme which provides a 60% TAMS grant to eligible young farmers.
- Over two-thirds of women farmers are over 55 and NWC is concerned that young women farmers have been repeatedly overlooked by farm organisations and the Department of Agriculture. Currently young farmers receive a 25% top-up on their annual farm payment and given the low number of young female farmers, NWC is seeking a 35% top-up for young women farmers under 40 years of age in the next CAP.
- New women entrants over 40 to get a 25% top up on their single farm payment.
- Pillar II pilot scheme that would directly address women in agriculture focusing on land mobility and installation aid for young women farmers.
- The identification in the CAP strategic plan of women farmers as a specified group and the need for their improvement under the next CAP period. This should include a Department of Agriculture target to reach a 25% sole or joint female farm ownership level within the next CAP strategic plan.
- Collect and publish gender disaggregated data on accessibility and participation of all schemes and measures including young farmer scheme and Glas.

Womens representation in Agri business and Co-operatives

Traditional perceptions of women's position in farming organisations still hold. Currently 7 out of 29 chairpersons of Irish Farming Association (IFA) branches are women.²⁶ Five chairs of the forty-one committees are women and there is only one woman on the National Council. They have launched their diversity strategy towards 2025.²⁷ The Irish Creameries Milk Suppliers Association have no women on their executive committee.²⁸ We have seen the emergence of women farmers networks such as the West Women in Farming Network and South East Women in Farming Network on a provincial basis, however they do not have seats at the decision-making tables nor are they resourced to participate. CERES (The

²⁵ <https://www.ihrec.ie/our-work/public-sector-duty/>

²⁶ <https://www.ifa.ie/county-chairs/>

²⁷ <https://www.ifa.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/IFA-Diversity-Report-A4-Sep19-FINALWeb.pdf>

²⁸ <https://icmsa.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Excutive-Comm.pdf>

Women in Agribusiness Leadership Network) have consistently highlighted the lack of women's representation on boards. Lakeland Dairies, an Irish Dairy Co-operative, continues to have an all-male board.²⁹ We welcome the convening of the Women in Agriculture Stakeholders Group and would encourage ongoing and meaningful engagement with this group.

Recommendations

Promoting women's participation and leadership in agriculture

- Given the current poor representation of women in the agriculture sector, NWC is calling for gender balance and gender expertise on the boards of all Agri food and Agri business groups and farming representative bodies to ensure that gender goals outlined nationally within Government and the recent Citizen's Assembly³⁰ are addressed and given representation at a national level in the agriculture sector.
- Promote and report on women in leadership roles in the agri-food sector, including improving gender balance in stakeholder organisations and State and company boards in the sector.
- Promote women's participation in farming through Knowledge Transfer (KT) women only Groups facilitated by a woman advisor. This is in keeping with the spirit of the KT Programme where like-minded farmers who experience similar challenges and opportunities form groups.
- Hold a National Dialogue on Women in Agriculture and commission a national study into women in agriculture similar to the study carried out by the Scottish government in 2016
- Promote and support women's networks, such as CERES (The Women in Agribusiness Leadership Network), women farmers networks, mentoring programmes for rural women entrepreneurs such as ACORNS and the newly formed Women in Agriculture Stakeholders Group.

Conclusion

The urgency that is required to shift the balance on this issue must be reflected in expenditure priorities, concrete measures and targets for decision making and land ownership. All resources financial and otherwise must be employed to tackle the gender gap on Irish farms over the timescale of this strategic plan. We strongly recommend a dedicated ringfenced allocation to mainstream gender equality across all programmes and schemes to tackle the gender gap on Irish farms. We urge the department to use all the tools at its disposal, financial and otherwise through CAP investment and taxation measures to bring about the transformation needed in this sector.

Contact

Catherine Lane, Women in Local, Community & Rural Development Officer

²⁹ <https://www.lakeland.ie/about-us/our-board>

³⁰ "Making funding to public bodies contingent on reaching a 40% gender balance quota by 2025." <http://citizensassembly.ie/en/about-the-citizens-assembly/report-of-the-citizens-assembly-on-gender-equality.pdf>

E: catherinel@nwci.ie

National Women's Council of Ireland, 100 North King Street, D7 Tel: 01 6790 100