



Department of
Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Ain Roinn
Talmhaíochta, Iascaigh agus Bia



2nd progress report



Table of Contents

	Page
Table of Contents	
Summary	3
Chapter 1 - Focusing on the Consumer	5
Chapter 2 - Building our Knowledge Base	12
Chapter 3 - Strengthening Competitiveness	17
Chapter 4 - Promoting a Sustainable Future	38



Summary

The report of the AgriVision 2015 Committee set out the main issues facing the Irish agriculture and food industries as well as their recommendations for its optimal development into the future. This was followed up by the publication in March 2006, of the AgriVision 2015 Action Plan, (AV2015) which contained 167 specific actions to be taken to ensure a vibrant future for the agri-food industry.

The four main priorities progressed in the AV2015 Action Plan are consumer focus, innovation, competitiveness and sustainability.

Actions taken to improve consumer focus highlight the many activities of the Department which enhance and guarantee the production of a safe and healthy food supply. These include the enforcement of both our service contract with the Food Safety Authority and the food safety elements of the wide ranging EU Hygiene Package. Further initiatives include the development and implementation of sophisticated animal traceability system, comprehensive quality assurance schemes, healthy eating initiatives including the Food Dude Programme and the School Milk Scheme as well as country of origin labelling.

The Department encourages innovation through the provision of increased funding for its public good competitive research programmes (Food Institutional Research measure-FIRM, the Research Stimulus Fund-RSF and COFORD), facilitating collaborative initiatives and interactive interfaces with the food industry and proactive dissemination of research to encourage commercial development potential.

Maintaining cost competitiveness is major issue for the agri-food sector as the majority of its produce is exported. As would be expected, the largest proportion of actions in AV2015 is directed at improving competitiveness at farm, producer, processor and marketing level. To this end, advisory services for farmers have been adapted to assist competitive market driven production, capital investment has been provided for the meat and dairy industries to improve their efficiency and competitiveness and significant emphasis has been placed on providing innovative market development measures and on promoting Irish food at home and abroad. An indication of the success achieved in this area is the growth achieved in the food and drinks sector in 2007 where for the first time overall exports exceeded €8 billion. The strengthening of the global food commodities augers well for a food exporting nation such as Ireland.

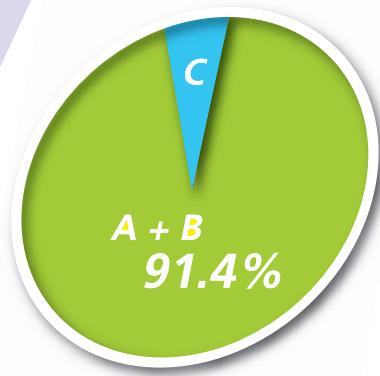
Ensuring sustainable agricultural development is one of the major objectives of the Rural Development Programme. This multi faceted issue is being progressed through national schemes as well as measures in the RDP. These stimulate environmentally sensitive farming practices, enhance waste and energy management, reduce greenhouse gases, improve carbon sequestration, encourage biological diversity, maintain high standards of animal and plant health. The agriculture and fisheries sector also contribute to the enhancement of public goods such as clean water and the retention of rural landscape and amenities.



This 2nd report outlines the overall progress which has been made to March 2008. Each of the actions in the Plan is addressed and brief details of the measures taken to progress the action are noted. Progress is evaluated on a four-point basis with overall progress categorised as follows

	Description	%
A	Action completed	11.5
B	Action implemented on an ongoing basis	81.5
C	Substantial action taken but required further work	7
D	Minimal action taken	0

Overall, to date 93 % of the action points have been completed or are being implemented on an ongoing basis. This is a satisfactory result and the intention is to ensure that all actions in the AV2015 Action Plan are substantially implemented by the end of 2008.



Focusing on the Consumer

*Status	
A:	Action Completed
B:	Action implemented on an ongoing basis
C:	Substantial Action Taken
D:	Minimal Action Taken

No	Measures taken	*Status
1	DAFF will enforce food legislation in accordance with the terms of its service contract with the FSAI and it will take a proactive role in prioritising and delivering food safety initiatives in conjunction with both the FSAI and SafeFood, the all-island food safety body.	B
	<p>DAFF's service contract with the FSAI has been renewed up to 31st December 2009. The enforcement of the food legislation listed in this contract is constantly reviewed through regular liaison meetings between DAFF and the FSAI as well as through quarterly reports and the Annual Report required under the FSAI Act. There is a strong co-operative working relationship between both agencies on the implementation of the service contract and DAF is represented on a significant number of FSAI committees and working groups working on initiatives addressing food safety concerns.</p> <p>The Department continued to collaborate with SafeFood on a number of all-island food safety projects, e.g. assessing the occurrence of salmonella in pork and the risk factors contributing to its transmission, developing a harmonised system for approval and monitoring of private laboratories testing foodborne pathogens and consumer surveys on specific agricultural products. On an ongoing basis, DAFF staff also participate in SafeFood's conferences and training programmes.</p>	
2	DAF and other agencies involved will put the necessary measures in place to ensure the full implementation of the EU Food and Feed legislation, including the EU Hygiene Package.	B
	<p>The EU Hygiene Package revised and consolidated legislation in relation to food and feed hygiene as well as other issues. A key aspect of this legislation is that all food and feed operators, from farmers and processors to retailers and caterers, have primary responsibility for ensuring that food put on the EU market meets the required safety standard. The enforcement of the legislation crosses a number of Departments/Agencies and the FSAI ensures effective cross-departmental working through its inter-agency working group.</p> <p>The main responsibilities of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) -the registration and re-approval of feed and food plants, (b) -provision of training for all DAF personnel involved in food and feed handling (c) -implementation of an independent audit programme (d) -accreditation of DAFF laboratories (e) -input into the guides for good hygiene practices and into the Multi-Annual National Control Plan. <p>All food and feed premises must be re-inspected and approved under the Hygiene Package. These risk-based inspections of meat, milk processing and feed premises are well advanced. To date 92% of meat plants and 98% of milk plants have met the required standards and have been re-approved. The re-approval process for these premises will be finalised shortly. The re-registration and re-approval of feed business operators is complete and this list is now published on the DAFF website.</p> <p>The Department continues to monitor compliance with its legislative obligations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (b) All the Dairy Produce Inspectors involved in food inspections have been trained. All Veterinary Public Health inspection staff have also received training on the requirements under the Hygiene and Official Controls Regulations, on the Microbiological Criteria legislation and additional modular training is being rolled out. The ongoing programme of training for auxiliary technical staff has been expanded to meet the additional requirements of the Regulations. All of the Feed Inspectorate staff have completed HACCP training. Training in other aspects of Feed Hygiene legislation and official controls is ongoing. 	

No	Measures taken	*Status
	<p>(c) An independent Internal Audit Unit has been established to cover all relevant activities of the Dairying, Feedingstuffs, Plant Health and Pesticides and Organics Divisions. The unit reports directly to the Deputy Chief Inspector and is fully operational. Five audits were conducted and reported on under the 2007 audit programme while the 2008 programme has been agreed and is being implemented.</p> <p>A complementary internal audit function is carried out in the areas of animal health, animal welfare and food safety, by the recently established State Veterinary Service Internal Audit Group (SVSIAG). This unit reports to the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO).</p> <p>(d) The details of the scope of the dozens of tests accredited at the DAFF laboratories are available on the Irish National Accreditation Board's Website (www.inab.ie). The tests involved cover a broad range of differing methodologies from microbiology to chemical analysis. Seven tests are also accredited to the International Seed Testing Association standards.</p> <p>Test accreditation is an on-going process and further tests are currently being prepared for validation and accreditation.</p> <p>(e) The Multi- Annual National Control Plan for food, animal feed, plant health, animal health and welfare, prepared jointly by DAFF and the FSAI, was submitted to the EU Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) in 2007. This sets out the food and feed safety processes and controls for all products and formed the basis for the FVO audits planned for 2008. The Department's annual progress report to FVO will be provided to them by the end of June each year.</p>	
3	<p>DAF will support research and programmes which facilitates accurate assessment of possible risks from food constituents or contaminants in the diet of consumers.</p>	B
	<p>The Department implements a range of programmes and controls which assess the level of possible risks to consumers from food constituents or contaminants. Specifically DAFF implements a comprehensive National Residue Plan which on an ongoing basis samples a range of foodstuffs to check for traces for illegal substances and follows up any positive results with the necessary enforcement action, up to and including legal action. <i>See 146 for further information.</i></p> <p>Due to its expertise, the Pesticide Control Service of the Department is a partner institution providing advice and oversight on a FIRM supported research project in the area of consumer exposure to pesticide residues in food. The use of techniques to provide more realistic estimates of actual levels of consumer exposure is being evaluated. This project is due for completion in 2009 and a workshop to provide an update on progress has been organised to take place in UCD in June 2008.</p> <p>Overall funding totalling €8.1m was awarded under the 2006 FIRM Call to research projects on the theme of food safety and security in the food chain. An example of projects funded was the award to IUNA (Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance) for research into the safety and nutritional quality of the diets of Irish children and adolescents. This research is to upgrade the National Food Ingredient Database, to produce an estimation of intakes of selected food additive of 5 to 12 year olds, and to develop a food composition database; <i>see Actions 18 and 19 for details of other projects.</i></p> <p>The 2008 FIRM Call contains the theme area of Food Quality and Safety. The Call will close in April 2008 with evaluations completed by June 2008.</p>	
4	<p>Existing systems on animal traceability will be further developed by DAF in line with emerging health and consumer concerns.</p>	B
	<p>Animal traceability systems are being implemented and enhanced on an ongoing basis. Enhancements include the development of an internet based animal identification and traceability system for bovines, sheep, pigs and goats to enhance consumer confidence in food safety standards.</p> <p>The system is being developed in modular basis and the following facilities are available :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ordering and distribution of ear tags; -provision of online services to view herd profiles, register calf births, apply for a compliance certificate; -on-line bovine pre-clearance and movement notification system at selected marts <p>The upgrading of software at slaughter plants is currently being rolled out and future modules will include the upgrading of the application for Local Authority Slaughter Houses and knackeries as well as the provision of a sheep movement notification system.</p>	

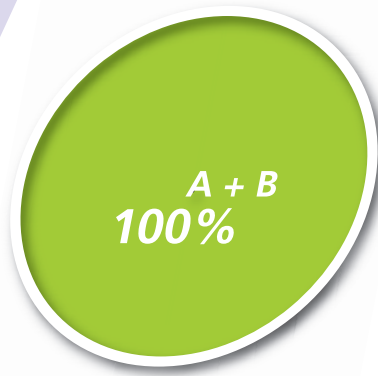
No	Measures taken	*Status
	<p>The Sheep/Goat Movement Database System is currently being developed within the overall Animal Identification and Movement Computer System to record the required animal movements. It is intended that the new system will be rolled-out to DAFF-supervised sheep meat factories during the second quarter of 2008. It is intended that the Sheep Movement Database System will be rolled out to marts immediately after and to other capture points on a progressive basis thereafter.</p> <p>More user friendly sheep flock registers and dispatch documents, which reduced the amount of recording required under the National Sheep Identification System, were distributed to all sheep flock keepers in November 2006.</p>	B
5	<p>In consultation with the FSAI and the Department of Health and Children, DAF will ensure that the optimum level of laboratory services are available to maintain food safety standards. In this regard, DAF's central laboratories at Backweston will be further developed and utilised as a science based centre by DAF and the agri-food industry.</p>	B
	<p>All laboratories, with the exception of one element in the Central Veterinary Research Laboratory, have relocated to Backweston, Celbridge, Co Kildare and are fully operational. All DAFF laboratories have been consolidated under a Director of Laboratory Services and operate in a modern, state of the art complex which has been developed to provide the highest standards of diagnostic, regulatory, research and development facilities to underpin the national food safety standards and development of the laboratories as a science based centre is proceeding. <i>See also Action 29 and 112 on details of collaborative projects.</i></p>	
6	<p>The veterinary medicines regime will be revised in 2006 and kept under review thereafter to take account of developments at EU level, to protect public and animal health and welfare and to promote competitiveness of Irish agriculture.</p>	B
	<p>This commitment has now been met following the adoption of updated veterinary medicines regulations on 22 November 2007. The regulations allow for the retention of the status quo for veterinary medicines that did not previously require a veterinary prescription as well as setting out arrangements for prescribing intra-mammary treatments which are designed to protect public and animal health and to ensure a competitive market for medicines.</p>	
7	<p>DAF will continue to promote best practice in food safety and quality, recognising their importance to consumers and the competitive advantage that such practices offer, particularly in the context of competing with low cost imports.</p>	B
	<p>The promotion of food safety and quality is integral to the work of the Department. Sophisticated animal traceability systems underpin safety and quality requirements while over 1,700 staff are engaged on monitoring, surveillance and inspection services along the links in the food chain. Actions 1 and 2 above set out the ongoing activities undertaken by DAFF in the area of food law enforcement, while the FSAI and Safefood have been actively supported by the Department in their food safety education, training and promotion activities.</p> <p>Bord Bia continues to promote quality through its enhanced Quality Assurance Schemes for beef, lamb, pigmeat, poultry, eggs and horticulture, <i>see Actions 10, 12 and 13 for further details.</i></p>	
8	<p>DAF will consider ways to enhance the usage of the existing animal traceability systems for marketing and labelling of food products.</p>	B
	<p>The DAFF traceability systems have been used to support claims made under the Bord Bia Beef Quality Assurance Scheme and voluntary labelling claims made by some retailers and meat plants. It will also underpin the Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) application for 'Irish Beef'</p> <p>Research projects have also focused on improving links between traceability systems and marketing of produce. Grant aid of €1.1 m has been awarded under the 2006 FIRM call for research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) to develop a protocol using unique animal biometrics and state-of-the-art low cost e-tracking systems for assuring the origin and food chain history of poultry/poultry products and (ii) biomarkers to authenticate Irish grass-fed beef. <p>The results of the research will assist in managing external risks such as avian flu, meeting consumer demand for assurance on where products come from, identification of product with a nutritional advantage and thus providing producers and industry with a route to premium markets.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
9	Farm bodies should commit to, and actively promote amongst their members, maximum participation in Quality Assurance Schemes for all livestock, grain and horticultural products	B
	The farm bodies are represented on the technical advisory committees for various QA schemes which agree on the standards to be implemented. They are also actively involved in the promotion of the beef quality assurance scheme and in the development of the new Lamb Quality Assurance Scheme introduced in 2007.	
10	Bord Bia will actively promote maximum participation in the existing quality assurance schemes for pigmeat, poultry and eggs.	B
	<p>Bord Bia has ongoing campaigns to promote participation levels in the quality assurance schemes and stakeholders are involved in the development of standards through the various technical committees. DAFF has membership on the Bord Bia Board and the Quality Assurance Sub-Board.</p> <p>The current situation is that all key processors/packers in the pigmeat, egg and poultry sectors are participating in the Bord Bia Quality Assurance Schemes. The Pigmeat quality standard is fully accredited under EN45011 at producer and processor level and the auditing of the new standard has commenced. The amalgamated poultry quality assurance scheme is being moved towards full accreditation to the EN45011 standard. The Egg Quality Assurance Scheme was the first Bord Bia scheme to achieve EN45011 accreditation and the scheme assists greatly in promoting eggs at consumer level. A scheme revision is being progressed by the Technical Advisory Committee.</p>	
11	DAF will encourage the participants in the beef industry to agree an appropriate and stable funding mechanism for the Beef Quality Assurance Scheme. Provided agreement can be reached with stakeholders, exchequer funding will be made available to assist with some of the costs involved.	B
	Following intensive discussions involving all stakeholders, agreement on the way forward was reached in May 2006 and DAFF provided €1.9m in 2006 to kick-start the expansion of the EN45011 Beef Quality Assurance Scheme. Overall it is estimated that the Department will have contributed in excess of €6.5 million in certification and on farm inspection costs by end 2008.	
12	Beef processors and Meat Industry Ireland (MII) should continue to actively promote and support the extension of Quality Assurance Schemes.	B
	Membership of the Bord Bia Beef Quality Assurance Scheme continues to expand. Over 4,000 holdings were inspected in 2005. This increased to some 11,000 in 2006 and 25,000 in 2007. By end 2008 it is intended to have 35,000 farms participating in the scheme, with inspections fully up to date.	
13	Producers, Processors, DAF and Bord Bia will jointly implement a Sheepmeat Quality Assurance scheme to orient production methods to meet market demands at home and abroad	B
	On foot of the Sheep Strategy, Exchequer funding was provided for a Lamb Quality Assurance Scheme introduced in 2007. The scheme involves the major commercial flocks. There are some 3,750 members of the Lamb Quality Assurance Scheme. The processor standard for the Lamb Quality Assurance Scheme has been submitted for accreditation to EN45011 expected in April 08.	
14	Proactive steps will be taken in conjunction with the industry to introduce country of origin labelling and to promote and support Quality Assurance schemes to differentiate Irish poultry and pigmeat products.	C
	<p>Action 10 above illustrates the steps taken to further enhance and promote the quality assurance schemes for Irish pigmeat and poultry products.</p> <p>See Action 16 for details on country of origin labelling for non-beef products</p>	
15	The operation of the Consumer Panel will be reviewed and strengthened to ensure that an up-to-date consumer viewpoint is available on Department activities.	C
	The membership of the Consumer Liaison Panel is currently being reviewed, and it is proposed to re-launch the Panel shortly.	

No	Measures taken	*Status
16	<p>The relevant Departments will enact the necessary legislative basis and implement a food labelling regime to provide the maximum information to all consumers on “country of origin”. This will apply in the first instance to beef products and will be extended as rapidly as possible to other meats</p>	B
	<p>Country of Origin labelling regulations were made in June 2006 which extended the labelling requirements for beef to the catering sector.</p> <p>In relation to origin labelling for other meats, the Department of Health and Children (D/HC) has the lead responsibility for promoting the Irish position on this issue to DG Sanco. DAFF's submission to D/HC confirmed our strong preference for origin labelling of meat and meat products and the desirability of there being common EU-wide legislation to support a labelling regime. Draft legislation to implement national measures has been prepared. The intended legislation was notified to the Commission in December 2007.</p> <p>As agreed with the Commission further information on the intent and scope of the action will be forwarded to Brussels in the coming weeks.</p>	
17	<p>DAF, in conjunction with the state agencies, will work with the food industry to develop a nutritional focus in product development and marketing.</p>	B
	<p>A call was issued by Enterprise Ireland for research proposals on dairy-based functional ingredients focusing on the development of new products with strong commercial potential. DAF has been involved in the proposal assessment process which will see up to €15m investment by Enterprise Ireland and major dairy companies. A high quality response was been received to the research call. This initiative on dairy-based functional ingredients is in final stage of negotiations with research institutions and industry partners and it is due to be launched in the coming weeks.</p> <p>The initiative will seek to employ the best publicly funded research resources available to allow companies move dairy production from commodity to higher value applications and to new consumer food development. The programme will focus on products with specific nutritional applications with an emphasis on “keeping healthy people healthy”. It will employ the very latest technology in milk mining, rapid assay screening, GMP manufacturing and human intervention studies.</p>	
18	<p>DAF will commission further research in the area of human nutrition and food science, including dietary requirements, nutritional assessments, food composition and food uses, to provide information to the food industry to support innovation, new product development and product promotion.</p>	B
	<p>These themes form the central topics of FIRM Calls in 2006, 2007 and 2008.</p> <p>Under the 2006 FIRM Call, funding of €30m was approved for 57 projects; €11m of this was on Food and Health research using dairy, meat, cereals and fruit and vegetable ingredients.</p> <p>In 2007, a new initiative in postgraduate education, the Food Graduate Development Programme, was funded for five years to provide skills training to postgraduate students and research staff in Universities and Research Institutes in Ireland engaged in FIRM food research projects.</p> <p>FIRM and the Health Research Board (HRB) launched a joint 6-year research initiative in 2007 in the areas of nutritional health of the elderly, food consumption databases, and nutrigenomics. In addition a Food Safety – monitoring & surveillance programme was also evaluated. The contract negotiations were finalised in early 2008 and the projects have commenced. 4 programmes were funded for a period of 5 years with a DAFF contribution of €18m. These programmes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Development/ Updating of Databases ■ Nutritional Health in the Elderly ■ Nutrigenomics ■ Food Safety – Monitoring and Surveillance. <p>They also co-funded a Health Research Centre in Diet & Health particularly in the area of consumer cognitive response to food. The total value of DAFF input to this project will be €1m over 2007-2008.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
	<p>2007 also saw a joint call with the Marine Institute on Marine Functional Foods. After evaluation a consortium, led by Teagasc Ashtown, was selected for funding. The contribution from DAFF is €2.5m over 5 years.</p> <p>In 2008 DAFF launched a call for proposals covering Food Manufacturing and Processing Technology, New uses for Food and Drink By-Products, New and Innovative Food Ingredients and Products, Food Quality and Safety and Frontiers Research. The closing date for receipt of submissions is April 2008.</p>	
19	<p>DAF, in co-operation with other Government Departments and state agencies, will examine food use and food consumption patterns among the Irish population to determine areas for food production, marketing and promotion initiatives.</p>	B
	<p>Following favourable national and EU reaction to the Irish pilot Food Dude programme, in February 2007 the Minister launched a Healthy Eating Initiative to make the Food Dude programme available nationally in primary schools. This uses repeat tasting, rewards and peer models to effect attitudinal and behavioural change. Bord Bia manages the programme for which €4million has been allocated in 2007. The national roll-out of the Programme continued in 2008. To date the programme has been implemented in 653 schools nationwide and has reached over 100,000 children. Almost 3.25 million pieces of fruit & vegetables have been distributed through the programme to date. A further 125 schools will participate in the programme before the end of the school year.</p> <p>UCD were commissioned to carry out an evaluation of the second year of the Food Dude Programme. This has been completed and results are positive and similar to those obtained in Year 1</p> <p>The EU Commission is also working on a proposal for an EU school fruit scheme to be introduced in 2008. As part of this process it has established an expert group from the Commission and from countries who have school schemes in operation. Bord Bia has been invited to be a member of this expert group.</p> <p>DAFF and the FSAI co-funded a Scientific Study on Children's Diet by the Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance (IUNA). This showed an increase in obesity in children, especially girls; the critical role of parents and the home environment in shaping the eating behaviour, diet and physical activity habits of the 5-12 year old group; recommended intakes of salt, fibre, fruit and vegetable, milk and fresh meat, and factors influencing fussy eating habits. The findings of the Study are available for use by other parties and industry has commissioned research from IUNA. DAF in conjunction with the FSAI are funding further research to exploit the potential of the Scientific Study data for the development of the food sector. Under the Food for Health Research Initiative, DAFF and the HRB funded further research on the development of new and existing food consumption databases. To date FIRM funded research has developed consumption databases for pre-school, school, teenagers, adults and the elderly. The research funded by DAFF has formed a major part of a recently developed concise EFSA food consumption database.</p> <p>2008 Call for research proposals under FIRM issued in February. This followed detailed consultations with stakeholders and included brainstorming session with senior industry executives, which focussed on priority theme areas for the call. Closing date is April 2008.</p>	
20	<p>DAF will work with other Governments and international institutions to identify global trends and patterns with regard to nutrition related issues and promote appropriate food industry responses</p>	B
	<p>In 2006, DAFF participated with the Department of Health and Children (DOHC) in a WHO/FAO European Region Conference in Rome on strategies to combat obesity and spoke on the success of Food Dude and the importance of understanding influences on consumer decisions. In November 2006 WHO Health Ministers adopted a Charter on Obesity in Istanbul. Awards made on the occasion included one for the Irish Food Dude programme.</p> <p>Department is working with the Department of Health and Children (DOHC) on the Irish input for the High Level Group set up under the Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues. This will include research being funded by the Department on reducing the salt content of foods under the FIRM programme and proposals under the Department/Health Research Board initiative.</p> <p>Paradoxically in 2008, there is a growing emphasis on food security and supply driven by the imbalance between strong economic growth in some developing asian countries and a reducing global supply of basic food commodities. DAFF is working with industry and State Agencies to highlight the global challenges involved and to promote appropriate industry responses</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
21	In order to promote the nutritional benefits of milk and milk products DAF, in consultation with the dairy industry, will launch a new School Milk scheme.	A
	A new School Milk Scheme was launched in August 2006 aimed at increasing consumption of milk among school pupils. The new scheme has a positive health/nutritional message and includes a broader range of milk products including flavoured and low-fat milk. As part of the launch, the Department provided funding for the provision of 1,000 refrigerators, which were allocated to primary schools throughout the country. The scheme has seen an increase in participation.	
22	Teagasc will expand further its programme of research on food and health to identify potential components for food that will impact positively on health and will become actively involved in research towards the development of nutraceuticals.	B
	The agreed new vision for food research in Teagasc has prioritised food for health and research in the areas of functional foods and nutraceuticals. At Moorepark a new state of the art Biotechnology Section has been built which is almost totally devoted to Food and Health research. The programme is currently undergoing a major expansion as part of Teagasc Vision which will focus on obesity, infant nutrition and gut health. A parallel and integrated extension is happening at the other Teagasc Food Centre at Ashtown where a Nutraceutical Centre is soon to be built which will be involved in bioactive mining. Teagasc are now also key players in the major national projects in Food and Health which are currently underway including Teagasc Vision, the Alimentary Pharmabiotic Centre, the National Functional Foods Centre, the Marine Functional Foods Centre, Eldermet and the Functional Foods Alliance	
23	Secondary research as well as market research will be prioritised to support the opportunities provided for the Irish food sector to develop and supply appropriate food products to meet the changing demographics of national and international markets.	B
	<p>Market and secondary research are integral parts of Bord Bia's strategy. In 2006 funding of €0.5m was provided for their involvement in world-wide research aimed at identifying the main lifestyle trends shaping consumer thoughts, aspirations and buying patterns. The research highlighted six key trends - <i>Life on the Go</i>, <i>Living Life to the Full</i>, <i>Making a Difference</i>, <i>the Quest for health and Wellness</i>, <i>Smart Shoppers</i> and <i>the Real Thing</i>. The findings were presented at Marketplace 2007 and through the various Regional Food Fora to small food producers and businesses to assist their market development. Bord Bia also rolled out the Foresight4FOOD scheme that is designed to encourage companies to test new product concepts amongst consumers in order to improve their prospects of success when they are made available in retail outlets.</p> <p>PERIscope IV is a biennial survey of Irish consumers. It tracks changes in attitudes and reported behaviours of Irish consumers towards food over an eight-year period, including comparative data for British and Northern Ireland counterparts. The 4th survey was completed in 2007 and the results disseminated at Food Industry Day.</p> <p>A major project sketching out four different scenarios as to how the domestic market might evolve by 2020 was presented at the Brand Forum Gala Dinner and published in 2008 on the Bord Bia website as <i>Anticipating Tomorrow</i>.</p> <p>Research at trade and consumer level was conducted in Britain on the prospects for Irish organic products and has been reported to the Department's Organic Market Development Group which funded it. Preliminary research was also conducted on potential opportunities for Irish organic products in the Italian market</p> <p>Work has commenced on a directory of Irish retail operations and how smaller companies might best approach them to secure business with them. <i>Actions 17 and 18 also relate to secondary research.</i></p>	



Building on our Knowledge Base

***Status**

- A: Action Completed
- B: Action implemented on an ongoing basis
- C: Substantial Action Taken
- D: Minimal Action Taken

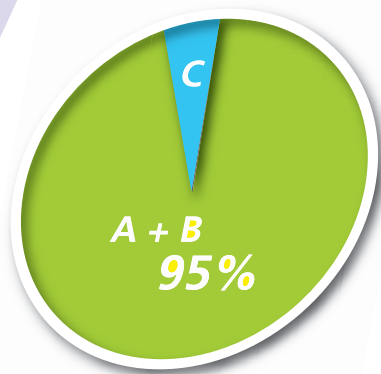
No	Measures taken	*Status
24	The Department of Agriculture and Food will prioritise increased funding for Research and Development in the National Development Plan 2007-2013.	A
	The NDP 2007-2013 includes provision for agri-food research funding of €641million. Actions under the R & D sub – programme will provide scientific support for the sector and assist the generation of new knowledge and technologies that are critical to the growth of a market-orientated and sustainable industry.	
25	DAF will ensure that its public good competitive research programmes, (FIRM, RSF, COFORD), will be focused on the needs of the sector and will continue to facilitate collaboration and capacity building in Irish research centres.	B
	<p>To ensure that research projects reflect the needs of the agri-food sector, consultation with stakeholders is an integral step in developing Calls in FIRM and Stimulus. This takes the form of regional meetings to gather ideas. In addition, an Industry led Research Group, has been established under AgriVision 2015 structures, to ensure that research funding achieves optimum benefit to the food industry and the consumer in terms of quality, food safety and innovation. This Group is chaired by industry and is comprised of representatives of the food and drink industry, the relevant State agencies and research institutes. The terms of reference of the Group are to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Advise on high level priorities for research under my Department's FIRM programme, and other research initiatives, in order to underpin the sustainable development of the Irish food industry (ii) Act as the Irish platform in interacting with and contributing an Irish view to the European Technology Platform and EU Framework Research Programme and (iii) Provide advice on issues arising in the research area. <p>The group has met three times since its establishment in October last with a further meeting scheduled for April 2008.</p> <p>An industry brainstorming session in January 2008 brought together food industry CEOs to contribute to the 2008 FIRM Call. The contributions from this event together with the input of the Industry Led Group and the stakeholder consultations were brought together to produce the 2008 Call. The call was subsequently launched and closes in April 2008.</p> <p>In 2006, a total of 58 projects were funded under FIRM and 35 under the Research Stimulus Fund (RSF).</p> <p>To facilitate collaboration and capacity building in research institutions, the second FIRM Call of August 2006 was specifically aimed at strategic equipment, graduate education and research network/ team building with a view to promoting expertise in new technologies, developing research teams capable of competing at EU level. In addition 53 R &D projects were funded by COFORD in 2006.</p> <p>In 2007, €4.8m was awarded to DAFF from the Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation (SSTI) competitive fund with anticipated funding of €9 million in 2008.</p> <p>FIRM issued a Joint call in Food for Health in collaboration with DOHC and HRB and a joint call between FIRM and Marine Institute also took place with the successful consortium being awarded €1m at the end of 2007. Stimulus also issued a call in 2007 following consultation with EPA and DCMNR. 68 applications underwent expert evaluation and, following consideration by the Research Stimulus Fund Committee, 38 were identified as suitable for funding.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
26	<p>DAF will ensure that agricultural production research, including socio-economic research, supports a competitive profitable farming sector that is sustainable in relation to soil, water, air quality and biodiversity and is a key part of a vibrant rural economy.</p>	B
	<p>The 2006 Research Stimulus Fund Call was heavily focused on sustainable agriculture. Included in the call were themes on Agri-Environment, Biodiversity, Agri-Economics and Policy, Animal Biosciences and Plant Biosciences. The focus on sustainable agriculture continued in the 2007 RSF Call which included the following theme areas: Agri-energy, Agri-environment, Plant biosciences and Agri-economy & policy.</p> <p>DAFF also works at an EU level to support collaborative research in sustainable agriculture through the EU Framework Programmes for R & D. This Department is the National Contact Point and provides the National Delegate responsible for Irish participation in the EU Programme for Food, Agriculture, Fisheries, and Biotechnology (FP7-Theme 2). The results of the first research Call in 2007 show Irish researchers securing 2% of the budget for this theme area. Call 2A and Call 2B are currently being assessed with results expected in May 2008.</p> <p>In order to continue our high level of participation, DAFF submitted suggested topics for the 2009 work programme and through the National Contact Point continues to assist Irish researchers and increase awareness of FP7 in Research Institutes and Universities; <i>see also Action 36.</i></p>	
27	<p>DAF will ensure that food research provides a base of expertise in generic technologies to support a modern, innovative and consumer focused food industry, with attention to food safety and quality issues.</p>	B
	<p>Generic technologies refer to the broad base of scientific knowledge and capability required by the food industry. The National Development Plan 2007-2013 recognises that the food industry needs the most modern techniques of food manufacturing to operate competitively and to engage in new product development. The FIRM Call was successful in developing this area via the development of suitable call themes following stakeholder consultation and the funding of suitable and worthy research proposals. The 58 projects funded under FIRM will each support 1 to 2 PhD students.</p> <p>The second FIRM Call in August 2006 further facilitates this key action by funding 1) a graduate development Programme to familiarise PhD students with the food industry, 2) a team building initiative to focus on food science areas, and 3) equipment purchase, including Mass Spectrometry, 3D Nuclear Resonance, and Atomic Imaging Analysis equipment to allow detailed identification and analysis of the bio-active components and molecular structures in foods.</p> <p>Research projects funded under the Marine Functional Foods Initiative and the Food for Health Research Initiative will further contribute to the development of generic technologies and ensure food safety.</p> <p>In addition, the 2007 FIRM funded Food Graduate Research Programme will develop the expertise of postgraduates and research staff.</p> <p>2008 Call for research proposals under FIRM issued in February. This followed detailed consultations with stakeholders and included brainstorming session with senior industry executives, which focussed on priority theme areas for the call. Closing date is April 2008.</p>	
28	<p>DAF, through Teagasc and its own competitive research programmes, will support the building and strengthening of a research capability in new technologies, and will exploit their application to natural resources including agriculture, food, non-food land uses and the bio-economy generally.</p>	B
	<p>The development of new technologies was central to the calls issued in 2006 and 2007 under the Research Stimulus Fund and FIRM. Theme areas focused on new BioSciences and at strengthening research capability in new technologies. In the last five years there has been major investment into Biotechnology at Moorepark and Ashtown particularly in the area of Food and Health. At Moorepark there is a substantial expansions being built on to the Biotechnology section which will be devoted to Food and Health Research and which is due to be completed in October 2009. In addition a new Neutraceutical centre is to be built in Ashtown and a large animal facility at Moorepark again to support the Food and Health Programme. Joint programmes funded through FIRM and EI and centres of excellence (such as the APC) have strengthened the critical mass in Food and Health while there is similar initiatives happening between Ashtown and UCD.</p> <p>Also Teagasc has re-organised its resources into Centres of Excellence to support those in the agriculture and food production business to improve efficiency, competitiveness and responsiveness to market. It is expanding its resources devoted to biotechnology so that world class competence is developed in selected key areas, particularly in food and plant bio-sciences. DAFF support for the Plant Biosciences Centre in Teagasc Oakpark will aid the development of new technologies in plant science.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
29	<p>DAF will ensure that the new DAF Agricultural and Veterinary laboratories will operate as science based centres and will seek to integrate them into the national research infrastructure and support their participation in collaborative research. Linkages will be pursued through outside bodies to achieve this.</p>	B
	<p>DAFF laboratories have competed successfully in FIRM and RSF as a partner on funded research. In 2006 the CVRL was a partner in 6 funded projects under the Research Stimulus Fund. The projects included topics on Bovine neosporosis, Rhodococcus equi genomics, Antimicrobial resistance, Gram Negative Food poisoning bacteria of animal origin, Leptospirosis, and Toxoplasma in meat and meat products. DAFFs involvement in R&D is not limited to veterinary research and it has been a research partners on successfully funded projects on Environmental policy and Animal Genetics.</p> <p>In 2007, the Research Stimulus Fund Call saw DAFF involvement in 3 funded projects in White Clover Breeding, Maize Production and Grass Cultivar Evaluation. Extensive collaboration is being developed with a range of Universities, Institutes of Technology and Teagasc Research Centres.</p>	
30	<p>Teagasc will organise its resources into centres of excellence, so as to build critical mass, improve market led R&D capability.</p>	B
	<p>Teagasc has made excellent progress in developing centres of excellence at its two food centres at Moorepark and Ashtown. Plans have been initiated to implement at both centres the agreed new research vision for "Food for Health" Teagasc is in the process of establishing a major alliance in food research with UCC that will further promote the building of critical mass and improve market led R&D capability. Teagasc is playing a significant role in the industry led Functional Foods Research centre being established at Ashtown with support from Enterprise Ireland and the food processing sector. It is also involved with the Marine Functional Foods Research Centre which was launched last December.</p> <p>Implementation of the agreed new vision for agricultural research is being advanced , including laboratory buildings for the new Animal Bioscience Centre at Grange, enhanced research programmes at Johnstown Castle for environmental research. Oak Park will focus on alternative crops and renewable energy while Mellows College, Athenry will concentrate on rural economy. Facilities at Johnstown Castle have been completed and Oak Park facilities will be completed by mid 2008. It is anticipated that the other facilities will be completed or well advanced by end 2008</p>	
31	<p>Teagasc will continue to develop its agricultural colleges to provide education and training courses that meet the skills needs of the agri-food industry. Teagasc will also broaden the role of the colleges with a view to their playing an enhanced role in rural society.</p>	B
	<p>More than 90% of the Action Plan to pursue the recommendations of the Forum Review of the Teagasc Education and Training programmes has been implemented. This Plan includes the objectives of providing training that meets the skill needs of the agri-food sector and enhancing the role of the colleges in rural society. Examples of ways in which the role of the colleges is being broadened include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Courses are being offered at all colleges outside of normal working hours to facilitate part time farmers. These courses are provided jointly by the local advisory service and college staff. 2. Work based training has been provided for migrant workers at Kildalton College and will be extended to other colleges. 3. Three education coordinators have been appointed and have been assigned to colleges and associated Area Management Units (AMUs) with the objective of using Teagasc resources efficiently to meet the changing needs of adult learners. 4. Regional Working Committees have been established to plan and agree all aspects of course delivery between the colleges and the AMUs. 5. A research programme has been established at Ballyhaise College and it is planned to establish applied research programmes at all colleges. 6. Outside agencies are being facilitated to use college facilities as appropriate. <p>A review of college infrastructure was undertaken by an outside consultancy body and was finalised in early 2008 and agreed by the Teagasc Authority. Four colleges (three Teagasc colleges and one private college) were prioritised in terms of future capital expenditure. The remaining four colleges of which three are private and one Teagasc will be required to deliver the overall Teagasc Education Programme and together with Teagasc senior management are agreeing a work programme to ensure their future viability.</p> <p>It is planned to establish Technology, Evaluation and Transfer (TET) demonstration units throughout the network of Teagasc and private colleges. These demonstration units will involve both the dairy and drystock enterprises in the colleges. The project will be used to demonstrate the latest research outputs to farmers in the catchment area.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
32	Enhanced Teagasc commodity groups are being established and programmes will be implemented jointly with industry, which foster early and widespread adoption of new technologies.	B
	<p>Enhanced Commodity Teams have been established for Dairy, Beef, Sheep, Crops, Environment, Rural Development, Farm Management, Mushrooms, Nursery stock, Soft Fruit and Vegetables. All these teams actively keep abreast of new technologies and input into the planning and delivery of advisory and research services that best meet the needs of the industry.</p> <p>Teagasc has implemented a significant number of successful Joint Programmes with agri-businesses which focus at achieving technology transfer that is beneficial to both farmer clients and the agribusiness partners.</p>	
33	Results of food R&D will continue to be rapidly and widely disseminated to industry through RELAY, the food research dissemination programme	B
	<p>RELAY disseminates the latest R & D findings to a wide audience through project updates, workshops and company visits and website on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>In 2007 , RELAY held 12 workshops, carried out 94 company visits and issued 57 updates on ongoing research projects. RELAY has 3,926 stakeholders registered on the RELAY website with of these have logged onto the site for information in 2007. To date in 2008, RELAY has held 4 workshops, made 4 company visits and issued 6 updates on ongoing research projects.</p> <p>The Minister has launched an attractive publication 'Quality Food founded on Science' which highlights some of the 2006 and 2007 FIRM research achievements. This brochure has been widely distributed to the research community as well as to food businesses</p>	
34	Teagasc will continue to place emphasis on ensuring that R&D results and technology developments are published and are transferred rapidly to clients through its advisory and education programmes	B
	<p>The Teagasc Advisory Service has been reorganised into four programmes. The Business & Technology Programme will focus on ensuring the exploitation of newly developed technologies at farm level. This is done through monitor farms, discussion groups, open days, seminars, conferences, newsletters, project reports, publications, one to one advisory sessions and joint programmes with industry.</p> <p><i>Action 33</i> above sets out how Teagasc food research is disseminated to the food industry. Areas which benefited from this research include,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ knowledge on gut flora which provided the scientific base for commercial development in the Teagasc/UCC Alimentary Pharmabiotic Centre and ■ research at Teagasc Ashtown has provided the basis for commercial development of new pizza base and gluten free products. 	

No	Measures taken	*Status
35	<p>DAF will continue to strengthen co-operation with other Departments and state agencies to achieve a strategic and seamless approach to R&D funding and to bring about increased involvement and funding by industry</p>	B
	<p>Co-operation with other state agencies is continuous and facilitated through a range of cross-departmental groups and through the interdepartmental cooperation involved in implementing the Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2006-2013.</p> <p>In a R & D context, the Department is actively involved with D/ETE, Enterprise Ireland, FORFAS, DoHC, DoE, HRB, HEA, FSAI, EPA, DCENR, Teagasc, Bord Bia, interdepartmental committees and other groups to achieve a strategic and seamless approach to R&D strategies and funding.</p> <p>Exemples of joint proposals for funding include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the Health Research Board on 'Food and Health' including consumption patterns, development of a gene library, and nutritional health of the elderly, DAFF's contribution to this succesfull project was of the order of €20 million 2) EPA on supporting sustainable agriculture and forestry practices relating to groundwater environments, nitrates, transboundary and greenhouse gases and bio-diversity, and 3) Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, and the Marine Institute (MI) on farming aspects of bio-energy production. Collaboration with the MI was extended in 2007 when €5.5m. was provided under the SSTI to establish a research consortium dealing with marine functional foods initiatives. The successful consortium, headed by Teagasc Ashtown, was funded and has commenced its work. <p>As mentioned in <i>Action 25</i> above, a Research Group, under the AgriVision 2015 structures, has been established to strengthen the involvement of the industry and to improve co-operation between the industry, the Department and State research institutes.</p>	
36	<p>DAF will promote and assist collaboration by Irish researchers in collaborative international research initiatives and EU Framework Programmes.</p>	B
	<p>The Department provides the National Delegate and National Contact Point for the EU Framework R&D Programmes FP6 and FP7 and provides ongoing information, support advice and mentoring to Irish researchers.</p> <p>In 2006, Irish researchers achieved eight partnerships, including the lead role in one large project, with funding value of approx €3.7m in the final Call of FP6. Overall, 64 Irish research teams were successful in 40 funded projects in the five-year FP6 Programme, with funding value of approx €15m.</p> <p>Under Call 1 of FP7, Irish researchers securing 2% of the total available budget. Irish researchers are involved in 30% of the awards covering Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The value of funding to Irish researchers is in excess of €3.8 million. This level of success has been facilitated by the promotional and awareness raising work undertaken by the National Contact Point and their preliminary work in submitting topics for the work programmes after a consultation with Irish research institutes. Results for Call 2A and 2B of FP7 are expected in May 2008.</p>	
37	<p>Teagasc will carry out agricultural production research, including research on the socio-economic determinants of agricultural productivity, so as to assist in providing a greater understanding of competitiveness.</p>	B
	<p>The Teagasc 2008 Research Programme includes research in agri-economics and rural sociology and development. The objective is to gain a better understanding of areas where rural households can undertake profitable activity, including new activities such as biomass/bio-technology, economic analysis of competitiveness, and understanding the barriers that exist to change. The Rural Economy Research Centre has been rebuilt following its relocation to Athenry and has significantly enhanced its research capacity.</p>	



Strengthening Competitiveness

- *Status**
- A: Action Completed
 - B: Action implemented on an ongoing basis
 - C: Substantial Action Taken
 - D: Minimal Action Taken

No	Measures taken	*Status
38	<p>At EU and International fora, Ireland will secure the optimum policy framework and the highest achievable level of support for the farming sector. At WTO negotiations, DAF will seek an outcome for the overall agri-food industry that respects the internal reforms already agreed, while maintaining an appropriate balance between export competitiveness and EU market access.</p>	C
	<p>The Department continues, on an on-going basis, to defend the national interest and to seek a satisfactory outcome on all policy proposals on the CAP and rural development. In this context the Department has negotiated and achieved satisfactory outcomes on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ revision of the EU State Aid Guidelines for agriculture and de minimis limits for State Aid for 2007 to 2013, ■ simplification of the CAP by replacing 21 Common Market Organisations by a single CMO, ■ reform of the CMO for fruit and vegetables, ■ sugar restructuring package, ■ strengthened rules on organic production, ■ simplification of the cross-compliance arrangements including abolition of the 10-month rule, discounting of penalties under €100 and introduction of tolerances for minor infringements. <p>The Department has also secured commitments from the Commission to simplify further the Single Payment Scheme arrangements, including cross-compliance.</p> <p>Particular attention is now focused on the CAP 'Health Check', which arises from the planned reviews of the Single Payment Scheme and the operation of milk quotas. Council conclusions were agreed at the March 2008 Agriculture Council of Ministers meeting, setting the direction of the review and legislative proposals are expected to be published in May 2008 with the intention of getting Council agreement by November. The Minister has established two consultative committees, composed of the main industry, farming stakeholders and independent experts to advise on all aspects of the Health Check and the long-term future of milk quotas. Attention will also focus on the forthcoming EU budget review.</p> <p>As to the WTO, discussions are ongoing and it is not possible to predict with any certainty that they will be concluded in 2008. In that connection, the Department has reviewed and confirmed existing policy positions and negotiating strategy and has participated actively in EU co-ordination meetings and provided detailed briefing for other meetings. While committed to a successful conclusion to the negotiations, Ireland's position is that the outcome must be balanced as between the various elements of a new agreement (trade in industrial goods, services, agriculture, etc.) and between the three pillars of the agriculture negotiations (domestic support, export subsidies and market access). The underlying objective remains to secure a new agreement which will not necessitate further reform of the CAP. The Department will continue to participate fully in the negotiations.</p>	
39	<p>The Government remains committed to maintaining the optimal number of family farms through the development of commercial full-time farming. At the same time, the Government will continue to provide an economic environment which enables smaller farmers to avail of both on and off-farm opportunities to secure their future.</p>	B
	<p>Annual expenditure of the order of €2 billion on SPS and other direct payments is made by this Department to help achieve the objective of protecting farmers' incomes and of maintaining the optimal number of family farms. The implementation of the measures in the AgriVision 2015 Action Plan, the Agriculture Chapter of Towards 2016 and the 2008-2010 Strategy Statement are further evidence of creating an environment which will assist all farmers full and part-time secure their future. These measures underpin the € 8.7 billion commitment under the 2007-2013 National Development Programme.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
	<p>This Government's commitment is to continue to maintain a core of competitive, full-time farmers, while at the same time providing an economic environment which enables smaller scale producers to avail of both on and off-farm opportunities to secure their future. Full-time farmers are looking to the new flexibility offered to them under decoupling to develop and intensify their commercial farm enterprises while many small-scale producers are finding that combining farming with off-farm employment is an effective way to ensure the viability of their holdings.</p>	
40	<p>The Government will continue to focus on maximising farm incomes through a combination of direct income supports, which will continue to account for 75-80% of farm incomes and a range of measures which improve competitiveness and productivity and thereby getting the best possible return from the market</p>	B
	<p>See Action 39 above</p>	
41	<p>The Government will continue to support low income farmers through the Farm Assist Scheme.</p>	B
	<p>The Farm Assist, which is designed to support low-income farm families, was introduced in April 1999. It is a means tested scheme administered by the Department of Social and Family Affairs.</p> <p>Budget 2007 increased personal payment rates by €20 per week from €165.80 to €185.80, in line with other social welfare increases. At the end of 2007, the number of recipients had reduced to 7,376 from 7,812 in 2005.</p>	
42	<p>Both State policy and industrial strategy must be sufficiently flexible to adapt to the sectoral needs of both full-time and part-time farmers.</p>	B
	<p>This Government is focused on ensuring that farming families have the best possible options available for them to stay on the land. That may mean as full-time farmers, if their farm size and resources are sufficient, and if they choose that option. Alternatively it may be through the combination of on-farm and off-farm income, which many small-scale producers are finding as the best route to a viable life on the land.</p> <p>The range of policies and schemes operated by DAF and Teagasc, in particular, indicate a very flexible approach to supporting and encouraging our farm families in whichever option they choose.</p> <p>At farm level, land mobility measures, which include the Early Retirement Scheme, Installation Aid, various tax measures and the flexible milk quota management process in operation are important aspects in facilitating structural change and maximising income earning potential.</p>	
43	<p>To allow for meaningful farm planning, incentives to encourage greater productivity, consolidation and improved land mobility are required. The Government will continue to implement measures, including appropriate taxation measures, to improve the availability of land for farmers who wish to increase their scale of production and maximise their income from farming.</p>	B
	<p>The Government is committed to developing and implementing policies, schemes and services that help sustain the rural economy, maximise the number of farm households and facilitate structural change within the agricultural sector. Structural change within agriculture is facilitated through the taxation system in terms of supporting our most productive farmers. High land prices coupled with low levels of land sales are an obstacle to farm expansion for many farmers. To assist more productive farmers gain access to additional land to expand, successive Budgets have increased the income tax exemption limits, for land leased out on a long-term basis by farmers over 40 years of age to non-connected persons. Budget 2007 introduced a third exemption threshold of €20,000 for leases of 10 years or more. It also extended stamp duty relief for farm consolidation for situations where on one farmer is consolidating his holding. An adjustment was also made to Capital Gains Tax Retirement relief to allow for situations where the land may have been leased prior to disposal to a family member.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
44	<p>Arrangements will be made for the establishment by 1 January 2007 of the farm advisory system provided for in the Single Payment Regulations to advise farmers on meeting their requirements.</p>	B
	<p>In April 2007, 184 Teagasc and other private REPS planning agencies completed Module 1 of the Department's Single Payment Scheme Cross-compliance training course and as a result have been designated approved "Farm Advisory System" agencies in Ireland. The list of the approved agencies/planners is published on the Department's website. The Department is currently arranging Module 2 of the course for those who have completed Module 1 and a further session of Module 1 for those who did not attend the first course.</p> <p>The Teagasc Advisory Service Programme for 2008 includes a programme of events and individual assistance that will be delivered under the Farm Advisory System. A key component of this will be the running of 54 on-farm events focused on supporting farmers in achieving compliance.</p>	
45	<p>Teagasc will implement a comprehensive advisory programme with specialist enterprise advisors to promote the adoption of proven and innovative farm production. This will be pursued through its four restructured advisory programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options Analysis, Business Competitiveness and Technology, Good Farm Practice, Advisory and Training Programme for Part-Time Farmers. 	B
	<p>The restructuring of the Advisory Service is complete and the programmes are now in place. The new management structure involving 18 Area Units is in place. Area Unit Managers have been appointed and the Advisory Service has been restructured into 4 programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Business and Technology Programme ■ Good Farming Practice Programme ■ Rural Development Programme ■ Adult Education and Life Long Learning Programme <p>The Business and Technology Programme delivers cutting-edge technology to Irish farmers. Advisers and specialists, located at over 80 centres throughout Ireland, help farmers maximise profits through improved business management and technical performance, and through the application of the latest results from the Teagasc research programme.</p> <p>The Good Farm Practice Programme supports farmer clients in sustaining sustainability. Teagasc provides the best science and advice to reconcile the often conflicting demands of a competitive and profitable industry, and environmental regulation.</p> <p>Through its Rural Development Programme, Teagasc provides training and advisory services to promote and sustain a broad range of enterprise development in rural areas. A team of specialist advisers provide start-up training for those establishing new enterprises and a continued training and advisory service for those who are up and running. The Options Programme is specifically designed to assist farm families in looking at all options for growing farm profit and other possibilities for the future. Some 14,000 farm families have availed of guidance from this Programme which is free.</p> <p>The aim of the Teagasc programme for Adult Training and Life Long Learning is to meet the statutory and practical training requirements of adult Irish farmers. With the ever-changing role of farming, especially in relation to the environment, animal welfare, nutrient management and business development, the farming practitioners of today must keep themselves continuously informed. To meet this demand, Teagasc Advisory provides a comprehensive range of adult training programmes at local offices in each county. Courses cover a wide range of subject matter, from leading-edge technology and financial business training to forestry, environment management, food safety, animal welfare, occupational safety and equine management.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
46	<p>The Department will seek to ensure that processes are operated in the most cost effective manner possible, with the minimum necessary burden of paperwork and regulation consistent with ensuring proper controls</p>	B
	<p>The adoption by Ireland of full decoupling under the Single Payment Scheme thereby replacing six EU subsidy schemes each with complex application, qualification and implementation procedures served to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy. The benefits of IT have also been used, wherever possible, in the interests of customer service.</p> <p>A Commission report on the application of cross-compliance was presented to the April Agriculture Council and Council conclusions were adopted in June 2007. The following simplification aspects were covered in the conclusions:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tolerance for minor non-compliance ■ Introduction of a “de minimis” rule for penalties ■ Harmonisation of control rates ■ Advance notice of Inspections ■ Reviewing the “10 month rule” ■ Better use of the results of existing controls in the context of risk analysis for cross-compliance. ■ Phasing in of cross-compliance for new Member States operating the SAPS <p>Council and Commission Regulations are now in place implementing the new arrangements with effect from 1 January 2008.</p> <p>The cost effectiveness of regulations on the food processing industry has been discussed by the AV2105 Food Industry Committees and this issue will be explored in greater detail in future meetings <i>See also Action 47 following on relevant cross-compliance issues.</i></p>	
47	<p>DAF will be proactive in the EU review of cross-compliance in 2008 with a view to simplifying implementation of the scheme</p>	B
	<p>Under the new regime, outlined in 46 above, while all inspections should be unannounced, DAFF can give up to 14 days notice for land eligibility and cross-compliance inspections involving SMRs other than those related to animal identification and registration, food, feed, and animal welfare. For checks involving cattle identification and registration the maximum advance notice is 48 hours provided we are satisfied that the purpose of the inspection is not jeopardised. For SMRs dealing with feed, food and animal welfare no advance notice may be given. The Commission expects that the new regulation will be adopted for 2008.</p>	
48	<p>Partnership and alliances between farmers and the food industry will be encouraged to promote the supply of quality produce to the processor and in return to provide certainty and income stability to the producer</p>	B
	<p>Regular meetings take place with farm organisations, meat processors and Bord Bia to promote quality and efficiency in the production, processing and promotion of Irish meat and meat products. In addition the establishment of the Beef Forum was announced in December 2007. The purpose of the Forum, which comprises representatives of producers, processors, relevant state agencies as well as independent experts, is to examine the sector in the light of the opportunities and challenges facing it and to consider appropriate responses and initiatives.</p>	
49	<p>A high-level group of CEOs of the food agencies, chaired at Ministerial level will be established to ensure and implement a fully consolidated approach towards the development of the food sector, as a whole</p>	B
	<p>The Agri-Vision 2015 CEO Group was established in July 2006 and at its meetings has discussed the challenges of WTO and review of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) cost issues, need for research to benefit the sector, regional importance of the industry, cost issues and emerging issues such as food miles. This group has played a very proactive part in developing the Regional Food Forum initiative and in developing links between the state agencies and food businesses and is actively involved in the Agri-Food Research subgroup.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
50	DAF will also establish a Food Industry Committee, chaired at Ministerial level and comprised of senior representatives of the industry to identify issues impeding the development of the sector	B
	<p>Two food industry committees, chaired at ministerial level have been established and have met a number of times. An artisan committee has also been formed, has met three times with further meetings planned. The importance of the food industry to the economy and the need for greater recognition of its direct and indirect contribution to Irish Economic Expenditure and for joined-up approaches to policy and regulation were emphasised. WTO and CAP challenges were flagged. Cost/price squeeze, energy and compliance costs were also raised.</p> <p>All the groups emphasised the need for commercialisation of research to ensure direct benefit to the industry. A new Agri- Food Research Subgroup comprising industry, academic and state agency representatives has been established with the twofold objective of acting as the national platform for the EU technology platform while also identifying high level research priorities.</p> <p>The artisan sector welcomed the recognition afforded to the sector in the Agri-Vision 2015 Action Plan and sought supports to develop the potential of the sector and a regulatory regime and advisory and investment assistance appropriate to its scale of operation.</p>	
51	The Department will proactively engage with the food industry at all levels, multinational, domestic, regional/local enterprises, and the food retail sector to drive forward its development having regard to the accelerating rate of change in its operating environment	B
	<p>The Department consults and engages closely with companies and associations representing the food industry at all levels. It also promotes close inter-agency involvement to develop all avenues of potential; <i>see Actions 49, 50, 70, 79, 80, 82 for specific details on cross-sectoral engagement</i></p> <p>In addition, the Programme for Government provided for the establishment of a Cabinet Sub Committee on the food and beverage sector, to which an Interdepartmental Group would report with recommendations. This Group has met on two occasions to date.</p>	
52	DAF will support Bord Bia in strengthening strategic market intelligence capability and in developing promotion and market development services with clear targets and objectives to meet current and future challenges, particularly those that emerge as a result of decoupling and the outcome of WTO trade negotiations.	B
	<p>DAF has substantially increased Bord Bia's funding for 2007 to enable it to implement a strategic plan aimed at assisting industry to deal with the challenge of the new market environment. The strategic plan includes provision for a small business centre of excellence, strategic market intelligence, increased market information facilities and focused marketing and promotion.</p> <p><i>See Action 56 for details on the Centre of Excellence.</i></p> <p>In 2007, an electronic newsletter, the Food Alert, was trialled. This brought news of interest to the Food Industry on a weekly basis to registered users of Bord Bia's Client Portal, the extranet for Irish food and drink manufacturers</p> <p>The trial has been completed and is being evaluated.</p> <p>A paper on WTO prepared for an Bord Bia meeting in April will be published on the Client Portal after it has been considered by the board.</p>	
53	DAF will support Bord Bia in providing assistance to companies developing value-added business in continental EU markets and overseas and identifying specific opportunities in emerging Asian markets	B
	DAF has provided Bord Bia with funding for specific programmes on the Continental EU and Asian markets. 2007 was the third year of Bord Bia's pan European Autumn Beef Promotion. It involved Irish beef being promoted in 13 export markets, covering the UK and Continental Europe. Thirty eight European retailers participated throughout 10,000 supermarket stores with a potential reach of over 100 million consumers; <i>see Action 54 for details on asian strategy.</i>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
54	DAF and Bord Bia will facilitate, support and promote a target of doubling the value of food and drink exports to the Far East over three years.	A
	<p>The Government's Asia strategy includes a target to double food and drink exports over the years 2005-2009 to €400 million. DAF has provided Bord Bia with the necessary support and resources to enable it to pursue this strategy. Irish food and drink exports to Asia increased by a phenomenal 50% in 2007, with very strong progress made on dairy ingredients and alcoholic beverages. This has resulted in Bord Bia achieving its original target of doubling exports by 2009 achieved two years ahead of schedule. Bord Bia's drive on Asian markets is continuing with participation planned in four trade fairs; Food Ingredients China (March), Food Hotel Asia (April), China Meat Association Exhibition (May) and Food Hotel China (December), an intensive trade development schedule and increased media engagement to raise the profile of Irish food among key trade and consumer audiences.</p> <p>Irish food and drink exports to Asia remain solid in the first months of 2008 building on the strong 2007 performance. In addition to the regular trade development activity Bord Bia focused on maximising the exposure for Irish food and drink around St. Patrick's Day with a delegation of Indian journalists visiting Ireland and an Ireland Food and Drink reception for Chinese journalists in Shanghai.</p>	
55	DAF will work with other bodies to support availability of information on innovation/NPD opportunities and the possibilities offered by ICT.	B
	<p>The Department is fully committed to supporting the availability of information on innovation and work closely with its agencies under its aegis on its delivery. Bord Bia has developed innovation features on their Client Portal (a password protected extranet web site available to manufacturers) to include both the "Inspiration Centre" - coverage of new products, new flavours, new menu trends and new packaging ideas from around the world - and the "Consumer Lifestyle Trends" programme that seeks to identify emerging trends that could form the basis of sustainable business for new products. See also Action 33 on RELAY</p> <p>On developing innovation, in 2007, Bord Bia initiated field trips to London to look at new innovations around the area of "wholesome health" and provide stimuli for new product ideas for the participating companies. Due to demand, a further "Innovation Expedition" was conducted in London involving ten further companies.</p> <p>In addition, Bord Bia organised a forum in Cork called "Inspiring through Tradition – See Tomorrow Today" with 17 individuals from 14 companies participating. Two companies participated in workshops to identify new products specifically for themselves and fourteen companies participated in the scheme where they can have product concepts tested amongst consumers</p>	
56	Bord Bia will establish a Centre of Excellence focused on servicing the market development related needs of small business and will promote regional food and food marketing initiatives through a series of local and international specialist forums.	B
	<p>The Centre of Excellence for small businesses was established in December 2006 to service the market development related needs of small business. It includes the development of an online resource guide as well as programmes for business development focused on key areas for growth such as distribution and a customised Business Development programme for SMEs who wish to achieve growth of scale.</p> <p>Bord Bia's Centre of Excellence is branded 'Bord Bia Vantage – Centre of Excellence for Small Business'. It was established in December 2006 and formally launched in November 2007. It includes an on-line resource guide Vantage Point which to date has recorded in excess of 700 unique visitors. Vantage Plus began a series of Competency Development Workshops on Distribution and Account Management with 100 company representatives in attendance. Vantage Partner has commenced its Business Development Programme with 8 client companies</p> <p>A Bord Bia Guide to the Speciality Retail Sector was launched at the South-East Food Forum in 2006. It also sponsored the 2007 RTE TV series 'Fresh from The Farmer's Market'. The 2006 International Speciality Food Forum in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham was evaluated in 2007 and it is showing a positive return with an annual listing sales value forecast of over €5 m.</p> <p><i>See Action 59 for details of regional food fora.</i></p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
57	<p>Farmers' Markets, modelled on the Farmleigh experience, will be rolled out in co-operation with the Office of Public Works. DAF will also work with Bord Bia and other Departments in promoting this sector as an important alternative outlet for farm produce as well as a valuable showcase and tourist amenity.</p>	B
	<p>Bord Bia has taken the lead in publishing its guide on 'Alternative Routes to Market'. This provides step-by-step action plans, checklists and relevant guidelines to assist growers and food entrepreneurs who wish to set up in business through farmers' markets, farm shops and box schemes.</p> <p>Its partnership with the Office of Public Works (OPW), Bord Bia has developed the exceptionally successful market in Farmleigh. It has also worked closely with Dublin City Council on the Smithfield market project and developed a seasonal market at the Fota and JFK arboretum locations. Bord Bia and Teagasc work closely with the Irish Farmers Market Traders Association on developing a training course for establishing farmers markets and a strategic approach to their development. Currently, there are over 100 farmers markets operating throughout the country and in December 2007, Bord Bia issued surveys to organisers of Farmers' markets to monitor progress, to give the Department an overview of the current position and to highlight any issues which need addressing. Teagasc has established a training programme for "Direct Selling" designed to meet the needs of traders involved in farmers markets. 3 are currently being run.</p> <p>In November 2007, Bord Bia held the National Conference on Local Food held in Mullingar and used the specifically commissioned consumer research into local food consumption in Ireland to input into these proceedings.</p> <p>Bord Bia promoted Farmers Markets through its sponsorship of the 2007 RTE television series 'Fresh from the Farmers Market'. Footage from the 2007 series is currently being shown on transatlantic flights. Filming on series 2 has begun and is scheduled for airing in May and June 2008. It will feature 16 markets, 24 producers and 8 Feile Bia restaurants from around the country</p> <p>In January 2008 a forum was held for Local Authorities to discuss local food issues and to promote greater Local Authority involvement and support for farmers' markets.</p> <p>An all-Ireland St Patrick's Day food market was held in Covent Garden London on 15th & 16th March 2008. Approximately 50 artisan producers took space in the market selling a wide range of produce including farmhouse cheeses, traditional breads, smoked fish, and luxury confectionery.</p>	
58	<p>DAF will encourage EU Protected Origin/Protected Geographical Indication status within the terms of the relevant EU regime.</p>	B
	<p>The EU Protected Origin/Protected Geographical Indication system protects names of certain products traditionally made by groups of producers which can be shown to have a uniqueness in terms of reputation, origin or method of manufacture. DAF has succeeded in having Connemara Hill Lamb, its 4th Irish product, registered and protected on the PDO/PGI register in February 2007. Having evaluated an application, on behalf of Irish Beef producers, to have the name 'Irish Beef' protected under PGI, the Department formally submitted its application to the EU in February 2008.</p>	
59	<p>DAF in conjunction with the relevant state agencies will also promote the development of local and regional food enterprises particularly in speciality and artisan food products</p>	B
	<p>Over the 2005-2007 period, the Department launched the successful Regional Food Forum initiative to build closer links between state agencies and food businesses and to develop regional and local foods. As they developed, these fora were used to showcase local food and drinks products, research presentations on emerging market opportunities and to publish a regional trade directory of food agencies and businesses. Successful local food entrepreneurs generously shared their experiences and there was a very good response from small, speciality and artisan businesses attending the event.</p> <p>Following the first Forum in the North-West (Killybegs), three fora were held in 2006 in the North-East (Carrickmacross), Midlands (Port Laoise) and South-East (Kilkenny). The remaining 2 fora in Claregalway and the South West Forum (Cork) in March completed the series. A follow up qualitative interview of a sample of participants was conducted by Bord Bia during June/ July 07 and this analysis input into the National Conference on Local Food and other initiatives.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
	<p>The International Specialty Foods Forum held by Bord Bia in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham in 2006 gave speciality producers an opportunity to showcase their produce and have pre-planned meetings with international and Irish buyers and generated new business opportunities. Produce from the sector was also featured in Ryder Cup menus providing further international exposure.</p> <p>Building on the success of the Regional Food Fora, a National Conference on Local Food was held in Mullingar in November 2007. This was a joint initiative by DAFF and Bord Bia and aimed to raise awareness of local food, provide practical information for those involved in local food production and address some of the issues highlighted at the Regional Food Fora. The audience comprised local food producers, relevant producer associations and organisations, key opinion formers and influencers, industry representative bodies and relevant state agencies. Some 250 people attended.</p> <p>The meetings of the Agri-Vision 2015 Artisan group have provided the sector with a structure for the sector and the Department to examine issues to promote the development of the industry.</p> <p><i>See also Action 56 above.</i></p>	
60	DAF will seek to strengthen links between producers in the artisan and speciality food sectors and relevant agencies such as the Taste Council, Teagasc and the Third Level Colleges.	B
	<p>DAFF actively works at strengthening links between speciality producers and relevant agencies. Some examples of ongoing collaboration include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Appointment by Teagasc of a full-time Specialty Development officer to work with producers and other agencies to develop the sector. ■ Funding awarded under the Department's FIRM programme for collaborative research by Teagasc and farmhouse cheese producers to provide a knowledge base to support the sustainable development of the farmhouse cheese industry. ■ Financial support by FAS, FSAI, Safefood, Bord Bia for the UCC Diploma in Speciality Food Production State agencies which has now been run for three years. ■ Membership of the Agri-Vision 2015 Artisan group includes Taste Council members. ■ DAFF discussions with the Taste Council following the National Conference on Local Food ■ Input provided by the Taste Council and Teagasc into DAFF's 2008-2010 Strategy Statement. 	
61	Teagasc will put in place a specific programme to support people wishing to set up artisan and speciality food businesses.	B
	<p>Part of Teagasc's Rural Development Programme includes a service to support the development of Artisan Food Enterprises which is supported by research at Moorepark Food Research Centre and Ashtown Food Research Centre.</p> <p>Teagasc has appointed a full-time Speciality Development adviser and two technologists, one for dairy and one for beef have been recruited. In addition a further six advisers have been assigned to spend 50% of their time on the promotion and development of the artisan food sector. The Teagasc Advisory commitment to the sector is now 6 full time equivalents, an increase of 5 in 12 months.</p>	
62	The National Functional Foods Forum, under the chairmanship of Enterprise Ireland, will develop a strategic plan for the development of the functional foods & ingredients industry in Ireland	B
	See Actions 17 and 30 on the establishment of a €15 million fund by Enterprise Ireland and major dairy companies for research for functional foods which would have commercial value.	
63	Bord Bia will hold Marketplace Ireland events to specifically match suppliers with international buyers.	A
	Bord Bia organised very successful Marketplace events for the Speciality sector in 2006 and 2007. Bord Bia's then implemented a systematic follow up of potential business with overseas buyers hosted at Marketplace 2007. This has involved category assessment and the delivery of additional information requested. Based on exhibiting companies which responded, the value of the business delivered to date is estimated at €939,000. Companies estimate that the potential for 2008 for the above mentioned contracts is €5,245,000.	

No	Measures taken	*Status
	<p>In 2007/8 a second initiative was launched under the "Marketplace Roadshow" banner specifically targeting the high potential markets of Holland & Belgium. An initial study visit was undertaken to the market in November followed by a Marketplace Roadshow in Holland & Belgium on 13-14 February 2008. 16 companies took part in this new initiative bringing the best of Irish food and drink manufacturers on tour across the Benelux region. The objective was to bring together distributors, foodservice and retail buyers, for branded or private label goods with the participating companies who are actively developing business relationships in these markets. In excess of 50 contacts primarily in the retail and foodservice areas took part across the two markets.</p> <p>Bord Bia are currently canvassing Irish companies with regard to a further roll out of the Marketplace Roadshow concept to tie in with the upcoming CIBUS fair which targets the Italian and Greek markets.</p>	
64	The Féile Bia campaign will be enhanced to promote the use of local, regional and speciality produce in all catering outlets.	B
	A review of Feile Bia, which inter alia examined how the use of local, regional and speciality produce can be enhanced, has been completed. A re-engineering and re-branding of the Feile Bia Programme is currently underway and Bord Bia is now working with industry to put the necessary measures in place so that the programme can be re-launched in May/June 2008.	
65	At EU level the Department will work to ensure the continuation of an appropriate support framework for the meat sector within the Common Organisation of the Markets.	B
	DAF continually argues strongly at EU and WTO level for the best support framework to allow our meat sector to trade competitively on EU and Third Country markets.	
66	The Department, in conjunction with other state agencies will oversee systems to ensure that the high standards of Irish food safety, quality and traceability will be vigorously promoted to provide a competitive advantage against low cost imports.	B
	<p>See Actions, 1, 2 and 7 above for details of processes and Schemes operated by DAFF and relevant State Agencies to implement and promote high food safety and quality assurance standards which provide a competitive advantage against low cost imports .</p> <p>The Department also participates at EU management and technical committee level in the formation of the EU's Food Hygiene standards for imports in accord with WTO trade commitments and applies these harmonised controls on animal products imported for food and technical purposes at designated Border Inspection Posts. DAFF and other agencies also actively pursue the question of providing country of origin labelling with the EU Commission.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
67	<p>Joint action will be taken by the Department, Bord Bia and the meat industry both to identify new markets for Irish meat products and to promote and improve Irish market share in European and Third Country markets.</p>	B
	<p>Regular meetings are held with Bord Bia and MII to agree an appropriate strategy on and continually assess market access and meat and meat products promotion.</p> <p>2007 was the third year and final year of Bord Bia's pan European Autumn Beef Promotion. It involved Irish beef being promoted in 13 export markets, throughout 10,000 supermarket stores with a potential reach of over 100 million consumers. Since Bord Bia launched the European Beef Promotion in 2005 the volume of Irish beef exported to the European retail market has grown by some 100,000 tonnes (cwe) from 145,000 tonnes (cwe) to 245,000 tonnes (cwe) in 2007. Irish beef is now listed by the major EU retail chains and over 90% of total exports now go into the high value EU markets compared to just 50% as recently as 2000.</p> <p>The Beef Strategy for 2008 to 2013 was completed and presented to and approved by the Meat and Livestock Board and the Main Board in December 2007. There are five pillars to Bord Bia's Beef Marketing Strategy –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increasing sales to Premium Retail and Foodservice, ■ Increasing sales to Standard Retail, ■ Customising more product to suit the specific requirements of discerning manufacturers, ■ Exploiting new opportunities and ■ Growing the share of the Beef Quality Assurance Scheme on the Home Market. <p>In line with the new beef strategy, the 2008 promotions in Holland and the UK focussed on improving its premium image & positioning using calendars and recipe booklets with recipes created and endorsed by celebrity chefs. The distribution of 'Chefs Irish Beef Club Recipe Calendar' continued up to St Patrick's Day 2008.</p> <p>In addition to the regular trade development activity, Bord Bia and Department hosted trade and key opinion formers at a seminar in Japan in 2008. Separately, veterinary delegations were hosted from Saudi Arabia and Russia with the view to increasing Irish beef and Irish beef offal market access.</p> <p>Ireland will host the 2008 European Meat Forum on June 9/10 in Kilkenny and at Satellite locations throughout the Ireland. The event will include scenarios for the future of Europe's Premium Meat Market and what meat production and consumption will look like in the future. Approximately 350 delegates including 180 buyers, chefs and journalists from overseas and the Irish market are expected to attend.</p>	
68	<p>The Department and state agencies will support increased investment in R&D and product development</p>	B
	<p>See progress outlined under Actions 24 to 37 above. Agriculture's R & D sectoral plan was launched in September 2006 in keeping with the Government strategy for Science Technology and Innovation 2006-2013.</p>	
69	<p>All parties involved in the beef sector will coordinate their efforts to increase the quality of beef produced under the National Beef Quality Assurance Scheme accredited to EN 45011 Standard.</p>	B
	<p>See Actions 11 and 12.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
70	Enterprise Ireland will provide support for investment projects by the meat processing sector in developing value-added products.	B
	<p>A Capital Investment Aid Scheme, directed towards improving efficiency and competitiveness in both the beef and sheepmeat primary processing sectors, was launched in April 2007. The support package, amounting to €50 million, should trigger overall investment of some €120 million. Enterprise Ireland is managing the scheme and will evaluate the suitability of projects. The closing date for the receipt of applications was 9 November 2007 with the scheme being over subscribed. Applications are currently being subjected to a competitive evaluation with a view to announcing approvals in the summer.</p> <p>In additions, a Call for proposals under the Department's capital investment scheme for marketing and processing of agricultural products issued in December 2007. Sectors involved are Horticulture, Livestock Marts, and Small slaughterhouses and Meat establishments. The closing date for applications was 29th of February 2008. Scheme has been oversubscribed with 110 eligible applications received. The evaluation process is underway.</p>	
71	Beef processing plants should strengthen and refine quality related pricing systems to encourage production of high quality carcasses, which meet consumer preferences.	B
	This is primarily an initiative for the trade, however DAFF has requested the meat industry to print the classification outcome on the 15-point scale (rather than the 5 point scale) and to reward and encourage breeders by paying for quality. Currently 5 out of 25 meat plants using mechanical grading provide the full information.	
72	Recognising the critical importance of the suckler herd to the Irish beef industry, the Department will consider what measures are required for the suckler herd in the context of decoupling	B
	The Animal Welfare, Recording and Breeding Scheme for Suckler Herds came into operation in January 2008 and it runs for 5 years with a budget of €250m. It aims to encourage and underpin the adoption of high standards of animal welfare in suckler herds and to improve the quality of breeding cattle in the beef sector. By the closing date of 31/3/08, over 50,000 suckler farmers had joined the scheme and three quarters of all the suckler cows in the country are now covered by the scheme. Every farmer who joined is committed to supplying information on the animal events in his/her herd to the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF). This information will be analysed in conjunction with other data already available to enable the ICBF to produce breeding scores for bulls and cows which will enable suckler farmers to make better breeding decisions in the coming years, thereby increasing the profitability of their suckler enterprise. The scheme can also be used as a marketing tool when selling Irish Beef into new higher value markets where the consumer is seeking assurances about the standards of animal welfare and husbandry on Irish Suckler farms.	
73	Increased use of artificial breeding techniques in the suckler herd will be promoted.	B
	Various initiatives are being operated to promote the increased use of artificial breeding techniques. In Spring 2007 an enhanced AI promotion ' <i>Breeding Future Profits - A Collaborative Effort</i> ' was conducted with DAFF funding with an initial focus on the dairy herd. This promotion worked well and ICBF provided coordination, technical support and administration. Following a review by all stakeholders, an improved Industry led campaign ' <i>The profit with AI partnership</i> ' is underway for 2008, also with DAFF funding and with a particular focus on the suckler herd.	
74	The mechanical grading of beef carcasses will continue to be monitored on an objective basis to encourage the production of consistent quality carcasses which best meet consumer preferences. The industry will continue to develop the system towards measurement of meat yields.	B
	The mechanical carcass grading system is monitored on an ongoing basis. The system for archiving of historical mechanical grading data has been established and TEAGASC is calibrating carcass-cut prediction system in collaboration with E+V Technology GmbH by dissecting carcasses of beef animals in trials.	

No	Measures taken	*Status
75	Beef processors should engage in partnership and supply chain management arrangements with individual beef producers to actively match specific consumer requirements with product delivered	B
	This is primarily an initiative for the trade and a number of meat plants have undertaken such initiatives. DAFF continues to support such developments as well as the Voluntary Beef Labelling Scheme.	
76	With support from DAF, the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF) will intensify its efforts to deliver a significant increase in the rate of genetic improvement of beef cattle through a combination of improved breeding schemes, greater use of artificial insemination, genetic evaluation and information services to all sectors of the industry.	B
	ICBF have launched, in conjunction with beef breed societies and the AI industry, the Gene Ireland bull testing programme which is designed to identify the most profitable bulls for Irish beef farmers. ICBF are also coordinating the industry led AI promotion campaign for 2007 'Profit with AI partnership' designed to increase the usage of AI in the suckler herd. Beef genetic evaluation services have been further enhanced with the new 'Eurostar' indices which have been launched and which reflect an animals different breeding traits of importance in simple terms. The breeding information system 'Herdplus' provides a range of farm management aids such as Eurostar reports (indicating rate of genetic progress of herd), breeding charts, fertility reports all which enable the farmer to track the progress of his herd over a number of years, and compare it with other herds in the country. The accuracy and content of the reports have been improved on throughout 2007.	
77	Teagasc will strengthen its animal breeding expertise and will work closely with ICBF to support improved livestock breeding	B
	Teagasc has recently strengthened its animal breeding expertise on dairy and beef cattle at Moorepark and Grange. This includes expertise in the new bioscience areas of Genomics and Proteomics which will be strengthened further with the putting in place of the new bioscience centre at Grange. TEAGASC made several successful applications to DAFF for new funding in 2007 and Teagasc and ICBF are working on a number of collaborative projects to support improved breeding by the beef and dairy cattle sector.	
78	The Department, in consultation with the industry, farm organisations and other interests, will explore the possibility of including a cattle breeding measure in the RD programme 2007-2013.	B
	The Animal Welfare, Recording and Breeding Scheme for Suckler Herds has received EU approval and has been launched to all Suckler farmers. The Scheme has a significant cattle breeding element designed to improve the quality of the National beef herd. The collection of breeding and welfare data from farmer participants and subsequent genetic evaluation by ICBF will help farmers identify the most profitable animals for Irish farming conditions.	
79	A strategic plan will be produced for the long term development of all aspects of the sheepmeat sector, from breeding and production to processing and marketing	B
	A strategic plan for the sheep industry has been produced and a Sheep Strategy Implementation Group established by the Minister in July 2006 has reported on its proposals to ensure implementation of all recommendations in the Sheep Strategy Report. Funding is being provided to ICBF and Bord Bia towards the development of a comprehensive sheep breed improvement programme and a lamb quality assurance scheme. Bord Bia has developed proposals on sheep promotion and Teagasc has launched an initiative on an enhanced research and advice programme. Work on other issues such as mechanical carcass classification is being progressed.	
80	The pig and poultry sectors will be examined in the light of the existing and emerging competitive market pressures with a view to securing efficiencies at production and processing levels	B
	In the case of poultry, an expert group was established and has examined the current issues facing the sector. The Group's report contained recommendations dealing with labelling, environmental protection, poultry production, marketing and promotion, trade with NI, welfare, feeding-stuffs and veterinary issues. The report is currently under consideration. In 2008, Teagasc produced a report entitled "A Development Strategy for the Irish Pig Industry 2008 to 2015". Arising from this report, an Implementation Group has been appointed to monitor the implementation of the recommendations in the strategy document.	

No	Measures taken	*Status
	To improve efficiency at pig producer level, pig grading is being reviewed in conjunction with Teagasc and the industry. In addition, a Working Group has been established by DAFF with specific terms of reference " to underpin the future of the Intensive Livestock Sector in the context of the Nitrates Regulations S.I. 378 of 2006." Teagasc, pigmeat and poultrymeat processors and the IFA are represented on this working group.	
81	At EU level Ireland will continue to negotiate an appropriate support framework that will secure a competitive milk production sector within the EU and improved export competitiveness on world markets.	B
	DAFF continues to represent Irish interests at EU level and actively negotiates appropriate market support mechanisms to stimulate demand and stabilise markets. This strategy has helped retain and expand market access opportunities and has seen dairy exports increase in value to over €2.36 billion in 2007, a rise of 13% compared with 2006.	
82	Consolidation has taken place at processing level in line with Prospectus recommendations. The main recommendations of the Prospectus Report, however, remain to be implemented. This is primarily the responsibility of the processing sector. The Department will continue to engage with the processing sector to achieve optimum configuration within the sector especially in terms of scale.	B
	A new dairy processing industry investment package was announced in late 2006. The fund was administered by Enterprise Ireland and support was made available toward the cost of construction and acquisition of buildings, new machinery and equipment, and associated costs. A total of 19 capital investment projects were approved and awarded Government grant assistance of €114 million, which will generate an estimated capital spend of €286 million. Many of these projects have commenced and their implementation will continue throughout 2008.	
83	The Department and state agencies will promote and support continued and increased investment in R&D and market development.	B
	See Actions 24 to 37 above.	
84	Measures to support, through milk quota allocations, the development of high value and specialist milk products by small scale operators, will be strengthened.	B
	The Department is actively exploring the most efficient method of allocating quota to small-scale operators, which is consistent and complies with the milk quota and control/verification regulations.	
85	The current two-year quota restructuring programme will continue in 2006	A
	The two-year quota restructuring programme continued in 2006 and terminated as stipulated in the regulations at the end of the 2006/2007 Milk Quota Year.	
86	A substantial change in the quota restructuring system will commence on 1 April 2007. In association with stakeholders, arrangements will be made to introduce an open-market system of transferring quotas designed to facilitate consolidation of holdings, increase efficiency and contribute to more competitive milk production	A
	The new Milk Quota Scheme has been implemented successfully. Four exchanges have taken place since January 2007. The first two, which made quota available to producers from 1 April 2007, traded a total of 200 million litres, or 4 per cent of the national pool. A further 122 million litres was traded on two further exchanges that have taken place in recent months and has been allocated to producers from 1 April 2008. The Scheme will be reviewed in the coming weeks with a view to implementing the next exchange in October 2008.	
87	Teagasc will continue to assist farmers in optimising their returns from dairy enterprises including efforts to increase the protein content of milk and meeting environmental requirements	B
	The Teagasc dairy advisory and research programme is sharply focussed on optimising returns from dairying while respecting environmental protection. Increasing the production of milk solids per hectare and maximising production from grass (thereby lowering costs) are the key areas of focus of the programme.	

No	Measures taken	*Status
	<p>One of the agriculture commitments of Towards 2016 is that DAFF will extend its monitoring of the milk testing regime to include milk protein and other constituents which are used for payment purposes. On the 12th March, 2008, the Minister announced the introduction of a new improved regime for the monitoring of milk processors' practices in the testing of milk for payment purposes. The new regime will now include a full audit of milk testing laboratories' facilities and management practices. The inspections of milk testing laboratories will be organised on a more systematic basis and improved procedures for reporting and recording the results of inspections will be put in place within the Department. To ensure there is transparency in the milk testing procedures, as guaranteed under the Partnership Agreement, the findings of these inspections will be published on the Department's website.</p>	
88	<p>DAF will support ICBF in the development and delivery of significant increases in the rate of genetic improvement of dairy cattle through a combination of improved breeding schemes, genetic evaluation and information services to all sectors of the industry.</p>	B
	<p>DAFF provided financial support for further development of genetic evaluations for traits relevant to dairy replacement breeding decisions. Dairy genetic evaluation services have been enhanced with research based improvements to the dairy genetic evaluation index, the EBI. The ICBF Active bull list publication allows farmers to make breeding decisions easily using the best available information on bulls that are relevant to Irish conditions. The 'Herdplus' information service to farmers has been launched offering reports on an individual herd that covers areas such as calving pattern, milk quality report, reproductive performance and genetic quality of herd, all of which can be viewed on-line if required. A new web based search facility, <i>Sire Advice</i>, has been launched allowing for each cow in a herd to be matched with the most appropriate AI bull. This facility has proven to be very popular with dairy farmers. <i>The Gene Ireland</i> bull testing programme has arranged testing of 51 bulls in dairy herds in 2006 allowing these bulls to be tested in Irish conditions and thus facilitating the identification of bull characteristics most suited to Irish farming systems.</p>	
89	<p>DAF, in conjunction with the Forestry Liaison Group, will complete its review of the long-term objectives for forestry and ensure that the range of Government supports in place for forestry development in Ireland are suitable and appropriate.</p>	B
	<p>The forestry strategic review has been completed and the report is being finalised. The range of Government supports for the forestry sector has been enhanced; these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Retention of the 100% grant and 20 year premium ■ Major increases secured for the planting and roading grant ■ New Forest Environment Protection Scheme launched (FEPS) to encourage high nature value forestry on REPS farms ■ New scheme launched to support investment in harvesting/processing machinery for wood-biomass, to supply growing demand for wood energy. ■ Successful implementation of IFORIS, the new forestry computer system with online application now being investigated. ■ Fieldwork for National Forest Inventory completed. A public conference was held in July 2007 and full publication of the National Forestry Inventory took place in December 2007. ■ The legislative review has been completed and the Heads of Bill are ready for Government. ■ An Indicative Forest Strategy has been completed – major GIS project which will focus policy and planting into the future. ■ Very successful Call for Proposals for innovation in the sector ■ New training programme, designed and delivered in conjunction with the sector ■ New promotional campaign, again designed and delivered in conjunction with the sector <p>New schemes, approved under State Aid Approval, support forestry development and enhance its compatibility with the environment. FEPS is now open for new woodlands. FEPS Enhancement will improve biodiversity in older forest. This scheme will be designed in 2008. An Agro-Forestry Scheme will support farmers in the planting of small-scale forestry that will benefit their farming activities. These combine to make forestry an attractive option.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
90	The forestry funding programme for 2007 – 2013 will ensure that farmers who might wish to afforest all or part of their land can make their decisions on the basis of continued commitment of the Government to forestry. This commitment will be consistent with and complementary to other land based supports	B
	A number of key schemes were rolled out in early 2007, using the de minimus derogation for State Aid. These provisions were removed from the RDP following the Government's decision to nationally fund the 2007-2013 forestry programme. Formal State Aid approval for the Afforestation Scheme was received in September 2007 and approval for support schemes underpinning the forestry programme was secured in October 2007. A general 15% increase in the annual Forest Premium was implemented with effect from April 2007 and a new Forest Environment Protection Scheme (FEPS) has been launched which specifically targets REPS farmers, offering a more attractive premium rate in return for a more environmentally focused forestry.	
91	A new annualised planting target will be established which maintains the necessary critical mass of production to secure the development of the timber industry well into the next decade.	C
	Proposals on planting targets are contained in the forestry strategic review which will be published shortly.	
92	DAF will launch a major forestry promotion campaign in 2006	A
	A Joint DAF and Irish Forestry Industry Chain forestry promotion campaign ' <i>Forests for a Bright Future</i> ' was launched in June 2006. The campaign continued throughout 2007 and has consisted of county launches, national and local radio advertising, supplements in the farming press and the organisation of interviews. The final phase of the campaign is currently underway with revamped radio ads. Other ideas currently being considered are a specific television ad campaign and improved air-time on relevant TV programmes	
93	The IFORIS programme will be in place in early 2006 to ensure that forestry grants and premium payments are managed by an effective IT system.	A
	IFORIS payment programme went live in March 2006 and is operating very successfully.	
94	DAF will complete its national inventory of forest production in 2006 and will develop further inventory information, particularly in regard to wood biomass production	B
	The National Forestry Inventory has been completed, on schedule. A public conference was held in July 2007 and full publication of the National Forestry Inventory took place in December 2007. Development of additional inventory capacity/information, including private stand inventory, is under close consideration	
95	Teagasc will put in place an integrated advisory and research programme to encourage greater development of forestry.	A
	<p>A dedicated Forestry Development Unit has been established with 21 research and advisory staff managed by a Head of Unit on a national basis. The unit has close links with the general advisory service and forestry is being promoted as a main on-farm alternative. The advisory and training programme is run jointly with the DAFF Forest Service while some of the research programme is co-funded by COFORD which has the lead role in forestry research. The Teagasc forestry programme for each year is agreed in consultation with DAFF.</p> <p>In 2007, in addition its ongoing advisory and training programme, Teagasc were one of the joint organisers of the Bio-Energy Conference/Exhibition 2007 and the Forest Energy 2007 demonstrations. Bioenergy '08 will be incorporated into the Farm Fest event in 2008 and Teagasc will be joint partners in the Forest Energy 2008 public events. The focus on promoting and supporting afforestation and the Forest Environment Protection Scheme (FEPS) will continue and be enhanced in 2008. Teagasc will also encourage and support the active management of broadleaf and coniferous forests through advisory visits, farm walks and practical demonstrations.</p> <p>New research programmes were initiated in forestry economics, broadleaf tree improvement and clustering of forest owners for marketing purposes. These projects are co-funded by COFORD.</p>	
96	New market opportunities for thinnings will be developed, particularly in relation to renewable energy.	B
	A range of initiatives is being supported, including pilot projects, greener homes scheme and biomass harvesting scheme. These provide new market opportunities for thinnings and will improve supply of raw material. The Forest Energy 2007 Programme jointly undertaken by COFORD, the Waterford Institute of Technology, Forest Service and Teagasc, involved wood energy harvesting and processing demonstrations. A biomass harvesting scheme was launched in April 07.	

No	Measures taken	*Status
97	Support for the better management of the forest estate including pruning, thinning, training, reconstitution and forest roads will be considered	B
	State Aid Approval for the forestry support schemes was secured in September and October 2007. This facilitated the launch of a revised Forest Road Scheme, the Reconstitution of Woodlands Scheme, the Shaping of Broadleaves Scheme, the Woodland Improvement Scheme and the High Pruning of Conifers Scheme.	
98	Support for the native woodland, neighbour wood schemes and broadleaves products will continue.	B
	Provision for these schemes is included in the measures given State Aid approval by the Commission in September and October 2007 and the schemes have been re-launched. The commitment to planting 30% broadleaves, which has been achieved in previous years, remains in place.	
99	The commitment to adequate research and development in the forestry sector will be maintained	B
	Increased funding of €4.40m has been provided to COFORD for 2008 to enable it continue its R & D programme. Since the beginning of 2007 COFORD has put in place research programmes in climate change and forests, biodiversity, forests and water, forest planning and management, forest policy and economics, totalling 27 projects at an estimated cost of €13 million to 2012. In addition, COFORD (the National Council for Research & Development) plays a vital role in the identification of research priorities in the forestry sector and funding is provided in the current NDP for the continuation of the COFORD Forestry Competitive Research Programme. COFORD will continue to collaborate with the forest industry, through its applied research and technology transfer frameworks, to increase the level of business-led investment in R & D and innovation.	
100	Support schemes for equipment in thinning, harvesting and the production of wood biomass will be actively pursued in 2006.	B
	The new Forestry programme includes measures designed to provide support for such investments The Wood Biomass Harvesting Machinery Scheme was launched in April 07. with available funding of €1.2 million. Woodland Improvement Scheme was launched in March 2008.	
101	A grant scheme for the installation of wood burning stoves is being launched by the Department of Marine and Natural Resources in support of increased use of renewable energy in Ireland	A
	The scheme has been initiated and grants are now available from SEI for the installation of pellet and chip boilers.	
102	Protection of the health of forest estate from biological or other threats will be strengthened.	B
	Damage to forest estates by the two main predators, deer and grey squirrel, is being addressed through the Deer Fencing Scheme in co-operation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Research Project for control of Grey Squirrel.(CRISIS). CRISIS has had great success in raising awareness of the problem amongst the wider public. During 2007 the Forest Service of DAFF actively implemented forestry provisions of the EU Plant Health Directive and also participates in the current 'North South Invasive Species in Ireland' project. – see also Action 143	
103	DAF will continue to contribute to the development of policies on biofuels, especially having regard to further advances in technology.	B
	DAFF implements a number of Actions set out in the National Bioenergy Action Plan to increase production of energy crops and afforestation and to support research and development in the agri-energy area. Grant assistance of of some €4 million is available for agri-energy projects following the 2007 Call under the Research Stimulus Fund Programme. It is intended that these projects, among other items, will focus on technologies and approaches to exploit farm-based renewable energy materials for the production of biomass and biofuels. €6 million is being made available for a new National Energy Crop Premium of €80 per hectare to encourage farmers to grow energy crops as a feedstock for biofuels.	

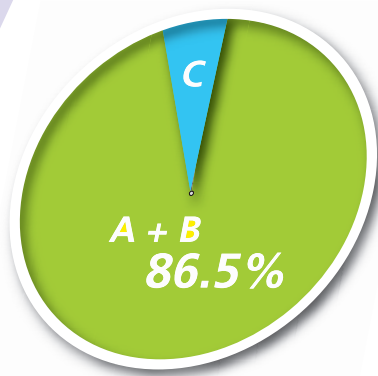
No	Measures taken	*Status
104	DAF will engage actively with the development of EU policy on biofuels and will, in particular, promote and seek improvements in the energy crops scheme.	B
	DAFF will continue to monitor progress in regard to implementation of the EU Biomass Action Plan, EU Strategy for Biofuels and the EU Energy Crops Scheme. The Energy Crops Scheme was revised in 2006 to authorise Member States to grant national aid to support the establishment of permanent crops, such as miscanthus and willow (see Action 109). DAFF will monitor developments in relation to the Scheme during the forthcoming Health Check of the CAP.	
105	The Research Stimulus Programme will be used to encourage research projects on biofuels and other non-food use of crops. Teagasc will also commit additional resources to this area.	B
	<p>DAFF has awarded €1.5 million in funding for biofuel research projects under the Department's Research Stimulus Fund Programme (RSF) arising from Calls for Proposals issued in 2005 and 2006.</p> <p>The 2007 Call for Proposals under the Research Stimulus Fund Programme invited proposals in the AGRI-Energy area to identify and develop renewable energy sources with feasible exploitation potential within the agriculture sector. The contribution to the successful projects is €4.5m.</p> <p>The Teagasc Research Programme on biofuel focuses on the agronomy of biofuel crops, the suitability of soils, the harvesting, drying and storage of biofuels, fuel quality and on the energy efficiency / carbon balance of biofuel crops. The Teagasc Advisory programme has focused on the development of support materials for the industry and on providing support to potential growers through individual advice and a range of local and national bio-energy events, the largest of which attracted 7000 people. It has taken a lead role in developing a partnership with government departments, SEI, farming organisations and commercial interests to promote the development of the sector.</p>	
106	DAF will continue to facilitate the use of tallow as a biofuel in thermal boilers in rendering plants and larger meat plants to provide energy.	B
	The Department supplies information and guidance to the trade via its inspectorate to facilitate compliance with the EC Regulations which set out the conditions that must be met to burn tallow in thermal boilers. Three Meat Plants (four burners), five Rendering Plants (total of ten burners), one Petfood Manufacturer (one burner) and one Fishmeal Producer (one burner) have been approved. Applications for approval have been received from 2 Rendering Plants, 3 Meat Plants, 1 Dairy Plant and 1 Animal Feed Manufacturers. The Department is also aware of expressions of interest from a number of other plants.	
107	DAF will introduce procedures for the conversion of tallow to biodiesel	B
	<p>Statutory Instrument 612 of 2006 provide for the conversion of tallow to bio-diesel. The Department has had discussions with potential investors regarding the planned establishment of biodiesel plants which would use tallow as a feedstock. A new biodiesel plant at New Ross is near completion. This will produce 34 million litres of biodiesel per year using a number of feedstocks including tallow and used cooking oil.</p> <p>An Bord Pleanála is currently examining a proposal to build a very large combined biogas and biodiesel plant in Co. Tipperary.</p> <p>The Department is aware of a number of other proposed biodiesel plants, but these are at a preliminary stage.</p> <p>The Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources announced in November 2006 that 16 projects are to be granted excise relief under the Biofuels Scheme II, and it is expected that a number of these will seek to use tallow as a feedstock for bio-diesel.</p>	
108	DAF will seek EU approval for a new scheme of supports to encourage the harvesting and processing of biomass from forests and otherwise promote the use of wood biomass as a source of renewable energy.	B
	<p>In the Budget 2007, €0.6m was provided for a special scheme to grant aid biomass harvesting machinery such as harvesters and chippers for the processing of forest biomass. The scheme is now operational. A further €0.6 million was provided in Budget 2008 for this scheme.</p> <p>In conjunction with Teagasc, the Department hosted the National Renewable Energy Conference on 6th and 7th March 2007.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
109	DAF will launch a pilot project on willow planting to evaluate further its potential from a bioenergy and waste disposal viewpoint. The potential of miscanthus as a biomass crop will also be explored.	B
	In February 2007, DAFF launched a new Bioenergy Scheme to provide establishment grants to farmers to plant willow and miscanthus for use as a renewable source of energy. €8m is being made available for this scheme over the period 2007 - 2009. The maximum grant aid payable is €1,450 per hectare subject to an overall limit of 20 hectares per applicant. Some 800 hectares of willow and miscanthus were planted in 2007. The second phase of the Scheme will be launched shortly.	
110	DAF will promote the use of emerging technologies such as anaerobic digestion and fluidised bed combustion	B
	see Action 160	
111	The variety evaluation and seed certification and testing services provided by DAF will be enhanced to improve the efficiency, quality and viability of cereal production.	B
	Almost 500 varieties of cereals, herbage, forage maize, potatoes and oilseed rape are being evaluated monitored for quality and agronomic traits at trial sites on DAFF and Teagasc selected farms. Discussions are ongoing with breeders to bring about further efficiencies this season in the cereal variety evaluation system. Changes in the seed certification scheme have been introduced which will lead to greater efficiencies whilst others will be introduced in 2008.	
112	The regulatory regime for plant protection products will be further developed and implemented to ensure the highest standards of plant health, food safety and consumer protection are achieved	B
	The new facilities provided at Backweston, facilitated use of an expanded range of analytical equipment, permitting implementation of an expanded monitoring programme for pesticide residues in food. In the context of OECD, collaborative arrangements have been introduced to provide improved efficiency and more robust regulatory decisions on plant protection products. In this context, a pilot project for the joint review of a new insecticide, by Ireland, Australia, Canada, US and UK commenced on 2 February 2007 and is due for completion in 2008. If successful, the approach adopted will facilitate earlier access by farmers to new crop protection solutions.	
113	DAF will put in place comprehensive co-existence arrangements to enable conventional and organic crops co-exist with genetically modified crops.	C
	<p>The Report of the inter-agency Working Group (D/AF, D/EHLG, Teagasc and the EPA) developed necessary strategies and best practices relating to coexistence of authorised GM crops alongside non-GM crops in Ireland. A public consultation process was initiated following the publication of this report.</p> <p>Subsequent to the publication of the AgriVision 2015 Report and Action Plan, one of the commitments in the new Programme for Government "seeks to negotiate the establishment of an All Ireland GM Free Zone". Arising from this commitment meetings are being held involving a number of Government Departments with a view to implementing this commitment whilst recognizing the fact that EU legislation does not allow for a total ban on the growing of GM crops unless in very restricted circumstances.</p>	
114	DAF will encourage industry initiatives to improve the safety and quality of grain	C
	A number of meetings have been held between the farm organisations, Bord Bia, Irish National Accreditation Board and the industry with a view to the introduction of a fully accredited quality assurance scheme. Discussions are ongoing with all interested parties.	
115	Teagasc will continue to assist farmers in optimising their returns from cereal enterprises through its research, training and advisory services.	B
	The needs of the cereal producers have been reviewed by the Teagasc Crops Commodity Team. Priorities for the tillage crops advisory programme includes optimising Single Farm Payments, achieving top yields and quality at as low a cost as possible. Best practice technology and financial assessment is being promoted and demonstrated on monitor farms, communication bulletins and one to one advisory sessions. The growing and use of alternative crops for bio- energy and other non-food purposes is also a focus for crops research.	

No	Measures taken	*Status
116	In the light of the modifications secured in the sugar reform arrangements, decisions on the future production of sugar and sugar beet will be made by the producers and processor.	A
	In March 2006, the sugar processor (Greencore Group plc) decided to cease sugar production in Ireland. The sole remaining sugar factory at Mallow duly closed in May 2006.	
117	The Government will take the necessary steps to implement the compensation arrangements for the sugar sector, as required in consultation with relevant stakeholders.	A
	<p>The compensation package, worth in excess of €310m to Ireland, comprises three elements.</p> <p>The first element is the compensation for the reduction in the minimum price of beet which is worth approximately €123m to Irish beet growers over seven years. It has been already incorporated in the Single Payment with effect from 2006.</p> <p>The second element is the EU restructuring aid which, at the outset, was worth €145m to Ireland. Three parties benefit from this aid: the sugar processor, former beet growers and machinery contractors. The first installment of 40% (€58m) was paid to the beneficiaries in June 2007 and the balance of €87m was paid in February 2008. However, an amending EU regulation in October 2007 had the effect of increasing the overall amount of restructuring aid available to Ireland and this increase, the amount of which has yet to be confirmed by the EU Commission, will be paid retroactively to the growers in June 2008.</p> <p>The third and final element of the package is the diversification aid worth almost €44m to the former beet growers. The first tranche of 50% (€22m) was paid in September 2007 and the balance was paid in March 2008.</p>	
118	The interests of Irish producers and consumers will be maximised by DAF in the negotiations on the future reform of the common organisation of the market in fruit and vegetables. The aim will be to strengthen the role of Producer Organisations in the supply and marketing of fruit and vegetables to give them influence in a market dictated by the multiple retailers	B
	Proposals for the reform of the Fruit and Vegetable regime were presented to the Council of Ministers on 31 January 2007. The Council Regulation adopted in September 2007 includes greater flexibility in the rules governing producer organisations and increased funding for certain measures in their operational programme. Detailed rules for implementation of the reforms were adopted in December 2007. Ireland's National Strategy for Sustainable Operational Programmes will come into effect for operational programmes commencing on 1 January 2009	
119	DAF will provide grant support strategically targeted at horticultural projects in production, processing and marketing and aimed at improving the overall development and competitiveness of the sector	B
	<p>Under the 2000-2006 NDP over €7m in grant aid has been awarded in capital investment which leveraged overall investment of some €20m for the 174 growers involved. Grant aid of €1.5m was also provided for the development of the seed potato sector bringing to €2.5m the support provided since 2005.</p> <p>The current NDP Capital Grant Aid Scheme for the development of commercial horticulture continues to be the catalyst for development of the horticulture sector with an annual provision of some €7m per year for the scheme.</p> <p>Due to the late approval from the EU Commission for the scheme under State aid guidelines, the new NDP 2007 –2013 scheme was launched in October 2007 and over 200 applications were received. Approvals of some €9m were issued in February 2008 to 189 applicants.</p> <p>Under the 2007-2013 NDP funding continues to be provided for capital investments towards the development of the commercial horticulture sector and the seed potato sector.</p> <p>In addition, the Call for proposals under the Department's capital investment scheme for marketing and processing of agricultural products issued in December 2007 includes the horticulture sector. The closing date for applications was 29th of February 2008. Scheme has been oversubscribed with 110 eligible applications received including some on horticulture. The evaluation process is underway.</p>	
120	DAF will support all year round production of horticultural products to meet the increased demands of Irish consumers.	B
	Under the National Development Plan and the Producer Organisation Scheme growers are being provided with the support to meet local demands for the supply of fresh fruit and vegetables on all year round basis.	

No	Measures taken	*Status
121	Teagasc will target its programmes in research, advisory services and training at underpinning the competitiveness of the commercial horticulture sector.	B
	The Teagasc Horticultural Development Unit has been established with 28 advisory and research staff managed on a national basis. Four Staff Development Teams have been established, namely, Fruit, Vegetables, Nursery Stock and Mushrooms. The programme for each team is planned and guided by four Commodity Teams representing the Industry, DAF and Bord Bia and is targeted at underpinning the competitiveness of the commercial horticulture sectors.	
122	Bord Bia will continue to implement its Quality Assurance Programme for vegetables and potatoes and, in conjunction with industry stakeholders, it will strongly promote the importance of fruit and vegetables in a healthy diet	B
	<p>Bord Bia has a well established Quality Assurance programme for fruit and vegetables and membership of this is a key condition for support under the NDP Horticulture grant aid scheme and the Producer Organisation Scheme.</p> <p>The reformed EU regime for fruit and vegetables (see Action 118 above) includes increased EU aid of 60% for actions to promote the consumption of fruit and vegetables by children in educational establishments</p> <p>The 2nd year of a 'Food Dude' programme to encourage fruit and vegetable consumption by schoolchildren via repeat tasting, rewards and peer models, commenced in September 2006. It is funded by the EU, DAF and the trade. The programme received an international best practice award from the World Health Organisation in 2006. Following the positive response to the programme, a Healthy Eating Initiative, which will make the programme available to primary schools on a nationally funded basis was launched on the 18 February by Minister Coughlan.</p> <p>Bord Bia is continuing with other elements of its programme of activities for development of the horticulture sector, viz promotion programmes for both trade and consumer, market intelligence, Business Support Scheme, industrial development, amenity horticulture and buyer programmes for exports of nursery stock. Bord Bia has identified good growth potential in the prepared vegetable sector.</p>	
123	DAF will implement efficient and effective potato variety evaluation and seed certification services to enable Ireland maintain its high grade seed area status and foster the development of a competitive seed potato sector	B
	<p>Changes and improved efficiencies in the seed potato variety evaluation and certification scheme are being introduced. Under the NDP 2007-2013 funding of €1m per year is available for capital investments towards the development of the seed potato sector In September 2007 grant aid of almost €1m was approved to some 18 applicants which will be paid out in 2008.</p> <p>Under the NDP 2007-2013 funding will be provided for capital investments towards the development of the seed potato sector.</p>	
124	The recommendations of the Mushroom Task Force will be implemented as far as possible to ensure that the industry is put on a solid footing and can exploit the potential for further growth in exports	B
	<p>The Mushroom Task Force published its report in May 2004 and its 36 recommendations, which has a time frame of up to 36 months, related to supply arrangements, price transparency, cost reduction, marketing and promotion, training and advisory, research and the environment. The period since publication of the Task Force Report has been marked by major consolidation in the sector.</p> <p>Increasing the supply of Phase III mushroom compost is the only issue which is still being actively pursued</p>	
125	DAF will promote the development of the organic sector by direct support to organic farmers and also by grant aid for investment, both on-farm and off-farm.	B
	<p>DAFF is working closely with organic organisations and has initiated a variety evaluation programme to assess those varieties of cereals that perform best under organic farming conditions. DAFF also continues to operate a Scheme of Grant Aid for the Development of the Organic Sector.</p> <p>Direct support was previously provided to organic farmers as a supplementary measure of the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS). The new Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 includes a stand-alone measure, with the objective of encouraging organic production by farmers for whom participation in REPS itself is not attractive.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
126	DAF will strengthen the processing and retail representation on the Organic Steering Group to specifically enhance the commercial focus of the organic sector. The experience of other countries is that retail driven development is critical to the growth of the organic sector.	B
	Representation of the processing and retail sectors on the Steering Group has been increased and will be kept under review.	
127	In relation to the organic industry, REPS will have a twin objective in the next programme, to be more attractive to organic farmers and also to aim to maximise organic output.	B
	See Action 125	
128	DAF will work with the organic farming bodies and other stakeholders to maintain consumer confidence in the integrity of organic produce.	B
	DAF has assigned extra resources to inspect retailers selling or purporting to sell organic produce. Two successful prosecutions have been taken, and in two other cases goods were seized from retailers. DAF works with the organic farming bodies and other stakeholders, through the National Steering Group for the Organic Sector, to advance and promote the development of the sector.	
129	Farmers' Markets will be encouraged through practical advice and support from An Bord Bia and the Department.	B
	See Action 57.	
130	Teagasc will work with DAF and the farming community to ensure that farmers are well informed about the opportunities that exist in the organic sector. To this end Teagasc will enhance its organic advisory, research, demonstration and training activities	B
	<p>Teagasc has assigned four advisory staff to work full time in the development of organic production. Teagasc has an organic research/demonstration programme at Mellows, Athenry (Dairy, beef, sheep), Oak Park (Tillage) and Johnstown Castle (Beef). Teagasc works closely with DAFF in ensuring that the 21 designated organic demonstration farms are effectively used to disseminate knowledge about organic farming;</p> <p>The combined staff compliment including advice, research, education and farm operations is 18. This team now operates as an integrated unit and a business plan setting out Teagasc's contribution to the development of the organic sector was presented to the Minister of State for Food in March 2008. The combined land area with organic status across these centres is 200Ha, which represents in excess of 10% of the total Teagasc land bank.</p> <p>see also Action 125 .</p>	



Promoting a Sustainable Future

- *Status**
- A: Action Completed
 - B: Action implemented on an ongoing basis
 - C: Substantial Action Taken
 - D: Minimal Action Taken

No	Measures taken	*Status
131	The Department will develop and implement appropriate strategies and actions for the agriculture sector, in line with the National Biodiversity Plan, with the aim of meeting the EU target of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010.	B
	<p>DAF participates in the Inter-Departmental Steering Group which monitors the implementation of the National Biodiversity Action Plan. The current plan includes a number of significant actions to be taken by the agriculture sector. These have been largely achieved through the following measures and Schemes operated by DAFF;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduction in 2006 of nitrates Regulations to protect waters against pollution from agricultural sources, ■ Implementation of the cross-compliance elements of the Single Farm Payment and requiring land to be kept in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition, ■ Introduction of REPS 3 in 2004 which, in addition to basic measures, placed increased emphasis on biodiversity; and submission to the European Commission of proposals for REPS 4 which further continue this trend, ■ Implementation by DAFF of a co-ordinated programme for the conservation and utilisation of genetic resources in agriculture, food and forestry, overseen by a National Advisory Committee on Plant and animal Genetic Resources, ■ The employment of forest ecologists by both Coillte and the Forest Service of DAFF, ■ Establishment of a Biodiversity Unit within the Department. 	
132	DAF will continue to work towards the target for reduced emissions from the agriculture sector set down in the Government's Climate Change Strategy	B
	The National Climate Change Strategy published in 2000 provided for a reduction in methane emissions from the national herd equivalent to a reduction in livestock numbers by 10% below 2010 projected levels. The agriculture sector is projected to meet the target set down for it, notwithstanding the fact that market trends in both dairying and beef are likely to lead to some rise in numbers. The EU's target of a 20% reduction (by 2020) on 2005 levels could however, if applied to the agriculture sector, lead to significant downward pressure on cattle numbers since other abatement techniques are not capable of delivering more than a fraction of the 20% target.	
133	Using the key principles contained in the report from Comhairle na Tuaithe, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs will seek agreement on the issues of access and countryside recreation.	B
	<p>The Comhairle na Tuaithe, National Countryside Recreation Strategy was published in September 2006 and is available on the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs's website; www.pobail.ie. The Strategy defines the scope and vision for countryside recreation and sets out the broad principles under which sustainable countryside recreation can be managed into the future. It also recommends the actions that should be undertaken to achieve this vision.</p> <p>The development of countryside recreation is also a key part of the measures to be rolled out by Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs under the Rural Development Programme 2007 -2013.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
134	The Department will provide ongoing assurances of the effectiveness of the cross-compliance requirements of the Single Payment Scheme to the European Commission and to the general public.	B
	The cross-compliance arrangements developed by the Department have already been the subject of audits by both the European Court of Auditors and the European Commission and amended accordingly. DAFF is required to ensure that the control environment established under cross-compliance is robust and meets with regulatory and audit requirements. As the Department believed that the cross-compliance provisions were overly complex for farmers, it sought and gained appropriate simplification in the context of the review of cross-compliance conducted by the Commission and the ensuing debates regarding their proposals; <i>see Actions 46 and 47 above.</i>	
135	DAF will engage with the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to maximise synergies on an all-island approach on research, animal health and welfare, plant health, forestry and other matters of mutual interest.	B
	<p>Regular meetings are held at Ministerial and official levels to progress alignment of policies and protection arrangements in relation to animal and plant disease control, research, forestry and other matters. The first NSMC Agriculture Sectoral meeting since the restoration of the Assembly took place in November 2007.</p> <p>On the specific issues of Foot & Mouth Disease and of Avian Influenza, contingency planning to deal with the possible incursion of this disease has been put in place. It involves the active participation of a number of other Government Departments and agencies, which will be required to provide a range of services and personnel to work alongside Department personnel. In the context of cross-border cooperation there is ongoing contact and interaction with DARD NI on disease planning, including training programmes.</p> <p>There is a close working relationship between DARDNI and DAFF on Plant Health matters, including Forest plant health, with at least two meetings per year. There is a move to a more harmonised approach especially with regard to quarantine organisms of particular interest to this island. It is proposed to put the current ad hoc arrangements on a more structured basis to report to the NSMC. Meetings of the North/South Pesticide Steering Group to co-ordinate and review the continuing co-operation in the field of pesticide regulation take place annually. In the area of crop variety evaluation, Nth/Sth collaborative projects are underway for cereals, herbage and potatoes with preparatory meetings, joint trials and reciprocal visits to inspect trials.</p>	
136	The high-level review of forestry policy will be finalised in 2006. This review will include consideration of the public goods aspect of the forest programme.	C
	The review has been completed and the report, which includes an analysis of the public goods aspect of forestry, is being finalised prior to publication.	
137	The Department will add to its suite of environmental guidelines in the forest sector with the publication of Guidelines for Forest Recreation and Guidelines for the preparation of Environmental Impact Assessments and will legislate for the control of aerial fertilisation.	B
	The Forest Recreation guidelines have been published. The Statutory Instrument on aerial fertilisation has been signed.	
138	DAF will strengthen policies, and in particular continue the vaccine research project, aimed at containing the incidence of TB to enhance consumer safety and trade.	B
	The current eradication programme is being reviewed under the Value for Money process which is scheduled to be completed in April 2008. Any recommendations contained in the report aimed at improving the effectiveness or efficiency of the programme will be examined carefully, with a view to early adoption. The presence of TB infected wildlife is an impediment to the eradication of this disease and consequently the programme includes a research project which is seeking to develop a vaccine for wildlife so as to minimise the spread of infection from wildlife to cattle. A 3 year field trial aimed at testing the efficacy of a vaccine in wildlife is scheduled to commence in June 2008. In view of this, it is evident that a fully licensed and effective vaccine will not be available in the short term.	

No	Measures taken	*Status
139	Effective Brucellosis and BSE programmes will be continued, and focused on the aim of early eradication of both diseases.	B
	<p>The incidence of Brucellosis has declined significantly in recent years and an effective programme is being maintained with a view to eradicating this disease in the short term. There were no herds depopulated in 2007, compared with 3 in 2006 and 328 in 1998. The current intensive BSE programme has succeeded in reducing the number of BSE cases from 333 in 2002 to 25 in 2007 and the age profile of cases is increasing. The current control regime for eradication of BSE will be maintained to eradicate the disease but efforts will continue to be made to secure EU approval to raise the age limits for rapid testing in view of the consumer protection measures in place and the improved situation.</p>	
140	In the short term, scrapie surveillance will continue for sheep and goats so as to identify and deal with affected flocks. Following consultation with relevant interests, a genotyping programme for sheep will be introduced to promote production of scrapie resistant sheep thereby providing further reassurances to consumers.	C
	<p>The surveillance and related measures that are provided for in relation to scrapie will continue to be applied. Future arrangements for genotyping will be discussed with the farming and other interests following finalisation of the current negotiations at EU level.</p>	
141	The Department will encourage and support the development of industry led initiatives to further improve animal health by implementation of measures to control a range of production related diseases in cattle, sheep and pigs.	C
	<p>The Department is continuing to develop its approach to progressing an industry led initiative to deal with various non-regulated diseases which affect productivity, animal welfare and potentially public health. Further meetings are to be held with relevant stakeholders in the short to medium term to finalise outstanding issues.</p>	
142	Contingency Planning for significant disease outbreaks will be updated and further co-ordinated with industry stakeholders and other state agencies to enhance our capacity to deal with exotic diseases and pests.	B
	<p>Contingency plans for a range of animal diseases continue to be refined and updated and contacts are maintained with Departments and agencies that would assist the Department in the event of an outbreak of disease. Close liaison is also maintained with authorities in Northern Ireland and as appropriate in London. Plant Health Contingency Plans are in place for 4 major diseases which are under continuous review. A generic format for contingencies is also being developed.</p>	
143	An enhanced national monitoring and control programme for harmful plant and forest pests will be put in place, based on risk analysis and using emerging science and technologies.	B
	<p>Annual surveys for specific quarantine pests as required by EU Plant Health regulations are being carried out and the situation monitored on an ongoing basis to maintain our protected zone status.</p> <p>As part of the 2007 monitoring programme, brown rot of potatoes (<i>Ralstonia solanacearum</i>) has been found on imported and domestically produced potatoes. Efforts are ongoing in trying to eradicate this quarantine organism.</p> <p>In 2007, as part of an EU wide requirement the national forest estate was surveyed by the Forest Service for the following forest pests and diseases: <i>Phytophthora ramorum</i> (the causal agent of the disease known as sudden oak death), pine wood nematode and oriental chestnut gall wasp. In 2007 a national survey was also carried out for the first time for pitch canker disease. Surveys of the national forest estate were also carried out for 11 separate forest pests and diseases which are present in other parts of the EU and for which Ireland has special Protected Zone status within the EU Internal Market. No quarantine pests or diseases were detected on any tree species in 2007 but <i>Phytophthora ramorum</i> was found in three forest areas on <i>Rhododendron</i>.</p> <p>Also, in 2007, as part of an International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) process, a special forest pest monitoring exercise was conducted of imports of wood packaging material associated with goods of all kinds.</p>	
144	Liaison with other national bodies and research institutes will be increased with the intention of developing collaborative research and control programmes for quarantine organisms.	B
	<p>The Forest Service inputted during 2007 to an international research project, RAPRA, to produce an EU Pest Risk Analysis on <i>Phytophthora ramorum</i>, the causal agent of the disease known as sudden oak death. There is continued contact and liaison with COFORD, the National Council for Forest Research and Development in identifying research needs and facilitating and promoting forestry research.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
145	Work will continue on the development of common policies on animal and plant health and animal welfare on an all-island basis with a view to ultimately achieving free movement of animals on the island.	C
	There is close contact with DARDNI with regards to Animal and Plant Health issues and an all-island approach to specific quarantine organisms is being pursued. The NSMC Agriculture Sectoral meeting noted an all-island Animal Health & Welfare Strategy paper developed by the North/South Animal health & Welfare Steering Group. Two meetings have been held in relation to the brown rot of potatoes (<i>Ralstonia solanacearum</i>) outbreak. A further Sectoral meeting is scheduled for 30th April 2008.	
146	The Veterinary Medicines and Animal Remedies Regulations will be implemented by DAF to protect consumers from exposure to potentially harmful organisms	B
	Commitment is honoured on an on-going basis. Consumers are protected from exposure to potentially harmful residues through the enforcement of the Animal Remedies legislation under which veterinary medicines are regulated. Foodstuffs are also monitored for residues of harmful substances under the National Residues Plan. The monitoring regime is implemented under contract with the FSAI and in accordance with EU requirements. In 2006 approx 28,000 samples of foodstuffs were tested for residues under the regime when the overall level of positive samples was 0.18% (49 samples) which was a reduction on 2005 figures. No residues for growth promoters were found in 2006. Under the 2007 National Residue Control Plan, over 29,000 samples from a wide range of products were taken and analysed, showing a further reduction in the number of positives. No residues for growth promoters were found in 2007.	
147	The animal welfare early warning system will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that it is achieving its objective of improving animal welfare by dealing with problem cases at the earliest possible stage.	B
	The system continues to be kept under review with regular meetings at regional and national levels to review operation of system in different areas. In general the system is working well and relevant parties continue to contribute.	
148	The new DAF Veterinary and Agriculture laboratories will be developed as centres of excellence and scientific knowledge to support and enable the effective operation of national and industry programmes on animal health, plant health and food hygiene.	B
	See Action 29 and 149.	
149	<p>The Department will develop joint animal health and welfare research programmes with Third Level Institutions, Teagasc, farming organisations, and the veterinary profession. These programmes, centred on the new Central Veterinary Laboratory complex at Backweston, Co. Kildare, will focus on :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Surveillance for and control of Zoonotic diseases ■ Surveillance for those endemic animal diseases that are of commercial significance and ■ The enhancement of animal welfare compliance 	B
	<p>More sophisticated techniques for typing zoonotic organisms are being developed in conjunction with third level institutes. Surveillance for exotic and those endemic disease of commercial significance of animals and plants is ongoing using regional and central laboratory facilities. An annual animal disease surveillance report has been produced. Contribution to undergraduate and postgraduate teaching is being undertaken with third level institutes and further expansion of collaborative projects will be undertaken.</p>	
150	ICBF will work in close collaboration with researchers and farmers to establish the potential of cattle breeding for reduced disease levels and enhanced animal welfare.	B
	A research project on the genetics of resistance to TB has been initiated in collaboration with ICBF, TEAGASC, DAF and UCD. ICBF has developed and implemented an evaluation system for somatic cell counts and lameness across breeds. ICBF also operate across-breed genetic evaluation system for calving ease, calf mortality and gestation length	

No	Measures taken	*Status
151	<p>A proactive approach will be taken to welfare issues and in particular a registration system and related measures for transporters of animals will be put in place by DAF by January 2007 to improve conditions under which animals are transported and thereby ensuring the possibility of continuing the live trade.</p>	B
	<p>Legislation was enacted in December 2006 and other necessary actions were taken to provide for implementation of the EU Transport Regulation from January 2007. Training and other requirements in the legislation are being addressed on an ongoing basis.</p>	
152	<p>DAF, in conjunction with the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, will publish a national Rural Development Strategy in mid 2006, following extensive consultation with stakeholders. This will set the principles for rural development support until 2013.</p>	A
	<p>The national rural development strategy, which provides an overview of the priorities and proposed actions for 2007-2013, was approved by the EU Commission. The strategy provides the basis for the support measures detailed in the approved Rural Development Programme.</p>	
153	<p>The two Departments will seek EU approval for a detailed CAP Rural Development Programme in the latter half of 2006. This will involve significant policy and exchequer decisions for the period 2007-2013 for major schemes such as REPS, Forestry, Disadvantaged Areas, Early Retirement, Installation Aid and the on-farm investment measures. This programme will also encompass other measures targeted in the three EU priorities mentioned above.</p>	A
	<p>Following consultation with stakeholders, an independent evaluation and negotiations with the EU Commission Ireland's rural development programme for the period 2007 – 2013 was approved by the EU Commission in September 2007. The rural development programme (RDP) involving total public expenditure of €5.79 billion addresses three priorities – competitiveness, the environment and the wider rural economy. The main agri-food measures involved are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ REPS/Natura (€2.98bn), ■ Disadvantaged Areas (€1.8bn), ■ Early Retirement (€418m), ■ Installation Aid (€63m) and ■ Farm Investment (€85m). <p>Overall, they account for €5.35bn – or 93% of the programme's total public expenditure of €5.79bn.</p> <p>This represents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A 17% increase in REPs payments. ■ An 8% increase in Disadvantaged Areas payments. ■ A 55% increase in Installation Aid rates – bringing it to €15,000. ■ A new Early Retirement Scheme – with maximum pension rate of €15,000. <p>Under the wider rural economy measures in the RDP over €425m will be provided over the next seven years – a trebling of funding compared to the 2000-2006 period – to support improvements to the quality of life in rural areas and the diversification and development of the rural economy. The Programme will be delivered by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs through a network of Local Action Groups (LAGs).</p>	
154	<p>It is envisaged that the 2007-2013 Rural Development Plan will also cover the development of alternative /supplementary farm enterprises including equine breeding and production.</p>	A
	<p>Support measures for the development of alternative / supplementary farm enterprises /equine breeding and production have been approved under the RDP.</p>	

No	Measures taken	*Status
155	An ex-ante evaluation will be carried out on the Rural Development Programme to develop priorities for future measures. It will be vital to ensure value for public money in all the measures included in the programme and that public good benefits must be clear and measurable.	A
	An independent ex-ante evaluation was completed on the draft rural development programme. The evaluation report was available for the consultative process on the programme and was taken into account in finalising it prior to submission to the EU Commission.	
156	As the Government is committed to an integrated approach to rural development, the national RD Strategy and Programme will complement other policy initiatives that address the economic and social well-being of rural areas.	A
	The new National Development Plan recognises that the economic and social well-being of rural areas is not contingent solely on the CAP rural development strategy and programme. The NDP sets out a series of complementary policy initiatives that are summarised in its chapter on the rural economy.	
157	In consultation with relevant stakeholders, a new agri-environmental scheme that pro-actively enhances environment and biodiversity will be developed by the Department for inclusion in the 2007 -2013 RD programme. It is anticipated that this will require a very significant commitment of exchequer resources.	A
	Following agreement in October 2006 on the new Social Partnership Agreement, Towards 2016, a new agri-environmental scheme, REPS 4, was launched in August 2007 as part of the Rural Development Programme. It provides for a substantial increase in rates over the existing REP scheme and represents a major commitment of EU and exchequer funding for the period of the new Programme.	
158	The Department will seek to ensure that the new agri-environmental scheme is operationally straightforward, with the minimum necessary burden of paperwork while ensuring proper controls on public funds and effectiveness in delivering public goods.	B
	Following approval by the European Commission of the 2007–2013 RDP, REPS 4 was launched in August 2007. Detailed Terms and Conditions, planning specifications and a Farmer's Handbook have been produced. The simplification of application, payment and processing procedures in line with best practice is being pursued as an ongoing priority.	
159	In the context of the Nitrates Directive, the new Farm Waste Management Scheme, with broader eligibility and enhanced grant rates, will be implemented by the Department to increase on-farm slurry storage capacity and to protect water resources. This package includes funding rates above the norm for EU co-funded schemes. It will be available for all farmers, including for the first time pig and poultry producers, who are required to carry out investment works to comply with the directive.	B
	A revised FWMS was introduced in March 2006 to assist farmers meet additional requirements of the Nitrates Directive. The Scheme provided, inter alia, for: (a) increase in the maximum eligible investment ceiling from €75,000 to €120,000; (b) increase in the standard grant rate to 60%, with 70% available in the four Zone C counties; (c) extension of the Scheme to include horses, deer, goats, pigs, poultry and mushroom compost; (d) removal of minimum income requirement from farming so that all farmers can participate in scheme; (e) extension of the maximum income unit (IU) ceiling from 450 IUs to 650 IUs, with no upper limit being applied in the case of pig & poultry farmers. Over 48,500 applications were received for the revised scheme by the time it closed for new applications at the end of 2006. Over 34,600 approvals issued to date to farmers to commence work.	
160	A scheme of grant aid, demonstrating the advantages of innovative and emerging technologies in treating livestock manures, will be implemented.	B
	A new Scheme was introduced in June 2006 to support the demonstration of new and emerging technologies to further assist the agricultural sector meet the requirements of the Nitrates Directive. The Scheme, which closed for new applications at the end of 2006, provided grant aid for up to ten projects throughout the State for this purpose. The maximum investment ceiling per project is €1 million and the grant rate is 40%. The 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme provides for the continuation of this Scheme. In May, 2007 grant aid approval was announced in respect of three projects under the Scheme. Under a second tranche in October, approval of a further eight projects was announced.	

No	Measures taken	*Status
161	Teagasc will intensify its advisory campaign to support pig and poultry producers in the context of complying with environmental and animal welfare requests.	B
	<p>Teagasc is conscious of the new requirements being placed on pig and poultry producers by recent environment and animal welfare legislation. It has strengthened its advisory and research programme in these areas in that an additional pig advisor has been recruited and new research has been initiated on ways in which animal manure might be treated and used in an environmentally satisfactory way.</p> <p>A research project examining the energy generation options from pig manure and the sustainable disposal of residue will commence in 2008.</p>	
162	DAF will support research and initiatives to monitor and ameliorate the impact of chemicals used in agriculture on water, air and on species inhabiting agricultural ecosystems.	B
	<p>Researchers have been encouraged to submit relevant research proposals for funding under the Stimulus and FIRM programmes. The 2007 RSF Call included an Agri-Environment Theme Area which encompassed the area of environmental pollution via agriculture.</p> <p>DAF continues to liaise with and support EPA monitoring of chemicals in water in the context of the Water Framework Directive requirements.</p>	
163	In consultation with the European Commission, the Department will develop a forestry programme for the 2007–2013 Rural Development period, which will underline the environmental values of forestry, including health, amenity and diversification.	A
	The Forestry Programme was approved by the Commission in September and October 2007.	
164	Progress on the implementation of this Plan will be assessed each year in the Annual Report of the Minister.	B
	<p>The first progress report, which illustrated how 65% of the commitments had been effected or were being implemented on an ongoing basis, has been published. Material on progress achieved was included in the 2006 Annual Report and material provided for the 2007 Annual Report indicates that 77% of the actions have been implemented by end 2007. The 2007 Annual report will be published shortly</p>	
165	DAF will review its current structure and operational strategies in 2006 to consider what changes may be required to reflect the new priorities set out in this Plan.	C
	<p>The Department appointed a firm of consultants to facilitate a review of DAF's organisation being carried out by an internal group under the direction of the Management Advisory Committee. A number of sub-groups are examining the themes identified in the Agri-vision 2015 Action Plan. A draft has been submitted to the Management Advisory Committee for consideration.</p>	
166	Teagasc and Bord Bia will also consider the implications of this plan for their organisations.	B
	Teagasc and Bord Bia have taken full account of the AV2015 Action Plan in the development of their organisational strategies.	
167	A forum involving the main stakeholders, including farmers, processors consumers and retailers, as well as relevant public bodies, will be established to consider key issues for the future of the sector. The forum will also receive progress reports on the implementation of this action plan and will focus in particular on the role of the private sector in fulfilling its objectives	A
	<p>The Stakeholder Forum was held on 23 March 2007 in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, hosted by Minister Coughlan. It involved key stakeholders from the agriculture and food industry and included Irish, EU and USA keynote speakers to develop on key issues for the future of the sector. The first progress report on the AgriVision 2015 Action Plan was presented to the forum. See also Actions 49 and 50.</p>	