

Republic of Ireland
Proposed Renewed Programme for Government
10th October 2009

Agriculture and Food (page 14)

- We will support a well-resourced CAP post 2013 to underpin a strong European agricultural and food production base.
- We will obtain EU approval for, and implement, the revised Rural Development Programme which includes targeted agri-environment and farm investment measures, consistent with full drawdown of EU funding.
- We will continue to support family farms through a more targeted scheme of onfarm investment. We will also continue to support low-income farmers through the Farm Assist Scheme and adapt it in consultation with the relevant farming organisations.
- We will support Teagasc in enhancing its scientific capacity to enable it to foster science-based innovation on farms and in firms.
- Ensure the achievement of the target of 5% of land in organic agriculture and meet the growing demand for domestically produced organic produce by providing adequate resources and supports for the achievement of the target, with a focus on import substitution in areas where Ireland is under producing at present e.g. horticulture. Beginning in 2010, and rising in subsequent years, stepping up supports for the Organic Farming Scheme for conversion to organic production, Capital Grants for the Organic Sector and Non-Capital costs.

• *Declare the Republic of Ireland a GM-Free Zone, free from the cultivation of all GM plants.*

• *To optimise Ireland's competitive advantage as a GM-Free country, we will introduce a voluntary GM-Free logo for use in all relevant product labelling and advertising, similar to a scheme recently introduced in Germany.*

- Conduct a review of our National Food Security Policy to develop resilience in food production capacity to future proof against substantial rises in price and availability of oil and to meet the challenge of Climate Change.
- We will increase horticulture production to meet the requirements for Irish produced fruit and vegetables, in line with recommendations in the Obesity Report.
- We will ensure that new public procurement guidelines for food include criteria based on giving greater weight to sustainable local produce, seasonal menus and organic production, building on good practice in other EU countries in this area.
- We will review standards to ensure that micro production and direct selling by producers are not impeded, building on good practice from other EU countries.
- We will promote a positive environment within the food inspection systems to foster innovation in the food business. In particular we will ensure adequate training and support for relevant officials to assist them in providing advice to start-ups, facilitating growth and innovation and fostering a problem-solving environment within the system.
- We will promote and support a network of farmers' markets at Local Authority level to encourage more direct selling from producers to consumers.
- We will develop a template for the establishment of farm-gate shops and ensure

that the necessary legislative arrangements are made to facilitate this.

- We will develop and introduce a healthy schools' meals policy, building on existing pilot projects, and implement it gradually across the country.