



PRESS RELEASE

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Government must support the Agriculture and Land Use sectors in taking climate action says Climate Change Advisory Council

The Climate Change Advisory Council has said that Government needs to urgently support and incentivise the rapid uptake of cost-effective farming measures to reduce agricultural emissions.

The recommendations are included within the Council's annual review of Agriculture and Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector which was published today. The Agriculture sector is the largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for 34.3% of Ireland's emissions in 2023. The LULUCF sector is a net source of emissions in Ireland, accounting for an additional 9.3% of total national emissions.

Marie Donnelly, Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Council said, *"Government needs to communicate the opportunities and incentivise proven measures for farmers, suppliers and the wider industry. Key areas of impactful gains include the accelerated roll out of protected urea fertiliser, increased uptake of methane reducing feed and manure additives and also the early finishing of livestock."*

"Positive news is that the Organic Farming Scheme has helped to treble the area organically farmed in Ireland since 2021. Incentives and supports are required to improve land management practices across all land uses to enhance resilience to the impacts of climate change and improve biodiversity with measures such as water table management, mixed swards, hedgerows and woodlands extension."

The Council has signalled real concern about Ireland's forestry, with forests becoming a source of emissions rather than a carbon sink due to a large proportion of the national forest estate approaching harvesting age, while afforestation rates have been insufficient to balance the removal of stored carbon.

Commenting Dr Cara Augustenborg, member of the Climate Change Advisory Council said, *"The Council's recommendations reflect the scale of the challenge for the agriculture and forestry sector to help meet our long-term national climate objectives, covering the range of changes needed from system-wide, strategic measures to technical, on-farm measures, in addition to more work required on societal engagement and supporting how agriculture will adapt to climate change."*

Developments within forestry present a particular challenge to meeting our long-term national climate objective. We want to see Government engage with foresters, farmers and communities to set out the financial opportunity and crucial role that forestry plays in our climate and biodiversity objectives. Government must also provide improved guidance on procedures for the Forestry Programme to encourage uptake."

In its Review, the Council has also recommended that Government urgently complete the Land Use Review and implement policies that align with long-term climate and biodiversity objectives.

Finally, Government needs to establish a robust implementation plan for the Biomethane Strategy, providing the necessary supports and incentives to underpin the business case for the production and use of biomethane.

ENDS

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