Challenges facing the Tillage sector in Ireland today

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An unlevel playing field

Introduction

* **The difficulties and additional costs associated with:**
  * Current grain prices
  * Greening and Nitrates
  * Imported grain
  * Reduction in pesticides available for use
* **Teagasc Tillage Stakeholders Group**

Grain Prices

* Low grain prices
* Current prices not sustainable
* 2016 feed barley approx. €130/t
* Teagasc costs/t for 2017 –

Winter barley : €126/t

Spring Barley : €123/t

The Greening Effect!

Greening requirements

* Three crops required when farming over 30ha
* Approx. 87% of land is grassland
* Ecological Focus Areas (EFA)
* Farming over 15ha – requires 5% of EFA
* 'One cap fits all' approach not practical
* Tillage is the only sector inconvenienced by Greening

  - Why is this??

Nitrates

* Establishment of a crop within 6 weeks of ploughing or spraying off
* Could be in breach of regulations if the weather goes against you
* Much less winter ploughing due to nitrates
* 6 weeks needed to break the green bridge for aphids
    * Is this exacerbating our aphid problems?
* Should there be an allowance for spreading of phosphorus in Autumn?

Grain Imports

* We produce approximately four million tonnes of feed
* We harvest somewhere between 2.0 and 2.5 million tonnes of grain
* Use of municipal sludge not allowed under IGAS
* Use allowed in many European countries and beyond
* Pesticides withdrawn in EU, frequently used elsewhere
* Livestock farmers need to demand higher inclusion rates of native grain in rations
* Farm to Farm trade

Chemicals

* Reducing pool of chemicals at our disposal
* Very strict policy on the availability and use of pesticides in the EU
* Chemical withdrawal decisions sometimes political rather than science?


Perfect emergence

But then .....


Leather-jackets can decimate crops

The agchem sector

* Rigorous controls at EU level for new chemicals:
* Massive increase in cost of bringing new products to market
  * 1985- €110m, 2015 €330m (estimated)
* Resulting in lower AgChem company R&D spend for European markets
* 35% of global R&D in Europe in 1980's -- Approx 8% today
* More focus on research to provide genetic solutions through seeds and traits
* Less focus on Europe due to non-acceptance of GM

Policy decisions

- Teagasc Knowledge Transfer (KT) discussion groups
- Disappointing that we still do not have a TAMS for tillage
- Partnerships

Teagasc Tillage Stakeholders Group

Our purpose and role :

To provide advice, guidance and feedback to Teagasc

To identify and prioritise the key stakeholder issues to be addressed by the Teagasc Crops Research and Knowledge Transfer programmes

Stakeholder involvement

<u>Food Wise 2025:</u>

Department of Agriculture roadmap for the future development of agriculture in Ireland.

<u>High Level Implementation Committee (HLIC):</u>

To help implement the strategies and action plans needed for Food Wise 2025

Chaired by the Minister for Agriculture, Michael Creed.

HLIC meeting

- Promotion of native grain in both feed and drinks industries.
- Tweaks in land leasing tax concessions
- Growing bottle-neck in protein crop utilisation
- Consider granting Irish Oatmeal PGI (Protected Geographical Indicator) status
- General reaction was broadly positive

Conclusion

<u>Why is it vital we have a profitable tillage sector in the future?</u>

* Locally produced grain of highest quality
* Only source of straw for livestock sector
* Tillage farms are a vital outlet for animal manures
* No tillage sector = complete dependence on imported grains
* Negative impact on our expanding drinks industry


Thank you