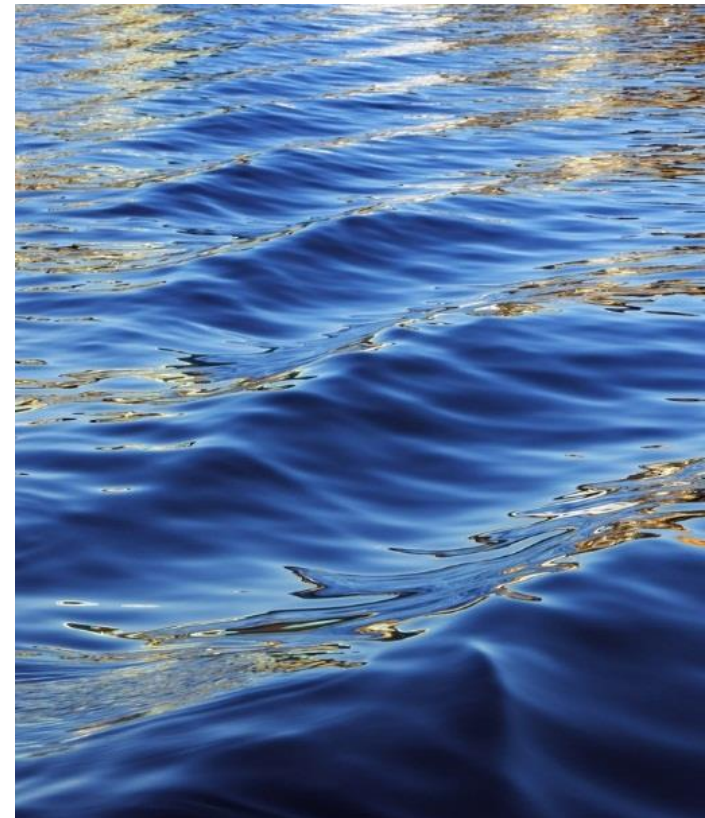




Sustainable Agriculture



National Rural Network



What is Sustainable Agriculture?

Sustainability has become an increasingly important concept in all walks of life and particularly for the Irish agricultural sector.

From an agricultural perspective, a sustainable system focuses on meeting market demands for produce, whilst remaining profitable and having no or a positive impact on the environment.

Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious about the sustainability of the products they purchase with regards animal welfare, traceability and environmental standards to which they have been produced.



Benefits of Sustainable Systems

Sustainable agriculture has a number of benefits including environmentally and financially through potential premiums for produce like that seen from organic products, increased productivity and a reduced reliance on expensive inputs like chemical fertilisers and pesticides.

Sustainable systems helps protect soil and water quality, enhances biodiversity by maintaining healthy ecosystems and reduces green house emissions.



Sustainable Agriculture at Farm Level

Sustainable agriculture at an individual farm level is possible but not without challenges and changes in practices. Practices which can help contribute to a sustainable agricultural sector include:

- Moving towards multispecies and clover swards
- Reduction in fertiliser use and changes in fertiliser types
- Younger finishing of cattle
- Modified crop rotations and minimum tillage
- Nutrient Management Planning and correcting soil fertility whilst increasing grass utilisation



Farm to Fork

The Farm to Fork strategy outlines how the agricultural sector will help achieve the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 as set out in the European Green Deal

The F2F Strategy aims to:

- Reduce the usage of pesticides and antimicrobials by 50%
- Reduce biodiversity loss
- Improve animal welfare
- Increase the land farmed organically to 25% of EU agricultural land area
- Reduce fertiliser usage by 20%