



## PRESS RELEASE

### ACA welcome announcement on pioneering Farm Environment Survey pilot

21<sup>st</sup> May 2021

The ACA welcome the announcement this morning by DAFM Ministers McConalogue, Heydon and Hackett of the **Farm Environmental Survey pilot**, which will support biodiversity measurement at farm level.

**ACA President, Tom Canning** stated this afternoon ‘as part of ACA’s key targets in 2021 and 2022 and towards the next CAP, submitted to the DAFM last autumn, we outlined the critical need for base line measurements on Irish farms. Without any baseline assessment, it will be very difficult to gauge the success of any environmental programmes on Irish farms in the next decade. The positive contributions by farmers must be measured and acknowledged’.

Canning added ‘there has always been anecdotal evidence to suggest that previous environmental schemes in Ireland such as the entire Rural Environment Protection Schemes (REPS) and Agricultural Environmental Options Scheme (AEOS) have been beneficial to the environment and countryside. Both farmers and farm advisors believe that both schemes did have positive effects but regrettably there was no significant measuring or recording completed, either in advance or during these successful programmes’. He continued by stating ‘it is critical for the future of the entire agricultural sector, and to mitigate any proposed reductions or otherwise, that baseline measurements of Irish farms is conducted. ACA are confident that there are significant environmental assets currently in Ireland, once measured, to greatly assist in our commitments to both our National and EU responsibilities under climate change and we welcome this announcement today’.

He concluded by stating ‘the commitment in this pilot to the training of advisors is a major advancement for ACA members, as a consequence of the efforts of our Association in working closely with the DAFM to ensure such measures are introduced. The benefits of having training for our members will ensure that ACA, as the largest provider of farm advice in Ireland, can continue to support our large farmer client base with advisory services required for the current and future challenges of our sector’.

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**Note to Editors:**

The Agricultural Consultants Association (ACA) are the sole representative body for private agricultural consultants and advisors in Ireland. Currently the ACA have 166 member offices across all of Ireland and employ 272 Agricultural and Environmental graduates, 17 Forestry Consultants and 120 employed as either administration or technical staff. Members of ACA advise in the region of 55,000 Irish farmers, confirming the private advisory service as the largest in Ireland.

**New Vision and Mission Statement of ACA**

1. Our vision is to be the most influential and dynamic Agri-business association consulted nationally and internationally and recognised for its excellence in representing the world-class independent professional Agri-business advisors in Ireland
2. The Mission statement: to bring our Vision into reality the Association represents and supports its members and is the professional body consulted on policy by government. The Association ensures that standards of excellence are maintained among the members through its code of ethics, admission qualifications and continuous professional education. This allows members to independently advise and assist the Irish farming community to be profitably sustainable economically, environmentally and socially to ensure an enhanced quality of life for all in Ireland.