



6th October 2021

ACA welcome appointment of new Teagasc Director as a significant opportunity for an innovative collaborative era in the Irish farm advisory service

The ACA welcome the appointment of Frank O'Mara as the new Director of Teagasc as a significant opportunity for an innovative collaborative era in the Irish farm advisory service.

ACA President, Tom Canning, stated this afternoon, 'as the largest provider of advice to Irish farmers, ACA perceive the new Teagasc Director appointment as a huge opportunity to embrace reform for the betterment of the majority of Irish farmers, taking a holistic approach to farm advice with the inclusion of the private sector and their farmer clients in various programmes. 3 out of every 4 farmers use either ACA or Teagasc for advisory services which is a very positive position for Ireland but in many ways our overall strategy for the dissemination of advice is not linked up and excludes ACA and our farmer clients.'

Canning added 'there are so many challenges for our sector presently but one of the untapped opportunities is a joined up approach between the ACA and Teagasc to ensure the 55,000 ACA farmer clients receive state funded research, tools and materials, similar to Teagasc clients. Once we agree on ways to address this issue, then can we both target the remaining 35,000 farmers who do not engage with either of us and find ways to bring the latest research/advice to them'. **Canning continued by stating** 'ACA have made numerous attempts in the past 3 years to engage and find ways to address this situation and we are now very hopeful that with Frank's appointment, we can explore and commence discussions on national and regional collaborative opportunities and bring world class research to more farmers. Remaining as we are or have been in the past is no longer desirable and indeed a big risk, as the sector requires full collaboration to ensure we not only meet our sectoral targets, but also find ways to improve sustainability, including farmers' incomes, and other challenges by working together across many programmes including the ASSAP (Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advice Programme), Signpost farms and a future Knowledge Transfer'.

Canning concluded 'ACA congratulate Frank on a great personal achievement but it comes with the expectation from our association and members that with a new CAP (Common Agricultural Policy), which includes a proposed reformed AKIS (Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System), a solution and working agreement between us will now be found to benefit the entire agri sector and the majority of farmers in Ireland'.

ENDS

NOTE: 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.

For more information contact Breian Carroll General Secretary email: breiancarroll@aca.ie