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Water Matters - agriculture

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Primary pressures

- **Enrichment**
Nutrients – nitrogen and phosphate contamination leading to eutrophication
- **Organic pollution**
Slurry / silage effluent leading depletion of oxygen and direct contamination
- **Pesticides** – dangerous substances



Regional concerns

- Rapid change
 - CAP reform
 - intensification
 - land abandonment
 - sugar reform
 - Pressure for renewables
- Sedimentation
- Used sheep dip
- Fallen animals
- Overgrazing
- Drainage – hydro-morphological alterations
- Abstraction – irrigation / washing / domestic



Current controls - 1

Decoupling – payments no longer linked to production

Cross compliance for the single farm payment

- Good Agricultural and Ecological Condition
 - Prevent soil erosion
 - Maintain soil organic matter levels
 - Maintain soil structure
 - Ensure minimum level of maintenance
- Statutory management requirements - environmental
 - Habitats
 - Birds
 - Groundwater
 - Sewage sludge
 - Nitrates Directive



Current controls - 2

- **Nitrates Directive Action Programme**

- Stocking limit – 170kgN/ha/year
- Minimum storage requirements
- Closed period for organic and inorganic fertiliser
- Restricted spreading methods
- Protection zones around water bodies – chemical / organic
- Dirty water controls
- Increasing N efficiency targets
- Farm Storage Aid



Current controls - 3

Phosphate regulations

- Northern Ireland
 - No chemical P fertiliser unless crop need proven
 - Commitment to future farm P balance
- Republic of Ireland
 - Local authority licensing – identify / address / monitor

Integrated Pollution and Prevention Control

- Intensive pig / poultry sector

Agri-environment schemes

- Northern Ireland – Countryside Management Scheme
- Ireland – Rural Environment Payment Scheme



Are these measures sufficient? - 1

- **Decoupling**
 - Market forces
 - Overall extensification - pockets of intensification?
- **Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition**
 - Soil management – P control
- **Groundwater** – some additional bye-laws
- **Sewage sludge** – in accordance with Nutrient Management Plan
- **Nitrates action plan**
 - Politics vs science
 - Understanding / compliance
 - Implementation delay
 - Stocking limit on farm not field basis
 - Traceability of movement
 - Derogation
 - Action programme review 2009
 - Farm nutrient surplus tracking - multifactoral



Are these measures sufficient? - 2

- **Phosphate Regulations**

- National Implementation Report 2005

“Despite implementation of local authority measures nationally water quality has not yet improved significantly”

- **Integrated Pollution and Prevention Control**

- Exemptions for small units

- **Agri-environment**

- Voluntary
- Monitored by numbers/areas not measures
- Many ‘masters’



Additional measures proposed

- Grant aid for technical solutions to excess slurry problem
- Voluntary agri-environment measures
 - Riparian zone restoration in sensitive areas
- Education and awareness raising programmes



Rural Development Programme Ireland 2007-2013

- **Axis 1 – Competitiveness**
 - 111 Vocational training – cross compliance / environmental regulations
 - 121 Modernization of agricultural buildings – water storage / rain water harvesting
- **Axis 3 – Quality of life in rural areas**
 - 312 Business creation and development
 - 313 Encouragement of tourism activities
 - 321 Basic services for the economy and rural population
 - 322 Village renewal and development
 - 323 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
- **Axis 4 – LEADER**
 - 421 Implementing co-operation projects – stakeholders developing management strategies for lake catchments



Rural Development Programme Ireland 2007-2013

- **Axis 2 – Improving the environment**

- **214** Agri-environment payments

- **Core measures relating to water**

- Farm nutrient management plan
 - Protect and maintain water ways
 - Restrict use of pesticides / fertilisers around waterways

- **Optional measures for water**

- Increased water margin
 - No bovine access
 - Use of planted buffer zones

- **Supplementary measure for water**

- Riparian zones – 10m-30m
 - Lake catchments

- **213** Payments linked to Natura 2000 AND WFD - (not NI)



Thank you

