

Department of Agriculture & Food Scheme

2006-2009

under Section 11 of the

Official Languages Act 2003



THE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE & FOOD
AN ROINN TALMHAÍOCHTA AGUS BIA

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Introduction & Background

This scheme was prepared by the Department of Agriculture & Food pursuant to Section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003 (the Act). Section 11 provides for the preparation by public bodies of a statutory Scheme detailing the services they will provide

- through the medium of Irish
- through the medium of English, and
- through the medium of Irish and English

and the measures to be adopted to ensure that any service not provided by the body through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

Guidelines for preparation of a scheme

This Scheme has been drawn up in accordance with guidelines prepared by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. These guidelines were prepared in conjunction with an Inter-Departmental Working Group which included representatives of this Department.

The Department published an advertisement in the national papers on 7 December, 2004 inviting submissions in relation to the preparation of the draft Scheme from interested parties. A small number of submissions were received and are available on the Department's website www.agriculture.gov.ie

Formulation of the Scheme has been informed by, inter alia, these submissions and also by views put forward by members of staff in the Department.

The content of the Language Scheme

A Departmental Working Group comprising representatives from key functional areas of the Department has assisted in drafting the Scheme. Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the Scheme will rest with the Head of Divisions. It is intended that reports on implementation of the Plan will be submitted to the Management Advisory Committee (MAC).

The Scheme includes a commitment to assess on an ongoing basis the level of demand for services through Irish and to ensure that the Department strives to meet this demand in a realistic, planned, coherent and accessible way.

Commencement of Scheme

This Scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. The Scheme will commence with effect from 1st June 2006 and shall remain in force for a period of 3 years from this date, or until a new Scheme has been confirmed by the Minister pursuant to Section 15 of the Act, whichever is the earlier.

Chapter 1

The Department

1.1 Overview of the Department of Agriculture & Food

There are over 4,500 staff members working in the Department, 75% of whom are working outside of Dublin in locations at regional, county and local levels.

In 2001 a new structure was put in place within the Department to enhance organisational flexibility and competence. This structure consists of 4 groups. These are comprised of 11 units, each headed by a member of the Management Advisory Committee. In turn there are 65 divisions each led by a Head of Division. The Department has over 4,500 staff working in 70 different locations around the country on some 250 schemes and services. It should also be noted that there are 85 different grades within the Department, which is an indication of the wide range of services and activities that come within our remit, and of the diversity of skills required.

In the preparation of the Department's 65 Business Plans particular attention is focused on the issue of Quality Customer Service. This ensures that staff at all levels throughout the organisation are continually working towards the delivery of a service that is accessible and relevant to all our customers and that accommodates the needs of particular groups of customers under the equality legislation.

1.2 Customers and Clients

Farmers and the food industry continue to form a very significant part of our customer base and are actively represented by their organisations. The Department has taken steps in recent years to enhance the means by which other stakeholders can represent their views on policies and practices which come within its remit (e.g. consumer interests, animal welfare organisations, etc).

Our overall approach to our customers encompasses a wide range of initiatives and is set out in a number of action plans and policy documents. As a Department, our Mission, as expressed in our Strategic Plan is:

To lead the sustainable development of a competitive, consumer focused agri-food sector and to contribute to a vibrant rural economy and society

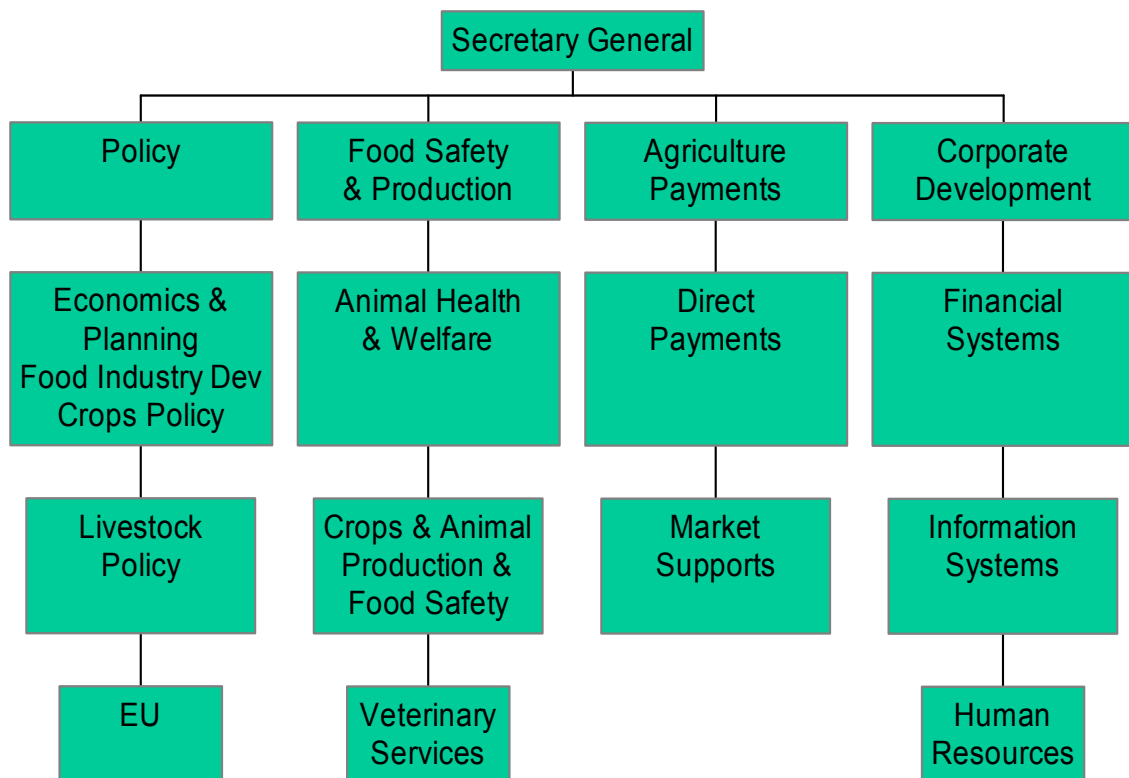
The services provided by the Department are very extensive and complex and include:

- promotion of the agri-food sector and support for the marketing of Ireland's agri-food output
- sectoral development (including forestry)
- representation of Ireland in international fora (most notably the EU) on matters relating to agriculture and food
- payments to farmers
- market support measures
- protection and enhancement of animal health and welfare
- crop production
- rural development

- a range of consumer protection / food safety measures
- an array of inspection services in a variety of areas of activity
- the operation of veterinary services (including related laboratory facilities)
- licensing, regulation, enforcement and investigative functions across a spectrum of areas of operation relating to agricultural production and processing.

1.3 Functional Areas of the Department

The structure of the Department consists of 4 Groups – Policy; Food Safety and Production; Agriculture Payments and Corporate Development comprising 11 units as follows:



Many of the staff of the Department have responsibilities which extend across Divisional `demarcation` lines and inter-disciplinary co-operation is a feature of many areas of work. This requires particular co-ordination mechanisms to maintain the efficient operation of each Group. Many issues that arise cut across the various functional areas and require Department wide co-ordination.

Chapter 2

Enhancement of Services to be provided bilingually - First Scheme

2.1 Background

The Department will implement a Scheme of measures aimed at providing services through Irish in accordance with the terms of the Official Languages Act 2003. To date the Department has not made general provision for the provision of services in Irish, primarily because there has been minimal demand for services through Irish. While some staff with a personal competence in the language provide services through Irish, there are no formal arrangements in place. It must also be stated that in common with many Departments, there appears to be a low level competence in spoken and written Irish among the staff of the Department. The Corporate Affairs Division conducted a survey earlier in the year, in order to assess the level of competence in Irish and, by extension, the training needs of the Department. The results of this survey are attached in Appendix 2.

During the course of this and future Schemes the Department is committed to enhancing its capabilities and access for clients in this regard. This is a long-term project as the Department's remit is broad and complex. Over €3b is paid out annually and the new Single Payment alone will account for €1.3b of this. It is important that the professional service currently provided by the staff and expected by the Department's clients, across a wide spectrum of areas of responsibility / activity, is not compromised by trying to introduce an overly hasty, overly ambitious or ill-considered Scheme. It is also important to bear in mind that new staff entering the Department under decentralisation will need to acquire the necessary knowledge about the Department as well as improving, along with existing staff, their proficiency in Irish. Therefore, the overall project necessary to meet the requirements of the Official Languages Act 2003 will necessarily be progressed on a phased basis.

2.2 – Features of the Scheme

- The Department will provide reception, computer kiosk and phone-answering services in Irish in our regional offices and local offices. Roll out will be in place by the end of May, 2009 (with immediate priority being given to our offices serving the seven Gaeltacht regions).
- Details of schemes are not currently available in Irish on the Department's website. As new schemes / services are introduced, the Department will initially provide summary details on the website in both Irish and English, with a view to providing full bilingual texts over the period of the Plan.
- The Department does not currently provide an online bilingual service to customers but arrangements will be put in place in the course of the scheme to allow all new online web-based systems to be provided to customers bilingually.
- The Department will establish via its Customer Services/ IT units a generic e-mail address for queries 'as Gaeilge'.
- The Department does not have offices situated in a Gaeltacht area. As a pilot project, the Department will by the end of 2006 provide customers in Local Offices serving the Gaeltacht regions in Galway (office in Galway City) and Kerry (office in Tralee) with the opportunity to transact business through Irish

in relation to schemes and services likely to be most relevant to Irish speakers in the catchment areas of such offices.

- The Department will by the end of 2006 identify those forms / schemes likely to be most relevant to customers in Irish-speaking areas. The Department will arrange for translation of the appropriate documentation.
- The Department will set up, no later than June 2006, a suitably staffed and resourced Irish Language Unit to assist in its implementation and to support the enhancement and delivery of particular services through Irish in / by other units of the Department.
- Pending the establishment within the Department of an Irish Language Unit, the Department is engaging external translation services to support translation requirements.
- Having regard to the nature of our Press Releases, the Department will ensure that 20% of our Press Releases will issue in both English and Irish to those papers which require them by the end of the scheme.

2.3 Recruitment and Placement

The following measures will be put in place by Personnel Division in order that an adequate number of staff with proficiency in the Irish Language are recruited and retained within the Department:

- Appropriate placement of staff with a proficiency in spoken and written Irish will be effected throughout the Department.
- As part of its recruitment policy when suitable people are not available through general entry-level competitions, the Department, in co-operation with the Public Appointments Service, may publicly advertise competitions for staff to work through Irish.
- Recruitment policy will be reviewed with proficiency in the Irish language (both written and oral) being an essential requirement for posts in the Irish Language Unit.

2.4 Training and Development

There is an ongoing commitment to provide appropriate training and development for all staff to meet the evolving needs of our customers and to develop the full potential of staff during their careers in the Department.

The Training Unit/Personnel Division (and, where appropriate, other support Divisions) will:-

- Include language awareness (with particular emphasis on delivery of the Plan) in staff seminars and as part of both Induction and Customer Service training courses so as to ensure that staff:
 - ❑ understand the context and background to the policy;
 - ❑ understand the necessity to implement a bilingual policy;

- are fully informed about how the policy will affect their work and where they can receive assistance.
- Promote interest in language training courses, such as courses and the Scholarship Scheme offered by Gaeleagras, and both encourage and support staff in attending such courses.
- Some staff with a reasonable proficiency in Irish may express interest in participating in initiatives relating to the provision of services through Irish if specific training needs (e.g. general business and specific agricultural terminology) are met. The relevant staff will be further surveyed to see if any further volunteers would be willing to work in Irish if specific training were to be made available to them.
- Depending on the outcome of the above and in the context of this Scheme, the Training Unit will develop Irish language training programmes focused on specific customer service needs for various sections/ work areas that interface with customers who seek one-to-one service in Irish.
- The Department may consider offering time in lieu to officers attending Irish language courses outside of normal working hours.

2.5 Improving the Department's Irish language capability

The following initiatives are proposed in order to ensure that both the general level of competency in Irish among the Department's staff and its capability to provide services through Irish to the public are improved during the duration of the Scheme: -

- The Department has undertaken an initial survey of Irish language competence among the staff of the Department. The results of this and subsequent surveys will be used to inform actions in developing language capability within the Department
- Information will be given (including on the eZone) to staff in relation to the range of Irish language classes available outside office hours (e.g. third –level diploma in Irish; Sult; Gael-Linn, etc)
- The Department will establish a monitoring system to track issues of supply and demand for Irish language services across all areas of the Department, with a view to identifying areas of greatest demand / priority and seeking to match supply with demand for particular services through Irish.
- The Irish Language Unit when established will set up a special site on e-zone where a range of standard letters in Irish are available to staff. Consideration will also be given to making a glossary of appropriate words / terms likely to be used in dealings with customers available in Irish on the eZone.

Chapter 3

Monitoring and Review

3.1 Monitoring and Review

The Management Advisory Committee of the Department will keep the effective operation of the Scheme under review. Implementation of the Scheme will be integrated into the Department's business planning processes.

The day-to-day monitoring function will be carried out primarily by line managers who are responsible for the implementation of the Scheme within their own areas. Each area will report on a regular basis to the relevant Assistant Secretary and regular reports will be submitted to the MAC. The Irish Language Unit, within Corporate Affairs structures, will play an ongoing role in monitoring, supporting and driving implementation of the Plan.

Chapter 4

Publicising of Agreed Scheme

4.1 Publicising of Agreed Scheme

The contents of this Scheme along with the commitments and provisions of the Scheme will be publicised to the general public by means of: -

- Press Release
- Official Launch of the Scheme
- Advertising of provisions
- Circulation to appropriate agencies and public bodies
- Website

A copy of this scheme has also been forwarded to Oifig Choimisinéir na dTeangacha Oifigiúla.

Appendix 1

Summary of Services/Activities provided by the Department.

This Chapter sets out the position in relation to service provision/activities by individual offices within the Department.

The following is a list of the work areas within the Department providing one-to-one service in English. The Department does not provide service in Irish on a formal basis. However it has tried to practically facilitate people who want to carry out their business in Irish.

A – Z OF DEPARTMENT SERVICES

Division/Section

Accommodation

Accounts Division, Cavan

- Executes all payment and receipt transactions
- Maintains all accounting records
- Controls and supports the Accounts System and the Corporate Customer System

Agricultural Structural Funds Division

- General Agricultural Structural Policy
- Monitoring and Control of Structural Funds

Agricultural Structures Division (Wexford)

- Scheme of Farm Retirement from Farming
- Organic Farming Unit
- Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS)
- Environment Policy Section

Agriculture Appeals Office, Kilminchy Court, Portlaoise

Animal Health and Welfare Division

- Class A Diseases
- Class B Diseases
- Compulsory Breeding Programme for Sheep
- National Genotype Programme
- National Sheep Identification System
- National Pig Identification and Tracing System
- International Transport of Live Animals
- Import/Export of Livestock, Horses and Birds
- EU Pet Passport System / Quarantine Procedures
- Animal Welfare Issues
- Marts
- Swill

Licensing of Purchasing of Mammalian Meat and Bone Meal
Veterinary Laboratory Services

- Clinical Diagnostic Service
- Laboratory testing of samples

Control of Horses
Sheep Scab
Zoonoses

Central Meat Control Laboratory

Compensatory Allowance, Mayo

Corporate Affairs Division

Freedom of Information Unit
Press and Information Office
Quality Services Unit
Enquiry Unit
Library

Crops Policy and State Bodies

Policy for cereals, sugar, bananas, olive oil, hops, tobacco and fibre plants
Administration of Research Stimulus Fund
Teagasc and the Irish National Stud Co. Ltd

Crop Production & Safety

Animal Feeding stuffs
Cereal Variety
Cereal Seed Testing & Variety Testing Seed Certification
Fertilizers & Plant Trade
Horticulture/Potatoes
NDP Grant Aid (Horticulture, Potatoes & Grain Storage)
Seed Testing
Pesticides

Dairy Science Laboratory, Backweston, Leixlip, Co Kildare

Economics and Planning Division

ERAD

T.B. and Brucellosis Eradication Schemes
Collection of Disease Levies
Animal Remedies Regulations (including enforcement)
National Residue Plan
Veterinary Surgeons Legislation, Veterinary Medicines

EU/Trade

Export Refunds – Wexford

Payment of export refunds to traders
Issue of export licences for refundable products
Issue of import licences for dairy, cereals and certain other products
Management of related securities

Finance Division

Food Division

Capital investment Scheme for marketing and processing of agricultural products
Institutional Research and Development
Food Directives and Regulations
Protection of geographical indications/designations of origin
Promotion and information measures under Regulations (EU) 2826/2000 and 2702/1999
Wine and Ethyl Alcohol Import Licences

Food Safety Liaison Division

Food Safety Liaison Unit
Animal Product Imports & Re-imports

Forestry Service, Wexford - Administration

Grants and Premiums
Appeals
Felling
Forestry Planning and Development
Forestry Promotion and Training
Policy

Forest Service Inspectorate, Dublin (and countrywide- see under "Local Offices)

Implementation of national forest policy, promotion of private forestry
National Forest Inventory
Inspection and approval of planting and other forestry grants schemes
Forest Protection, Forest Reproductive material, Export of Wood Packaging
Environmental Audit
Control of felling and promotion of research in forestry and forest produce

Horticulture/State Bodies**Information Systems Division****Internal Audit**

Provision of independent, objective assurance and consultancy services to the Department's operations.
Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Department's control

Irish Horse Board, Maynooth, Co Kildare**ISO Projects Management Division****Lands Division, Cavan****Legal Services Division****Livestock Breeding, Cavan****Management Services Division**

Provision and advice on organisational development, resource deployment, business process improvement and change management
Support on decentralisation planning
Organisation of seminars as appropriate when required on SMI issues

Meat Policy Division

Beef Policy
Central Fees Unit

Sheepmeat/Meat Trade
Pigmeat
Poultry/Eggs

Meat Hygiene and Animal By-products

Beef, Sheep meat, Pigmeat and Poultry plants
Knackeries
Rendering
Composting and biogas production

Milk Policy Division

Trade and Markets
Milk Quota Policy/Allocation and Transfers
Milk Quota Verification/Superlevy
Dairy Hygiene

Milk Subsidies, Wexford

National Beef Assurance Division

CMMS
Registration of Dealers

National Cereal Breeding Station, Backweston, Leixlip, Co Kildare

On-Farm Investment Schemes/ Subsidies and Storage Division, Wexford

On-Farm Investments:

- Farm Waste Management Scheme
- Dairy Hygiene Scheme
- Alternative Enterprises
- Scheme of Installation Aid
- Improvements in Animal Welfare Standards (Sow Housing)

Irish Intervention Agency:

- Intervention Operations

Milk Subsidies:

- Hospital Butter Scheme
- Pastry Butter Scheme
- School Milk Scheme
- Animal Feed Scheme
- Casein Aid
- Casein in Cheese

Fallen Animals Collection Scheme

Meat and Bone Meal Disposal

Organic Farming, Wexford

Personnel Division

Administrative Staff
Agricultural Officers
Inspectorate Staff
Staff Training & Development
Veterinary/Legal Staff

Pesticide Control Service, Backweston, Leixlip, Co Kildare

**Records Branch, Land Commission
(National Archives Premises) Bishop Street, Dublin 8**

Seed Testing Station, Backweston, Lucan, Co Kildare

Single Payment Services, Portlaoise
Single Payment Processing
Single Payment Entitlements
Livestock Premium
National Reserve/Transfer of Entitlements
Cross Compliance

Specialist Farm Services, Environment and Evaluation
Specialist Farm Services
Soil Analysis Laboratories
Environmental issues
Evaluation

**Survey Branch, Land Commission
(National Archives Premises), Bishop Street, Dublin 8**

Veterinary Research Lab, Backweston, Leixlip, Co Kildare

REGIONAL OFFICES

Head Office Dublin	Agriculture House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2.
Castlebar Office	Michael Davitt House, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Cavan Office	Government Buildings, Farnham Street, Cavan, Co. Cavan.
Maynooth Office	Maynooth Business Campus, Block B, Maynooth Co. Kildare
Portlaoise Office	Old Abbeyleix Road, Portlaoise, Co Laois.
Wexford Office	Johnstown Castle Estate, Wexford, Co Wexford.

LOCAL OFFICES OF THE DEPARTMENT

The Department has a large network of local offices situated in the following locations.

V = Veterinary Office
L = Livestock Office

AES= Agricultural, Environmental and Structures (formerly Farm Development Services)
 F = Forestry

Offices serving the seven Gaeltacht regions are highlighted.

County	Service Provided	Address
Co Carlow	V/L/AES F	Industrial Estate, Athy Road, Carlow Church Street, Graiguecullen, Carlow
Co Cavan	V/L/AES	Government Offices, Farnham Street, Cavan
Co Clare	V/L/AES F	Government Offices, Kilrush Road, Ennis Francis Street, Clare
Co Cork	V/L/AES AES V/L/AES F F	Hibernian House, 80 South Mall Gooldshill, Mallow Darrara, Clonakilty Irish Life Building, South Mall, Cork 27 Townsend Street, Skibbereen,
Co Donegal	V/L AES AES AES F F	Meetinghouse St., Raphoe Public Services Centre, Drumlongher, Donegal Town Govt Offices, High Road Letterkenny Govt Offices, Oliver Plunkett Street, Letterkenny Social Welfare Building, Oliver Plunkett Road, Letterkenny Mill Road, Glenties
Co Dublin	V/L/AES	St. John's House, High Street, Tallaght Dublin 24
Co Galway	V/L AES AES F	Dockgate Building, Merchants Road, Galway The Mall, Tuam Main St., Loughrea Ross House, Merchants Road
Co Kerry	V/L/AES AES F	Govt Offices, Spa Road, Tralee Credit Union Building, Beech Road, Killarney Island Centre, Castleisland
Co Kildare	V/L AES	Poplar House, Poplar Square, Naas Spring Garden House, Sallins Road, Naas
Co Kilkenny	V/L/AES	Government Offices, Hebron Road, Kilkenny
Co Laois	V/L/AES	Government Offices, Abbeyleix Road, Portlaoise
Co Leitrim	V/L/AES	Government Offices, Carrick-on-Shannon
Co Limerick	V/L/AES F	St Munchin's House, Dock Road, Limerick St Munchin's House, Mallow Street, Limerick
Co Longford	V/L/AES	Government Offices, Ballinalee Road, Longford
Co Louth	V/L AES	North Quay, Drogheda Government Office, Millennium Centre, Dundalk

Co Mayo	V/L/AES AES AES	Michael Davitt House Castlebar Government Offices, Ballina The Square, Claremorris
Co Meath	V/L/AES	Government Offices, Kells Road, Navan
Co Monaghan	V/L AES	Main Street, Ballybay Old Garda Barracks, Monaghan
Co Offaly	V/L/AES F	Government Offices Clonminch, Tullamore Hamilton House, Emmet Street, Birr
Co Roscommon	V/L AES/F	Circular Rd., Roscommon Church St., Roscommon The Square, Castlerea (Rural Dev & Environment)
Co Sligo	V/L/AES/F	Government Offices, Cranmore Road, Sligo
Co Tipperary	V/L V/L/AES AES F F	Government Offices, Davis Street, Tipperary Government Offices, St Conlon's Road, Nenagh Government Offices, New Quay, Clonmel ACC House, Liberty Square, Thurles The Mill, Church Street, Cahir
Co Waterford	V/L AES/F F	The Glen, Waterford New Civic Offices, Davitts Quay, Dungarvan Customs House, The Quay, Waterford
Co Westmeath	V/L/F AES	Bellview, Dublin Road, Mullingar Pearse Street, Athlone
Co Wexford	V/L/AES	Vinegar Hill Lane, Templeshannon, Enniscorthy
Co. Wicklow	AES	No 2, Murrough, Wicklow Town

LABORATORIES AND FIELD STATIONS

Blood Testing Laboratory	Model Farm Road, Cork
Bull Performance Station	Tully, Kildare
Central Veterinary Laboratory	Backweston Leixlip, Co. Kildare
Central Meat Control Laboratory	Backweston Leixlip, Co. Kildare
Dairy Science Laboratory	Backweston Leixlip, Co. Kildare
Dairy Science Laboratory	Model Farm Road, Cork
Dairy Science Laboratory	Killeely Road, Limerick
Regional Veterinary Lab.	Model Farm Road, Cork
Regional Veterinary Lab.	Leggetsrath, Hebron Road, Kilkenny
Regional Veterinary Lab.	Knockalisheen, Limerick
Regional Veterinary Lab.	Fawcetts Bridge, Doonally, Sligo
Regional Veterinary Lab.	Coosan, Athlone, Co Westmeath
National Crop Variety Testing Centre	Backweston, Leixlip, Co Kildare
Pesticides Control Service	Backweston Leixlip, Co. Kildare
Potato Farm & Lab.	Tops, Raphoe, Co. Donegal
Seed Analysis Laboratory	Backweston Leixlip, Co. Kildare

Appendix 2

Results of Irish Survey

All staff were surveyed in March 2005 regarding their competence in Irish and asked if they were interested in training. Approximately 20% of staff replied. It should be noted that these results are based on self-assessment. The results are as follows:

Can speak, write and carry out their duties in Irish	19.3%
Can speak and write Irish but can only carry out some of their duties in Irish	13.5%
Can speak but cannot write in Irish	6.1%
Have some /little Irish but definitely interested in training	44.6%
Not interested in training	17.2%

Regardless of their level of competence, most staff who replied are interested in training.