

# Evolution of the Advisory services in Ireland, the role of part funded public services in the AKIS

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IPARD - SEMINAR ON RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE  
TRANSFER IN WESTERN BALKANS

# In this presentation, I will...

- Explain what Teagasc does,
- How public and private advisory services have evolved,
- Important developments which strengthen the advisor farmer relationships and
- How to increase participation and demand for services

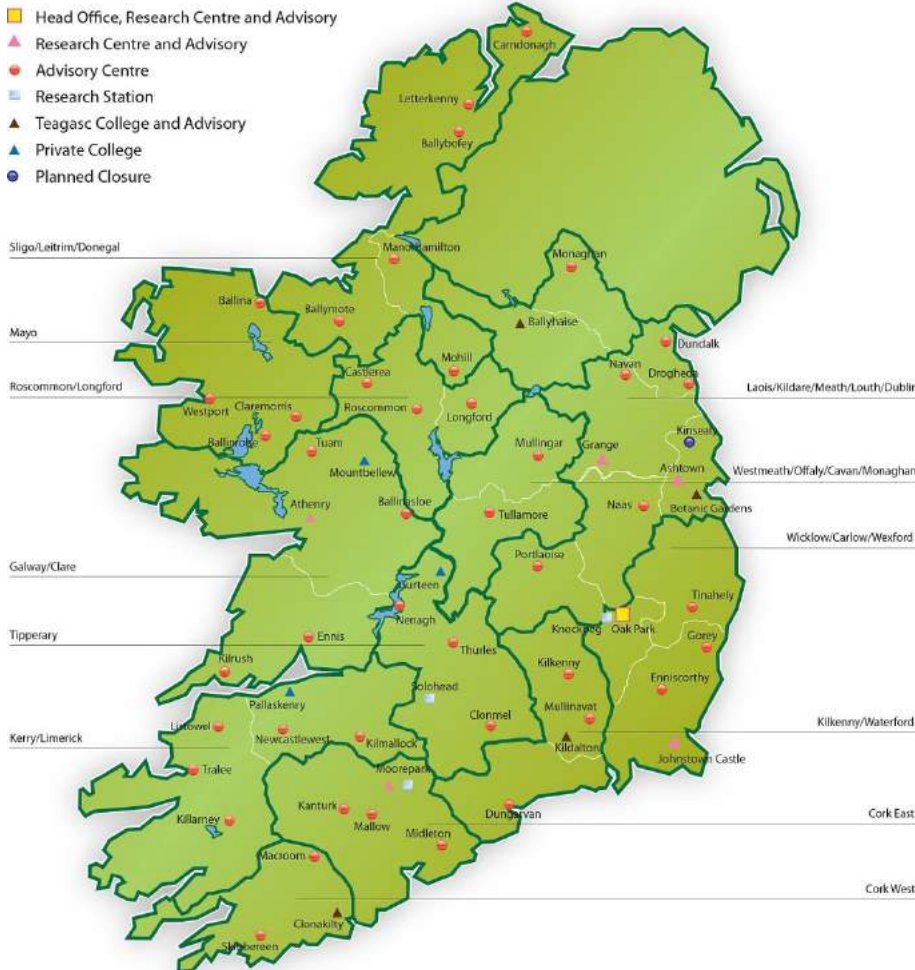


# A long tradition of Farm Advisors

- Part of Irish Potato Famine relief 1840's
- Agriculture Ministry 1900 – Public service advice
- Local Authorities (county) 1932
- National body (ACOT) 1981
- Teagasc 1988

# Teagasc Locations & Staff

52 Advisory offices  
 4 Teagasc colleges  
 3 Private colleges  
 7 Research Centres



(1,228)	Perm.	Con.	Total
Researchers	115	115	227
Advisors	240	37	277
Education	53	32	85
Specialists	65	0	65



760 Professional staff who interact with the Irish AKIS daily.



# Teagasc Funding

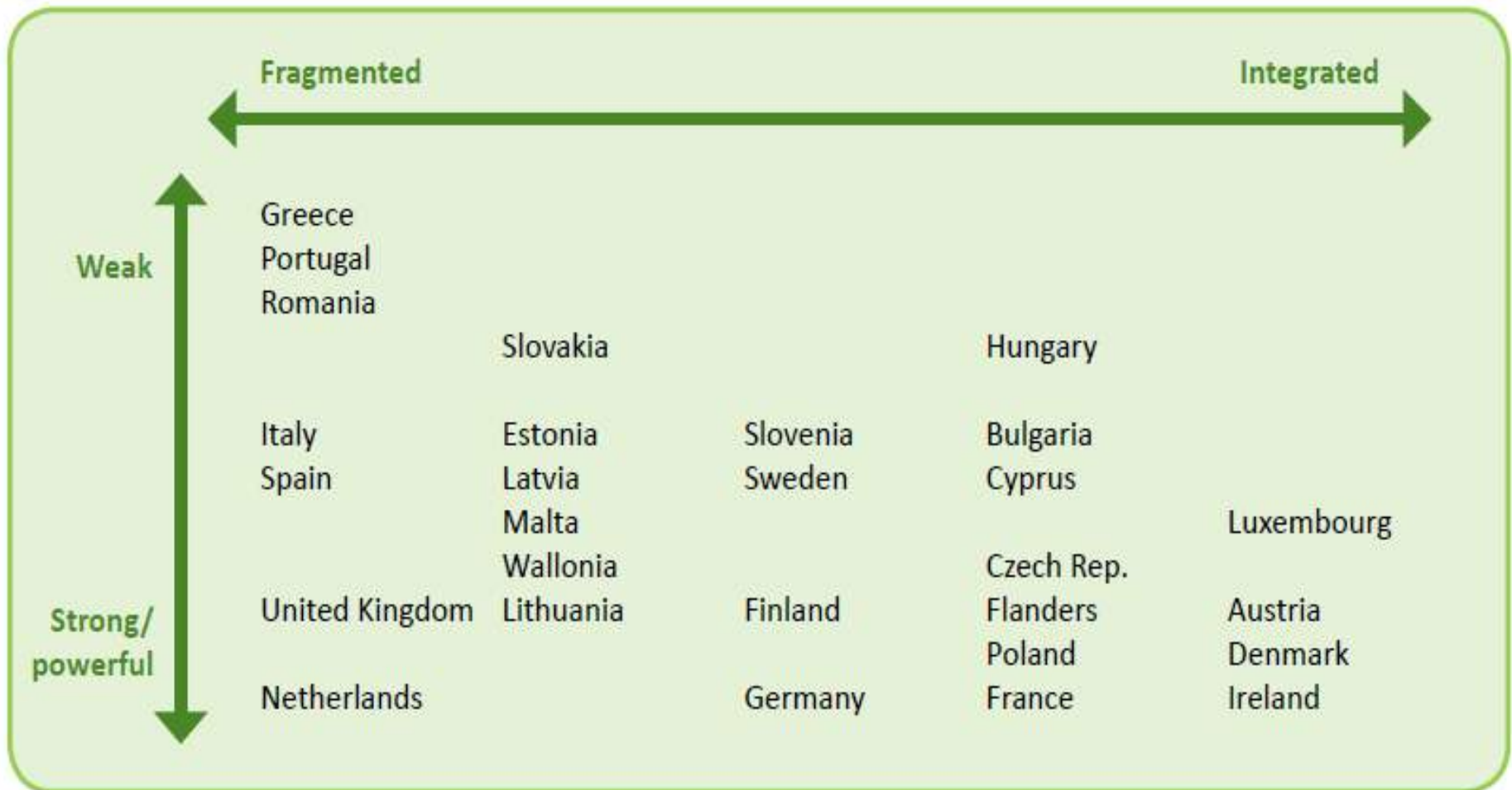
- State grant-in-aid €132m
- Fees for research, advisory and training services since 1988
- National and EU competitive research programme funding
- Revenue from farming activities and commodity levies
- Annual operating budget >€170m including €45m pensions
- **75% of budget from Irish exchequer and EU funding, balance from earned income**
- Approx. 47 % of budget is devoted to research; 30% advisory; 20% education
- Teagasc pay maintenance grants for college students
- Teagasc fund post graduates programmes; intake of 60 PhD and 20 MSc scholarships awards every year

# The Irish AKIS as we know it



# PROAKIS study: 2014

## Characterising EU MS' AKIS

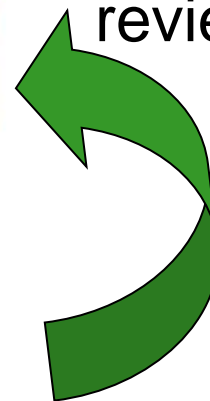


# Integrating Research and Knowledge Exchange

Researchers create new knowledge



Stakeholders participate in programme reviews



Specialists mould this knowledge into information for farmers



Advisers work with farmers to implement the new technology



# The Role of the Farm Advisor

- **The role of the advisor and extension services can be expressed in a single word “Development”**
- **This is a long term role and includes interactions and relationships with farm families**
- **Others providers may perform some of these roles but few see the totality of the farm or have the opportunity to focus on the individual situations and contexts**

# Service and Innovation Support Based Advisory Work

## ■ Service based

- Easier to be paid for
- Short term or one off
- Based on schemes
- Mainly mandatory
- Easy to build farmer contact
- Trust needed

## ■ Innovation support based

- Difficult to get paid for
- Longer term relationship
- Some Scheme support
- Mainly voluntary
- Difficult to build contact
- Trust essential

***The mix of both is important, Teagasc funding drives innovation based activity***

# Three factors which underpin knowledge exchange

1. Knowledge exchange is all about facilitating human contact and interactions.
2. Multiple channels of communication are needed.
3. Multi-actor approaches are better for complex innovation supports.

# Effective advisory methods from linear to more interactive group work (30 years of evolution)

## Adviser as Instructor



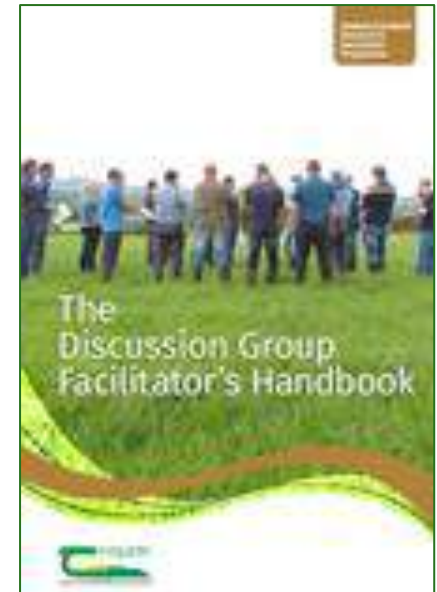
## Adviser as Facilitator



Teagasc Dairy Discussion groups study (Hennessy & Heanue, 2012)

# Facilitation

- Basic skills, planning, listening, questioning, observing, controlling, time keeping etc. Advisors can be taught to facilitate group learning but will be improved with practice and experience.
- Participants need encouragement and involvement
- Participants ownership of the process/group is essential
- Reference – The Teagasc Discussion Group Facilitators Handbook – 2020  
<https://www.teagasc.ie/publications/2020/the-discussion-group-facilitators-handbook.php>

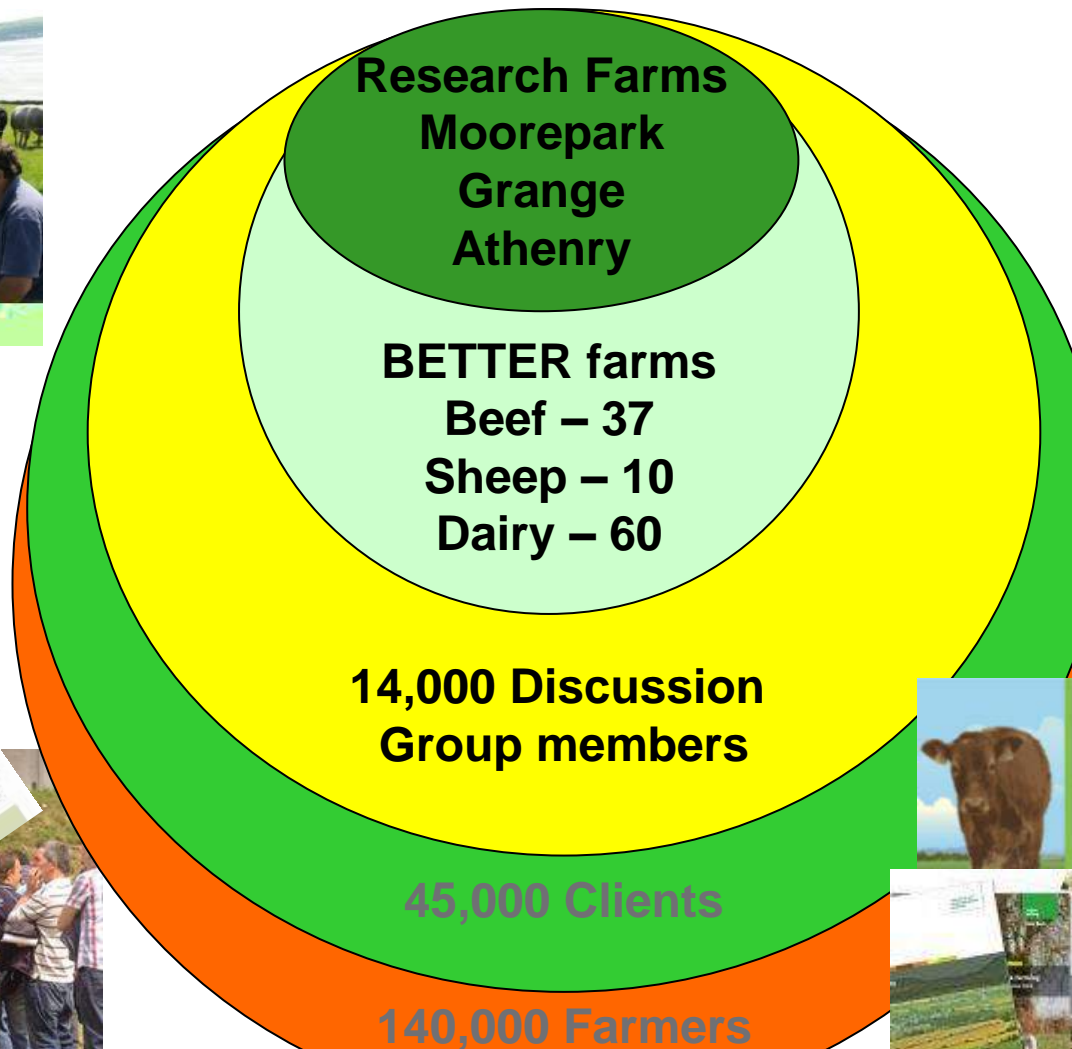


# Farm Data and Information

- Detailed, current and verifiable data both physical and financial.
- Comparable data using common benchmarking tools available in real time or at regular intervals
- Involvement in the data collection and analysis, taking the measurements.



# Advisory model – Many communication channels



# Research, Media and Industry Backup

- The consistency and complementarity of the information within the wider AKIS is important.
- Farmers will be influenced to change their practice if the message is clear, consistent and repeated.
- Every practice change on a farm is an experiment for that individual farmer and worthy of the interest of the advisor and other farmers.





# Branding

- Branding of initiatives is important to create a profile of the activities and events.
- It also identifies the advisors, farmers and other actors involved.
- Branding helps with media platforms and with industry partners who need to differentiate the initiative and evaluate its cost benefit.
- Thank You



# Learner Participation

Course Enrolments	2017 No's
Fulltime Voc. (L5&6)	1,302
Fulltime (L7&8)	451
Part time (L6) 3 year	404
Distance Ed. (L6) 2 years	1,016
Short Courses 1 - 20 days	4,431

~5,000 learners

## Female Participation – Agriculture

- Colleges: – Agric 3%
- Regions: - Agric 8%
- Horticulture ~30%
- Equine ~50%

**A new organisation to help improve advisory services in Europe linked to g-fras, it's 54 member organisations represent 30,000 European extension agents from 30 countries. Includes two member networks IALB and SEASN**

### **▪ Objectives**

- The promotion of best practice in advisory methodologies**
- The development of shared information technology services and solutions**
- The sharing of technical expertise**
- The skills training of advisory staff**
- The development of advisory standards and frameworks for evaluation**
- Promoting the activities of its members to key decision makers in the EU and elsewhere**
- Influencing the training of agriculture undergraduates**

# Reflection – CAP supports a better future

- Avoid top-down research driven approaches
- Reflect farmer/advisor ability and capacity
- Create less dependency, more inter-dependency
- Engage and support the wider AKIS
- Continuous improvement in advisor skills and methodology
- Need to grow sustainably

# Summary

- Evolved structure and communication channels (Context)
- Move from one-to-one advice to groups (long term)
- Engagement with stakeholders (ongoing)
- Mix of service and innovation based advisory services
- Range of communication channels
- Connecting with other professionals and businesses in the agri-food sector (national and European networks)
- Proactive contributions to national strategies (Food Wise 2025)

**Thank you**