



Farmers must be supported to prepare for ever more compounding climate extremes, says Climate Change Advisory Council

- Council calls for farmers to be supported with land-specific climate information, technology and practical advice to prepare for a changing climate.
- The Agriculture sector has not met its commitment to reduce emissions by 10% by 2025, and without a stronger push, will not meet its 2030 commitments.
- Just 2,527 hectares of new forest were planted in 2025 against an annual target of 8,000 hectares
- Progress on biomethane remains far behind the pace required.

Wednesday 9 September:

Launching the Agriculture and Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry chapter of its Annual Review 2026 today, the Climate Change Advisory Council said farmers are increasingly having to manage very different risks throughout the year due to extreme conditions including excessive rainfall, heatwaves and drought.

Rather than reacting to individual weather crises as they occur, the Council says farmers should be better equipped to understand the long-term risks facing their land and businesses in a climate that is becoming increasingly extreme. It is calling on the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) to develop and deploy, within 12 months, a practical climate-risk toolkit tailored to individual land parcels.

Alongside better information, farmers need access to practical advice, financial support and viable alternatives to existing practices that are more climate resilient. Restoring soil, water and ecosystem functions can help farms absorb extreme-weather shocks and maintain productivity, while some farmers may choose to adapt existing practices or diversify into new sources of income.

The Review also warns that Ireland's reliance on imported fruit and vegetables leaves the food system vulnerable to climate-related crop failures elsewhere and supply-chain disruption, and calls for a review of how domestic horticulture could strengthen food security.

Agriculture emissions fell by just 0.2% in 2025 and are now 4.7% below the 2018 baseline - less than half of the 10% reduction commitment from government for 2025. EPA projections indicate that the 'with additional measures' scenario would deliver an approximately 19% reduction in Agriculture emissions by 2030, compared with the 25% target. The Council notes that the 25% target remains achievable if

additional diversification measures identified in the Climate Action Plan¹ are also fully implemented.

To close this gap, DAFM should develop and begin implementing, a time-bound and properly resourced plan to accelerate emissions-reduction measures on farms, informed by structured dialogue with farmers, rural communities and workers.

The Forestry sector remains a particular concern. Ireland is not close to meeting its annual afforestation target of 8,000 hectares, leaving Ireland substantially off track for 18% forest cover by mid-century and contributing to a weakening forest carbon sink. The next Forestry Programme must address the financial, administrative and practical barriers preventing greater participation.

Significant public funding has been committed to anaerobic digestion under the Biomethane Strategy, but delays to the Renewable Heat Obligation are holding back the market certainty needed to unlock investment and demand. Progressing the obligation is essential if biomethane is to support farm diversification and energy security.

Alex White, Chairperson of the Climate Change Advisory Council, said:

“Farmers are increasingly having to manage extremes – this year we have seen too much water at one time of year and too little at another. We cannot keep treating every prolonged wet period or drought as an isolated crisis. Climate change is challenging some of the established practices involved in agriculture and land management.

Practical support will be essential, whether that means making land and farms more resilient, adapting existing practices or pursuing viable opportunities for diversification, including forestry, carbon farming and renewable energy.

The transition has to be shaped in collaboration with rural communities and farmers, and not simply designed for them. Policy will be more effective if it reflects the practical realities, costs and opportunities on the ground, while delivering the emissions reductions Ireland needs.”

END

NOTES TO EDITOR:

- Only 39.3 GWh of indigenous biomethane was injected into the gas grid between 2022 and 2024, equivalent to 0.7% of the Government's 5.7 TWh target for 2030.
- Latest EPA projections estimate biomethane production of 1.75 TWh by 2030, a 59% downward revision on previous projections based on expert assessment of the current situation.
- Extreme weather events including excessive rainfall restrict access to fields for grazing, increasing reliance on stored fodder and putting additional pressure on animal housing. Drought and high temperatures affect grass

¹ Table 5 in the Annual Review outlines progress to date on the commitments in the Climate Action Plan required to achieve 25% emissions reduction.

growth, animal welfare and farm productivity creating increasingly difficult conditions for agriculture.

If you have any questions or are seeking further comment, please do not hesitate to contact:

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The Climate Change Advisory Council will publish Sectoral Reviews throughout the year. The publication schedule below is subject to change and indicative only:

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Published</u>
Our Changing Climate	Published 1 st April 2026
Electricity	Published 13 th May 2026
Transport	Published 17 th June 2026
Built Environment	Published 29 th July 2026
Agriculture, Forestry and Land Use (AFOLU)	Published 9 th September 2026
Preparing for Ireland's Changing Climate	End September 2026
Industry and Waste	Mid October 2026
Biodiversity	Start of November 2026
Cross Sectoral	Mid November 2026
Irish Translation of Summary document	Mid November 2026