

Countryside Agri-Rural Partnership

The Countryside Agri-Rural Partnership, a consortium led by Countryside Services Ltd, working with AI Services Ltd and the NI Rural Development Council is currently delivering a number of measures under the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural development (EAFRD) and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). These are: Farm Family Options, Farm Modernisation, Focus Farms, Benchmarking and Supply Chain Development.

For more information please contact:

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If you require specific information on any of the 5 programmes please use the relevant contact telephone number or email address below.

FARM FAMILY OPTIONS

With the support of an experienced agricultural business mentor, farmers and farm family members can review their current position and seek to identify opportunities for both their own future and that of the farm business. As an outcome of the mentoring process, an action plan will be drawn up to set out the steps needed to make the changes identified. Financial assistance is available to help towards the costs of professional legal and financial advice to address issues identified in the action plan. The skills training element of the programme will support the development of both on farm and off farm work-related skills. Guidance on training opportunities as well as funding to support training costs is available for farm family members.

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FARM MODERNISATION

The Farm Modernisation programme aims to contribute to the competitiveness of agricultural and horticultural businesses in Northern Ireland. The programme offers support to farm businesses to modernise their holdings and improve their production techniques by providing financial support for plant, machinery and equipment from a pre-defined List of Eligible Items across six priority investment areas. Support is also available through the Manure Efficiency Technology Scheme (METS) which aims to encourage uptake of specific advanced slurry spreading distribution systems. Tranche 2 of the Farm Modernisation Programme is due to open in Spring 2010.

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FOCUS FARMS

The Focus Farms programme aims to contribute to the creation of a more competitive agriculture industry through the provision of farmer-led training. The 55 Focus Farms selected to participate in the scheme are commercial farms that aim to demonstrate good farming practice; modern technology; innovative farm methods and on-farm research through farm walks, discussion and

follow-up mentoring. Focus Farms have been appointed throughout Northern Ireland, across a range of enterprises to include Dairy, Beef, Sheep, Pigs, Arable, Commercial Horticulture, Organic, Renewable Crops, Diversification and Environmental sectors.

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BENCHMARKING

The Benchmarking programme aims to improve the business management and decision making process on farms in the following sectors: Dairy, Pig, Beef and Sheep, Crop and Horticulture. Establishing clear physical and financial criteria common to each farm within a sector allows owners and CAFRE Development Advisors to assess individual performance. Analysis of the data should inform target setting, budget development leading to improved profitability and overall business competence.

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SUPPLY CHAIN

The Supply Chain programme supports farmers working together, and with others, to improve the rewards from their supply chain. It provides expert guidance and financial assistance for the formation and development of new groups with a focus on marketing. Groups of farmers with partners further along their respective supply chains in the common agri-food, horticulture, forestry and renewable energy sectors are eligible to apply.

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