

Base Year Dilemma Needs To Be Resolved - ICMSA

Commenting on the proposed amendments to the CAP Post 2013 proposals from the EU Parliament Agriculture Committee, Mr. John Comer, President of ICMSA said that while over the next number of months, many issues of huge importance to Irish farmers will be decided, one issue which is having a major impact today and will continue until it is resolved is the proposed base year and this matter needs to be addressed immediately in the interests of active farmers planning their future in farming.

Given recent comments by Commissioner Çiolos, Mr. Comer said, that it appears increasingly unlikely that 2014 will be the base year with 2015 now seen as most likely but also possibly 2016. For farmers dependent on rented/leased land to earn an income in farming, this uncertainty which now appears likely to go on for longer than expected, is simply not acceptable and the proposals coming from the EU Parliament Agriculture Committee provide little comfort for farmers. The EU Parliament proposal simply states that a farmer must have been farming in 2009, 2010 or 2011 but still retains a future base year which is the crux of the problem for those farmers farming the land.

Given that over 20% of land in Ireland is either rented or leased, the base year selected under the new regime will have major implications for farmers into the future. It is ICMSA's firm view that given the need to target payments to those farming the land, that a retrospective base year is required and is the only solution to a problem that is current and will continue until agreement is reached and will have major implications for a farmers' payment when this agreement is implemented.

It is absolutely essential that the Minister for Agriculture, Food & Marine and our MEPS in the EU Parliament bring about an immediate resolution to a problem that is hindering the future development of our sector, concluded Mr. Comer.

ENDS.

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