

## Department clarify position on storm damage Force Majeure in positive meeting with ICMSA

Speaking following a meeting with senior officials of the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, Patrick Rohan, Chairperson of ICMSA's Farm Services and Environment Committee, said that the Department had clarified a number of issues for ICMSA in relation to farmland damaged during recent storms and how this will be addressed in inspections in the coming year, clarifications which, according to Mr Rohan, are both needed and welcome. The Farm Services Chairman was particularly satisfied that the Department clarified the following would be treated as Force Majeure for the coming year:

- Where trees have fallen on farmland and will not be cut this year, the Department has confirmed that the area covered by the trees will remain eligible land and thus the farmer does not have to make an adjustment to his/her land area. Given the huge number of trees that have fallen throughout the country in recent storms, this is a welcome development and takes some pressure off farmers said Mr. Rohan.
- Where farmland that was declared in previous years has become covered in rock, stones, rubbish, seaweed etc, the Department will again treat this land as eligible land so the farmer will not have to adjust his/her maps in relation to this issue.
- In relation to farmers who have lost land to the sea, the Department have confirmed that these farmers will be able to consolidate their entitlements onto their remaining land to ensure that they can claim their full payment for 2014. While this is welcome in relation to their direct payments, Mr. Rohan pointed out that the reality for the farmers concerned is that they have lost land to the sea and this is a wider issue that needs to be addressed by the state agencies responsible for the management of their coastlines.
- In relation to forestry land that is eligible for Single Farm Payment that was badly damaged with trees blown-over, etc, the Department confirmed that this land will remain eligible for 2014 for the Single Farm Payment.

Following the meeting, Mr. Rohan said that he was satisfied that the Department will take a reasonable approach on this matter but he added that ICMSA will be monitoring the situation in the coming months to ensure that the Department live up to the commitments given at the meeting.

Ends 7 March 2014.

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