

## Comer says Farmers Charter must have oversight role on new Investigations Division

Commenting on the announcement of the new Investigations Division within the Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine, the ICMSA President, Mr. John Comer, said that while farmers will support any reasonable measure that defended the reputation of their sector and Irish food, it is absolutely essential that the Farmers Charter Monitoring Committee has an oversight role on the workings of the new Division. Mr Comer said that concerns had been raised in the past regarding the workings of the Special Investigations Unit and farmers believed that these concerns were largely ignored. 'While Farmers want to ensure that people who undermine the agriculture sector at any level of the supply chain through illegal activity are made accountable and dealt with, their key concern is the possibility of genuine farmers making minor errors and finding themselves dragged into this regime - that's simply not acceptable. A balance needs to be achieved in this regard and ICMSA believes that there needs to be regular dialogue with farmers on the workings of the Investigations Division. The Farmers Charter Monitoring Committee provides the appropriate forum to actively address the genuine concerns held by farmers?', concluded Mr Comer.

Ends 1 October 2014.

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