

TAMS Delays Causing Severe Hardship and Disruption For Farmers - ICMSA.

The level of frustration being felt at farm level due to delays in approvals and payments under the TAMS scheme is reaching boiling point and it is now causing severe hardship and disruption at farm level according to Mr. Patrick Rohan, Chairperson of ICMSA's Farm & Rural Affairs Committee.

Despite a commitment from the Minister for Agriculture, Food & Marine that payments would be made in July, this has not happened and farmers are now waiting over six months for payments in a year when cashflow is already under enormous pressure and farmers are being treated very shabbily in this regard. The payments delays are simply not acceptable and very unfair on the individual farmers affected and at this stage, the Minister needs to intervene and remove whatever obstacles are in the way that are preventing payments. If the computer system causes further delays, then manual payments as has happened with other schemes in the past should be made and advance payments if necessary in order to ease cash flow. Farmers are under massive pressure at present and additional staff resources should be put in place if necessary to ensure payments are made to farmers within the next week.

In relation to approvals, as we face into the Autumn/Winter period, many farmers are trying to ensure that their facilities are upgraded to meet the required standard and find that the lack of approval is putting them at risk in relation to Cross Compliance penalties in the coming Autumn. For some parts of the country, farmers probably at this stage have less than two months to get their facilities in place and the delays in approvals is putting added on farmers and contractors to get the jobs completed. In this regard, the Minister should allocate additional staff resources to get approvals completed as soon as possible in particular for those farmers who wish to proceed immediately. If additional staff resources are not available, the Department should establish a contact point that farmers who wish to commence immediately can make contact with and that these cases get prioritised and approved immediately.

The TAMS scheme are hugely important for the farm sector but farmer confidence in these schemes has been undermined and the Minister needs to repair this damage as a matter of priority and get these schemes fully operational immediately, concluded Mr. Rohan.

