

The Organic Centre

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**Organic Trust Symbol Holder : 151
Charitable Status (CHY 11547).**

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Re Draft Leitrim Development Plan 2023-2029. To be considered for inclusion into section 10.5- Agriculture.

Intensive agriculture has been linked to biodiversity loss and climate change. A 2021 UN report stated that the global food system is the primary driver of biodiversity loss, with agriculture alone being the identified threat to 24,000 of the 28,000 (86%) species at risk of extinction. The global food system has been similarly tied to climate change, accounting for around 30% of total human-produced emissions. One third of the worlds greenhouse gas emissions comes from food systems according to a report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The Irish government declared a biodiversity and climate emergency in 2019. Organic agriculture, farming with nature and subsequently producing food without using chemicals, synthetic fertilisers and pesticides is seen as a potential solution internationally and nationally to the crises. The Farm to Fork strategy targets increasing organic production to reach 25% of the EU's agricultural land use by 2030. Ireland however is badly lagging behind at just under 2% organic.

Leitrim is ideally placed to play a leading role to increase the county and countries capacity levels in organic agriculture, and assist the government reach its target of 7.5% of agricultural land in organic production by 2027 nationally. The Minister is proposing a budget of €256m in the next CAP to deliver this. This is 500% larger than the budget for the current scheme. Leitrim has the expertise with the Organic Centre in Rossinver established to promote organic growing since 1995 and the National Organic Training NOTs, to build capacity and support farmers towards that goal.

The geo political climate including Brexit, Covid, and war in Ukraine has exposed an agricultural model that is vulnerable to external shock. Irelands reliance on specialised food production in farming, on imports including of grain, and low level of fruit and vegetable growers means the consumeris at risk to food shortages and price rises.

As a close-knit community Leitrim can help build Food security and sovereignty by aiming to build mechanisms that support farmers locally to provide locally produced food for the county.

A Rights to Nature approach adopted that would include a motion, declaration and community involvement will assist to recognise again the importance of, guide and recognise our interdependence and our fundamental dependence on nature in our development, including our farming.

Thanks in advance

Dervilla Keegan Communications and Policy Officer
The Organic Centre
Sraud,
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