

# RECESSION AND RURAL AREAS: EXPERIENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Dr Pat Bogue  
National Rural Network &  
Broadmore Research



# INTRODUCTION

- NRN - Strategic Issues Research & Case Studies (2010 & 2011)
- Agr Science and Rural Development
- Broadmore Research
  - Established in 2005
  - Public and Private Sector
  - Rural and Community Development
  - Agricultural and Rural Policy
  - Farm Families and Rural Dwellers

# BACKGROUND TO NRN

- National Rural Network
  - Rural Development Programme 2007-13
  - RDSU - Tipperary Institute
  - Networking forum for the RDP
  - Assist efficient & effective RDP implementation
  - Transfer of knowledge
  - Sharing of information

# STRATEGIC ISSUES

- Strategic Issues Working Groups
  - Discussion around key issues - important in rural areas
  - Collate existing policies/research
  - Develop practical proposals for changes in policies/programmes/measures
  - Involve key stakeholders across sector

# AIM OF WORKING GROUP

- Agricultural and Rural Economy Working Group
  - *Explore the challenges which the changing economic climate will have on the structure of Agriculture and Rural Communities and how the Rural Development Programme can address these challenges*

# THE CONTEXT

## ○ Key Issues

- Unemployment increased
- 28.2% decline in employment in construction
- Under 25's & men more affected
- No. in agriculture increased
- Off-farm income declining
- SFP significant component of income
  - (143% of FFI - 87% for dairy and 204% for beef)
- Farm diversification offers potential but challenges

# CHALLENGES IN STIMULATING RURAL ENTERPRISE

- ◉ Investment capital - access to credit
- ◉ Regulations
- ◉ Lack of confidence
- ◉ Poor business skills
- ◉ Focus on accessing grant aid
- ◉ Comfort zone - Inability to get out of field -  
Fear of neighbours

# CONCLUSIONS ON STIMULATING RURAL INNOVATION

- ◉ LEADER key role - more than grants
- ◉ Changes can enhance LAGs
- ◉ Gradual development process - need support and resources
- ◉ Opportunities to diversify need support and encouragement
- ◉ Many supports but confusion

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO STIMULATE RURAL ENTERPRISE

- Long & short term measures
- Fundamental changes & modifications to RDP
- Broad Areas
  - Education & training
  - Farm families
  - Enterprise supports
  - Community enterprise
  - Local action groups & LEADER approach

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO STIMULATE RURAL ENTERPRISE

- Education and Training
  - Entrepreneurship module
  - Tailored training courses, local needs & proactive recruitment
  - Partnership for delivery

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO STIMULATE RURAL ENTERPRISE

## ○ Farm Families

- New approach to encourage diversification
- Targeted animation service
- Advice to re-assess priorities - rejuvenated Options Programme
- '*Come see us*' - Bord Bia

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO STIMULATE RURAL ENTERPRISE

## ◉ Enterprise Supports

- Focus enterprises (& Rural Innovation Centres)
- Support existing businesses
- Explore new models of assistance (revolving fund, guarantees, non-financial support)
- Enhanced partnerships between agencies
- Additional animation & support staff

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO STIMULATE RURAL ENTERPRISE

- Community Enterprise
  - Provide community/social services
  - Service provision hubs
  - Synergies between urban and rural - investment in rural assets

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO STIMULATE RURAL ENTERPRISE

- Local Action Groups and LEADER Approach
  - Continue to prioritise enterprise development
  - Shared services and expertise
  - Proactively engage with public for awareness
  - Minimise and simplify application procedures
  - Remit for new priorities (energy, waste)
  - Upskilling of staff

# RECESSION AND RURAL AREAS: EXPERIENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

- ◉ Findings of NRN working group
- ◉ Some have application in NI
- ◉ Report available - [www.nrn.ie](http://www.nrn.ie) - or e-mail [rdsu@tippinst.ie](mailto:rdsu@tippinst.ie) to request link

<http://www.nrn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/stimulatingtheagriculturalandruraleconomythroughtherdp1.pdf>

## Thank You



*An Roinn Gnóthaí Pobail,  
Comhionannais agus Gaeltachta*  
*Department of Community, Equality  
and Gaeltacht Affairs*

