

Bioeconomy Action Plan

The Bioeconomy Action Plan is a welcomed document that hopefully will help Ireland reach our sustainability goals in a quick, efficient and harmless nature that will increase Ireland's biodiversity and unique ecosystem. The consultation is a welcomed part of the document which allows the general public to voice their opinion on the subject. Ireland has a fantastic climate for intensive agriculture and this land must be used to the highest efficiency but we must get carried away about profits and businesses and as a nation take responsibility for our own biodiversity so that our future generations have the ability to see our island as the diverse ecosystem it has the potential to be. From my studies as an sustainable engineer and my own personal research we must not get sucked into distributing our carbon emissions to other less developed nations in the hope of satisfying the EU carbon emissions targets set for our country. In one of the answers below I explain how Holland have done this by shutting down farmers but then import meat from South American countries.

The following answers are provided:

Q1-5. I believe these questions have been accurately answered by the document and I don't believe any change needs to be made. Also as an engineer I don't believe I have any contribution that is of value.

Q6. What key issues should the Nature, Climate & Circular Pillar deal with?

I believe the pillar stated above should not only help to protect our biodiversity but actively help increase our biodiversity on this island. Due to our intense agriculture wildlife species have become marginalised over economic growth. It's time we realise that having a diverse wildlife can help the tourism sector which will help economic growth. There is a 3500 acre farm in the south of England in a place called Knepp. The farm in question was once a crop farm but due to spiralling costs they stopped farming and left the estate to "mother nature" and the amount of endangered species that are thriving is just wonderful to see.

Q7. What key issues concerning consumption patterns need to be examined to close the gap between sustainable supply of biological resources and demand.

I believe there needs to be a re-education of the general public regarding food consumption. 1/3 of all food gets thrown out in Irish homes. Educating our youth in school and re-educating the adult population is one step that should help reduce our food demand. Also best-before dates need to be either extended or scrapped. I see good food go to waste because the best-before date says its gone off by one day which in fact the food is still able for consumption.

Secondly the government better not fall into the trap of increasing imports of foreign goods so that we can reduce our own carbon footprint. I see countries like Holland shutting down thousands of farms to meet EU guidelines. Which makes zero sense to me as their imports will increase from south American countries such as Brazil which firstly has a lower yield per acre of crop compared to Europe but also fuels the deforestation of the Amazon. If the government cannot meet the consumption demand of the Irish public by 2030 we must ramp up supply in a sustainable fashion instead of throwing our carbon footprint onto another country.

Q8. What key issues should the Agriculture, Food & Marine Pillar deal with?

As stated in the answer above I believe this pillar should help the Irish Argi sector become self sufficient and only lower the number of animals in the country once demand is met for the Irish people instead of lowering our supply to meet carbon regulations and basically shipping are carbon footprint to countries outside the EU. E.g South America.

Q9-10. I believe these two questions have been accurately answered in the document.

Q11. What key issues should the Industry & Enterprise Pillar deal with?

As an engineer myself I believe more emphasis could be placed on argi engineering in colleges allowing Irish engineers to help Irish farmers move to a more mechanised environment which will keep increasing our yield per acre.

Q12-Q16. I don't have the expertise knowhow to answer these questions accurately even after reading the document so I will not be giving an opinion on them.

Q17. Are there any further Pillars/Issues which this Action Plan should address?

As stated previously I believe more emphasis needs to be placed on biodiversity. From my studies as a Mechanical and Sustainability engineer I understand the importance of both biodiversity and allowing big areas of land to naturally grow wild. The government shouldn't be trying to densely back Ireland's wild with trees that in 20 or 30 years will be cut down anyway. That isn't capturing carbon. Once a tree is cut the carbon it took in over its lifetime escapes back into the atmosphere and as more people get better educated about the environment the public will start to realise that the government aren't planting trees to help the environment they are planting trees firstly to show off and good image to the public and secondly to make money from logging the trees. If this government is serious about climate change, areas that are set out for dense forests should actually be planted with Irish trees sparsely, wild bushes and wild grasses allowing wildlife to flourish and that ecosystem to capture carbon properly.

Furthermore wildlife areas can attract tourists which can increase the economy for a rural region by having to stay in local hotels, eat at local restaurants and buy food at local shops. Also if a land owner could have a wildlife track and charge people to walk through it which would incentivise the land owner to change in the first place.

Q18. Indicate what the top five priorities for the action in the bioeconomy over the next three years should be?

1. Incentives Irish colleges to start and Argi engineering degree to help produce young Irish engineers that are willing to help Irish farmers produce better yields per acre allowing less land to be used for agriculture.
2. Increase supply of Irish meat and dairy products to meet just the Irish demand. Do not cut herd sizes to meet our carbon demands and then import meat from foreign countries. IT MAKES NO SENSE.
3. Use public advertising to help the public reduce the demand of meat and dairy produces. Don't tell them to go vegetarian or vegan as this will make the public go against the government. Instead advise people to not eat red meat as much. As in cut down from 4 to 5 days a week from red meat to 1 or 2 days a week.
4. STOP planting trees just for logging. As I said previously once a tree is cut a high percentage of the carbon it captured is realised back into the atmosphere. Instead plant Irish trees sparsely and allow the ecosystem to recover itself and don't then cut the trees down 30 years later.
5. Finally a bigger incentive for rewilding projects. As previously stated this can help boost tourism in the area helping Ireland's Bioeconomy and allows these areas to also capture carbon.