

Question: 128, Ref No.: 5240/20:To ask the Minister for Rural and Community Development the status of the supports being offered by his Department to rural agricultural shows that have been cancelled or postponed due to Covid-19; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Carol Nolan.

REPLY

Minister for Rural and Community Development (Michael Ring)

Late last year, I allocated €600,000 to the Irish Shows Association (ISA) to support affiliated agricultural shows that were due to take place in 2020.

I am aware that a significant number of agricultural shows which were planned for this year have already been cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 virus, and it is likely that more shows will be cancelled as public health advice evolves in the weeks and months ahead.

In light of the extraordinary circumstances which prevail, I have instructed the ISA to hold in trust the funding for any shows which are cancelled this year. The funding for those shows can be carried forward for use in 2021, should the shows go ahead next year.

If any agricultural shows are in a position to take place later this year, they can utilise their funding in 2020. I would strongly advise the organisers of all agricultural shows to monitor and adhere to public health advice regarding public gatherings, social distancing and travel for only essential purposes.

Agricultural shows are a great celebration of all that is good about rural Ireland. They also provide a welcome boost for local economies and attract visitors to support our rural communities. In total, since 2017, I have allocated approximately €2 million to assist with the running costs of these shows.

I have no doubt that the agricultural shows will come back even stronger in 2021 and that they will be important events in bringing rural communities together again after the challenges they currently face.