On the 31 July 2020, the Supreme Court quashed the National Mitigation Plan (NMP) 2017. Food Wise 2025 was a key part of the NMP in respect of the so called "sustainable intensification" of Irish agriculture. The Supreme Court ruled that the successor to the NMP must set out, with a sufficient level of detail, how Ireland will achieve the National Transition Objective by 2050. The successor strategy to Food Wise 2025 must unequivocally do this. The Teagasc MACC mitigation measures, as included in the subsequent Climate Action Plan, have thus far failed to have any meaningful effect whatsoever on rising agriculture emissions.

The recently negotiated Programme for Government proposed a new Climate Act which will mandate a average -7% per annum emissions reduction to 2030 (~-50% over a decade) with legally binding 5-year carbon budgets. Each sector, particularly agriculture which accounts for ~30% of total ESD emissions, will be required to develop a clear strategy to achieve its sectoral target.

It is simply **not credible** , **or possible**, to expand the agricultural productivism in the context of the scale of rapid emissions reductions that Ireland is required to make. Agriculture will be required play its part.

The overarching agri-food strategy to 2030 must be one of **sustainable DE-intensification.**

Ireland also has legally binding emissions under the **National Emissions Ceiling Directive** to reduce ammonia emissions. 90% of ammonia coming from animal manure. Failure to implement policies to reduce ammonia emissions will expose Ireland to legal action to force it to comply. Any successor strategy to Food Wise 2025 must include such policies.

Ireland further has legally binding requirements under the **Water Framework Directive**. According to the EPA, agriculture continues to be a major cause of declining water quality. Again, failure to implement policies to reduce water pollutants from agriculture will expose Ireland to legal action to force it to comply. Any successor strategy to Food Wise 2025 must include such policies.

It is unimpeachable from readily available empirical evidence (EPA) that the agriculture productivism promoted by Food Wise 2025 is incompatible with environmental limits and legally mandated requirements pursuant to EU law. This cannot continue.

The EU has signalled a clear direction of travel for post-2020 CAP through the Farm to Fork strategy. This proposes a radical reorientation of agricultural policy away from headlong productivism towards a more holistic land-use management approach and rewarding farmers for environmental goods. This direction of travel is only going one way.

Ireland needs to use this opportunity to strategically reset agricultural policy through **a fundamental change of approach** and to maximise income to farmers through early adoption of this new paradigm. We need to shun our reflex as a reluctant jurisdiction on environmental protection. Failure to do so will simply store up significant costs for the future and make the challenge of the **inevitable transition** away from the flawed expansionary agricultural model of the past decade much more difficult.

No doubt Ireland's high-emission agri-industrial complex will rail against and stymie the policies required. The choice for the Government is between the short-term profiteering and predatory delay of corporate interests, and the long term viability of Irish food production.

[redacted]

[redacted]

www.liverpool.ac.uk/heseltine-institute