



**Isle of Man**  
**Government**

*Reiltys Ellan Vannin*



Delivering for productive Farming and the Environment

An Agricultural Strategy

2019/20-2029/30

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## **Minister's Foreword**

As headlined in my 2016 election manifesto I committed to "Work with farmers to bring back some certainty to the system that will enable young people to continue farming, preserve our landscape and provide viability for our meat processing facilities (exploit post Brexit opportunities)".

Working to secure a new operator for the Meat Plant has been a major task and now that this new venture is up and running I am keen to deliver on the rest of my election promises.

Acknowledging that the Meat Plant is a cornerstone of the entire agricultural sector, not just for beef and sheep producers, due to the interdependent nature of the industry, I have been committed to ensuring that there is sufficient production and thus throughput to operate the plant at a viable level.

I have been firmly committed to a production-based support and my Department has extensively explored direct headage – based options. We concluded that recoupling, as a principle, could prove extremely complex; this suggestion was put to the industry and did not acquire majority support. However, I am pleased that the industry does support the principle of production-related support and constructive feedback from the Manx National Farmers' Union in particular has allowed us to formulate this strategy, which builds on, rather than replaces the current model of production support.

I strongly believe that this is the direction of travel that the industry now wishes to pursue, and was further strengthened by the results from the Agricultural Strategy Consultation held in the spring of 2019. Responses to this consultation revealed over 90% supported a strategy that is designed to deliver a reliable and profitable food chain, an enhanced environment and opportunities for new and existing businesses to flourish through investment in infrastructure

The Strategy is also independent of Brexit outcomes as without exception all of the proposed initiatives, I believe, are designed to deliver a more competitive agricultural sector that demonstrates its value to the economy, environment and wider public. Just as importantly the Strategy is designed to be tailored to the unique Manx farming situation, something that was supported by 65% of respondents to the consultation.

Farming is of course much more than food production. Our Biosphere status is testament to that, and we must continue to recognise and support the contribution farming makes to the Manx landscape and biodiversity as well as providing the tools to allow greener and more efficient ways of operating, particularly if we are to successfully meet the opportunities and challenges of Brexit and climate change.

## Background

The strategy outlined in this document is intended to build on current policy and provide relevant and timely solutions for the industry and the wider Isle of Man public, replacing the previous strategy which was outlined in the document:

- [GR 12/08](#) Developing a Reliable, Sustainable, Self Reliant Manx Agriculture

Current policy positions that remain relevant to the formulation of the new Agricultural Strategy are:

- [GD 2014/0042](#) Isle of Man Food Security Strategy
- [GD 2014/0076](#) Food Matters – A Food Business Development Strategy, 2015-2025
- [GD 2016/0027](#) Our Landscape Our Legacy
- [GD 2015/0049](#) Managing our Natural Wealth, The Isle of Man's First Biodiversity Strategy

## Isle of Man Agriculture and the EU

Whilst the Isle of Man has encouraged the development of a local food culture, the value of its agricultural output remains largely dependent on markets in the UK and these UK markets are in turn dependent on wider markets both within the EU and globally.

Globally, agriculture is a highly protected industry with substantial tariffs imposed by many countries and trading blocs on agricultural imports falling outside of free-trade agreements. Agriculture is also a highly regulated industry, so that (for example) EU regulations have been applied within the Isle of Man as far as has been necessary to allow free trade under Protocol 3. Finally, agriculture is a highly supported industry, not only in the UK and the EU, but across many developed and developing countries.

As the UK negotiates its departure from the EU there is then a myriad of factors that might directly or indirectly change the markets for Isle of Man produce, including:

- a) The future trading agreements between the UK and the EU and between the UK and non-EU third countries;
- b) The nature and value of the support given by the UK government to UK agricultural production, and by the EU to EU Member States;
- c) The extent to which the UK aligns its regulatory framework with that of the EU.

The Isle of Man is a WTO member by extension of the UK's membership and whilst the UK's departure from the EU will render Protocol 3 obsolete, the support provided by the Manx government to the Isle of Man's agriculture sector will continue to be restricted by that WTO membership.

Trade in agricultural products between the UK and the EU is also affected by the value of Sterling relative to the Euro. The value of Sterling declined markedly immediately following the UK's vote to leave the EU, benefiting export markets such as those for lamb, and the

financial markets have reacted to subsequent indications of a 'hard Brexit' with further devaluations.

### **Complementary Government/Island strategies**

Agriculture holds a unique position as an industry. Whilst its economic contribution in terms of GDP may in modern times be modest, it forms an integral part of the Isle of Man for social, environment and economic reasons. Food and agriculture are major employers with around 2,000 jobs estimated to be directly associated with the sector. This does not include all the ancillary and supporting employment that the sector creates through its activities. The **Food Matters** strategy has demonstrated that a diverse range of high-value, high-quality food and drink can be produced in the Isle of Man and the range and quality is increasing year on year, with knock-on benefits to the primary producer.

The farmed landscape and rich fabric of rural life played a role in gaining **UNESCO Biosphere** status and the effort required to maintain landscapes and habitats, particularly the distinctive network of small fields bound by sod hedges and stone walls, should be recognised and rewarded.

As with any industry, farming has to manage waste streams as part of its outputs. Utilised correctly, manure and other waste can be a valuable fertilizer. However, there is always the potential for such waste to reach watercourses, particularly with increasingly unpredictable weather patterns. Government has committed to improving its sewage treatment systems and implementing reporting against **EU Bathing Water Directive 2006/7/EC**. This will increase scrutiny of other sources of actual or potential pollution in bathing waters and the catchments that supply them. Supporting agriculture to ensure that appropriate management systems and infrastructure for farm waste are in place will ensure that the 'green' reputation of the sector is maintained and pollution risk is reduced.

Aligned with pollution management is **catchment management**. This ensures that flooding is managed at source and efforts, particularly soft-engineering are implemented to ameliorate the effects of high rainfall events. Farmland and particularly upland areas play a key role in slowing down the flow of surface water into streams and rivers. Managing the spongy peat of the uplands and having suitable vegetation and trees in riparian zones are practical methods, mostly on farmland of contributing to flood management. Support for initiatives in these areas is clearly of wider public benefit.

The Isle of Man Government '**SAVE Programme**' is looking at ways to reduce expenditure, or deliver public services differently. Agricultural support was reviewed as part of this process and was not impacted. However, demonstrating value for public money will continue to be a theme for the future and maintaining, or securing new funds will require detailed rationale of the public goods delivered.

The transition towards **Brexit** is fast-approaching and whilst the details are still far from certain, most scenario models show significant impact to industries that rely on EU and global trade. Whilst there is little that can be done to influence the outcome, the industry can ready itself for worst-case eventualities and be ready to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. Efficient and profitable businesses will be the first to take advantage of new

post-Brexit opportunities and initiatives and support to help farm businesses improve their profitability will have long term positive impacts.

### **Review of the current Manx Agricultural strategy**

The process of assessing the effectiveness of the current strategy, as delivered in the main through the Agricultural Development Scheme (ADS) and the Agricultural and Fisheries Grant Scheme (AFGS) was initiated By Minister Boot when he became Minister for DEFA in 2016. Initial internal assessments led to the decision to hold a stakeholder workshop where the current performance of the Agricultural strategy and the direction of any future strategy could be discussed. Stake holders, Political members, farmers and processor representatives were invited to the 'Future Agricultural Policy – Workshop' which was held on 20 January 2017.

A wide range of issues were covered during this workshop; which are outlined below and overleaf in a 'Word Cloud', highlighting the topics that were raised most frequently throughout the day.

The workshop report captured the following:

Good points/strengths of the Manx Agricultural situation

A diverse agriculture; family farms; a strong young farmers' movement; an entrepreneurial spirit; a co-operative approach to processing and marketing; great infrastructure; the Milk Price Order; good existing schemes; a unique countryside; the UNESCO Biosphere designation; local community support and empathy. Free trade with the UK and EU is also valued – important in the context of Brexit.

Key issues and concerns identified:

Production costs; processing (in particular Isle of Man Meats and how it operates); relations with supermarkets; the supply chain; lack of marketing; the need to be market/demand-led and be wary of protectionism; and maintaining high standards. In relation to other areas discussed, key issues and concerns included: the environment being taken for granted / under-valued; the need to educate the public/consumers in respect of both farming and the environment; not making the most of Biosphere, TT and other USPs; lack of succession; limited opportunities for young people; lack of ladies in agriculture; limited education, knowledge transfer and advice.



### **In terms of vision, objectives and principles:**

There was a strong focus on improving the supply chain, in particular the need for better integration, and marketing to and the education of consumers. There was also recognition of the need to improve farm business performance by benchmarking, upskilling, using technology and reducing/sharing costs, as well as the need to encourage younger people into the industry. The link between farming and the environment, tourism, quality of life etc. - and the need to make of more of this and the Island's USPs - was also recognised. In a similar way, there was a call for better integration with other business sectors in terms of policy, support and cross-fertilisation.

### **Future Agriculture Strategy development**

The workshop was followed by a series of meetings with the MNFU and other stakeholders where options to change the current ADS to address the issues and opportunities highlighted at the workshop were discussed. These led to the production of the proposals for the new strategy which are outlined below.

### **Delivering for productive farming and the environment**

#### **Vision:**

To achieve an agile, sustainable and self-reliant Manx food chain that efficiently and profitably produces a diverse range of high quality foods to feed the Manx nation and export profitably.

In parallel, to continue to steward and enhance the Island's landscape, natural heritage and Biosphere status through protection of biodiversity, carbon sequestration and catchment management.

This industry shall offer opportunities for new entrants and existing businesses and shall allow both co-operative and entrepreneurial behaviour to flourish, underpinned by efficient and reliable infrastructure."

#### **Key objectives:**

1. **The environment** – Providing support for targeted initiatives that produce conserved and cherished landscapes, enhance biodiversity, sequester carbon and, improve water quality and reduce flood risk.
2. **Supporting active farmers** – ensuring that financial support is targeted at businesses producing food, protecting the environment and catchment and landscape management.
3. **Productivity** – supporting marketing, efficiency, knowledge, benchmarking and advice to sustainably improve farm profitability and secure the long-term viability of the industry, post BREXIT.
4. **Investment** – increasing investment through capital grants, business confidence and profitability.



## **The support initiatives to deliver the objectives will include:**

- Flat rate support scheme for active farmers, with reduced rates from current levels
- New stewardship payments for the Uplands and specific highly sensitive sites.
- Capital grant scheme
  - Modern fixed assets to enhance productivity
  - Support the adoption of new technologies to improve productivity & profitability
  - FYM/Slurry storage and pollution control systems
  - Hedges and dry stone wall repair
  - Diversification and Food processing
  - Discretionary public access improvements
  - Lime, Reseeding, Weed wipers and Soil sampling
- Productivity advice
- Ongoing Meatplant support

## **Agricultural Strategy consultation**

To ascertain if the proposed changes had support within the Agricultural industry a six week, web based consultation was launched at a public meeting held at Bemahague Lower School on 26th of February 2019. Current claimants of the ADS, Stakeholders and the Manx National Farmers Union (MNFU) were invited to this meeting.

The responses to the consultation have been published and are available on the web site here [Agricultural strategy-results summary.pdf](#)

The consultation attracted one hundred and eighty six responses ninety one percent of which supported the vision statement that a strategy should deliver a reliable and profitable food Chain, an enhanced environment and opportunities for new and existing businesses to flourish through investment in infrastructure. Over eighty percent supported the proposed strategies four main objectives for securing a sustainable agricultural industry

- The environment- Providing support for targeted initiatives that produce conserved and cherished landscapes, enhance biodiversity, sequester carbon and, improve water quality and reduce flood risk? 87%
- Supporting active farmers – ensuring that financial support is targeted at businesses producing food, protecting the environment and catchment and landscape management. 86%
- Productivity – supporting marketing, efficiency, knowledge, benchmarking and advice to sustainably improve farm profitability and secure the long-term viability of the industry, post BREXIT. 86%
- Investment – increasing investment through capital grants, business confidence and profitability. 82%

There was limited (thirty six percent) support for the proposed budget with most of those respondents who were directly involved with agriculture stating that the extra one million pounds of funding was not enough to enable the strategy to deliver its desired outcomes.

There was however widespread support (75%) for increasing the overall budget, but reducing the area payment component to fund specific initiatives focused on paying more to active farmers.

There was similar support (69%) for removing the Above Mountain Line payment and replacing it with an Uplands Agri-environment scheme can deliver better targeted upland management whilst retaining the viability of farming in the hills.

Paying farmers to provide environmental services will improve the Island's environment attracted support from 78% of responders.

Only 23% thought that it was important that the Isle of Man Agriculture Strategy should broadly follow the UK; the majority held the view that it was important that a Manx strategy was specific to the Manx situation.

The responses indicated that there was an appetite from within the industry to adopt the new strategy. This will deliver environmental benefits whilst, being focused on providing measures that will improve the productivity of active farmers.

### **Funding mechanism to deliver the strategy**

In Scheme year 2021-22 when the strategy is fully operational it is anticipated that the initiatives within in the strategy will require funding of around £2 million. This will be found by refocussing around £1million of existing flat-rate support towards the targeted initiatives. The other £1million will come through matched funding by Treasury.

The ADS the flat rate payments for both land categories, Above the Mountain Line (AML) and Below the Mountain Line (BML) are currently calculated using the same methodology. The new strategy recognises that these areas have differing environmental management priorities and the new flat rate payment have been adjusted to reflect this.

### **AML payments**

AML areas consist of land with predominantly semi-natural upland vegetation, or comprising predominantly of rock outcrops and semi-natural upland vegetation, used primarily for rough grazing. Predominantly land which could be considered to be of high value both in terms of of desirable habitats and the potential for Carbon sequestration. The proposed budget for the AML areas (£330,000) will be broken down into two sections.

1. A flat rate payment budget will be £200,000 this will deliver a payment of around £8.21/acre depending on the number of acres claimed, this payment is to cover the costs of meeting cross compliance standards.

2. The remaining £130,000 of the budget will deliver a payment of around £5.33/acre to reward the maintenance and enhancement of the habitats unique to the individual holding. Receipt of this payment will be dependent on the claimant achieving agreed habitat outcomes.

Therefore a large portion of the AML payment will be dependent on the delivery of Habitat outcomes; this will make the calculation of any front loading supplementary payment impossible, therefore AML payments will no longer be adjusted to account for front loading payments.

The budget for Front loading payments will only be calculated using claimed BML land and will now only be paid on BML land.

### **BML payments**

The BML flat rate area payment will be reduced to reflect the contribution made from this budget to fund the new Agricultural initiatives; indicative values for this payment can be found in the table below.

Table 1 Flat rate and front loading payment rates

Indicative flat rate and front loading payment rates				
	2018/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
BML	78.2	73.64	69.08	64.52
Front Loading	12	11.41	10.71	10.00
AML	13.03	13.03	8.21	8.21

### **Strategy initiatives**

Outlined below are the areas that have been identified as worthy of support within the new strategy.

- Flat rate support scheme for active farmers, with reduced rates from current levels
- New stewardship payments for the Uplands and specific highly sensitive sites.
- Capital grant scheme
  - Modern fixed assets to enhance productivity
  - Support the adoption of new technologies to improve productivity & profitability
  - FYM/Slurry storage and pollution control systems
  - Hedges and dry stone wall repair
  - Diversification and Food processing
  - Discretionary public access improvements
  - Lime, Reseeding, Weed wipers and Soil sampling
- Productivity advice

- Advisory service
- Advisory grants
- Ongoing Processor support

The initial allocation of the budget towards these sectors can be found in the table over leaf however the strategy recognises that the proportion of the budget allocated to these areas may be subject to change to reflect changes to the Agricultural market place. This table also gives more detail around how the Agricultural industry and the wider general public gain from the money redirected in this way.

**Table 2 Strategy initiative indicative budgets**

<b>The Environment</b>	<b>Annual Budget @ 2021/22</b>	<b>Delivering for Agriculture</b>	<b>Delivering for the Isle of Man</b>
Uplands (AML) stewardship management plans	£130,000	Well managed upland habitats increase Carbon sequestration and the sustainable livestock grazing management regimes that deliver this directly influence both economic outputs and biodiversity on upland farms.	Biosphere – ensuring rare heathland habitats are managed through grazing Climate challenge – preventing peat losses Catchment management – protecting integrity of water storing peat
Habitat maintenance, enhancement and creation	£283,000	Farmers are rewarded for positive land-management and provision of public goods not linked to farming outputs.	Catchment management – protecting integrity of water storing peat and water quality. Climate challenge – increased Carbon sequestration in peat and trees.
Wall and hedge restoration and tree planting	£150,000	Effective walls and hedges help farms maintain their biosecurity, aiding in the prevention of the spread of pests and diseases. Walls, Hedges and trees are also an invaluable habitat for beneficial insects and invertebrates	Biosphere – walls and hedges are an important landscape feature and a link to the Island’s farming and cultural heritage
Farm waste and water management capital grants	£400,000	To improve the utilisation of farm manures, reducing costs to the farmer whilst also reduce risk of farm pollution incidents	The effective management of farm manures reduces the risk of Nitrogen and carbon losses to the environment therefore reducing climate change gas release. It will also assist in the island achieving the Bathing water Directive standards. Enhancing its reputation as a desirable place to live and work
Public access	£80,000	Increased access to the countryside gives the general public the opportunity to gain a wider understanding of the countryside and the work that Agriculture does to protect and enhance the Islands cherished landscapes	Strong argument that spending on agriculture delivers public money for public goods. The public have access to the countryside for health and recreation but also can see ‘up close’ the productivity, culture, wildlife and landscape that farming delivers.

<b>Supporting active farmers</b>	<b>Annual Budget @ 2021/22</b>	<b>Delivering for Agriculture</b>	<b>Delivering for the Isle of Man</b>
Advisory provision	£200,000	The primary purpose of the advisory provision will be the holistic development of farm and food businesses, where economic and environmental performance is inextricably linked. This will be delivered by the Department facilitating the delivery of Benchmarking, Advisory groups, peer to peer advisory opportunities and specialist advice	Improving the economic output of the agricultural sector and growing GDP through growing the agricultural industry. Whilst ensuring that initiatives are not in conflict with environmental This will ensure that the productivity, environmental sustainability will be maintained and enhanced
Food Marketing	£80,000	Ensuring that primary agricultural produce achieves the best return from the market place	Encourages a vibrant Manx agriculture that is able to actively contribute to the fabric of the island
Plastic disposal	£40,000	Providing a central collection infrastructure for plastic waste facilitating appropriate disposal	Minimises environmental pollution through the unlicensed disposal of plastic waste

Supporting Productivity	Annual Budget @ 2021/22	Delivering for Agriculture	Delivering for the Isle of Man
Lowland Liming grant	£150,000	Increasing productivity Maintaining land at its optimum pH is important if productivity is to be maintained, the benefits of fertiliser both natural and artificial are only fully realised if soil pH is at an optimum level.	Maintaining soil at optimum pH productivity necessary to enable soil to achieve optimum soil carbon sequestration. A healthy fertile soil supports the growth healthy crops which add to the soil carbon reserves with its roots and the soil fauna it supports.
Lowland reseeded grant		Reseeding where appropriate improves agricultural productivity	Poor grass swards which have become poached etc. are very vulnerable to erosion, readily losing plant nutrients and stored soil Nitrogen
Weed-wiping		Increased productivity through weed control.	Prevents spread of injurious weeds.
Pig Premium Scheme	£120,000	The scheme supports the viability of the industry, whilst focussing on consumer confidence; principally through Red Tractor Farm Assurance	Having an indigenous pig industry brings benefits to the Island in terms of food security, helping to deliver the food strategy, enhancing the range of food products available and supporting the environment and through better use of farm manures.
Knowledge and Innovation (AFGS)	£100,000	Ensuring that the industry is able to gain first-hand knowledge and experience of new and novel industry developments, by procuring specialist advice and analysis and facilitating off-island fact finding trips. Including support for Agricultural Apprenticeships	Providing an industry with access to topical developments delivers an industry that provides value for money for the island

<b>Supporting Investment</b>	<b>Annual Budget @ 2021/22</b>	<b>Delivering for Agriculture</b>	<b>Delivering for the Isle of Man</b>
Agricultural and Horticultural Capital Grants (AFGS)	£900,000	Providing the industry with the capital required to ensure that their farm infrastructure allows them to farm productively and efficiently	Improving the economic output of the agricultural sector and growing GDP through growing the agricultural industry
Food Grants	£300,000	Providing the food industry with the capital required to ensure that their infrastructure allows them to work productively and efficiently. Enhancing current and creating new added value outlets for primary agricultural production	Ensuring the consumer has access to a wide range of locally produced foodstuffs be they staples or artisanal food offerings. Building on the growing reputation of the Island as a 'food destination' bringing economic opportunities to the tourism and leisure industries



## Delivery plan financial summary

The table below details anticipated spend per initiative over the introductory period of the new strategy, the allocation of budget toward these areas for the previous Scheme year is included to give an indication of the direction of travel of the support for the various initiatives.

Table 3 - Agricultural strategy budget allocation

Initiative	2018/19	19/20	2021	21/22
BML - area payment	£ 5,710,000	£ 5,377,000	£ 5,044,000	£ 4,711,000
AML - area payment	£ 324,000	£ 324,000	£ 200,000	£ 200,000
Uplands Agri-environment scheme		£ -	£ 130,000	£ 130,000
Advisory service	£ 50,000	£ 150,000	£ 200,000	£ 200,000
AFGS - Food grants	£ 300,000	£ 300,000	£ 300,000	£ 300,000
AFGS - Agric and Hortic capital grants	£ 200,000	£ 400,000	£ 700,000	£ 900,000
Hedge and wall repair tree planting	£ -	£ 50,000	£ 100,000	£ 150,000
Slurry control systems	£ -	£ 100,000	£ 250,000	£ 400,000
AFGS - Knowledge and Innovation	£ 50,000	£ 100,000	£ 100,000	£ 100,000
Pig premium scheme	£ 120,000	£ 120,000	£ 120,000	£ 120,000
Food marketing	£ 50,000	£ 75,000	£ 75,000	£ 80,000
Plastic disposal support	£ 40,000	£ 40,000	£ 40,000	£ 40,000
Public access	£ -	£ 40,000	£ 80,000	£ 80,000
Land improvements (e.g. lime)	£ -	£ 50,000	£ 75,000	£ 150,000
Habitat maintenance enhancement & protection	£ -	£ 50,000	£ 100,000	£ 283,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 6,844,000</b>	<b>£ 7,176,000</b>	<b>£ 7,514,000</b>	<b>£ 7,844,000</b>

[Funding for strategy.xlsx](#)

The changes outlined in the table overleaf when amalgamated together are demonstrated graphically below. They show the shift in the emphasis of payments from full flat rate payments towards making payments investments and activities that make a positive contribution to productivity and the environment.

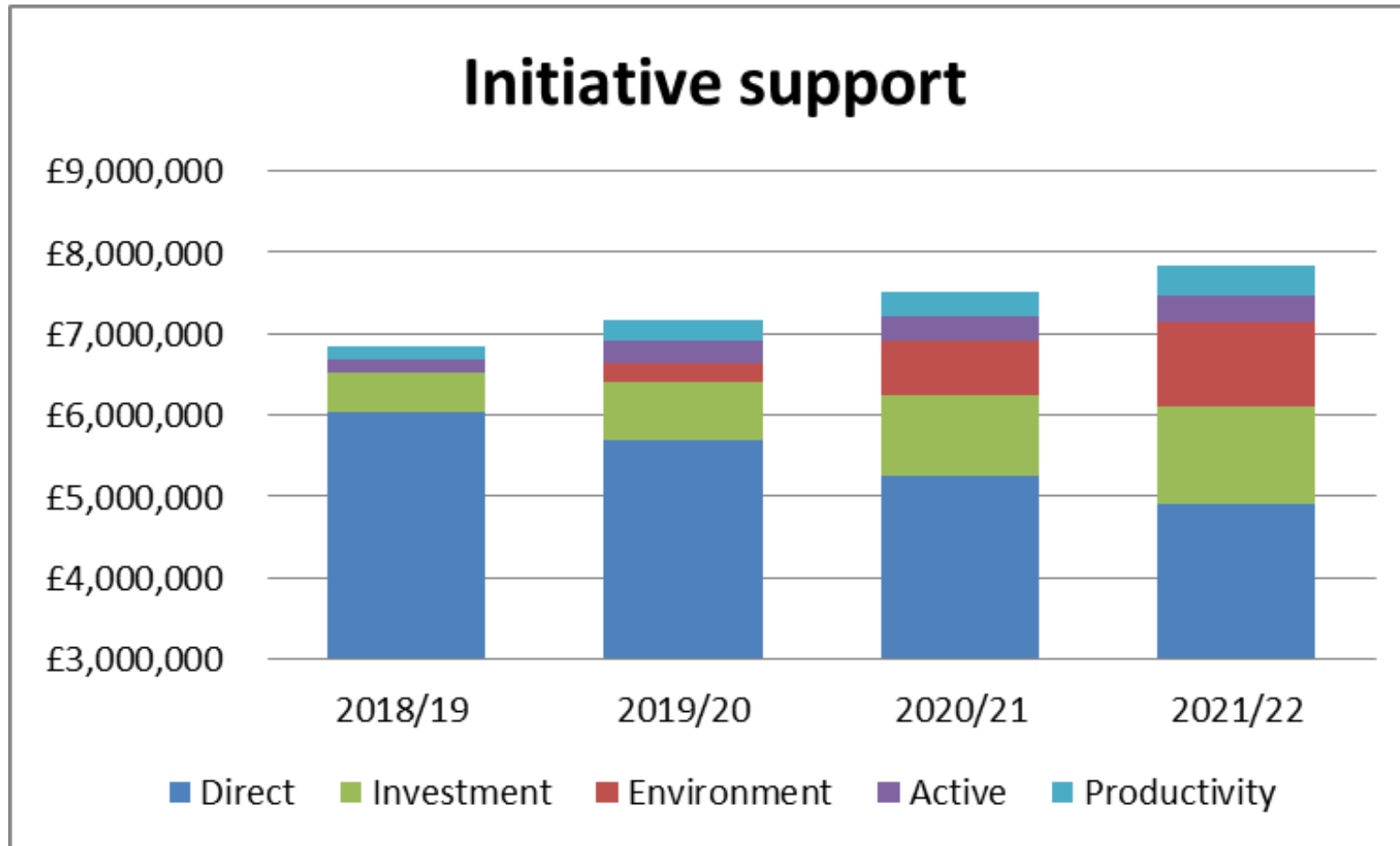


Figure 1 Graph of changes in total support payments by sector

## Summary

### Expected Outcomes from this Strategy

The core principle of this strategy is that the focus of Agricultural support payments is to be refocused away from full flat rate payments with a significant proportion of support being targeted towards initiatives that deliver productivity and or Environmental gains. These changes are outlined in the table (table 4) below.

Table 4 Changes in total support by sector from 2018-19 to 2021-22

	2018-19	2021-22	Trend
Direct support (flat rate)	£ 6,034,000	£ 4,911,000	<b>-£ 1,123,000</b>
Active farmer	£ 140,000	£ 320,000	£ 180,000
Productivity	£ 170,000	£ 370,000	£ 200,000
Investment	£ 500,000	£ 1,200,000	£ 700,000
Environmental Initiatives	£ -	£ 1,043,000	£ 1,043,000
Total funding	£ 6,844,000	£ 7,844,000	£ 1,000,000

[Funding for strategy.xlsx](#)

Direct support through flat rate payments falls from 88% of total support in 2018-19 to 63% in 2021-22. This releases funds to increase support for Active farmers Productivity and Investment to 24% of total support and just as if not more importantly creates a new Environmental initiative which represents 13% of the total support budget or some £1,043,000. This is graphically illustrated below.

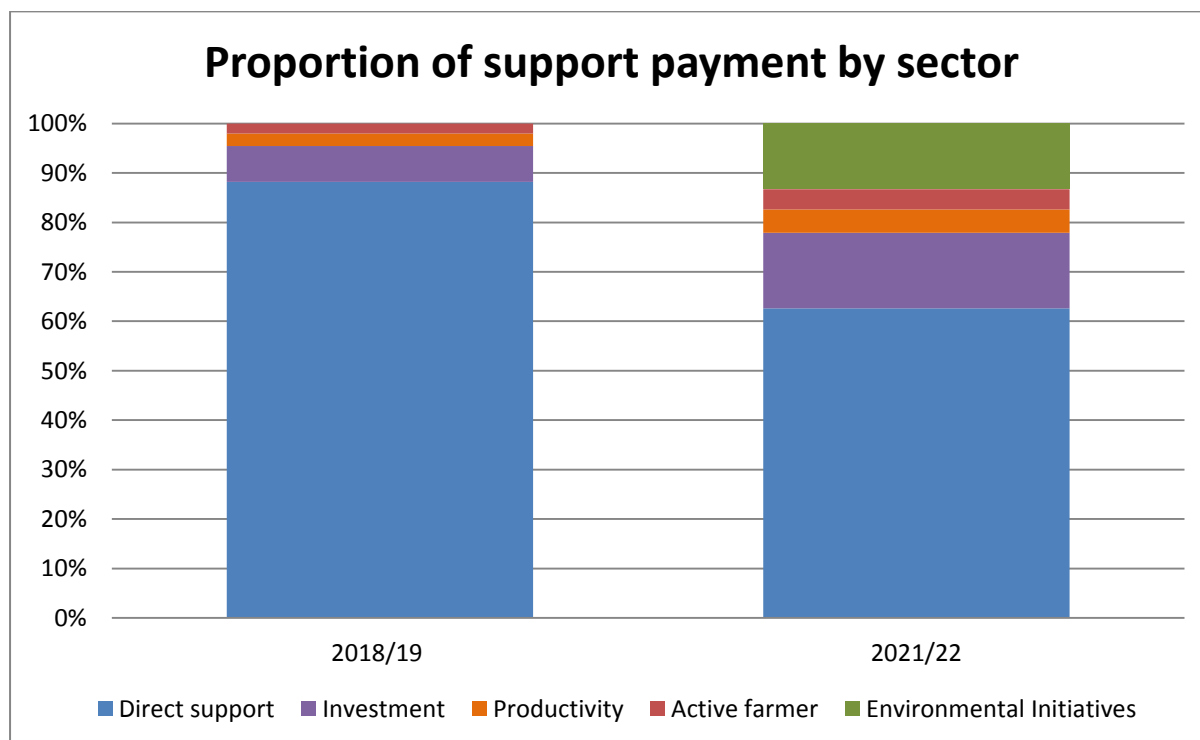


Figure 2 proportion of payment distribution expressed as a percentage, see actual values in figure 1

## **Gains for the Environment**

### **Uplands**

These include the creation of an upland Environmental Stewardship Scheme where farmers are actively encouraged to maintain and enhance the islands cherished uplands. Working in conjunction with NGO's upland farmers will be actively supported to enable the delivery of measurable habitat and biodiversity gains. It is envisaged that these initiatives will provide the ability to provide increased Carbon sequestration opportunities.

### **Water quality**

Other benefits to the Environment include enhancement to catchment management practices which will give benefits in terms of flood prevention and control plus reductions in diffuse water pollution which will help deliver against EU Bathing Water Directive 2006/7/EC. Farm nutrient management plans will help to reduce diffuse water pollution whilst at the same time reducing the production of Nitrogenous greenhouse gasses.

The enhancement and protection of dubs and scrapes is also an area where support will be given.

### **Field Boundary features and Woodlands**

Support will be given towards the appropriate maintenance and creation of walls, sod banks and hedges to maintain and enhance the islands unique field structures. Properly maintained and managed field boundaries provide shelter and food for many species of birds, mammals and invertebrates; they also provide an invaluable opportunity for Carbon sequestration. Where appropriate sites can be identified the creation of new Manx native woodlands will be supported.

### **Gains for the whole community**

The strategy will provide support that will foster a viable and sustainable agricultural industry that will be able to continue to provide the wide range of the staple foods that are required to be available on a daily basis. Through supporting the adoption of novel growing methods the scheme will encourage the further development of local food offering.

Environmental initiatives such as habitat management and habitat creation will encourage the maintenance and enhance the natural environment, further enhancing the islands reputation as 'the jewel in the crown' of the Irish sea. This is something that is readily commented on by visitors to the island but often taken for granted by those who live and work here.

It is widely acknowledged that the landscape that has been evolved over time by generations of farmers, has created an environment which is an asset to the island both as a tourist destination but more recently and more importantly creating an environment which people seek out as a desirable place to live and work in.

### **Gains for Active Farmers**

Those earning a living from their farming practices will be actively supported. The provision of a wide range of advisory services will be facilitated from at one end support towards basic soil sampling through benchmarking and group activities to the provision of strategic farms with all the advisory opportunities these provide.

The budget for Farm investment grants will also be increased to provide farmers with the support they require to ensure they are able to adapt to the ever changing market place they face.

### **Conclusion**

The introduction of the Countryside Care Scheme in 2009 saw a phased change in Agricultural support with a shift away from production support towards acreage payments for meeting cross compliance and land management standards.

The new strategy is a step further, whilst an element of flat rate payment towards basic cross compliance will be maintained there will be a new focus on making payments to help those who are trying to improve the productivity of their businesses and to those who wish to make a positive impact on the Island's environment and landscape.

This initiative is not been taken in isolation to the climate change initiative many of the Environmental initiatives within it have been formulated in consultation with the Climate Change team. Adopting the new strategy gives the opportunity to give an early kick start to the obvious quick win Carbon management initiatives.

The Department fully accepts that when a Climate Change Action Plan is agreed, it will need to bring forward actions to ensure that agriculture's role in the emissions and potential expansion of carbon capture associated with Land Management is fully delivered.