Notes from consultation with farming pillar on Thursday 22 February 2001 at Rockwell College
SWOT analysis of Farming + Agriculture in South Tipperary

STRENGTHS • Land Quality (good land quality – above average for the country) • Training and Expertise • Scenic Landscapes + Topography (-from a tourist point of view) • High % of full time farmers • Age profile is positive • Centrally located in country – access • Climate – favourable – allows diverse enterprise mix • Tourism potential • Well maintained – high reinvestment into farms • High ownership of land • Good Co-op structure • Back-up service by Co-ops and others • Good reputation/profile – Nationally (Brand Name) • Milk Quota Production Capacity • Equestrian	WEAKNESSES • Decrease in Margins – Price Pressure • Labour shortage + price of labour (can't compete) • Limit on output [high cost] • (Urban pressures) Infrastructure and development projects • Movement out of farming – farm accession • Isolation (one man farms) in farming • Increased administration • Environmental restrictions – inequitable implementation urban/rural and around the country and EU • Cost of administration and monitoring – products can only carry so much cost • Producing commodities in a high cost environment – other countries do not have to pay the environmental cost • Negative Quality image – Consumer +Social + Press • Storage Capacity • Back-up facilities – including Crèches, Playschools • Loss of bargaining power • Lack of branding - trust • Product Suitability • Need higher quality • Lack of diversity • Lack of confidence by consumer in products • Lack of value added products • People feel that food should be cheap • Farmers have no control over prices • Bord Bia • Loss of connection between farmer and customer
OPPORTUNITIES • New enterprise development (eg mushrooms) • Better marketing initiatives (eg mushrooms) • Grass based industry – cheap cost – marketing + presentation • Education and promotion (image) • Organics – subsidised in the EU (10%) – potential to increase consumption - some short term advantage • More valued products – trend for more processed foods • Market 'environmentally friendly food' – much of Irish food already is –under REPS? • Positive media campaign • Direct marketing to final consumer – new technology (web sites) + space for sales	THREATS • Health scares + negative media • GATT – policy • KYOTO • Imports • Health and safety • EU enlargement • Climate • Infrastructure – new motorways – fragmentation, isolation, increase in non viable farms, social aspects, needs conciliation from government re CPOs, equal benefits • Infrastructure – access to farms on county roads • Supermarkets • Concentrated buying power

(enhanced country markets, farm selling, roadside sales) • Rural Renewal schemes (similar to urban renewal) • Farm partnerships – lack of incentives and taxation – buying groups • Renewable energy – wind, hydro, anaerobic • Tourism • Agri-aware • Value added food processing • Off farm employment opportunities • Bord Bia – enhance marketing role (through partnership) as opposed to promotions solely	• Globalisation • Decrease in margins • Divergence of incomes • Exodus from farming • Isolation • Rural vote is declining in importance - diminishing voice • Waste management – incinerator • Horse industry – cost of land • Smallholders will be squeezed out – no voice

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IDEAL PRESENT SITUATION FOR IRISH FARMING (South Tipperary)

- Higher standard of living
- Reasonable margins
- Access to adequate service provision – roads, health, water, childcare, rural public transport, policing – quality of life issues
- Growth in net worth over time
- Better PR
- Better business management including financial training
- Place value on time
- Farmers would have a better standard of living
- Access to education and training – decreasing margins don't give the time to access – farmers not afraid of taking these up
- Better relationship with customer

HOW TO GET THERE

- National Strategic Plan
- Local Strategic Plan – Local Autonomy – devolvement from Dublin and EU
- Involvement of the Farming Sector
- Subsidiarity - the involvement needs: Political will, farmer, consumer, processor, retailer, EPA and Department of Agriculture involvement.
- Reduce over-reliance on subsidies
- Re-direction of subsidies
- Better use of raw materials – value added
- Control of own incomes
- Strategy to bring back confidence to Irish produced food
- Space provided in urban and rural areas to enable direct sales of farming produce to the public