



# Integrating the social dimension in to farm sustainability assessment

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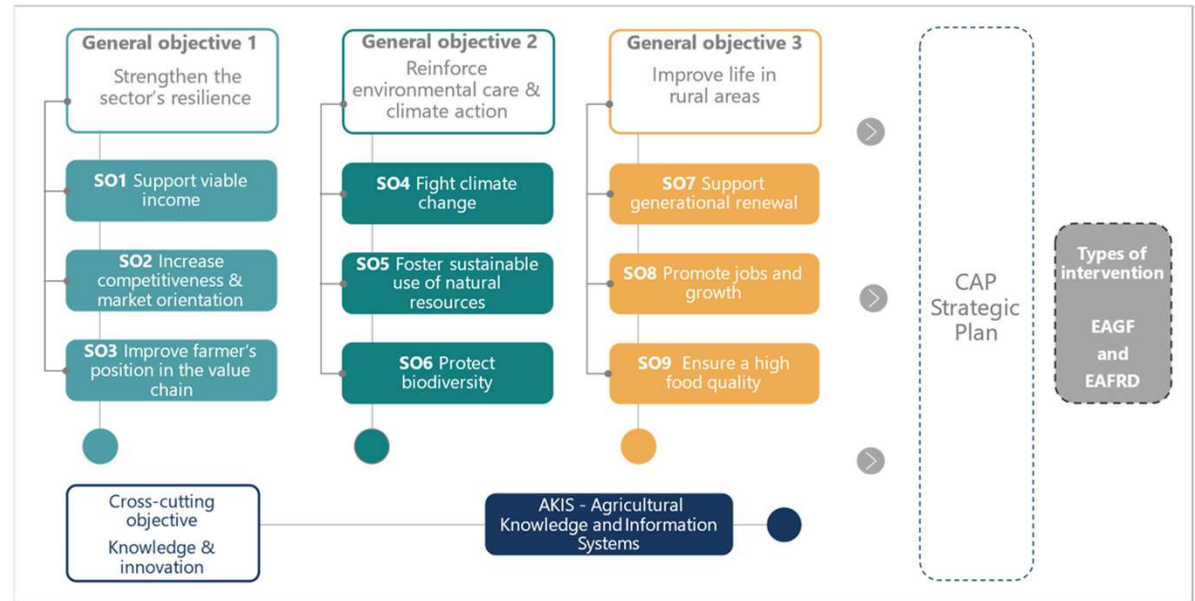
# Overview

- Motivation
- Policy landscape
- Measuring social sustainability
- Experiences from the Teagasc National Farm Survey
- Future work
- Discussion



# Motivation

- Holistic nature of sustainability increasingly reflected in **policy**
- **Multidimensional** aspects of facilitating a just transition
- New **reporting** requirements e.g. CMEF, CSRD, social conditionality etc.



Source: Cagliero et al. 2021



## Balancing sustainability dimensions in future policy design

- Create **socially responsible**, economically profitable, and environmentally sustainable agri-food systems
- Economic, environmental, & social sustainability dimensions are of **equal importance**
- Central objectives of the CAP should focus on:
  - Providing **socioeconomic support** to the farmers who need it most
  - Promoting **positive** environmental, **social** and animal welfare **outcomes** for society
  - Invigorating enabling conditions for **rural areas**
  - Creating a complementary and temporary **Just Transition** Fund to accelerate the sector's sustainability transition.
- **A guiding principle - Economic, environmental, and social sustainability can reinforce each other.**
- **How** can all of this be achieved? It will be challenging.



# What is social sustainability?

- Specifying and managing both **positive and negative impacts** of **systems, processes, organisations, and activities** on **people and social life** (Balaman, 2018)
- People at its core
  - **Meeting human needs now and in the future**
- **Aspects relating to the individual and society**
  - Internal e.g. health & wellbeing, working conditions
  - External e.g. animal welfare, generational renewal
- **FSDN pilot** identified the social attractiveness of the farm sector, social inclusion, education, training and advice and other aspects including factors that may impact the social conditions of farmers such as internet access, living conditions and access to public transport



## Some measurement challenges

- **Broad range of topics**
  - Diverse aspects and therefore data requirements
- **Subjectivity of social metrics**
  - Social factors are harder to quantify
  - May be context specific – trade-offs
- **Data collection burden**
  - Difficult to adapt existing mechanisms to incorporate this type of data
- **Sensitivity of subject areas**
  - Farm succession, Farmer health and wellbeing etc.
- **Complexity and cost**
  - Measurement often requires detailed fieldwork, stakeholder interviews, and ongoing audits, which can be expensive and resource-intensive



## New data requirements

- **FSDN**

- Farmer Training
- Farm Safety
- Social inclusion
- Services – IT
- Generational renewal

- **Ireland**

- Irish Food Vision 2030 - generational renewal, gender balance, diversity, education and training, health and safety, mental health and wellbeing and broader rural development.



Minister for Agriculture Charlie McConalogue. \ Philip Doyle

### **Commission on generational renewal in farming proposed by Minister**



Press release

### **Minister Heydon launches new open call for farmer health, safety and wellbeing projects**

From [Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine](#)

Published on 3 July 2024

# Indicator development in the NFS



Demographics  
Education  
Workload  
Isolation  
Farm Safety  
Connectivity (ICT)  
Succession  
Stress  
Wellbeing/Quality of Life\*

Health & Welfare\*  
Antibiotic use\*\*  
Farm Facilities\*



Rural viability/access to services  
Small Farms Survey  
Biodiversity\*

*\*Some data available \*\* not currently collected*



# Teagasc Annual Sustainability Report

## Dairy: Social Sustainability



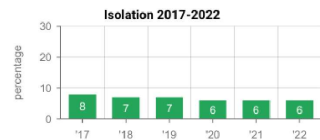
### Household Vulnerability 2022

4%



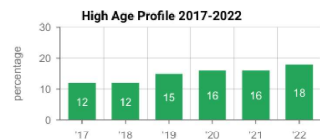
### Isolation 2022

6%



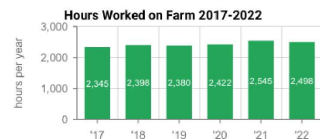
### High Age Profile 2022

18%



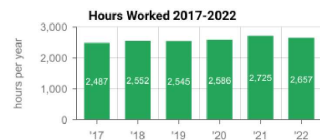
### Hours Worked on Farm 2022

2,498



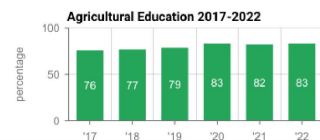
### Total Hours Worked 2022

2,657



### Agricultural Education 2022

83%



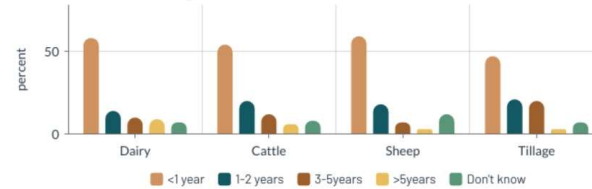
Source: Teagasc National Farm Survey

Agriculture and Food Development Authority



## Social Sustainability Special Focus 2022

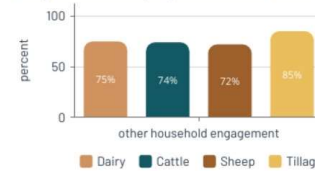
### When did you last take a break from the farm?



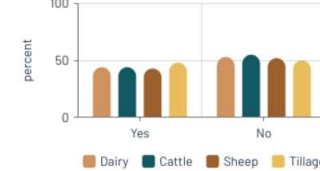
### When did you last visit a doctor?



### Daily contact with people outside the farm?

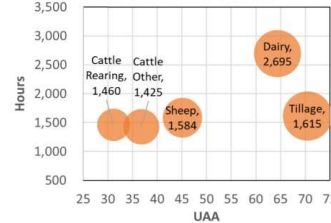


### Provide/receive help on farm

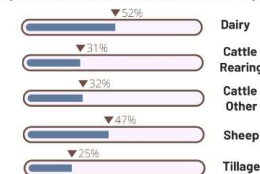


## Farm Labour

### Labour hours and Farm size



### Proportion of farms with female labour input 2022

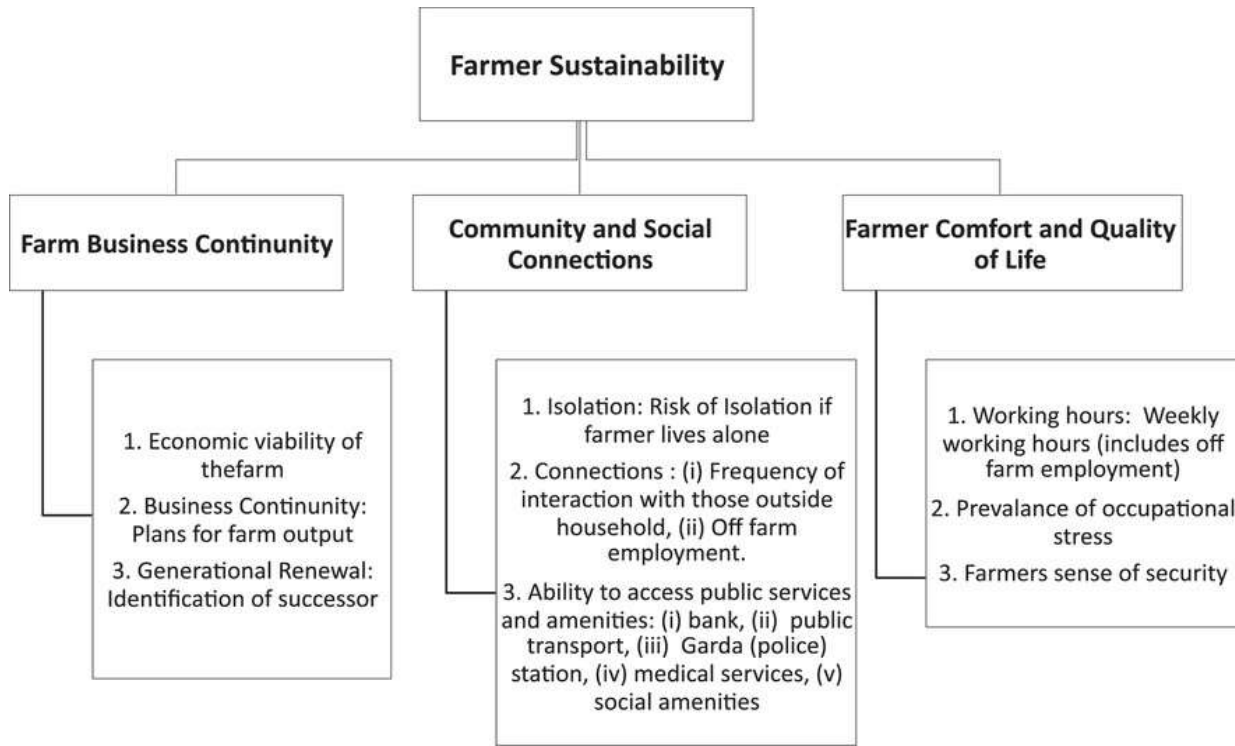


These social sustainability metrics for 2022 are based on data from a special survey of a sample of 611 farms, representing over 85,000 farms nationally.



# Creating a wellbeing index with existing NFS data

- Template - OECD 'Better Life Index' [OECD Index Ireland](#)



Source: Brennan et al. 2022

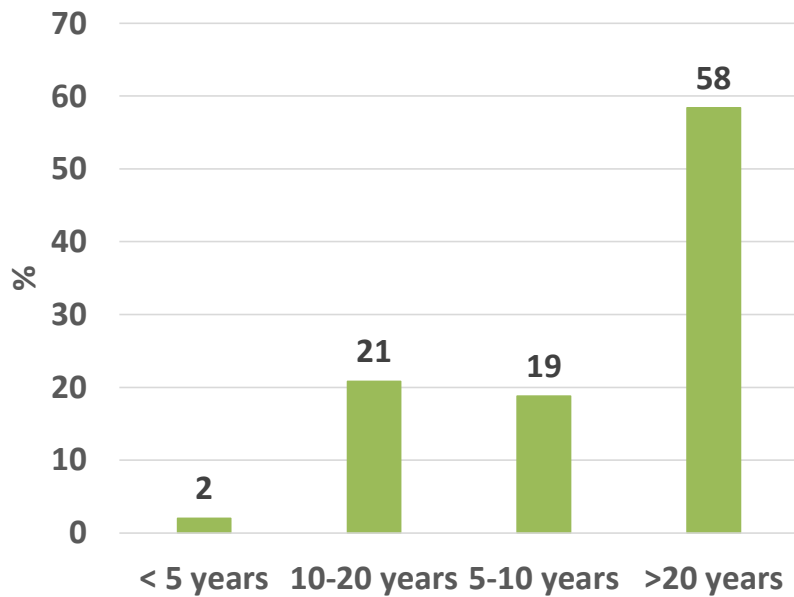
## Farm Succession

- **2020 Irish Census of Agriculture**
  - Almost 33% of farm holders aged >65 years, up from 23% in 1991
  - Only 7% aged <35 years, down from 13% in 1991
- Challenge of **delayed succession**
- **A nuanced story**
  - NFS 2018 - 3/4 of farmers aged over 65 have identified a successor
  - Dairy and Tillage more likely than Cattle and Sheep
  - Viability a factor for some systems but not all
  - New data forthcoming

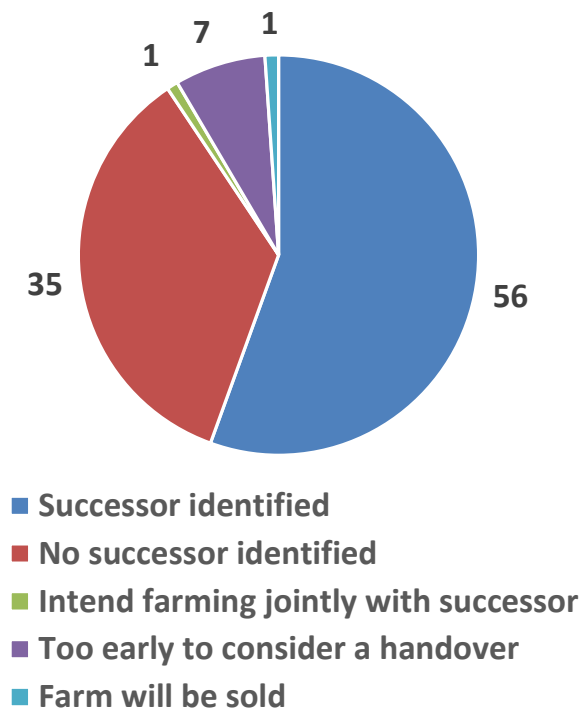


## Succession on Small Farms (<8K SO)

Length of time as main operator



Succession plans – Farmers aged >60



Source: Teagasc Small Farms Survey 2022

## Future Work

- Good progress but additional data is required
- Data collection issues
  - Challenging to collect broad ranging data every year
  - Sensitivity around wellbeing, quality of life etc.
  - Future linking to administrative data sources crucial e.g. animal medicines register
- New projects
  - Knowledge exchange and co-design in selection of suitable survey instruments



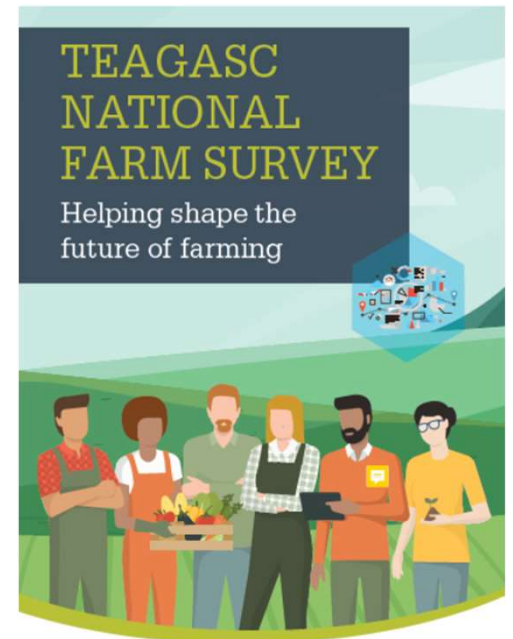
## Discussion

- Where to from here?
- Where should the focus lie?
  - Differs across MS
  - Universal challenges
- Sources of data outside of the FSDN?
- Perspectives from other countries?



*Thank You*

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