



Oifig an Ard-Rúnaí  
An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara, Baile Átha Cliath, DO2 WK12.  
Office of the Secretary General  
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Dublin, DO2 WK12.

**R1924 (ii) PAC33**

Telephone: (01) 607 2184 / 2134  
Facsimile: (01) 662 1739

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O<sup>sh</sup> June 2023

**Your Ref: S1321 PAC33**

Ms. Sarah O'Farrell  
Clerk  
Committee of Public Accounts  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

Email: [pac@oireachtas.ie](mailto:pac@oireachtas.ie)

Dear Ms. O'Farrell

I refer to the Department's recent appearance at the Committee of Public Accounts on 4 May 2023.

Please find enclosed responses to the five issues raised by the committee members during the meeting which required a response from the Department.

If you require further information or require clarification on any aspect of the replies please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Brendan Gleeson  
Secretary General

**Response of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to issues raised by the Committee of Public Accounts on 4 April 2023**

**Question 1: The average timeframe for dealing with forestry license appeals.**

The following, from our records, are the periods involved for Forestry Appeals Committee (FAC) appeals to be decided in each of the years 2021, 2022 and 2023. Please note that appeals decided in each year would include appeals received in previous years as well as that current year, publishing occurs each end of week for decisions that week.

The average time taken to decide an appeal from its receipt includes the time-period from appeal receipt to the receipt of the DAFM statement on the appeal and any associated documents given in days on the final column.

<b>Year of FAC decision</b>	<b>No of appeals decided and published by the FAC by licence decision appealed against*</b>	<b>Average time taken for FAC to decide the appeal from the date the appeal was first received – number of days</b>	<b>Average time from receipt of appeal to receipt of DAFM statement and documents – number of days</b>
2021	435	299	212
2022	57	261	124
2023	19	250	93

\*there can be more than one appeal against a licence decision, the FAC may hear all such appeals as a single appeal.

**Question 2: An information note on how many Irish products have PGI or PDO status, how many are in the process of applying for PGI or PDO status, and how this compares to other EU countries.**

### **IRISH GI REGISTERED PRODUCTS**

Ireland currently has 11 products registered under the GI system:

- **Protected Designation of Origin (PDO):** Oriel Sea Salt, Oriel Sea Minerals, Imokilly Regato Cheese
- **Protected Geographical Indication (PGI):** Waterford Blaa, Connemara Hill Lamb, Sneem Black Pudding, Timoleague Brown Pudding, Clare Island Salmon,
- **Geographical Indication (GI):** Irish Whiskey, Irish Poitin, Irish Cream (Liqueur)

### **CURRENT APPLICATIONS**

The Department is currently examining a further nine food GI applications covering baked goods, vegetables, fruit, salt and meat.

Four of these applications (Irish Grass Fed Beef, Wexford Blackcurrant, Comeragh Mountain Lamb and Achill Island Sea Salt) have been submitted to the Commission following the successful completion of the National Opposition procedure and are at various stages of scrutiny.

In regard to the application for Irish Grass Fed Beef, the Committee may be aware that the Commission finalized its scrutiny of the application and published it in the Official Journal of the European Union for what is referred to in the Regulation as an opposition procedure which allows submissions on the application to be made by Member States and third countries. The UK made such a submission and following successful consultations between this Department, Bord Bia and their UK counterparts, the geographical area of the application was extended to include Northern Ireland. This required a further scrutiny by the European Commission, which is on-going. When completed this will require a further publication in the Official Journal of the EU to allow other Member States and third countries having a legitimate

interest to make submissions on the application with the Commission, within a three-month period from the date of publication.

In regard to the other GI applications currently with the Commission, these have not yet been published in the Official Journal of the EU for the Member State/Third Country opposition procedure.

In regard to remaining applications not yet sent to the Commission, Department officials are engaging with the applicants which are still at the technical drafting stage.

### **PARTICIPATION LEVELS**

Ireland has a lower level of participation in applying for GIs compared to other Member States such as Italy, France and Spain who have a significant number of GIs for wine.

Participation is dependent on a number of factors, including the level of interest of EU Quality Scheme among producers. Applications for geographical indications are generally made by producer groups. Unlike some other Member States, Ireland does not have a tradition of producer groups or inter-branch organisations.

The table below gives details on GIs for some Member States.

<b>Member State</b>	<b>Agricultural Products and Foodstuffs</b>	<b>Wines</b>	<b>Spirit Drinks</b>	<b>Total</b>
Italy	319	526	35	880
France	260	439	53	752
Spain	208	144	19	371
Sweden	13	-	3	16
Denmark	8	5	-	13
Ireland	8	-	3	11

Estonia	1	-	1	2
Lativa	4	-	-	4

### Further information

A Geographical Indication is attributed to products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities, reputation or characteristics that are essentially attributable to that place of origin. Most commonly, a Geographical Indication includes the name of the place or origin of the goods. Agricultural products typically have qualities that derive from their place or production and are influenced by specific local factors.

The current Union quality policy includes the following:

- **Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)** - the product must be produced, processed, and prepared in the geographical area and where the quality or characteristics are essentially due to that area.
- **Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)** – the product must be produced or processed or prepared in the geographical area and where a specific quality reputation or other characteristics are attributable to that area.
- **Geographical Indication (GI)** – geographical indication for spirit drinks and aromatised wines.

The current Union Quality scheme also includes the following:

- Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG) – the product must be traditional (30 years/handed down through generations) or established custom.
- Mountain product - The quality term 'mountain product' highlights the specificities of a product from mountain areas, with difficult natural conditions.
- Product of EU's outermost regions
- Voluntary certification schemes

The EU Special Committee on Agriculture has agreed a negotiating mandate for the proposal for a Commission Regulation to change some of the GI rules. Trilogue negotiations are due to commence in early June.

**Question 3: Details of the review carried out in relation to the value of the greyhound sector to the Irish economy.**

In July 2021, Jim Power economics produced a report on The Economic & Financial Significance of the Irish Greyhound Industry July 2021 for Rásaíocht Con Éireann (RCÉ). This report follows earlier similar reports produced by Jim Power for RCÉ in 2010 and 2017.

According to the 2021 Power Report, the greyhound industry provides and supports considerable employment both directly and indirectly across the Irish economy. It is estimated that in 2019, the industry supported over 4,000 full-time and part-time jobs in the economy. In addition, there are over 6,000 active greyhound owners. The total number of people deriving economic benefit from the sector is estimated at over 10,000.

The report (p3) states:-

“The gross wage bill on the back of this direct and indirect employment is estimated at €103.8 million per annum. PAYE/PRSI paid per annum is estimated at €15.6million. Net incomes generated in the industry are estimated at €88.2 million. Based on a conservative income multiplier effect of 0.5, this would result in a total economic impact to the economy of €132.3 million per annum in terms of additional spending.”

<https://www.grireland.ie/globalassets/report-pdfs/jim-power-2021/the-economic-financial-significance-of-the-irish-greyhound-industry-jim-power-report-july-2021-gri.pdf>

**Question 4: Performance metrics related to the Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund.**

Both HRI and Rásaíocht Con Éireann (RCÉ) include metrics in their annual reports under the Financial Review heading.

Horse Racing Ireland (HRI) publishes a Factbook with metrics indicating year on year performance. The HRI Factbook 2022 can be accessed via this link [HRI Factbook 2022](#)

With regard to RCÉ, since 2020 this Department has ringfenced 10% of the Fund allocation to RCÉ for welfare including integrity. The Board of RCÉ has indicated that its priorities

include the continued expansion to the Care and Welfare initiatives which include a range of measures.

In order to assist DAFM in monitoring expenditure on welfare, quarterly reports on progress regarding the continued implementation of the Care and Welfare Programme and the traceability system are required.

***Question 5: The number of protected disclosures the Department has received over the last few years.***

**DAFM Protected Disclosures 2016 - 18/05/23**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>2023</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2022</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2021</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2019</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>3</b>