



Sustainable Smallholders Ireland Decision Tree

As a smallholder, you will, by definition, be limited by the size of your smallholding. This Decision Tree chart gives examples of the type of production possible, depending on the land available to you and additional considerations such as access to water and soil type. Completing this chart should assist with your SWOT analysis.

Smallholding Decision /Enterprise	Supports	Licenses/Certs	Considerations
General Considerations. Agriculture in Ireland accounted for 7.1 % of GNP in 2021 so it is pretty fundamental to a small open economy like Ireland. The CAP has now brought a new levelling out to income supports and smallholders can now avail of these.	Organic Farming Scheme, Young Farmers Scheme (farmer <40 and must complete Green Cert) BISS basic Income Support, Areas of Natural Constraint in the Western part of Ireland Others Agri Environment Schemes	All organic producers must have an organic license. Stricter standards apply in Ireland than basic EU license. Organic Payments much increased based on enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location – Access to buyers for produce or isolated? • Land Access Lease V Purchase • Condition of land – graded 1((best) – 5 (worst) • Suitability of land for crop/animals • Type of land – well drained/stony • Direction to the sun and prevailing wind • Condition of fencing/hedges

	available such as ACRES and NPWS Farm Plan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to fields • Access to water • Amount of land available for animals/arable • Suitable outbuildings/storage • Check planning requirements if a change of use is required
Egg Production	Organic Farming Scheme Supports	<p>No poultry license under 50 hens</p> <p>Organic license needed if sold organic</p> <p>Food Hygiene Cert</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic V Free Range • Bird Flu-Birds must remain indoors when advised by DAFM • Predators /Electric fencing • Housing/Polytunnel • Sales – Honesty Box/Farmers Market • Feed costs – Organic feed €1000+ per tonne
Vegetable Production		Organic license needed if sold organic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil type and fertility critical • Local Market Size • Routes to Market, Farmers Market, Box Schemes Etc. • Cooperative structures available Y/N • Restaurant Opportunities

Cattle / Sheep Production	BEAM (beef exceptional Aid Measure) Beef Environmental Efficiency Programme (BEEP) Sheep Welfare Scheme	Rare breed supports through ACRES Organic requires license	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herd number – application via ER1 form go to https://assets.gov.ie • All animals must be tagged. Sheep tags now electronic. Tag suffices for the life of the sheep https://assets.gov.ie • Farmers must comply with disease control in Bovines namely TB and BVD. • Farmers must retain a veterinary surgeon and an animal health plan should maintained • Herd/Flock registers must be maintained for all farm animals • Minimum stock rate to avail of Basic Income support is 0.10 lu/hectare • Extra support for Rare Breeds a • Crop/animal grazing rotation • Is there animal housing Y/N • Farmers in Ireland must comply with GAEC (Good Agricultural Environment Conditions)
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Pig Production	Small Scale Pig Production mostly Free Range. Organic Prohibitive due to feed costs	For Organic Production an Organic License is required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a Pig only enterprise, then a PIG number can be sought from DAFM • Pig Register must be maintained • Ireland high rainfall can make outdoors systems difficult • Systems must comply with GAEC • Pig ARC's on drier ground or indoor/outdoor systems suit best
Goat Production	Growing market for Goats Milk and Cheese in Ireland	Difficult to farm to Organic standards due to their susceptibility to worms and the high cost of inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flock number required • All animals must be tagged electronically

The following are the issues that apply to bringing product to the market in Ireland in the key smallholder categories:-

Marketing Issues	Requirements	Certs/Licenses	Applies to...
Slaughtering and Selling Meat Directly	Must use a local Authority approved abattoir which is inspected by the County Veterinary Officer on behalf of DAFM	For Organic you must have an Organic Processing License along with your production available from Organic Trust or The Irish Organic Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ bovine animals (cattle, bison and buffalo) ○ pigs ○ goats ○ sheep ○ deer ○ poultry (if you have 50 or more birds)

<p>Constructing own Abattoir</p>	<p>Planning permission or planning exemption must be sought from the local authority Producer must register with the Department of Agriculture and produce a HACCP plan for the premises Product liability will be required or selling meat to the public directly</p>	<p>Operator License from DAFM If Organic Processing License from Organic Certification Body</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cattle • Sheep • Pigs • Goats • Table Birds – facilities for slaughtering organic and Free-Range Poultry very limited in Ireland, DAFM will allow construction in containers on farm with Food Grade materials <p>See list of approved local authority abattoirs. https://oapi.fsai.ie/LAApprovedEstablishments.aspx</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport for Cattle, Sheep pigs and Goats 	<p>Animals pre-notified for slaughter to local abattoir</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal identity cards for bovines • Dispatch Document for Sheep must be recorded in flock register. Same for Goats and Pigs 	<p>If animals are organic, Stock Declaration sheets and Organic license should accompany all stock</p>	<p>Transport should be appropriate for the species. No distance restriction but important that animals are not stressed as it leads to increased pH and darkening of meat</p>

Animal Feed	Control Body Department of agriculture DAFM	Organic animals may only be fed certified organic rations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important not to feed beef rations high in copper to sheep and goats.
Vermin Control	Required to ensure that all animal feed and food products are not contaminated	Warfarin based vermin controls not allowed under Organic standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider putting in owl boxes to attract the birds to the farm • Store feed in plastic bins rather than putting down rodenticides
Animal Medicines	Bord Bia Quality Scheme must record all medicines given to cattle. Medicines must be stored in locked cabinet on farm	Organic Licensed operators may not use medicine routinely. All medicine use must be recorded in the organic record book and withdrawal times doubled or trebled before slaughter depending on the market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record all vet medicines administered in herd register • Note date meds purchased • Name batch ID • Quantity purchased • Name and address of the supplier • Date of treatment starting and finishing • date of the withdrawal period • I D animals • Quantity used • Name of the person administering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance - 	Public Liability insurance required for all farms and product liability required for sales of		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FBD largest agricultural insurer in Ireland • Other insurers AXA and Aviva • MAST insurance provides insurance for Farmers Market operators in Ireland (mast.ie)

	food produce to the public.		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate movement form • Correct ear tags/sap-marked pigs • Passport for cattle • Food Chain info signed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abattoir collections 	Self	Public Consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meats collected from an abattoir must be kept in temperature control. If collected fresh must be maintained in temperature band _1C to 5C.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butchery 	Self /butcher	Public consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cut list devised • meat weighed, packaged, and labelled appropriately (put on the fresh date and freezer date). Ensure the allergens and ingredients are correctly included. Also frozen meats must remain frozen for sale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg Sales 		Public consumption Organic License if organically. Also must be registered as a poultry keeper with DAFM	<p>Under 50 birds selling eggs will be classed as Farm Gate Sales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a 'Farm Gate Seller' is allowed to sell their eggs from their own premises or door to door in the local area. Over 50 birds, the seller must have a packing license • Selling at market eggs must be traceable Packing name and address on the boxes, advice on keeping the eggs chilled after purchase and provide a best before date (maximum 28 days from laying.) the eggs cannot be sold as graded eggs (e.g. Class 'A')

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No sales to shops or cafes, restaurants or hotels. These establishments must buy their eggs from producers registered with Animal Health EMI, and those eggs must be Class A
Fruit & Vegetable Selling	For Public Consumption operator where there is no livestock must have a Business Id with DAFM Also must have Product and Public Liability Insurance	Organic License if selling Organically. Also must have a current Food Hygiene Cert if selling directly at Farm Gate or Farmers Market	Route to Market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers Market Farm Gate Sales Online Sales Honesty Box