

## 11. Land Use and Agriculture

### 11.1 Introduction

A desktop examination of the study area combined with local knowledge has provided an overview of the agricultural land and the agricultural practices within the study area. While the study area is divided into two sections, North and South, the character of the agricultural land, the soil type and the farming practices are common throughout the entire area. The land use constraints are shown on Figures 18 to 20 (Drawings 00229/034 to 00229/036).

### 11.2 Study Methodology

The study was mainly a desktop study by the specialist Sub-Consultants, Philip Farrelly & Company, who liaised with regional representatives of Glanbia and the I.F.A to review the area. Other data sources included:

- Special Interest Organisations e.g. The Golfing Union of Ireland, Golf Club Ireland, The Irish Field and Country Sports Society and The International Equine Institute.
- Related websites.
- The Irish Tourist Board.
- The Environmental Protection Agency which provided information in relation to I.P.C. licensing granted within the study area.

### 11.3 Assessment Criteria

#### *Introduction*

The land area within the study zone can be categorised under several headings.

- Agricultural Lands
- Dairy Farms
- Stud Farms and Training Establishments
- Tillage Farms (incl. Sugar Beet Farms)
- REPS Farms
- Significant Land Based Sports Establishments.

In establishing assessment criteria the objective was to identify and grade areas where the probability of finding a feasible route is low, moderate or high. Since the farming practice, enterprise mix and soil types throughout the area are similar it is unlikely that standard farming practices will act as a constraint in deciding the route to be selected. The affect of a new road will be keenly felt by a given number of farmers along the chosen route. Therefore no matter where the route is chosen a sub-set of farmers within the area will be affected. Choosing alternative routes either to the east or the west will simply affect a different sub-set of farmers.

In identifying a feasible route it is important to consider areas in which the placing of a major road would create a significant impact. Such areas may have several prominent dairy farms or a cluster of dairy farms in a compact area. The probability of finding a feasible route through such an area may be quite low.

There are however within the area a significant number of land based sports establishments and stud farms and training establishments. Some of these are of national and international importance and each would need individual assessment before deciding to route a road through them.

### *Agricultural Lands*

The majority of the area within the study zone except for urban areas and roads can be broadly classified as agricultural land. The area, except for a small highland area north of Kilkenny, has the benefit of highly fertile soils and is a highly productive agricultural area. Throughout all of the study area agriculture is practiced intensively with specialist sugar beet, cereal, dairy, stud, beef and sheep farms throughout the area.

### *Stud Farms and Training Establishments*

The bloodstock industry is one of the most significant land uses in the region and it is therefore of major importance to the region. Kildare County Development Plan 1999 (Section 2.11) has assigned particular importance to the bloodstock industry 'its expansion is one of the primary goals of the council as a development agency'.

The location of a proposed road could create a significant impact on stud farms or equine based enterprises. Horses, due to their sensitive nature, could be greatly affected by the location of a major road in close proximity to a farm. It would have implications for both the rearing and breeding of horses in the area. The severance of land parcels can create field sizes and shapes unsuitable to the training of horses.

The stud farms and training areas identified are a non-exhaustive listing (See Table 11.1) with the farms identified being those derived from local knowledge, consultation with local people within the industry and a thorough desktop study. It is evident from the assessment that the Carlow - Muinebheag area is a prominent region in the equine industry. These enterprises vary in size and importance. The exact site boundaries of these stud farms would require individual mapping surveys.

### *Dairy Farms*

In the assessment of the study area a number of the prominent dairy farms and areas where clusters of dairy farms may be found, have been identified. This allows the highlighting of areas where dairy farming is of major importance in the local industry (See Table 11.2). As with the identification of stud farms within the study area, dairy farm locations have been pinpointed through the use of local

knowledge, consultation with local people within the industry and desktop resources. Once again this list is non-exhaustive and further field assessment of the constraints area would reveal more comprehensively the level of dairy farming in the area.

Dairy farms are particularly sensitive to the location of a major road. A dairy farm is entirely dependent on the land parcel or grazing paddocks adjacent to the farmyard. The location of a major road may cause severance of the land parcel into smaller areas or severance of the access from the yard to the grazing paddocks. This would have a significant impact on the future viability of the farm or its continuation in dairying.

#### *Tillage and Sugar Beet Farms*

In the study of the aerial photographs areas were identified where tillage based farming operations are carried out. This allowed the comparison of the extent of tillage farming in relation to the grassland based farming in an area. It also served to highlight areas where significant levels of tillage are to be found. Prominent tillage regions are associated with lands of very high quality and fertile soils. These were generally located from Athy to Ballitore and extending to Carlow Town and further south to Muinebheag.

The impact of the location of a major road on a tillage farm is not as significant as the impact on a dairy or stud farm. It may lead to the severance of an area or parcel of land. Severance will result in access problems for machinery to the severed area.

The location of a major road in the region of Carlow Town may have an indirect impact on the sugar beet industry. The soil type and the climatic conditions favour the growing of sugar beet in the area. The sugar factory located in Carlow Town has contributed to a high proportion of farms in the area growing sugar beet. The location of a major road in the area would have a similar significant affect on the individual farms as covered under Tillage farms above. An additional impact may be in access problems created as a result of the road location and the severance of minor local roads. These may impede the delivery of beet to the factory in Carlow Town.

#### *Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS) Farms*

The study area has among the lowest uptake of the Rural Environment Protection Scheme in the country. This reflects the high percentage of intensive farmers and the high soil qualities. The scheme is designed to encourage the farmer to farm less intensively and to do so in an environmentally friendly manner.

## **11.4 Summary of Land use from Kilcullen Town to Kilkenny City**

### *Monasterevin to Athy*

From Monasterevin to Kildare and south to Kildangan the land quality is very high. The land quality is lower in the area surrounding the large parcel of bog. From here to Athy the land quality again is very good. There is a significant level

of tillage farming and a number of large stud farms in the area. Large land parcels in these tillage areas reflect the intensive nature of the farming currently in practice. Other grassland based farming is evident although the field sizes are generally smaller.

#### *Kilcullen to Ballitore to Athy*

The land quality is very high throughout this area. Initially, the land use in the Kilcullen region is grassland-based, although the level of tillage-based farming increases in the Ballitore region. From Ballitore to Athy the farming is predominantly tillage based. Field and land parcels are smaller in the grassland area south of Kilcullen and become larger as the level of tillage increases.

#### *Athy to Castlecomer*

The land quality in the Athy region and the area south of it is very high. Land to the north-west of the excluded area is of average to good quality. There are several areas of poor quality land to be found. Land use is primarily tillage based in the Athy and south Athy region. Where the land quality decreases, there is a higher level of grassland-based farming. Of the grassland-based farming, there is a high level of dairy activity. There are several large parcels of commercial forestry.

#### *Athy to Castledermot to Carlow*

The land quality in the Athy region and south to Castledermot and Carlow town is very high. The land quality is lower around the excluded hilly area to the west of Carlow town. The southern and south-eastern region of Athy is almost entirely tillage-based. Below this area the level of grassland and dairy based farming activity increases although tillage remains significant especially north of Carlow town. Field and land parcel sizes are generally larger in the tillage parcels.

#### *Castlecomer to Kilkenny City*

The land quality within the study area is average to good initially and very high in the area north of Kilkenny City. There are several areas of poor to average quality land in the Castlecomer region. The area is mostly grassland-based with a level of dairy activity in the Castlecomer - Muckalee region. There is a low level of tillage farming in general, except for a high concentrated area north of Kilkenny City. To the north-west and north-east of Kilkenny City the land use is grassland based. Of the grassland-based farming, there is a high level of dairy activity and it extends east to Paulstown in Co. Carlow.

*Carlow to Muinebheag* - The high quality of land in the Carlow region extends to Muinebheag although the level of average quality parcels in the area increases moving southwards. There are similar levels of grassland and tillage based farming in the area south of Carlow town. Grassland based farming increases with tillage remaining significant in the area. Of the grassland farming both dairying and stud farming are prominent, especially in the Muinebheag region.

**Table 11.1 : Dairy Farms and compact areas of dairy farming**

Map Ref.	Photo Ref.	Address
D 1	22 - 3777	Rickardstown, Kildangan, Co. Kildare
D 2	22 - 3777	Riverstown, Kildangan, Co. Kildare
D 3	23 - 3740	Crookstown Upper, Ballytore, Co. Kildare
D 4	23 - 3738	Naraghmore, Ballytore, Co. Kildare
D 5	23 - 3736	Kilberry, Athy, Co. Kildare
D 6	23 - 3736	Cloney, Athy, Co. Kildare
D 7	24 - 3699	Timolin, Co. Kildare
D 8	24 - 3699	Castledermot, Co. Kildare
D 9	24 - 3697	Castledermot, Co. Kildare
D 10	25 - 1759	Athy, Co. Kildare
D 11	25 - 1757	Johnstown North, Castledermot, Co. Kildare
D 11	25 - 1757	Johnstown North, Castledermot, Co. Kildare
D 11	25 - 1757	Johnstown North, Castledermot, Co. Kildare
D 12	25 - 1759	Castleroe West, Maganey, Co. Kildare
D 13	25 - 1759	Maganey, Co Kildare
D 14	25 - 1759	Maganey, Co. Kildare
D 15	25 - 1761	Maidenhead, Arless, Co. Kildare
D 16	25 - 1761	Skehanagh House, Ballylynan, Co. Kildare
D 17	25 - 1761	Ballylynan, Co. Kildare
D 18	25 - 1761	Ballylehane, Ballylynan, Co. Kildare
D 19	25 - 1761	Ballylynan, Athy, Co. Kildare
D 20	26 - 1787	Killeshin, Co. Carlow
D 21	26 - 1787	Killeshin, Co. Carlow
D 22	26 - 1787	Cooperhill, Ballickmoyler, Co. Kildare
D 23	26 - 1787	The Strand, Ballickmoyler, Co. Kildare
D 24	26 - 1787	The Strand, Ballickmoyler, Co. Kildare
D 25	26 - 1787	Ballickmoyler, Co. Kildare
D 26	26 - 1789	Jerusalem, Maganey, Co. Kildare
D 27	26 - 1787	Doonane, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny
D 28	26 - 1783	Clogh, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny
D 29	26 - 1785	Ballynakill, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny
D 30	27 - 1821	Ballyhyde, Co. Carlow
D 31	27 - 1821	Fruithill, Co. Carlow
D 32	27 - 1821	Kilmeany, Carlow, Co. Carlow
D 33	27 - 1827	Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny
D 34	28 - 1850	Damerstown, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny
D 35	28 - 1850	Maudlin, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny
D 36	28 - 1850	Maudlin, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny
D 37	28 - 1850	Castelcomer, Co. Kilkenny
D 38	28 - 1856	Nurney, Co. Carlow
D 39	28 - 1856	Bohermore, Co. Carlow
D 40	28 - 1856	Bohermore, Co. Carlow
D 41	29 - 3592	Garryduff, Paulstown, Co. Carlow
D 42	29 - 3811	Johnswell, Co. Kilkenny
D 43	29 - 3811	Keatingstown, Co. Kilkenny
D 44	29 - 3811	Dunmore, Co. Kilkenny

Map Ref.	Photo Ref.	Address
D 45	29 - 3811	Leapstown, Co. Kilkenny
D 46	29 - 3811	Bullockhill, Co. Kilkenny
D 47	29 - 3811	Ballyfoyle, Co. Kilkenny
D 48	29 - 3811	Cramersgrove, Co. Kilkenny
D 49	29 - 3811	Greenridge, Co. Kilkenny
D 50	29 - 3811	Greenridge, Co. Kilkenny
D 51	29 - 3813	Cellarstown, Co. Kilkenny
D 52	29 - 3813	Clara Upper, Co. Kilkenny
D 53	29 - 3813	Clara Upper, Co. Kilkenny
D 54	29 - 3813	Kilderry, Co. Kilkenny
D 55	29 - 3813	Kilderry, Co. Kilkenny
D 56	29 - 3813	Churchclara, Co. Kilkenny
D 57	29 - 3813	Flagmount North, Co. Kilkenny
D 58	29 - 3813	Ballyquirk, Gowran, Co. Kilkenny
D 59	29 - 3813	Ballyquirk, Gowran, Co. Kilkenny
D 60	29 - 3592	Tinnagarney, Bagnalstown, Co. Carlow

**Table 11.2 : Stud Farms and Equine Based Enterprises**

Map Ref.	Photo Ref.	Address
S 1	22 - 3773	Kilcullen, Co. Kildare
S 2	22 - 3777	Monasterevin, Co. Kildare
S 3	22 - 3777	Kildangan, Co. Kildare
S 4	22 - 3777	Kildangan, Co. Kildare
S 5	22 - 3777	Kildangan, Co. Kildare
S 6	22 - 3736	Athy, Co. Kildare
S 7	23 - 3740	Ballitore, Co. Kildare
S 8	24 - 3695	Moone, Co. Kildare
S 9	24 - 3695	Ballitore, Co. Kildare
S 10	25 - 1759	Carlow, Co. Carlow
S 11	26 - 1785	Ashfield, Ballickmoyler, Co. Kildare
S 12	-	Carrigbeg, Muinebheag, Co. Carlow
S 13	27 - 1821	Tinryland, Carlow, Co. Carlow
S 14	27 - 1821	Busherstown, Co. Carlow
S 15	28 - 1856	Ballyhane, Leighlinbridge, Co. Carlow
S 16	28 - 1856	Milford, Co. Carlow
S 17	28 - 1856	Burgage, Leighlinbridge, Co. Carlow
S 18	28 - 1856	Rathellin, Leighlinbridge, Co. Carlow
S 19	29 - 3592	Slyguff, Muinebheag, Co. Carlow
S 20	29 - 3592	Fennescourt, Muinebheag, Co. Carlow
S 21	29 - 3592	Closutton, Muinebheag, Co. Carlow
S 22	29 - 3592	Paulstown, Muinebheag, Co. Carlow
S 23	29 - 3813	Johnswell, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny

**Table 11.3 : Pig Units**

Map Ref.	Photo Ref.	Address
P1	25 - 1757	Moone, Athy, Co. Kildare
P2	27 - 1821	Nurney, Carlow, Co. Carlow

**Table 11.4 : Golf Clubs**

Map Ref.	Photo Ref.	Name	Address
G 1	22 - 3773	Curragh Golf Club	The Curragh, Co. Kildare
G 2	23 - 3740	Rathsallagh Golf Club	Rathsallagh, Co. Kildare
G 3	24 - 3699	Athy Golf Club	Athy, Co. Kildare
G 4	25 - 1759	Kilkea Castle	Castledermot, Co. Kildare
G 5	26 - 1789	Carlow Golf Club	Pollerton, Co. Carlow
G 6	27 - 1827	Castlecomer Golf Club	Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny
G 7	29 - 3811	Kilkenny Golf Club	Newtown, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny

**Table 11.5 : Agri-Businesses**

Map Ref.	Photo Ref.	Name	Address
B 1	22 - 3777	Glanbia	Monasterevin, Co. Kildare
B 2	23 - 3738	Glanbia	Ballytore, Co. Kildare
B 3	26 - 1789	Oakpark Teagasc	Oakpark, Carlow, Co. Carlow
B 4	26 - 1789	Irish Sugar Plc	Carlow, Co. Carlow
B 5	27 -1821	Glanbia	Graigecullen, Carlow, Co. Carlow
B 6	27 -1827	Glanbia	Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny
B 7	28 - 1850	Glanbia	Muckalee, Co. Kilkenny
B 8	29 - 3811	Glanbia	Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny
B 9	29 - 3811	Airstrip	Kilkenny City