

Webinar Questions and Answers

Below you can find the questions and respective answers raised during the live webinar on the topic of “Circular Economy and Agri-Food” held on the 7th September 2023. You can find the recording and the slides for this webinar on our website.

Please note that comments and contributions in the chat are not included here.

#	Question	Answer
1	Thanks Andrew for a great presentation. Maybe a question to the rest of the group: Reflecting on the four flows framework: where do you see the most ‘activity’ on the ground in Ireland? What kind of solutions are innovators currently focusing on?	This question was answered live, please visit the recording James Gaffey: We have done some research before looking at Irish consumer perspectives of sustainable alternatives (more biobased products than food), and found that even though consumers in Ireland have positive sustainability sentiments - it doesn't always transfer into action (purchasing decisions). We also found that while their positive sentiments were quite strong, their actual knowledge on the environmental issues and their knowledge about alternatives were still quite low. There are now more bio-based products on our shelves, so I think this is slowly changing, but it needs to be promoted more, and you need industry champions brands to help with this too, as we also found brands can influence consumer behaviour https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/13/11/6062
2	Majority of Ireland's population rely on meat-based diet despite of being aware of all the negative impacts it might have. Are there suggestions to tackle this and initiate a behavioural change in people?	

- Frequently the mantra from farmers is that they are not being consulted/ engaged in processes - while I understand that is not always true- how do we move to change the widespread narrative / mindset and get farmers to BELIEVE that we can all work together to deliver positive outcomes. Every farmer I speak to on this has a strong negative impression and I include some of the more innovative
- 3 farmers in this.
Speaking of bioeconomy - Ireland seems to have really established itself as a leader when it comes to bioeconomy thinking. What do you think contributes to this success and what roadblocks might still be ahead? I know the group's touched somewhat on this but curious to hear if there are clear challenges / success factors other countries might
- 4 learn from.
How restricted are EU member states actually to roll out their own national support schemes? There seems to be this sentiment that these things will be regulated on EU level
- 12 and we shall just wait and see what they come up with
The by-product regulatory mechanism provides an opportunity to support industrial symbiosis in the agri-food sector, preserve materials/resources and prevent wastes being generated in the first place; how can we enhance the
- 13 awareness and understanding of this mechanism..
- The ESB Networks don't want micro generation. That is the biggest hurdle to anaerobic digestion and the meaningful roll out of solar. If you go to most farms in Europe they are making a good income from selling energy. Farmers in Ireland are solely depending on food production for their income. It is acceptable that ESB networks can prevent micro generation while the minister and all the experts are saying we need to look at diversification.
- This question was answered live, please visit the recording
- This question was answered live, please visit the recording
- This question was answered live, please visit the recording
- This question was answered live, please visit the recording
- James Gaffey: No one could argue we have been slow to catch up on the potential of AD. We have 30 million tonnes of slurry produced every year which could be better utilised in this way. We also need to look at possibilities for extracting higher value materials from other feedstocks before directing them to AD. At the moment there is a bioeconomy silo and bioenergy silo that needs to work closer together to take this forward. The possibilities are huge if they do. Food, feed, materials and biogas all in one place.