

#### Context

In Ireland, farmers are not required by law to hold a minimum qualification in order to farm.

However, since the 1980s, strategic government policies for both Revenue and Agriculture have set out tax exemptions and grants assistance for farmers for hold a minimum qualification ( e.g. NFQ Level 6 major award in agriculture or equivalent).

In particular, “young” trained farmers can receive significant supports to assist with establishing themselves.

**Current demands on farmers in terms of compliance for food safety, animal health and welfare, water quality and environmental sustainability.**

#### Teagasc – Supporting the learner in the RPL Process

- List of “ *approved qualifications*” meet the educational requirement for trained farmer status.
- For other learners, RPL offers an opportunity to develop a pathway towards a destination award to achieve trained farmer status.
- Many gained some skills, knowledge and experience through formal and informal learning routes.
- Through the RPL process, Teagasc supports and enables learners to recognise the value in what they achieved to date in their lives, organise the evidence in a portfolio linking to learning outcomes for a component or a full award.

#### Lessons Learned as RPL has developed

- It is important to manage learner expectations of RPL from the outset- award standards.
- RPL must be integrated into existing quality assurance processes - policies, procedures, identification of key staff, time and templates for portfolios.

#### Things to Consider

- Ongoing reflection and improving the RPL “**experience**” for the learner and all stakeholders- mentors, subject matter experts, assessors.
- The significance in the “**value**” of the outcome for the learner
- RPL is a process which can enable and empower the learner- the **future farmers** of Ireland