

# ***Roscommon 2020***

## ***The Realities of Rural Living***

### **Report**

**Undertaken on behalf of Roscommon LEADER Partnership**

**by**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report '*Roscommon Rural Living 2020*' provides an overview of the views of rural residents in Co. Roscommon on a range of issues relating to living and working in the county. The origins of this research report lie in a previous research report '*A Rural Living – Myth or Reality*' undertaken in Co. Roscommon over 20 years ago in 1998. This research report was initiated by Roscommon LEADER Partnership to establish the current situation in Co. Roscommon. The study and action plan provide direction and strategic focus to organisations and agencies working in the county and shape and prioritise the supports provided in rural areas. Funding for the study was secured from the LEADER Programme 2014-2020, the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme 2018-2022 and the Digital Skills for Citizens Project. Broadmore Research & Consulting was commissioned by Roscommon LEADER Partnership to conduct the research survey and prepare the research report.

The research was conducted by way of a face-to-face survey questionnaire administered by a team of community researchers across 8 District Electoral Areas (DEAs). The sample included four areas (Oakport; Breedoge; Cloonygormican; & Dysart) which were included in the 1998 research and complemented with four further areas (Artagh South; Ballydangan; Kilglass North; & Rockhill).

### **Research Findings – General Household Profile**

- The average household size was 2.72 persons - 1.86 adults aged up to 65 years, 0.24 persons aged over 65 years and 0.62 children under the age of 18 years.
- Almost half (48.5%) of the *Heads of Households* had a third level/trade qualification and 57% of *Spouses/Partners*.
- The education levels within rural households increased dramatically since 1998.
- In approximate terms, two out of five *Heads of Households* and *Spouses/Partners* were in full-time employment, one in five were retired, the same proportion farming and one in ten were in part-time employment and self-employed.
- The main jobs for *Heads of Households* and *Spouses/Partners* included: healthcare (11%); administration (8%); construction (8%); teaching (7%); and driving (7%).
- Some 42% worked within Co. Roscommon, 17% in Athlone, 11% in Galway and 10% in Leitrim.
- The average length of commute to work/college for the *Head of Household* was 30 minutes while it was 26 minutes for the *Spouses/Partners*.
- Some 5% of households indicated that they had an on-farm enterprise/business while 12% had a non-farm enterprise/business. The main challenges in establishing/running a business were: cashflow; demand for products/services; reliable staff; time to run business; complying with regulations; and finance.
- For those who considered setting up a new enterprise but who had not actually done so, the main reasons were financial: lack of money to invest; and access to finance/borrowing.
- Half of the *Heads of Household* had an income from employment while it was 60% for *Spouses/Partners*.
- Social welfare was the main source of income for 26% of the *Heads of Household*.
- For those with a farm, the farm income accounted for 35% of total income on average, while one in five indicated that farm income accounted for more than 50% of total income.
- The two main income concerns for households were the '*ability to pay day to day expenses*' and '*ability to pay healthcare expenses*'.

### **Research Findings – Living in Rural Roscommon**

- The main advantages of living in rural Roscommon included: tranquil/peaceful/quiet; close to family/neighbours/friends/community; privacy/own space; nice place to live; and low crime/security.
- Lack of transport (and related issues) and access to shops/services were the two main disadvantages identified to living in rural Roscommon.
- The main challenges to living in rural Roscommon included: public transport/lack of taxi's; access to broadband; withdrawal of services; dependence on a car; and isolation.
- Three-quarters of those surveyed rated their quality of life as good or excellent.
- Three out of five respondents were positive about the future (social and economic) for their household over the next 10 years, while only 13% were negative.
- Half of respondents expected that Brexit would impact on their household over the next 5 years, while a further one third expected that it would possibly impact.

### **Research Findings – Accessing Services and Supports**

- Shops and post offices were rated as the easiest services to access in Co. Roscommon.
- The majority of people rated transport services as the most difficult to access in the county while broadband was also considered as difficult to access.
- There was a high level of awareness of the services provided by Roscommon County Council, Department of Social Protection, Roscommon LEADER Partnership, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Teagasc/private consultants.
- Dealing with isolation/loneliness; relationship support/advice; advice on stress/mental ill-health; jobs/career guidance were areas where it was considered as relatively difficult to access advice and information.
- The main elements of training required by respondents were IT related training (social media, use of apps, banking, farming) and healthcare related training (including first aid).

### **Research Findings – Community Involvement and Social Interaction**

- Some 30% of the *Heads of Household* and one quarter of *Spouses/Partners* engaged in social activities more than once per week, while a further 28% of *Heads of Household* and 23% of *Spouses/Partners* did so once per week.
- The main organisations that the *Heads of Household* were involved in were sports clubs, community/charity/church groups, social groups/organisations and agri cooperatives/farm organisations.
- One quarter of *Heads of Household* and 30% of *Spouses/Partners* were involved to some extent in three or more local organisations. However, 47% of *Heads of Household* and 49% of *Spouses/Partners* either were not involved in any organisation or had a low level of involvement.

### Research Findings – Farm Households

- One third of households were farming with an average area farmed of 32 hectares. The main enterprises on farms were sucklers, beef drystock and sheep.
- The main sources of information/advice for farmers were Teagasc/private consultants, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, farming publications and other farmers/family members.
- The main areas of advice, information and training required by farmers to support the future development of the farm related to: maximising the schemes/grants; improving farm income; succession; and online/digital.
- The main areas of farm development over the past 5 years were: increased output/livestock numbers; investment in machinery/equipment; investment in farm buildings/facilities; investment in livestock; and increased area farmed.
- The main plans for farm investment over the next 5 years were: livestock; farm buildings; machinery; and increased output. While there were also significant plans to reduce output/livestock numbers, reduce the area farmed and to retire/step-back from active farming.
- Three-quarters of farmers stated that they would like/possibly like to retire from active farming at some stage in the future. One quarter of farmers had identified a farming successor, while a further one in ten had a non-farming successor identified.
- The main concerns about succession/transfer/inheritance were that the farm was not viable, the tax burden on successors and that no family member was interested in the farm.
- Some 23% of farm respondents had received advice/information on farm succession/inheritance. The main sources of advice/information were: solicitors; accountants; advisors/consultants; and family/friends. The main types of information/advice required on succession/transfer/inheritance were general information and tax implications.
- Overall, the respondents' outlook for farming in their own household and Co. Roscommon is negative with only 16% positive for their own future in farming (55% were negative) and 18% positive about farming in Co. Roscommon (51% were negative).
- Half of farmers identified '*way of life*' as the main function of farming for their household. However, only 27% identified farming as an *economic activity*, a similar proportion who identified it as a *traditional activity*.
- Some 63% of farmers believed that the impact of CAP was positive for their farm household while only 11% considered the impact as being negative. One third of farmers stated that they would not be farming without the CAP payments while a further one quarter said that it assisted with farm income.

## Research Conclusions

The main conclusions are summarised in this section.

### Employment and Occupations

- The level of self-employment and enterprise development is relatively low. This highlights both the potential to encourage greater entrepreneurship and self-employment but also the challenges faced by individuals in establishing small businesses.
- The range of jobs/occupations held by people living in rural Roscommon reflected the diversity of employment and the dependence on a wide number of sectors for jobs.
- People living in Roscommon were not only dependent on a thriving local economy/job market but also that of the surrounding counties in the west, northwest and midlands.

### Income

- The most significant source of income for households in Co. Roscommon was from employment with social welfare and farming also significant sources of income. The contribution of farm income to households was relatively small with only a minority who were dependent to any significant extent on the farm income.
- There are a wide range of financial concerns among households however, it is concerning that the greatest concerns related to day to day and health care expenses.

### Living in Roscommon

- Peace and tranquillity were appreciated as one of the major advantages of living in rural Roscommon and the opportunity to be '*close to family/friends*'. People valued the opportunity to have their own space to live individually or with their families.
- Rural transport was the most significant challenge identified to living in rural Roscommon. This related to: dependence on having a car/two cars to access services/get about; the lack of and cost of alternatives to public transport; and distance to public transport where available. Transport served as both a challenge to accessing services but also prohibited access to services.
- Communication services (broadband and mobile phone coverage) were also problematic in rural areas. Rural broadband/mobile phone services were considered to be a greater problem than rural roads.

### Quality of Life

- It is obvious that despite the challenges in accessing services, the rural population of Co. Roscommon were very satisfied with the quality of life experienced by themselves and their families. Living in Co. Roscommon was perceived as good for individuals and their families. Households were significantly more positive than negative about the future prospects for themselves and their households.



### **Access to Services**

- The core services of shops and post offices were perceived as being easy to access by rural residents (despite the closure of many small local shops and rural post offices) while the majority of people perceived transport services as difficult to access.
- Some of the key areas of advice/information that were sought by rural residents included: addressing isolation/loneliness; dealing with stress/mental ill health; relationship advice/support; and job/career advice.

### **Social Activities**

- Supports were required to encourage volunteering in rural clubs and support individuals in acquiring the necessary skills to run and manage voluntary organisations. Overall, rural communities needed greater engagement in voluntary groups/activities by a wider cohort of the community in order to survive and prosper and best serve their local community.
- Efforts are required to support and encourage those groups/organisations which may be under pressure to maintain their activities (which provide important services in local areas).

### **Future Training Needs**

- There was considerable interest among the rural population in acquiring ongoing training both related to career/employment (agricultural, safe pass, manual handling) and life skills (IT-digital skills, first aid etc). The challenge for organisations is to facilitate the delivery of training in a format and timeframe that will attract engagement from the community.

### **Impact of Brexit**

- There was concern that Brexit would impact on households in Co. Roscommon, however reflecting the general situation across Ireland at that stage (late 2019), there was considerable uncertainty and no agreement over how Brexit would impact.

### **Farming in Co. Roscommon**

- The findings from the research relating to farm families in Co Roscommon, confirmed the dominance of lower margin beef enterprises with a minority engaged in higher margin dairy and tillage enterprises. Therefore, the potential to increase income may be modest.
- It is evident that farmers were accessing information and advice on farming from a wide range of sources, however, the primary sources/channels of information were Teagasc/Private consultants and Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- Online sources of information and social media were key channels for information and advice. The challenge is to effectively utilise these channels for the future by targeting of information and providing focused messages and points of reference for farm families.

### **Farm Development**

- Despite the fact that the majority of farmers were engaged in low margin enterprises, there has been and continues to be plans for ongoing development and investment in farming which highlights the importance of measures which support and encourage farm development and investment. However, one of the most striking findings was the fact that one fifth of farmers planned to retire/step back from active farming/transfer the farm within the next 5 years.

### **Participation in Agri Related Schemes**

- There was a high level of participation in the core agricultural schemes which reflected the importance of these schemes to farmers in terms of farm development, management and income, the awareness created and information provided on these schemes by all stakeholders and the support in application provided by Advisors/consultants.

### **Farm Succession**

- It was interesting to note that the majority of farmers would like/possibly like to retire from active farming at some stage in the future, therefore highlighting a changing attitude among farmers who do not intend to '*stay farming forever*'.
- The level of farming successors was low which indicates potential challenges for the future in terms of what will actually happen the farmland in the county and who will farm it. Family succession is no longer as traditional as in the past and typically land is inherited by a family member who have limited farming knowledge. Therefore, actions need to be taken not only to support farmers in their succession decisions but also to provide advice and guidance to inheritors who are not intent on farming the land themselves and make them aware of the options open to them.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This report '*Roscommon Rural Living 2020*' provides an overview of the views of rural residents in Co. Roscommon on a range of issues relating to living and working in the county. The research was undertaken by way of a research survey conducted with households in eight areas across the county. The first section in the report (Chapter 2) provides key demographic background information to the county and the research areas to set a context for the research. The research approach is outlined in Chapter 3. The research findings are presented in Chapters 4-8. Conclusions on the research survey are presented in Chapter 9.

## 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON COUNTY ROSCOMMON

This Chapter provides a context to research study by providing some key demographic information for Roscommon and the District Electoral Divisions in the study area.

Roscommon has a land area of 2,548 km square and is the 11<sup>th</sup> largest county by land area in the country. The total population of Co. Roscommon was 64,544 in the 2016 census and the population density was 25.3 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. There was a slight increase in population (0.7%) between 2011 and 2016 while there was a 9.8% increase in population between 2006-2016. The population density is the third lowest in the country (only Mayo and Leitrim have a sparser population). Almost three-quarters (73.2%) of the population are living in rural areas. Therefore, Roscommon has a dispersed rural population (WDC, 2020<sup>1</sup>; CSO, 2016<sup>2</sup>).

One in six (16.6%) of people in Roscommon are aged over 65 years and over one in five (21.2%) were aged under 15 years in 2016. While a significantly rural county and traditional agricultural county,

only 9% (2,311 people) identified their primary occupation as agriculture. For those in employment, the average travel time to work is 26.4 minutes. The average farm size in 2010 was 27.1 hectares (WDC, 2020<sup>3</sup>; CSO, 2016<sup>4</sup>).

Some 43.1% of Roscommon residents who were employed were working in Co. Roscommon (Table 1). While 12.6% were working in Westmeath. For those in employment, the average travel time to work is 26.4 minutes. (CSO, 2017<sup>5</sup>; WDC, 2020<sup>6</sup>).

**Table 1 Location of Employment for People Living in Co. Roscommon (2016)**

Location	%
Roscommon	43.1
Westmeath	12.6
Galway	5
Leitrim	4.3
Longford	3.9
Mayo	2.6
Sligo	2.4
Dublin	2.1

Source: CSO, 2017<sup>7</sup>

A breakdown in the population and number of households in the survey areas is provided in Table 2. One in ten households in Roscommon were one person households. However, Artagh South had 31% of households with only one person and 30% of households in Dysart.

<sup>1</sup> Western Development Commission (WDC), 2020. Roscommon County Profile (<https://www.wdc.ie/county-profiles/roscommon/>) (accessed on 2/4/2020).

<sup>2</sup> Census of Population (CSO), 2016 – Profile 2 Population Distribution and Movements. <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp2tc/cp2pdm/> (accessed on 2/4/2020).

<sup>3</sup> WDC, 2020. Op cit.

<sup>4</sup> CSO, 2016. Op cit.

<sup>5</sup> Central Statistics Office (CSO), 2017. Census 2016 Profile 6 – Commuting in Ireland. (<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp6ci/p6cii/>) (accessed 29/04/20).

<sup>6</sup> WDC, 2020. Op cit.

<sup>7</sup> CSO, 2017. Op cit.

**Table 2 Population and Household Numbers in Survey Areas**

District Electoral Area	Population	Households	One person households (%)
Ballydangan	720	244	18
Cloonygormican	455	159	23
Artagh South	450	176	31
Kilglass North	435	179	27
Oakport	413	163	26
Rockhill	410	143	27
Dysart	243	93	30
Breedoge	241	97	25
Roscommon	64,544	24,013	10

Source: Central Statistics Office (CSO), 2016<sup>8</sup>

**Table 3 Percentage Change in Population in Survey Areas**

District Electoral Area	2006-2010	2010-2016
	%	
Oakport	+68	+30
Kilglass North	+9	+11
Rockhill	+23	+10
Ballydangan	+10	+2
Cloonygormican	+10	+1
Breedoge	-6	+1
Dysart	+6	0
Artagh South	+1	-2

Oakport experienced significant population growth since 2006 (68% between 2006-10 & further 30% between 2010-2016) (Table 3). Kilglass North and Rockhill also experienced growth in population between 2010-2016. However, the other areas were relatively static in terms of population (AIRO, 2020<sup>10</sup>).

Source: AIRO, 2020<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> CSO, 2016. Op cit.

<sup>9</sup> All Ireland Research Observatory (AIRO), 2020. Census Mapping Module – Roscommon. <http://airo.maynoothuniversity.ie/external-content/roscommon>. (accessed 10/01/2020).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

In terms of relative deprivation, Artagh South, Breedoge, Kilglass North, Cloonygormican, Dysart were '*marginally below average*' while Ballydangan, Oakport and Rockhill were '*marginally above average*' (Table 4). County Roscommon overall is '*marginally above average*' (AIRO, 2020<sup>11</sup>).

**Table 4 Relative Deprivation Score for Survey Areas**

District Electoral Area	Relative Deprivation Score	Relative Deprivation	Change (2006-2011)
Artagh South	-9	Marginally below average	-2
Breedoge	-8	Marginally below average	-1
Kilglass North	-6	Marginally below average	3
Cloonygormican	-4	Marginally below average	-3
Dysart	-4	Marginally below average	-6
Ballydangan	1	Marginally above average	1
Oakport	5	Marginally above average	-4
Rockhill	7	Marginally above average	1
Roscommon	2	Marginally above average	-1

Source: AIRO, 2020<sup>12</sup>

On average in Co. Roscommon, households were located with 8-12 minutes away from a GP surgery or a Pharmacy and 30-45 minutes from 24 hour emergency hospital services (Table 5) (AIRO, 2020<sup>13</sup>).

**Table 5 Length of Time to Access to Health Services in Co. Roscommon (2013)**

Access to	GP Surgery	24hr Emergency Hospital	Pharmacy
District Electoral Area	Minutes		
Kilglass North	8-12	45-60	15-20
Breedoge	12-15	45-60	15-20
Oakport	12-15	30-45	12-15
Artagh South	12-15	45-60	12-15
Ballydangan	12-15	10-20	12-15
Cloonygormican	15-20	45-60	15-20
Rockhill	15-20	20-30	12-15
Dysart	15-20	20-30	15-20
Roscommon	8-12	30-45	8-12

Source: AIRO, 2020<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> AIRO, 2020. Op cit.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

On average in Co. Roscommon, households were located with 12-15 minutes away from a Garda Station (Table 6). While households were typically 6-8 minutes away from a primary school and 12-15 minutes away from a secondary school (AIRO, 2020<sup>15</sup>).

**Table 6 Length of Time to Access to Garda Station and Schools in Co. Roscommon (2013)**

Access to	Garda Station	Primary School	Secondary School
District Electoral Area	Minutes		
Kilglass North	15-20	8-12	15-20
Breedoge	12-15	8-12	15-20
Oakport	15-20	6-8	15-20
Artagh South	15-20	6-8	15-20
Cloonygormican	15-20	6-8	15-20
Rockhill	20-30	8-12	15-20
Dysart	15-20	6-8	20-30
Ballydangan	12-15	8-12	12-15
Roscommon	12-15	6-8	12-15

Source: AIRO, 2020<sup>16</sup>

The importance of cars to households in Co. Roscommon is evident by the fact that 87% of households had a car (Table 7). However, 96% of households in Rockhill had a car and 94% in Ballydangan.

**Table 7 Presence of a Car Within Households**

District Electoral Area	% of Households with a car
Rockhill	96
Ballydangan	94
Kilglass North	93
Oakport	93
Cloonygormican	93
Dysart	90
Artagh South	87
Breedoge	84
Roscommon	87

Source: CSO, 2016<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> AIRO, 2020. Op cit.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> CSO, 2016. Op cit.

Half of the population of Co. Roscommon were single and 41% married (Table 8). While 41% of the population in Kilglass North were single, the proportion in Dysart was 54%.

**Table 8 Marital Status of Individuals in Co. Roscommon**

District Electoral Area	Marital Status		
	Married	Single	Other
	%		
Kilglass North	47	41	12
Breedoge	45	44	11
Oakport	38	51	11
Artagh South	42	48	10
Cloonygormican	42	49	9
Rockhill	43	49	8
Dysart	38	54	8
Ballydangan	45	48	7
Roscommon	41	50	9

Source: CSO, 2016<sup>18</sup>

Half (50.7%) of those aged over 15 years in Co. Roscommon were working, 17.2% were retired and 12.5% were unemployed in 2016 (Table 9). There was considerable variation in the economic status across the survey areas. Some 61.3% in Oakport were working, 58.1% in Ballydangan and 56.8% on Rockhill. However only 43.7% were working in Artagh. The highest proportion of unemployed were in Kilglass North (16.8%) and Artagh South (16.5%). While one in five of the population in Artagh South (21.9%) and Breedoge (19.6%) were retired.

**Table 9 Principal Economic Status of Those Aged over 15 years (%)**

District Electoral Area	Economic Status			
	Working	Unemployed/Unable to Work	Retired	Other
	%			
Oakport	61.3	11.3	13.8	13.5
Ballydangan	58.1	6.8	13.4	21.6
Rockhill	56.8	5.5	14.9	22.7
Dysart	54.1	10.8	16.5	18.6
Cloonygormican	52.7	8.4	18.2	20.6
Breedoge	50.8	12.1	19.6	17.6
Kilglass North	47.3	16.8	18.7	17.3
Artagh South	43.7	16.5	21.9	17.9
Roscommon	50.7	12.5	17.2	19.6

Source: CSO, 2016<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> CSO, 2016. Op cit.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.



Some 86.6% of households in Co. Roscommon identified that their general health was good/very good while 14.4% had a person with a disability within the household and 4.5% of the population were carers (Table 10) (CSO, 2016<sup>20</sup>).

**Table 10 Health Related Issues for Households in Co. Roscommon**

District Electoral Area	General Health – Good/Very Good	Persons With a Disability	Carers
	%		
Kilglass North	86.4	16.6	4.4
Breedoge	85.5	17.4	5.4
Oakport	90.8	9.7	6.1
Artagh South	85.3	16.4	3.3
Cloonygormican	86.8	12.7	5.3
Rockhill	92	11.5	4.1
Dysart	87.7	13.6	5.3
Ballydangan	91.1	11.5	7.6
Roscommon	86.6	14.4	4.5

Source: CSO, 2016<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> CSO, 2016. Op cit.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

### **3. THE RESEARCH SURVEY**

The origins of this research report lie in a previous research report '*A Rural Living – Myth or Reality*<sup>22</sup>' undertaken in Co. Roscommon over 20 years ago in 1998. It was carried out with 200 households across 4 selected District Electoral Areas in the County. That research study was commissioned to identify needs, influence policy in rural areas and prioritise supports for rural households in Co. Roscommon. This research report was initiated by Roscommon LEADER Partnership to establish the current situation in Co. Roscommon. The study and action plan provide direction and strategic focus to organisations and agencies working in the county and shape and prioritise the supports provided in rural areas. Funding for the study was secured from the LEADER Programme 2014-2020, the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme 2018-2022 and the Digital Skills for Citizens Project. Broadmore Research & Consulting was commissioned by Roscommon LEADER Partnership to conduct the research survey and prepare the research report.

#### **3.1 Study Approach and Locations**

Similar to the approach undertaken in 1998, the research study was conducted by way of a face-to-face survey questionnaire administered by a team of local community researchers. The previous study was conducted in 4 District Electoral Areas (DEDs) across the county: Oakport; Breedoge; Cloonygormican; and Dysart. The current survey involved these four DEDs plus an additional four DEDs: Artagh South; Ballydangan; Kilglass North; and Rockhill. The 8 DEDs were considered as being typical of the mix of areas across Co. Roscommon. A map of the project areas is provided in Figure 1 (next page)

The study approach was informed by Roscommon LEADER Partnership and a Project Steering Committee (see Appendix 1). A survey questionnaire (see Appendix 2) was developed in conjunction with Roscommon LEADER Partnership and the Project Steering Committee for the purpose of collecting data. Following the collection and analysis of the data, the key findings were reviewed by Roscommon LEADER Partnership and the Project Steering Committee. These views informed the development of the Action Plan.

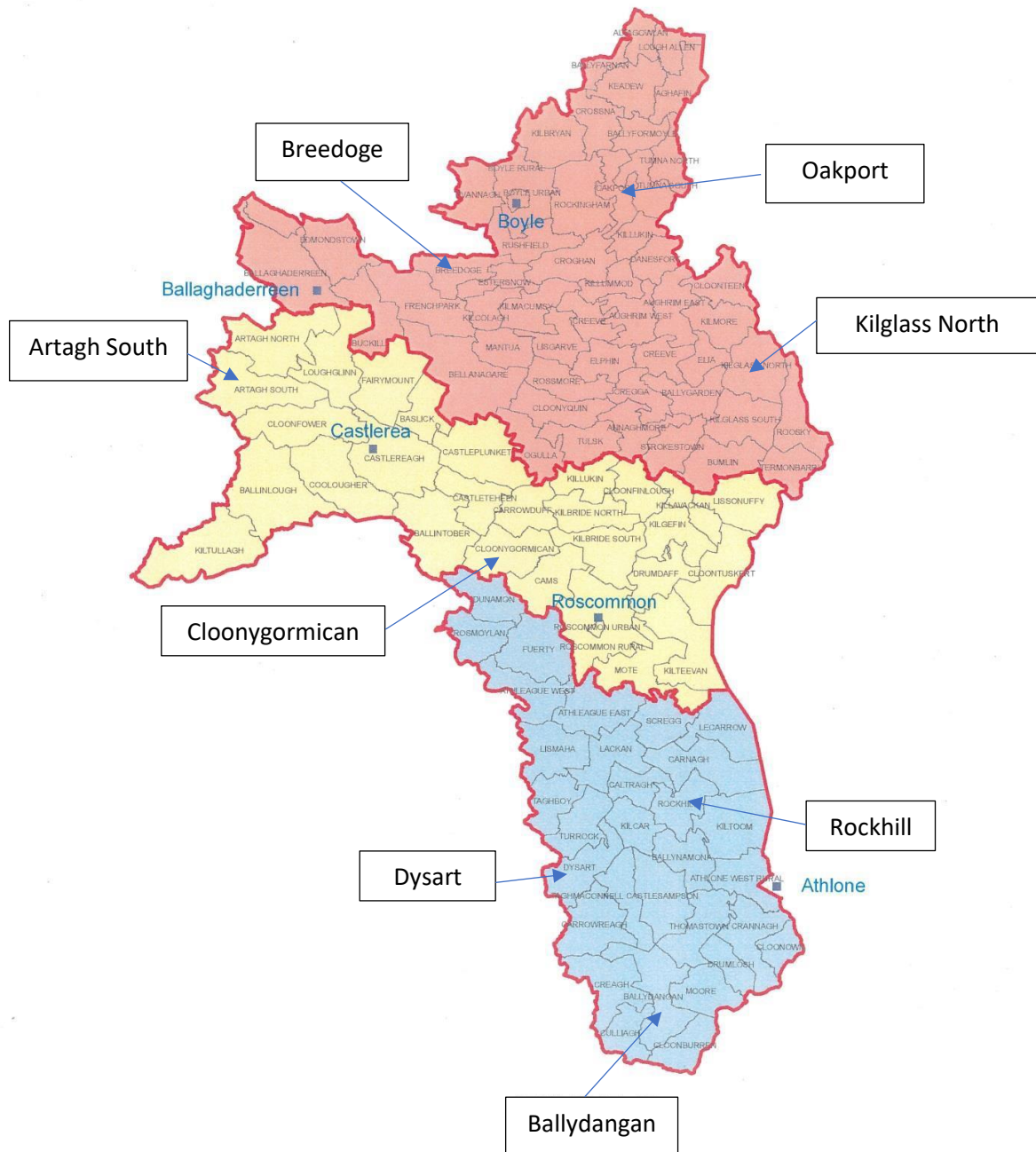
The research was collected by 7 interviewers who were trained and mentored in data collection. Initially 5 interviewers were recruited and subsequently 2 more were recruited to assist in the process<sup>23</sup>. A letter of introduction was delivered to each household in advance by the interviewers informing them of the survey and requesting their cooperation in completing the survey. The survey was also publicised in local media (print and radio) and at a local level in parish/community newsletters. The survey data was collected between October-December 2019.

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<sup>22</sup> Whyte, N., & Phelan, J., 1998. *A Rural Living – Myth or Reality?* Roscommon Rural Household Study.

<sup>23</sup> The significant efforts of the interview team to collect the survey data are acknowledged with gratitude.

## County Roscommon



**Figure 1 Map of the Research Project Areas**

Source: Government Publications, 2018<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Government Publications, 2018. Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee Number 1 Report 2018.

The process of data collection proved challenging for the interviewers despite achieving the overall target of 400 completed questionnaires. Some of the issues encountered included:

- Apathy towards engaging with the survey;
- Apathy and indifference to local development, authorities etc;
- Lack of interest in political engagement;
- Disillusionment with the establishment, government, local authorities;
- Perception that it was not worthwhile as nothing would change;
- Sceptical of the benefit of engaging in the survey;
- Fear of engaging with unknown interviewers;
- Personal safety (presence of electric gates prohibited interviewers from contacting households);
- Busy pace of life - families/individuals unwilling to engage with interviewers in the evening after return from work due to family/domestic commitments (including engagement in sport/social activities) and similarly Saturday interviews were not welcomed as households were busy catching up on family/domestic commitments or engaged in social and recreational activities; and
- Unwilling to share their views and personal opinions.

#### 4. RESEARCH FINDINGS – GENERAL HOUSEHOLD PROFILE

The results are presented in this Chapter (the specific farming related responses are presented in the next Chapter). A total of 409 respondents completed the survey questionnaire across the 8 District Electoral Areas (Table 11). The intention in the collection of the survey questionnaires was to interview the *Head of Household* or the *Spouse/Partner of Head of Household*.

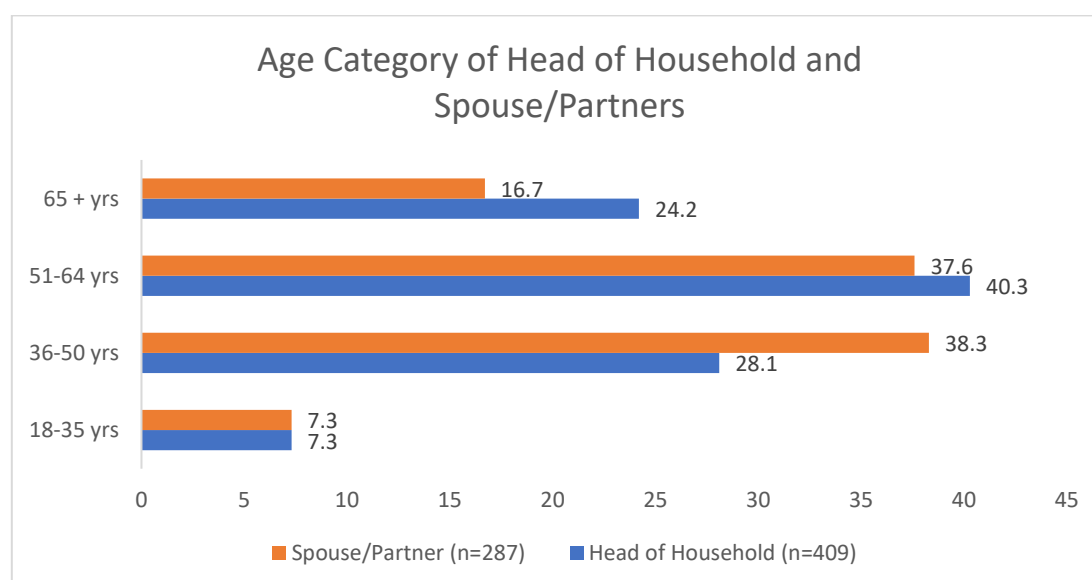
**Table 11 Number of Survey Questionnaires Completed in Each District Electoral Area**

District Electoral Area	No.
Artagh South	61
Ballydangan	62
Breedoge	38
Cloonygormican	32
Dysart	48
Kilglass North	52
Oakport	57
Rockhill	50
Other	9

Note: 'Other' includes a small number of questionnaires which were completed by respondents which were from areas outside of the eight selected areas

##### 4.1 Age and Gender

Some 86.3% of survey respondents described themselves as the '*Head of Household*' while the remaining 13.7% identified themselves as the '*Spouse/Partner of Head of Household*'. The age categories of respondents are presented in Figure 2. The *Heads of Household* tended to be older on average than the *Spouses/Partners*.



**Figure 2: Age Category of Head of Household and Spouse/Partners for Roscommon Rural Living Survey**

Some 69.4% of the *Heads of Households* were male and 30.6% female, while where *Spouses/Partners* were present, 75.7% of them were female.

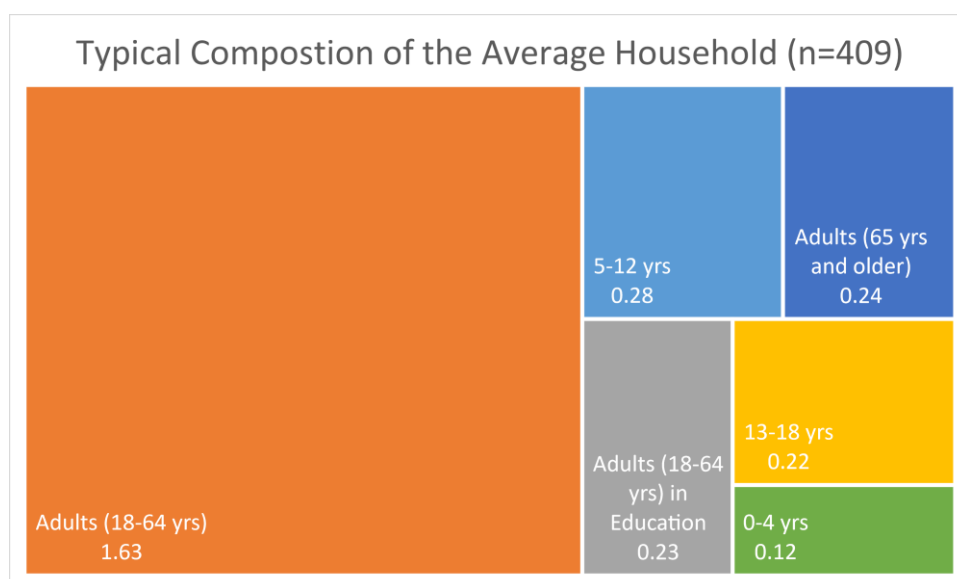
## 4.2 Household Composition

**Table 12 Presence of Different Age Categories in Households (n=409)**

Category	% of Households
Adults (65 yrs and older)	16.6
Adults (18-64 yrs)	85.8
Adults (18-64 yrs) in Education	15.4
13-18 yrs	16.4
5-12 yrs	18.3
0-4 yrs	9.5

There were persons aged over 65 years in 16.6% of households, while adults aged between 18 and 64 years (not in education) were present in 85.8% of households (Table 12). Some 9.5% of households had children aged under 4 years and 18.3% had children aged between 5 and 12 years.

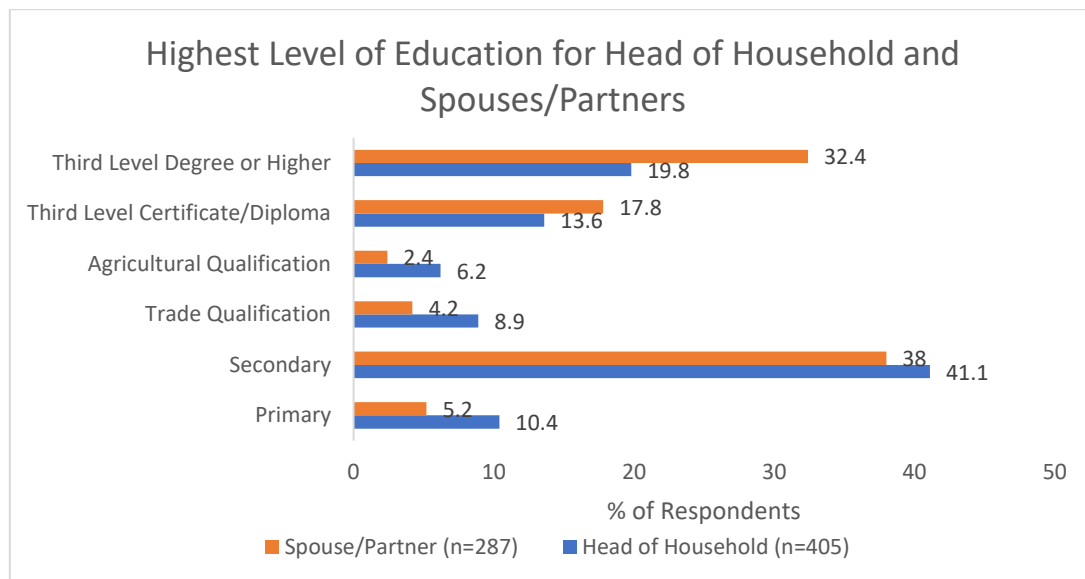
The average household size was 2.72 persons (the CSO average for 2016 for these areas was 2.79 persons). The typical household in the survey area consisted of 1.86 adults aged up to 65 years (including those in education), 0.24 persons aged over 65 years and 0.62 children under the age of 18 years (Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Typical Composition of the Average Household in the Roscommon Rural Living Survey**

### 4.3 Education Level

Over half (51.5%) of the *Heads of Households* had only attained secondary or primary level education while it was 43.2% for *Spouses/Partners* (Figure 4). While half (50.2%) of *Spouses/Partners* had a Third Level Certificate or higher compared to one third (33.4%) of the *Heads of Households*.



**Figure 4: Highest Level of Education for Head of Household and Spouses/Partners**

The education levels within rural households have increased dramatically since the previous research report in 1998, when half (50.3%) of respondents had only primary education, one third (33.9%) had secondary education and 15.9% had third level education (including agricultural qualifications) (Whyte & Phelan, 1998<sup>25</sup>).

<sup>25</sup> Whyte, N., & Phelan, J., 1998. Op cit.

#### 4.4 Occupation

In approximate terms, two out of five (41.5%) of *Heads of Households* and *Spouses/Partners* were in full-time employment, one in five were retired (19.4%) and farming (19.2%) and one in ten were in part-time employment (11.8%) and self-employed (9%) (Table 13). It is anticipated from viewing the analysis of the data that there is under-reporting for the extent to which individuals were working in the home, caring and in full-time education (as it was not their primary occupation).

**Table 13 Main Occupations of Head of Households and Spouses/Partners of Head of Household**

Occupation	Head of Household (n=406)	Spouse/Partner of Head of Household (n=286)	Head of Household & Spouse/Partner (n=692)
	%		
<b>Full-Time Employed</b>	40.3	43	41.5
<b>Retired</b>	21.7	16.1	19.4
<b>Farming</b>	28.3	6.3	19.2
<b>Part-Time Employed</b>	9.9	14.7	11.8
<b>Self-Employed</b>	9.3	8.4	9
<b>Working in Home</b>	1.2	7.3	3.8
<b>Unemployed</b>	3	4.2	3.5
<b>Unable to Work – Illness/Disability</b>	4.4	2.1	3.5
<b>Carer</b>	0.7	3.1	1.7
<b>Student</b>	1	2.1	1.4

Note: Some individuals identified more than one occupation

One in ten (10.9%) *Heads of Household* and *Spouses/Partners* were employed in Healthcare while 8.1% were employed in Administration/HR roles (Table 14) (note in addition to the specific occupations listed, 23.3% indicated that they were farming and 9.2% were self-employed). Some 7.7% were working in construction (13.1% for *Heads of Household*) and 7% were teachers. Other key jobs included: driving (6.7%); owners/managers (6.3%); sales reps (6.3%); factory operatives (6%); fitters/technicians (5.9%); and Civil Service (5.3%).



**Table 14 Main Types of Jobs (Non-Farming) Held by the Head of Household and Spouse/Partner of Head of Household**

Main Types of Job	Head of Household (n=153)	Spouse/ Partner of Head of Household (n=131)	All (n=284)
	%	%	%
Healthcare/HSE/Nurse/Dentist	8.6	13.7	10.9
Administration/HR	5.3	11.5	8.1
Construction/Building/Tradesmen	13.1	6.1	7.7
Teacher/SNA/Education	5.9	8.4	7
Driver – Bus/Machines/Courier/Haulage	9.9	3.1	6.7
Business Owner/Manager	7.2	5.4	6.3
Sales Rep/Manager	6.6	6.1	6.3
Factory Operative/Machinist	4.6	7.6	6
Civil Service/Public Service/Council	7.8	2.3	5.3
Shop Assistant	1.3	9.2	4.9
Carer	2.7	5.3	3.9
Chef/Food Industry/Bar/Hotel	1.3	6.9	3.9
Fitter/Technician	5.9	0.8	3.5
CE scheme/FAS/RSS	2.7	3.1	2.8
Accountant/Finance/Insurance	2	3.8	2.8
Childcare Worker	2	3.1	2.5
Development Worker/Project Worker	1.3	2.3	1.8
Caretaker/Maintenance	2.7	-	1.4
Agri Related	2.7	-	1.4
Freelancer/Contractor/Researcher	2	0.8	1.4
ESB	1.3	1.5	1.4
IT	2	-	1.1
An Post	1.3	0.8	1.1
Garda/Army	1.3	0.8	1.1
Hairdresser	1.3	-	0.7
Pharmaceutical	-	1.5	0.7
Gym Instructor	-	0.8	0.4
Hairdresser	-	0.8	0.4

The main locations of employment (excluding farming) are shown in Table 15. Some 41.8% worked within Co. Roscommon, 16.6% in Athlone, 11% in Galway (City & County) and 9.6% in Co. Leitrim (Table 15). Evidence from Census 2016 indicated that 43.1% of those working were employed within Co. Roscommon and 12.6% in Co. Westmeath (probably Athlone) (CSO, 2017<sup>26</sup>).

<sup>26</sup> CSO, 2017. Op cit.

**Table 15 Main Locations of Jobs for Heads of Households and Spouses/Partners**

Main Locations of Jobs	Head of Household (n=216)	Spouse/Partner of Head of Household (n=182)	All (n=398)
	%		
Roscommon	19.9	15.9	18.1
Athlone	15.7	17.6	16.6
Other Co Roscommon	8.8	12.6	10.6
Carrick on Shannon	5.6	8.2	6.8
Local Area/Home	7.9	4.4	6.3
Galway	6.9	4.9	6
Ballinasloe	4.6	5.5	5
All Over Country	4.6	2.2	3.5
Boyle	2.8	3.8	3.3
Midlands	2.8	3.8	3.3
Longford	3.2	2.2	2.8
Other Co. Leitrim	4.2	1.1	2.8
Sligo	1.9	2.7	2.5
Castlerea	2.3	1.6	2
West of Ireland	1.4	2.2	1.8
Ballaghaderreen	0.9	2.2	1.5
Dublin	1.4	1.6	1.5
Ballyhaunis	1.9	0.5	1.3
Castlebar	1.4	1.1	1.3

#### **4.5 Length of Commute**

One fifth of *Heads of Household* (21.5%) and *Spouses/Partners* (20.5%) had a daily commute (one way) to work/college of less than 10 minutes (Table 16). The average length of commute for the *Head of Household* was 30 minutes while it was 26 minutes for the *Spouses/Partners*. Evidence from the 2016 Census shows that the average commute to work time for those from Co. Roscommon in employment was 26 minutes (WDC, 2020<sup>27</sup>).

**Table 16 Length of Daily Commute (one-way) to Work/College for Head of Household and Spouse/Partner of Head of Household**

Length of Commute	Head of Household (n=205)	Spouse/Partner of Head of Household (n=171)
	%	
Up to 10 mins	21.5	20.5
11-20 mins	38	43.8
21-45 mins	23.9	25.2
46-60 mins	8.8	4.7
60+ mins	7.8	5.8
Average Commute	30 mins	26 mins

<sup>27</sup> WDC, 2020. Op cit.

#### 4.6 Enterprise/Self Employment

Some 5% of households indicated that they had an on-farm enterprise/business while 12.4% had a non-farm enterprise/business (Figures from the CSO, 2019<sup>28</sup> indicate that approximately 14.1% of people nationally were self-employed). For those who had a business/self-employment, the main challenges/obstacles identified in establishing/running those businesses included: cashflow/prompt payment (34.3%); demand for products/services (20%); reliable staff (14.3%); time to run business/work life balance (11.4%); complying with regulations (11.4%); and finance (11.4%) (Table 17).

**Table 17 Biggest Challenges/Obstacles Faced in Establishing and Running an Enterprise/Self Employment (n=35)**

Main Challenge	%
Cashflow/Prompt Payment	34.3
Local Demand/Customers for Services/Products/Opportunities	20
Sourcing and Maintaining Reliable Staff	14.3
Time to Run Business/Doing Everything Yourself/Work Life Balance	11.4
Regulations/Compliance/Bureaucracy	11.4
Finance	11.4
Taxes/VAT	8.6
Uncertainty/Brexit	8.6
Cost of Insurance	8.6
Cost of Labour	5.7
Costs (General)	5.7
Poor Returns from Enterprises	2.9
Rural Decline	2.9

Access to finance (16.1%) and increasing customers/demand (12.9%) were the two most important supports to improve the efficiency, profitability and sustainability of their own business identified by the self-employed/those running their own business (Table 18).

**Table 18 Main Supports Required to Improve Efficiency, Profitability and Sustainability of an Enterprise/Business (n=31)**

Main Supports Required	%
Finance	16.1
Increasing Customers/Demand/Diversification	12.9
Advertising/Marketing	9.7
Tax Breaks	9.7
Grants	6.5
Modern IT Systems	6.5
Training	6.5
Others included: better prices; efficiency; focused staff; limits on insurance claims; social welfare; keeping up with regulations	

For those who considered setting up a new enterprise but who had not actually done so, the main reasons were financial: lack of money to invest (40.7%); and access to finance/borrowing (31.5%) (Table 19). *Similarly, these two financial factors were identified in the 1998 research report (Whyte &*

<sup>28</sup> CSO, 2019. Labour Force Survey Employment Series. (<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/lfses/lfsemploymentseriesq12019/>) (Accessed on 1/5/20).

Phelan, 1998<sup>29</sup>): raising finance (45.9%); and cost of investment (43.2%). However, lack of information was identified as a difficult by 45.9% in 1998 and requirements and standards by 35.1%.

**Table 19 Main Reasons Identified by Those Who Had Considered a New Enterprise But Had Not Established It (n=54)**

Main Reason for Not Establishing a New Business Even Though Considered	%
Lack of Money to Invest/Cost of Investment	40.7
Access to Finance – Difficult to Borrow	31.5
Age	13
Fear/Risk/Stress	11.1
Tax Implications	9.3
Family Commitments – Children Too Young	7.4
Lack of Demand/Markets for Business	7.4
Cost of Inputs/Overheads	7.4
Lack of Knowledge/Information/Experience	7.4
Recession/Unstable Economy	5.6
Lack of Time	5.6
Cost of Insurance	3.7

#### **4.7 Sources of Income**

Half (51.9%) of the *Heads of Households* had an income from employment while 60.5% of *Spouses/Partners* had an income from a job (Table 20). Some 35.1% of the *Heads of Household* had income from social welfare/pension while 32.3% had a farm income. In 1998, over half (54.5%) of survey respondents had a social welfare source of income (Whyte & Phelan, 1998<sup>30</sup>).

**Table 20 Sources of Income for Heads of Household and Spouses/Partners**

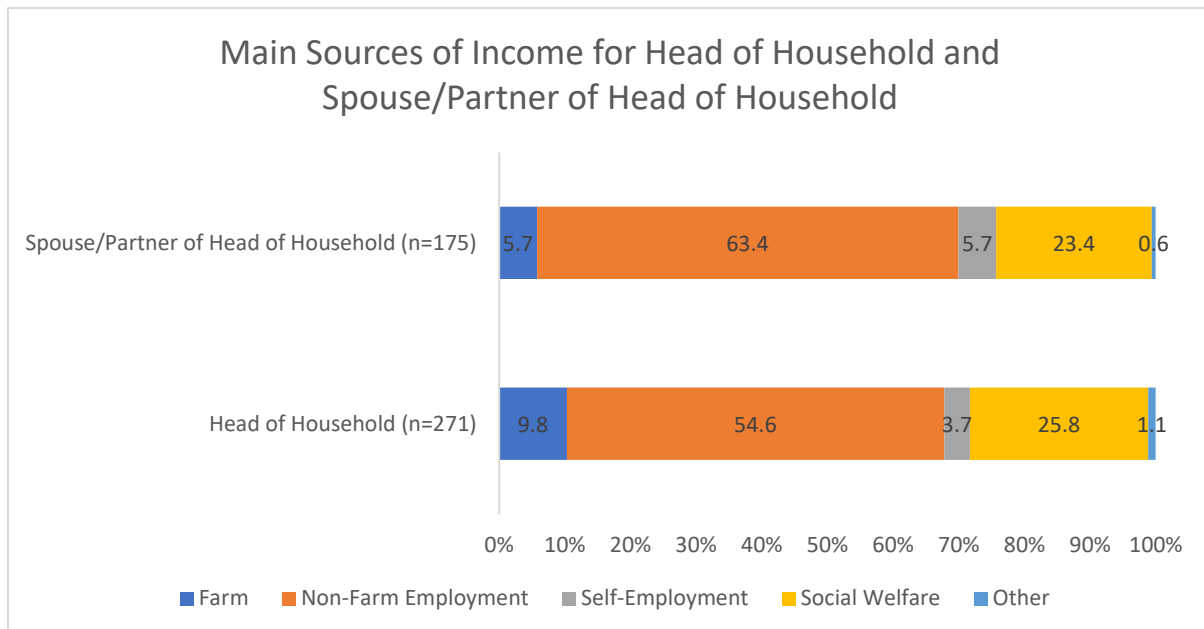
	Head of Household (n=387)	Spouse of Head of Household (n=263)
	%	
Employment (non-farm)	51.9	60.5
Social Welfare/Pension	35.1	31.6
Farm	32.3	10.6
Other Enterprise/Self- Employment	9.8	8.4

Note: More than one source of income was identified by some respondents

<sup>29</sup> Whyte, N., & Phelan, J., 1998. Op cit.

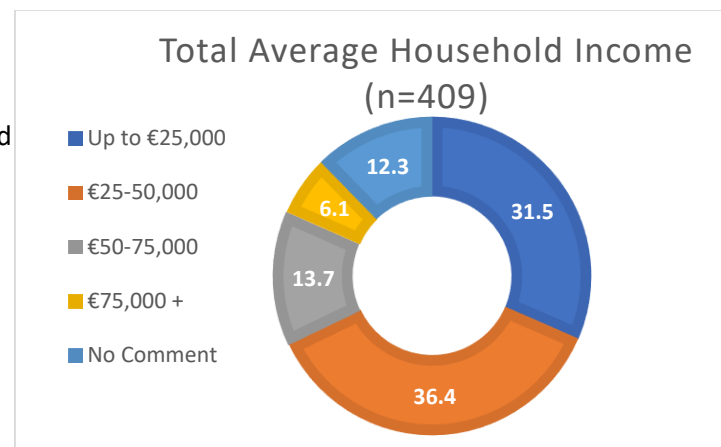
<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

Some 71.8% of *Heads of Household* identified one source of income, 28.2% had two or more sources. While 90% of the *Spouses/Partners* identified only one source of income. The main source of income for 54.6% of *Heads of Household* was from a job while 9.8% identified farm income as the main source (Figure 5). Social welfare was the main source of income for 25.8% of the *Heads of Household*.



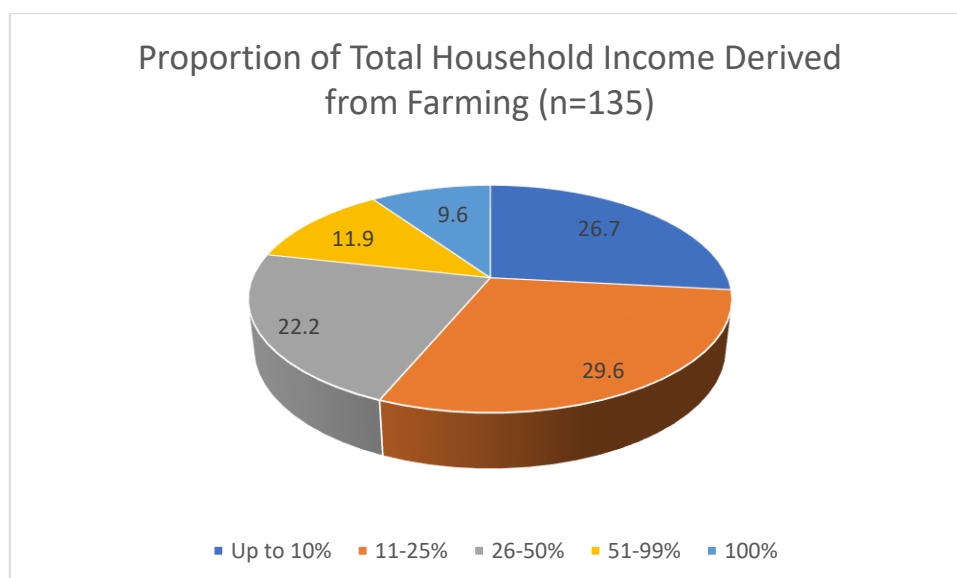
**Figure 5 Main Sources of Income for Heads of Household and Spouses/Partners**

Some 31.5% of respondents stated that their household income (*Head of Household & Spouse/Partner*) in 2018 was less than €25,000, while one in five (19.8%) had a household income over €50,000 (Figure 6).



**Figure 6 Average Household Income of the Head of Household and Spouse/Partner in 2018 (n=409)**

For those households with an agricultural source of income, the farm income accounted for 35.2% of total income on average. Over half (56.3%) of respondents said that farm income accounted for less than 25% of total income (Figure 7). While only one in five (21.5%) indicated that farm income accounted for more than 50% of total income.



**Figure 7 Proportion of Total Household Income Derived From Farming (n=135)**

Only 7.4% expected the proportion of income from farming to increase in the next 5 years, while 46% expected it to decrease, 26.8% that it would stay the same and 19.5% were uncertain if it would change or not.

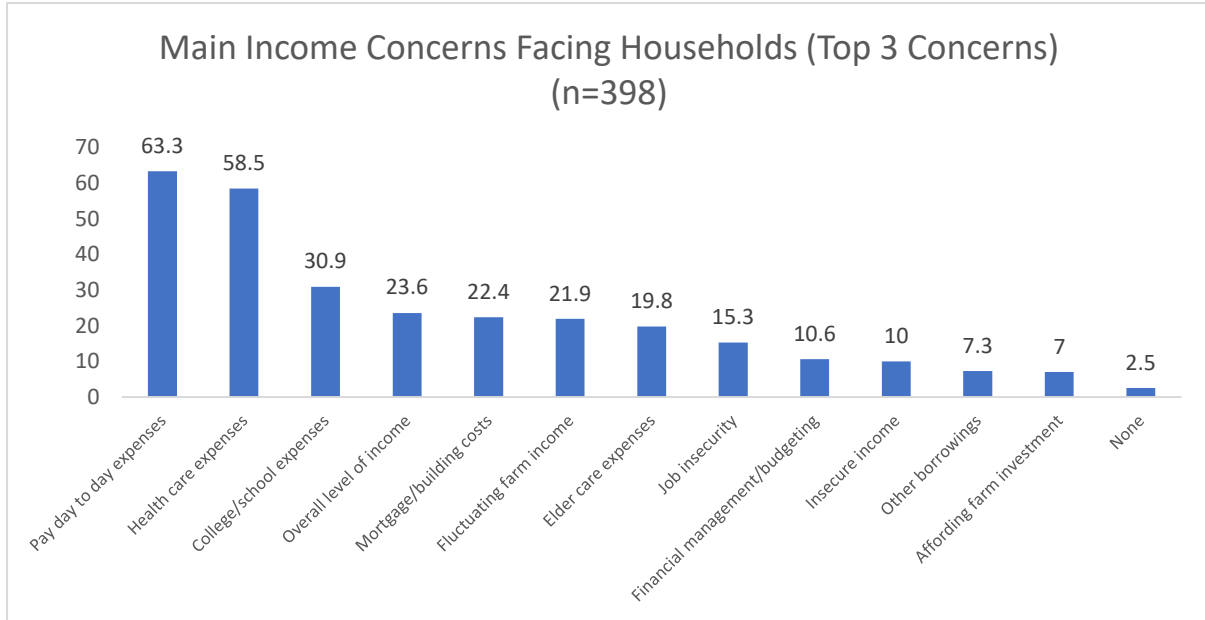
For those in receipt of social welfare, the most significant elements were: pension (58.8% of *Heads of Household* & 54.9% of *Spouses/Partners*); child benefit (18.2% of *Heads of Household* & 35.4% of *Spouses/Partners*); illness/disability payment (12.4% of *Heads of Household*); and job seekers benefit (8.8%) (Table 21).

**Table 21 Main Sources of Social Welfare for Households (for those in receipt of social welfare)**

	Head of Household (n=170)	Spouse/Partner of Head of Household (n=82)
	%	
<b>Pension</b>	58.8	54.9
<b>Illness/Disability/Invalidity/Injury Payment</b>	12.4	13.4
<b>Job Seekers Benefit/Back to Work Payment</b>	8.8	12.2
<b>Maternity/Paternity Benefit</b>	0.6	2.4
<b>Child Benefit</b>	18.2	35.4
<b>Farm Assist</b>	1.8	1.2
<b>Rural Social Scheme</b>	2.4	2.4
<b>Back to Education Allowance</b>	-	2.4
<b>Other Social Welfare</b>	2.9	12.2

#### 4.8 Income Concerns

Almost two thirds (63.3%) of respondents identified the '*ability to pay day to day expenses*' as the main income concern facing their household (Figure 8). However, 58.5% identified the '*ability to pay health care expenses*'. Other significant concerns included: college/school expenses (30.9%); overall level of income (23.6%); mortgage/building costs (22.4%); and fluctuating farm income (21.9%).



**Figure 8** Main Income Concerns Facing Households (n=398)

## 5. RESEARCH FINDINGS - LIVING IN RURAL ROSCOMMON

Survey respondents were asked to identify the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and challenges to living in Co. Roscommon.

### 5.1 Advantages to Living in Rural Roscommon

Half (48.8%) of the respondents identified the main advantage to living in rural Roscommon as *'tranquil/peaceful/quiet'* while one quarter (24.2%) identified *'close to family/neighbours/friends/community'* (Table 22). Having privacy and own space was an advantage for 17.5% of people, nice place to live (15.7%) and low crime were identified by 14.6% of respondents. Other important advantages included: cheaper cost of living/housing (9.1%); country living (8.6%); beautiful location (8.6%); and accessible to larger towns (6.8%).

**Table 22 Main Advantages of Living in Rural Roscommon (n=396)**

<b>Main Advantages of Living in Rural Roscommon</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Tranquil/Peaceful/Quiet</b>	48.8
<b>Close to family &amp; neighbours/Good Neighbours/Good community spirit/Close knit community/Community support/Sense of belonging/know everyone</b>	24.2
<b>Privacy/Personal space/People keep to themselves/No hassle with neighbours/Distance between houses/Open space/Lots of space</b>	17.5
<b>Nice rural community/Area/Good place to live/Friendly</b>	15.7
<b>Low crime/Safety/Security</b>	14.6
<b>Cheaper cost of living/Lower rent/Childcare/Housing/Own your house</b>	9.1
<b>Country living/Countryside/Not over-developed/Healthy</b>	8.6
<b>Beautiful scenic location/Close to nature</b>	8.6
<b>Close to shops/Accessible to larger towns/Good towns</b>	6.8
<b>Fresh air/Water</b>	6.3
<b>Better for rearing children</b>	5.6
<b>Central location/Good infrastructure/Road network/Access to major roads</b>	4.6
<b>Less traffic/No traffic worries/Easy access to work</b>	4.3
<b>Good education/Smaller class sizes/Close to local schools</b>	3.6
<b>Born and reared here/Home</b>	3.3
<b>Better quality of life/Easier pace of life</b>	3.0
<b>Low pollution/Clean/Green</b>	2.5
<b>Easy access to services/Facilities/Amenities</b>	2.3



## 5.2 Disadvantages to Living in Rural Roscommon

Lack of public transport and related issues (43%) was identified as the main disadvantage to living in rural Roscommon (Table 23). One third (33.8%) of respondents identified access to and lack of core services as a disadvantage while 14.7% identified broadband/mobile phone services as an issue. Other key disadvantages of living in rural Roscommon included: poor roads (12%); isolation/loneliness (9.5%); dependence on a car (8.4%); lack of employment opportunities (6.2%); and the distance to commute to work (6.2%).

**Table 23 Main Disadvantages of Living in Rural Roscommon (n= 395)**

<b>Main Disadvantages of Living in Rural Roscommon</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Lack of transport/Poor public transport/Distance to public transport/Lack of cost of taxis</b>	43
<b>Access to shops/pubs/Lack of some services/Distance to services/Post office/Health-emergency services/Gardai/Childcare/Eldercare/Local schools closing/Adult education</b>	33.8
<b>Broadband Service/Mobile network coverage</b>	14.7
<b>Poor roads/Narrow roads/Maintenance/Flooding on roads/Not safe/Speed</b>	12
<b>Isolation/Loneliness/Too quiet/Limited contact with others/Do not know neighbours/No support network/Hard to meet people/Fear of crime/Distance from family/Drink drive laws</b>	9.5
<b>Dependence on car/Including cost of running car/Have to drive everywhere/Need 2 cars/Have to rely on others</b>	8.4
<b>Lack of employment opportunities/Lack of inward investment/Decline in economic activities/Low incomes/Lack of demand for businesses/Rural decline</b>	8.3
<b>Commute to everything/Work/Need to travel to access services/Amenities/Activities/Distance to cities</b>	6.2
<b>None</b>	5.1
<b>Poor social life/Opportunities to socialise/Nothing to do/Nothing other than the pub</b>	4.6
<b>Bad weather/Flooding</b>	4.1
<b>Lack of activities/Amenities/Lack of Leisure/Fitness activities/Lack of Youth Amenities</b>	3.2
<b>Declining/Aging population/Not many young people/Children have to go away for college &amp; work</b>	2.7
<b>Farming is difficult in West</b>	1.7

### **5.3 Opportunities Presented by Living in Rural Roscommon**

Almost one in five (17.5%) respondents could not identify any opportunities presented by living in rural Roscommon (Table 24). Some 8.8% identified country living/close to nature as an opportunity while the clean and healthy living was identified as an opportunity by 8.5%.

**Table 24 Main Opportunities Presented by Living in Rural Roscommon (n=292)**

<b>Main Opportunities Presented by Living in Rural Roscommon</b>	<b>%</b>
None/Don't Know/Lack of opportunities	17.5
See the countryside/water/scenery/Country living/Close to nature/Natural amenities/Relaxing	8.8
Clean and healthy living/Fresh air/Little or no traffic congestion	8.5
Good neighbours - visiting each other/Helpful/Community oriented/Chance to develop friends	6.4
Central location/Within 30 mins of large towns/Knock airport/Easy access to towns/Road network	6.2
Opportunities for enterprises/Build up local client/Customer base/Work from home/Set-up own business/Job Opportunities/Potential Government Investment	5.7
Great place to rear children/Less chances of bad influences/good sports clubs	5.5
Close to children/grandchildren/family	4.8
Community help/Support if required/Part of a Community/Good Community/Spirit	4.8
Freedom/Own space to do what you want/Privacy	4.8
Tourism opportunities	4.5
Cheaper cost of housing/Buy a house sooner	4.5
Better lifestyle/Quality of life/Work life balance	4
Safe place to live	3.8
Own land/Grow own food/Affordable land/Gardening	3.4
Easy to get to know people/Know everyone	2.7
Peace/Quiet	2.7
Good broadband access/Allow working from home/Flexible working	1.7
Opportunity for children to come back to live in areas/Provide sites	1.0

#### 5.4 Challenges to Living in Rural Roscommon

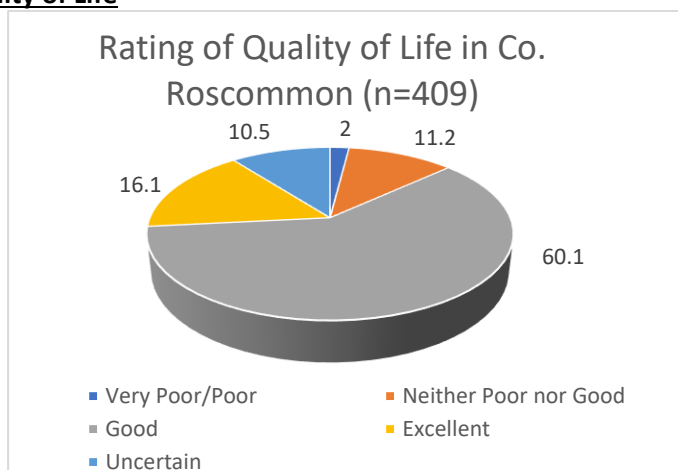
The main challenge to living in rural Roscommon was identified as poor public transport/lack of taxis (20.1%) (Table 25). Access to broadband was a challenge for 12.9% of households and the withdrawal/decline in services for 11.5%. Other significant challenges included the dependence on a car (9.9%) and isolation (8.8%) (Table 25).

**Table 25 Main Challenges to Living in Rural Roscommon Identified by Respondents (n= 363 )**

<b>Main Challenges to Living in Rural Roscommon</b>	<b>%</b>
Public transport/Lack of taxis	20.1
Access to broadband/Has to improve/Not reliable for business/Difficult to work from home/Cost of broadband/Mobile phone coverage	12.9
Withdrawal/Decline in services/Closure of shops/post office/health services/Access to services/Everything centralised in Dublin/Services moving online	11.5
Level of jobs available/Competition for jobs/Difficult to get part-time jobs/Lack of government investment in job creation/Forgotten by Government/Lack of Government investment/Little incentive for outside investment/Poor local economy	10.4
Dependence on cars/cost of running car - two cars/Difficult to get anywhere without car/Have to drive everywhere/Getting out and about	9.9
Isolated/Especially when unable to drive/Lonely/Too quiet	8.8
None/Do not know	7.2
Bad weather/Climate - frost, flooding - ability to get out of house in bad weather	7.2
Poor social outlets/Hard to meet people/Drink driving laws limit social activity/Lack of amenities/sports/Have to travel to everything	5.3
Bad roads	5.0
Distance to work/Commute/Shops/Everything	4.7
Access to childcare/Cost of/Availability/After school services	3.0
Poor farm income/Farming/Quality of life	3.4
Youth not interested in living in rural areas/Move away/Depopulation/Aging population	2.6
Crime/safety/break-ins/Decline in Gardai	2.2
Not much interaction with neighbours/Difficult to get to know people/Not a tightknit community/Poor community/Neighbour interactions/Locals not welcoming/Difficult to get to know people	2
Difficult for elderly/Lack of services/Supports/Home help/Lack of day care/Supported living	1.9
Busy/Dangerous roads/Speeding	1.4
Cost of sending children to college/Distance to third level	1.1
Planning restrictions for young people	1.1
Lack of amenities/Have to travel to amenities/Sports	0.9

### 5.5 Quality of Life

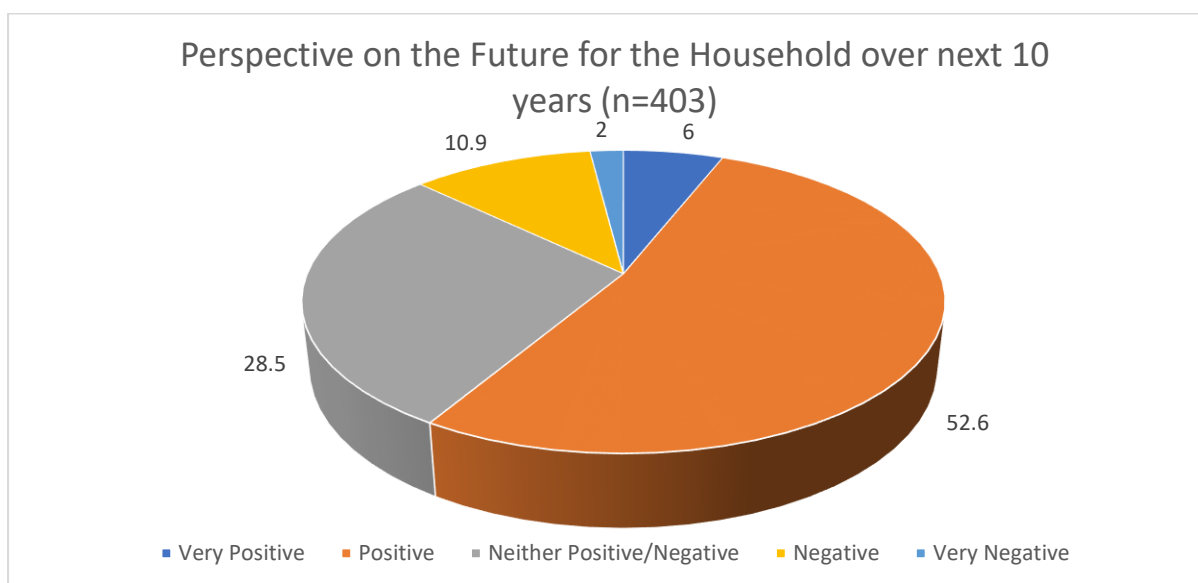
Some three-quarters (76.2%) of respondents rated the quality of life experienced by them and their families in Co. Roscommon as good or excellent while only 2% rated it as poor (Figure 9).



**Figure 9 Rating of Quality of Life in Co. Roscommon for Respondents and Their Families (n=409)**

### 5.6 Perspectives on the Future

Almost three out of five (58.6%) respondents were positive about the future (social and economic) for their household over the next 10 years, while only 12.9% were negative (Figure 10).



**Figure 10 Perspectives for the Future (Economic & Social) for Households for the Next 10 Years (n=403)**

### 5.7 Impact of Brexit

Half of respondents expected that Brexit would impact on their household over the next 5 years, while a further one third (32.8%) expected that it would possibly impact.

Some 30.8% of respondents expected that Brexit would have an impact but were uncertain of what that impact would be while 22.9% said that it would impact on the cost of living/household expenses (Table 26). Some 18.1% expected Brexit to impact on farming and prices received and 12.1% said it would impact on trade with the UK.

**Table 26 Main Impacts of Brexit Identified by Respondents (n=315)**

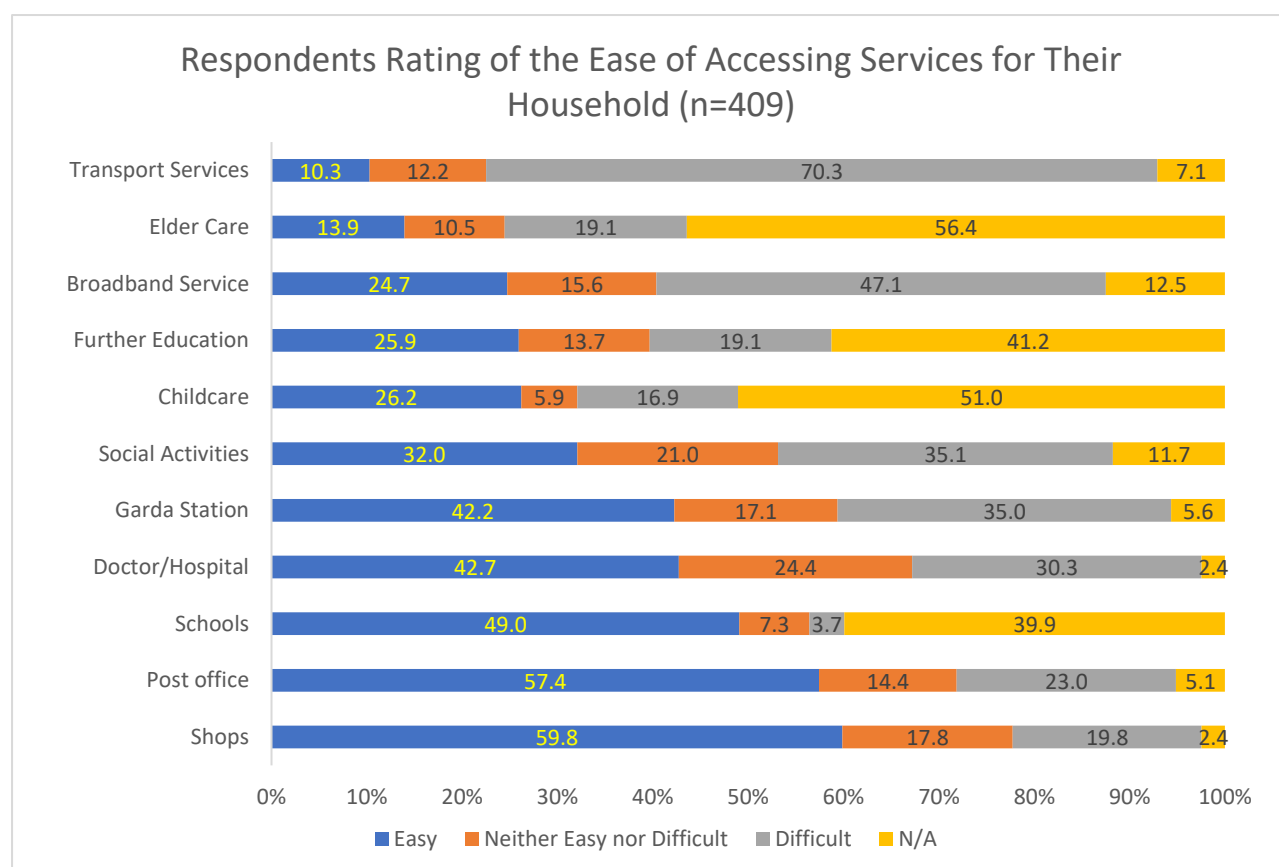
<b>Main Impacts of Brexit</b>	<b>%</b>
Do not know/Difficult to know/Uncertainty	30.8
Cost of living/Household expenses/Cost of goods & services	22.9
Farming/Livestock prices/Agricultural Markets/Farm Inputs/CAP	18.1
Imports/Exports to UK/Tariffs/Price fluctuations/Scarcity of Products	12.1
Commuting/Travel to UK/NI/Education in UK	9.2
Job insecurity/Job creation/Companies pulling out of Ireland/Construction Industry	6.3
Financially/Reduce income	5.4
Increase cost of food/Groceries	4.1
Economic downturn/Market confidence/Investment/Inflation/Mortgage rates	4.1
Border concerns - trouble in NI/Free movement/Travel	2.9
Increase in cost of fuel	2.2
Cost/Availability of medication/Healthcare	2.2
Car/Machinery VRT/Taxes	2.2
Pension	1.9
Currency fluctuations	1.3
UK regulations/Restricted access	1.3

## 6 RESEARCH FINDINGS - ACCESSING SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Access to services and supports in Co. Roscommon was a key element of this research and some of the key findings are presented in this section.

### 6.1 Ease of Accessing Services for the Household

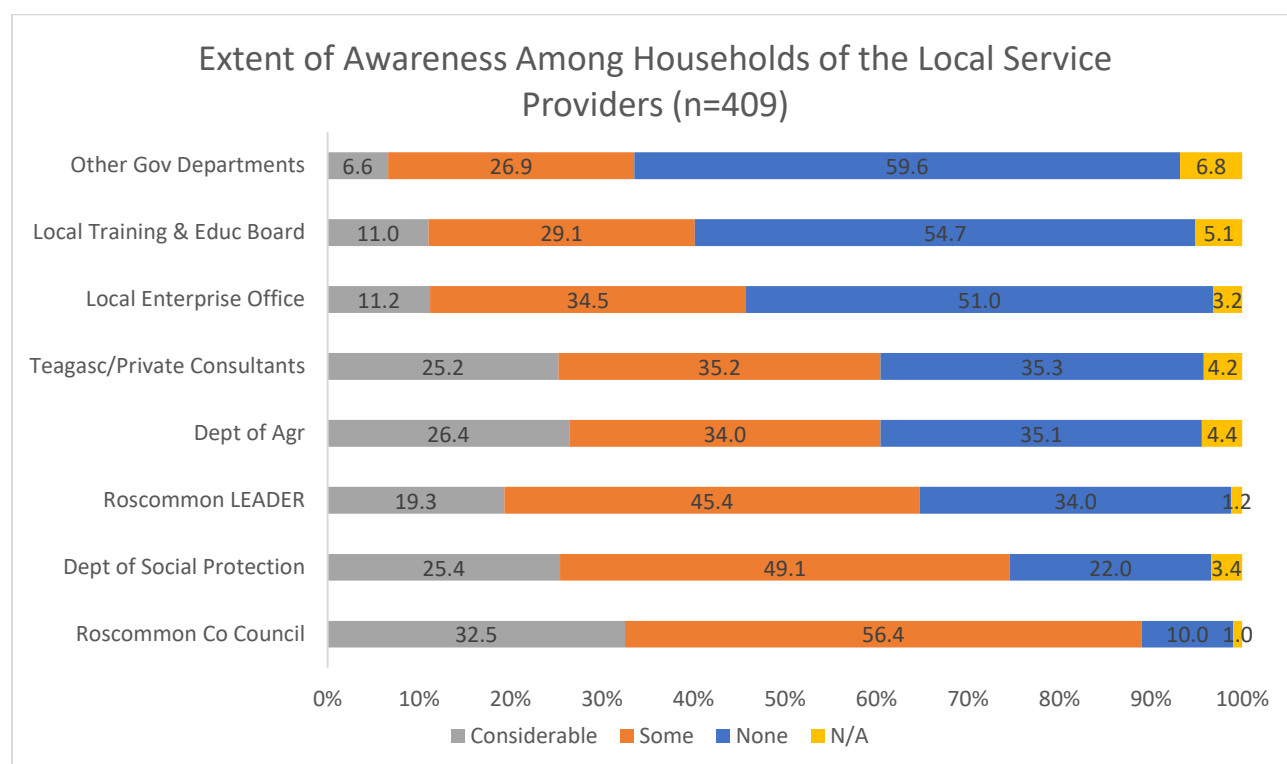
Shops (59.8%) and Post Office (57.4%) were rated as the easiest services to access by survey respondents (Figure 11). Half (49%) of respondents rated schools as easy to access, however 39.9% did not comment on schools (as they were probably not relevant to them). Some 42.7% rated doctors/hospital as being easy to access, however, 30.3% rated them as difficult to access. Similarly, 42.2% rated a Garda Station as being easy to access, however, 35% rated it as difficult. While 32% rated social activities as being easy to access, a greater proportion, 35% rated them as being difficult to access. One quarter (24.7%) of respondents rated broadband services as easy to access, however almost double that proportion (47.1%) rated it as difficult to access. Only one in ten (10.3%) respondents rated transport services as being easy to access while 70.3% rated them as being difficult to access.



**Figure 11 Rating of the Ease of Accessing Services for Their Household (n=409)**

## 6.2 Awareness and Contact with Agencies/Services

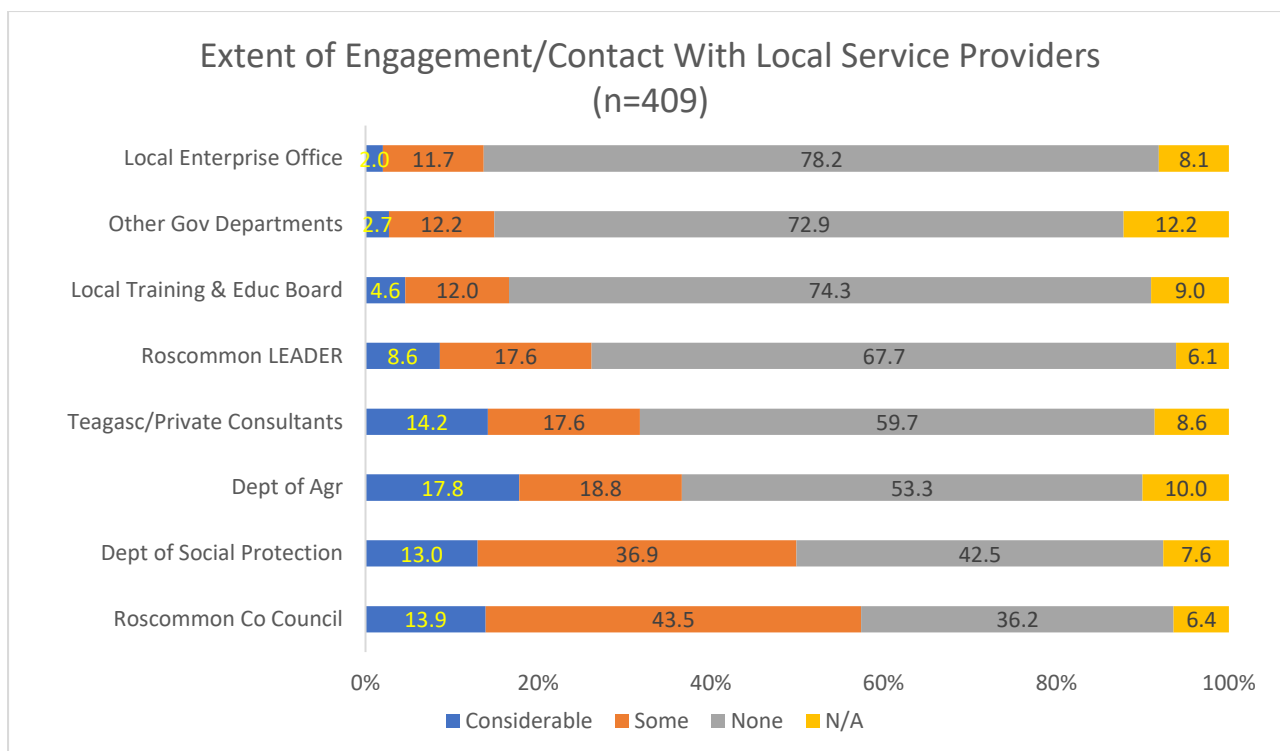
Nine out of ten (89%) respondents were aware of the services provided by Roscommon County Council and 57.4% had engaged with the local authority over the past 3 years (Figure 12 and Figure 13). Some 64.7% indicated that they were aware of Roscommon LEADER Partnership and 26.2% had some level of engagement with them over the past 3 years (*In the 1998 report, 52.3% were aware of Roscommon LEADER Partnership and 2.5% had been in contact* (Whyte & Phelan, 1998<sup>31</sup>)). The lowest levels of engagement over the past 3 years were with the Local Enterprise Office (13.7%) (*45.7% were aware of LEO in 1998 and 3.2% had contacted LEO* (Whyte & Phelan, 1998<sup>32</sup>)) and Local Training and Education Board (16.6%).



**Figure 12** Extent of Awareness Among Households of the Local Service Providers (n=409)

<sup>31</sup> Whyte, N., & Phelan, J., 1998. Op cit.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

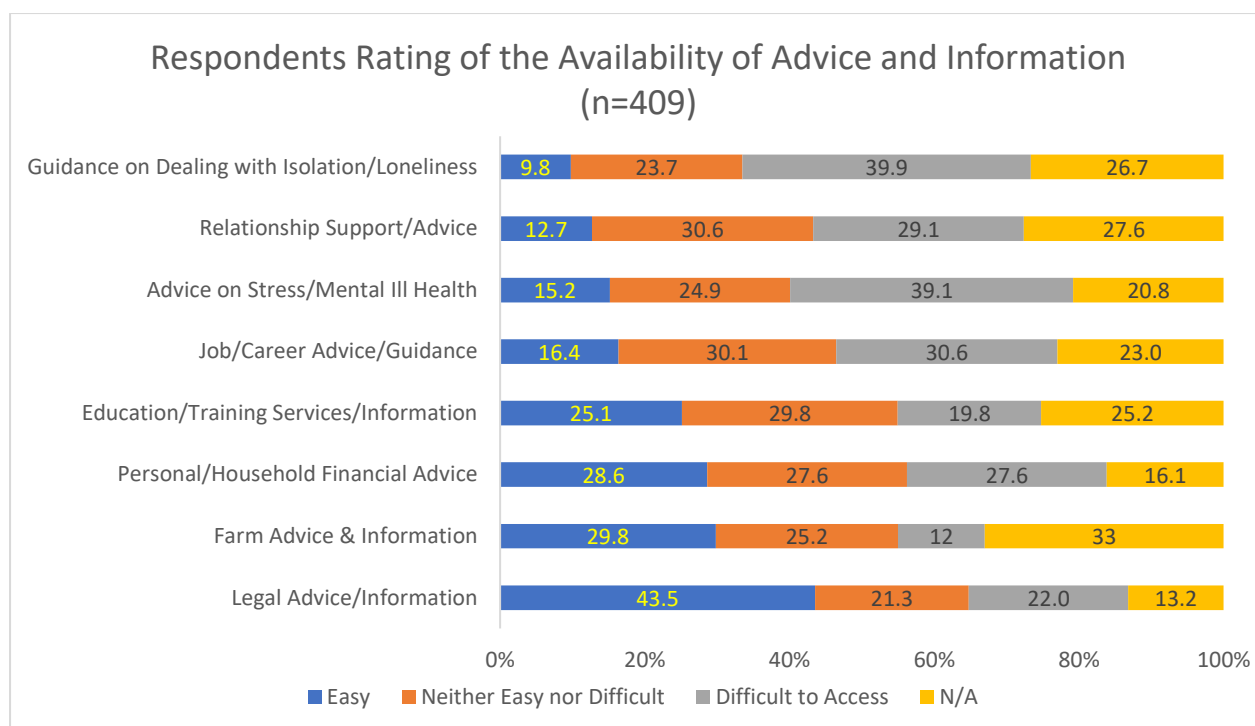


**Figure 13**      **Extent of Engagement/Contact by Households of the Local Service Providers**  
(n=409)

### **6.3 Availability of Advice and Information**

Legal advice & information was perceived as being one of the easiest services to access (43.5% rated it as easy to access), while 29.8% rated farm advice and information as easy to access (Figure 14). At the other end of the spectrum, two out of five (39.9%) respondents rated it difficult to access advice/information on dealing with isolation/loneliness and only one in ten (9.8%) rated it as easy to access. A similar proportion (39.1%) rated it as difficult to access advice on stress/mental ill health (15.2% rated it as easy to access this information/advice).





**Figure 14 Rating of the Availability of Advice and Information in the Area (n=409)**

Some 28.4% of respondents made further comments on the supports/advice required in the area. The main comments which are provided in Table 27 included: transport to access the services/supports (25%); childcare (including access and supports) (9%); and need for enhanced local provision of supports/advice (8%).

**Table 27 Additional Comments on the Advice/information/Supports Required in the Area (n=116)**

Main Comments	%
Transports to access services/support – local link bus etc	25
Childcare supports/advice/availability of various childcare programmes	9
Enhanced local provision of supports/advice within local communities	8
Loneliness/friendship services	6
Advice/information/supports on elder care & for carers	6
Health services provision/information/advice	6
Bereavement services	5
Back to work information/advice	5
Supports for young people	4
Self-employment support/advice	4
Information/advice for farmers	3
Addiction/drug use supports/services	3
IT Learning supports	3
Information/support for elderly – activities/events	3
Well-being/mindfulness supports	3
Others including: citizens information service; supports for families with children with specific needs; education/training; education/training supports; careers information; retirement planning	

#### 6.4 Future Training Needs

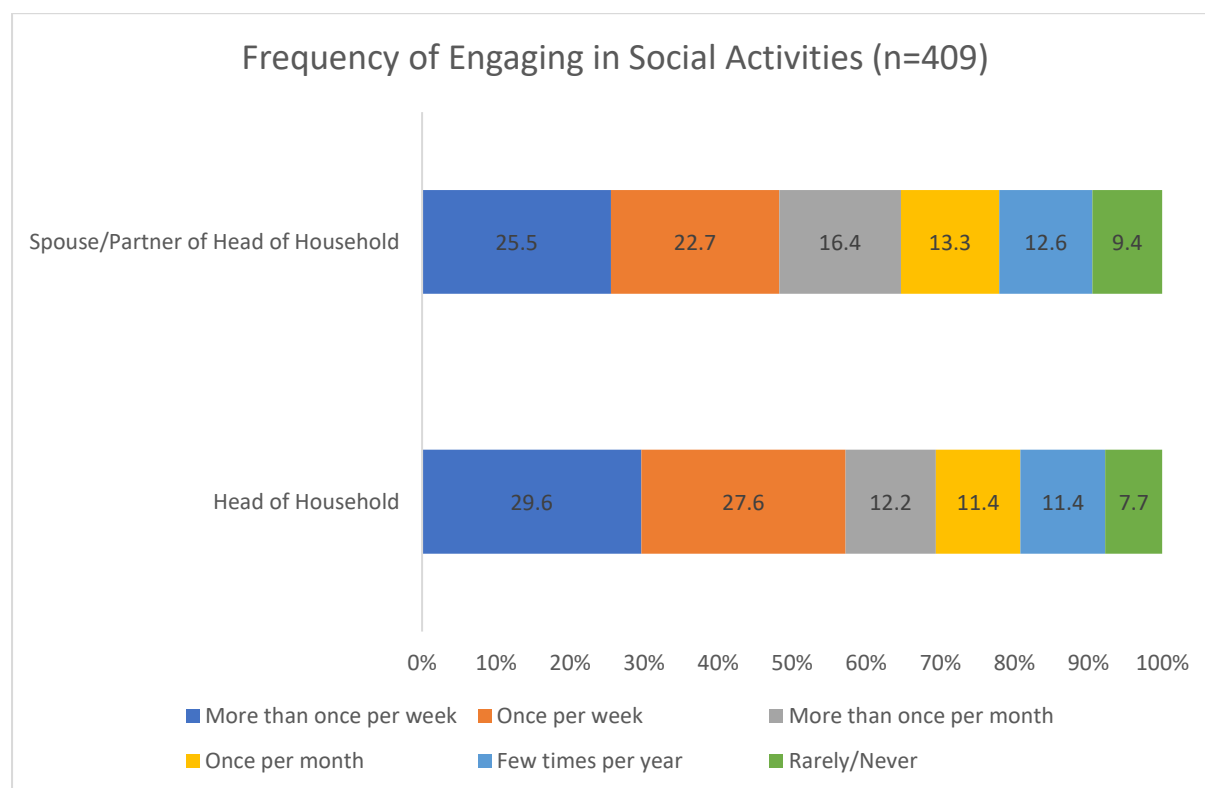
The main elements of training required by respondents were IT related training (social media, use of apps, banking, farming) (18.2%) and healthcare related training (including first aid) (15.3%) (Table 28). Other aspects included job related training such as Safe Pass (6.6%) and Manual Handling training (5.8%).

**Table 28 Main Aspects/Types of Future Training Required by Head of Household and Spouse/Partner over the Next 2 Years (n=274)**

Main Aspects/Types of Future Training	%
IT - including Farm/Use of Apps/online/web design/social media/banking/marketing/coding	18.2
First Aid/Paramedic/Healthcare/Social Care	15.3
Agricultural - improved management/efficiency/farm accounts/records/grants/schemes/environmental	7.3
Safe Pass	6.6
Company/On job training	5.8
Manual Handling	5.8
Some Training Always Worthwhile/Uncertain of Specific Type	5.5
Third Level/Further Education/SNA training	4.8
Start your own business/Running a business/Business Management	4.8
Spraying	3.6
Accountancy	3.6
Health and safety	3.3
Back to work training	3.3
Retirement planning	2.2
Defibrillator	2.2
Carer/Childcare	2.2
Household Maintenance/DIY/Gardening/Landscaping	2.2
Administration	1.8
Understanding of Brexit/Economy	1.8
Nutrition/Food safety/cookery	1.8
Driver DPC	1.5
Fitness/coaching	1.5
Machinery/Cars	1.1
Arts and Crafts	1.1
Personal Development/Wellbeing	1.1

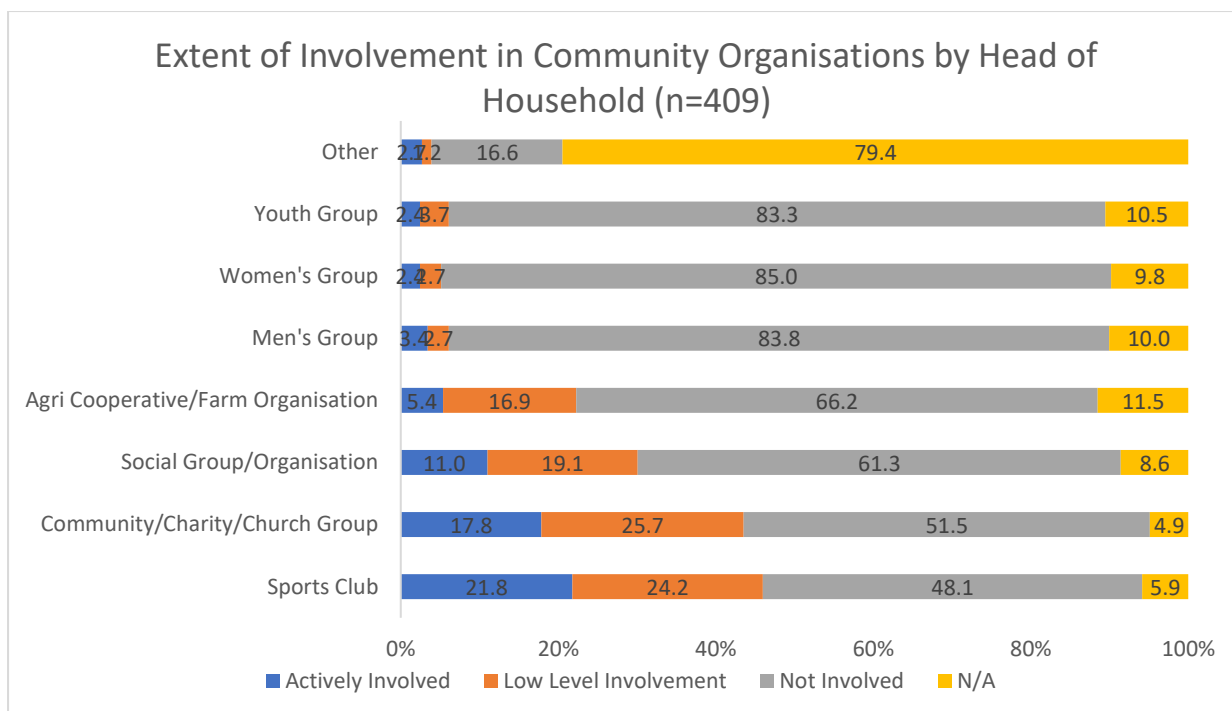
## 7. RESEARCH FINDINGS - COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & SOCIAL INTERACTION

Some 29.6% of the *Heads of Household* and one quarter (25.5%) of *Spouses/Partners* engaged in social activities more than once per week, while a further 27.6% of *Heads of Household* and 22.7% of *Spouses/Partners* did so once per week (Figure 15).



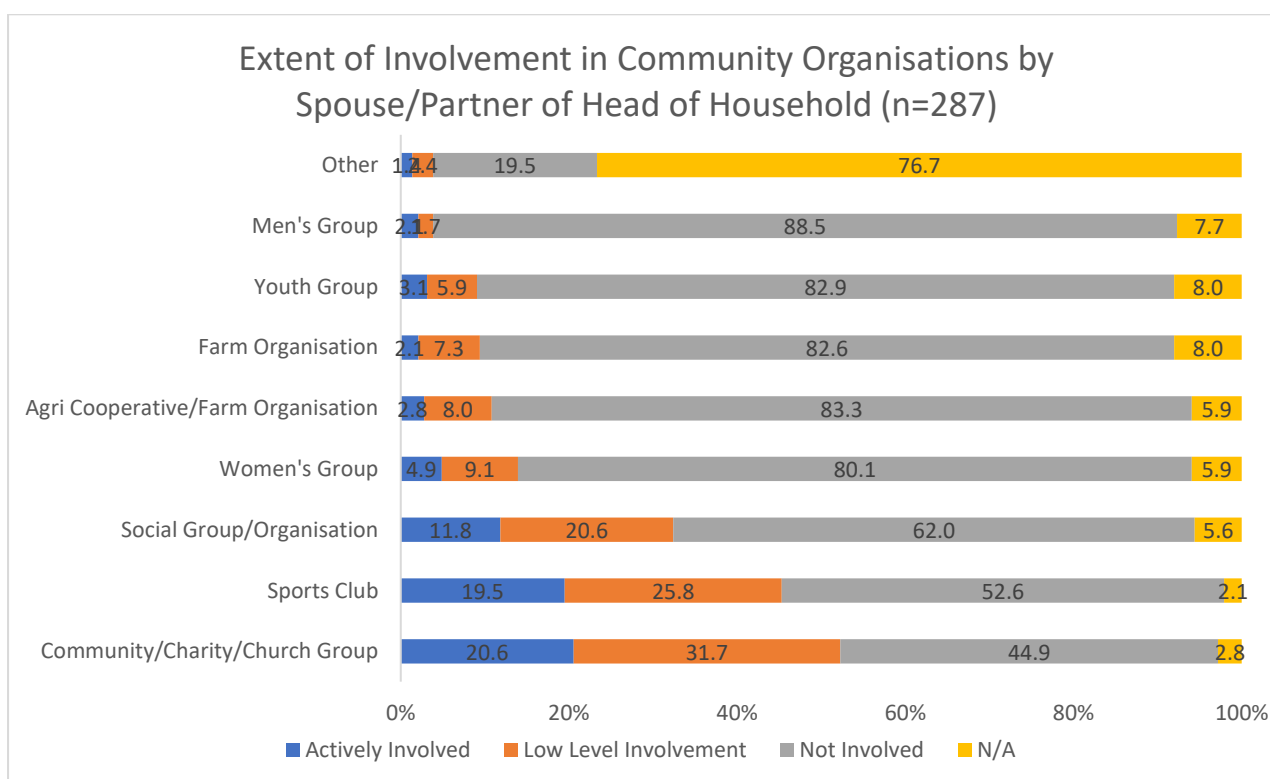
**Figure 15** Frequency of Engaging in Social Activities (Formal and/or Informal) for the Head of Household and Spouse/Partner of Head of Household (n=409)

Some 46% of the *Heads of Households* were involved in a sports club (21.8% actively), while 43.5% were involved in a community/charity/church group (17.8% actively) (Figure 16). Social groups/organisations (30.1%) and agri cooperatives/farm organisations (22.3%) also had a significant level of involvement.



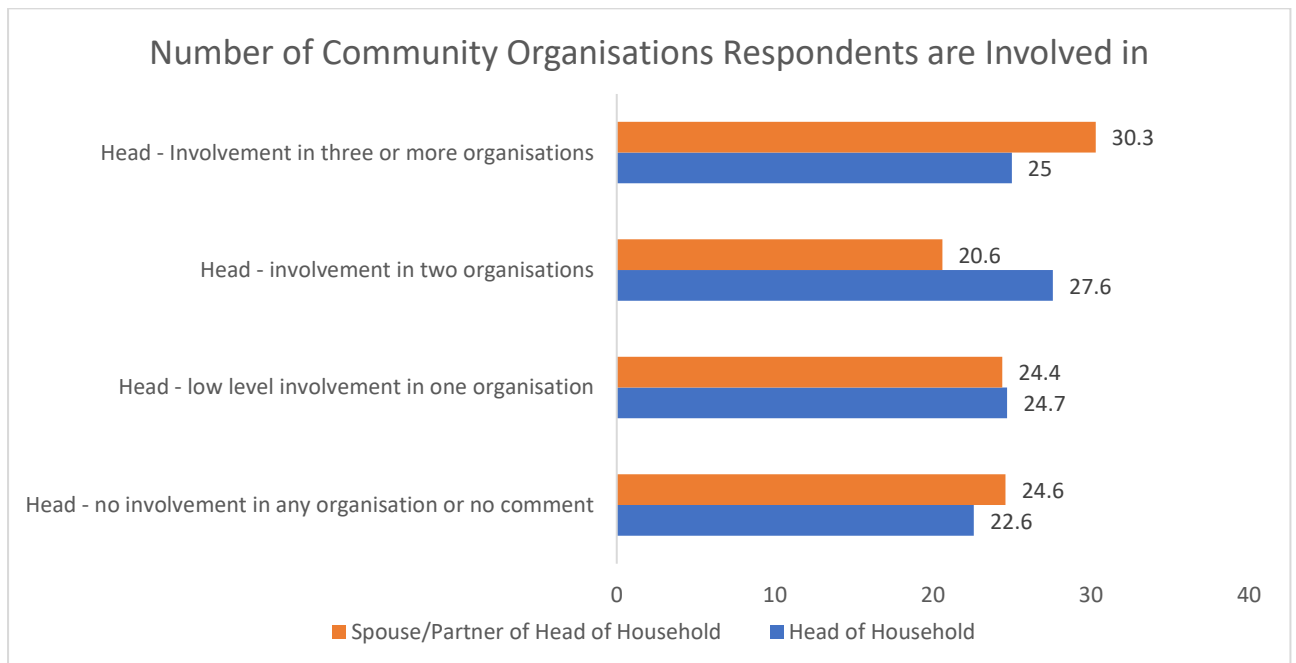
**Figure 16** Extent of Involvement in Community Organisations by Heads of Household (n=409)

Half (52.3%) of *Spouses/Partners* were involved in a community/charity/church group (20.6% actively) and 45.3% involved in a sports club (Figure 17). One third (32.4%) were involved in a social group/organisation while 14% were involved in a women's group.



**Figure 17** Extent of Involvement in Community Organisations by Spouses/Partners (n=409)

One quarter of *Heads of Household* and 30.3% of *Spouses/Partners* were involved to some extent in three or more local organisations (Figure 18). However, 47.3% of *Heads of Household* and 49% of *Spouses/Partners* either were not involved in any organisation or had a low level of involvement.



**Figure 18** Overall Level of Involvement in Community Organisations by Heads of Households and Spouses/Partners

The main social activities identified as being missing/hardest to access included: activities for youth including non-alcohol events and for those not interested in sport (13.5%); social dancing (11.1%); social activities in rural areas (including transport to them) (8.8%); fitness activities (8.2%); sports (including non-GAA); and arts and crafts (7%) (Table 29).

**Table 29 Main Social Activities Identified as Being Missing or Hardest to Access (n=171)**

<b>Main Activities Missing/Hardest to Access</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Activities for youth (non-alcohol) - including for those not into sports</b>	13.5
<b>Social dancing/Dance classes/Music lessons</b>	11.1
<b>Social activities/Meeting people/Activities in rural areas - at night (difficult due to drink driving) - transport to them</b>	8.8
<b>Gym/Fitness/Yoga/Healthy</b>	8.2
<b>Sports (including other than GAA)</b>	7
<b>Arts &amp; Crafts/Hobbies</b>	7
<b>Card Playing</b>	6.4
<b>Walking/Trekking/Cycling</b>	6.4
<b>Cafes, restaurants, pubs</b>	5.3
<b>Active age group/Activities for older people/Affordable</b>	5.3
<b>Men's Shed/Men's groups</b>	4.7
<b>Cinema/Theatre/Culture</b>	4.7
<b>Social Group</b>	4.7
<b>Bingo</b>	4.1
<b>Women's Groups</b>	3.5
<b>Swimming Pool</b>	2.9
<b>Mother &amp; Toddler Groups</b>	2.3
<b>Night Classes</b>	1.8
<b>After School Groups/Homework Clubs</b>	1.2
<b>Others included: outings/trips; addiction recovery clubs; well-being; LGBT activities; local meeting places; book club.</b>	

## 8. RESEARCH FINDINGS – FARMING HOUSEHOLDS

One third of respondents were farming. The average area farmed was 32.3 hectares (average area owned was 30.3 hectares). One third of farmers rented in land (16.9 hectares on average) while 7.4% rented out land (6.7 hectares on average). The main enterprises on farms in the survey areas were: sucklers (41.1%); beef drystock (35.7%); and sheep (14.7%) (Table 30). In total, half (49.7%) of farms had beef drystock, 47.3% had sucklers and 35.6% had sheep.

**Table 30 Main Enterprises on Farms in Survey Area**

Enterprise	Main (n=129)	Other (n=129)	Overall (n=129)
	%		
<b>Sucklers</b>	41.1	6.2	47.3
<b>Beef Drystock</b>	35.7	14	49.7
<b>Sheep</b>	14.7	20.9	35.6
<b>Dairy</b>	3.1	-	3.1
<b>Tillage</b>	2.3	0.8	3.8
<b>Forestry</b>	1.6	2.3	3.9
<b>Hay</b>	0.8	0.8	1.6
<b>Vegetables</b>	-	1.6	1.6
<b>Horses</b>	-	1.6	1.6

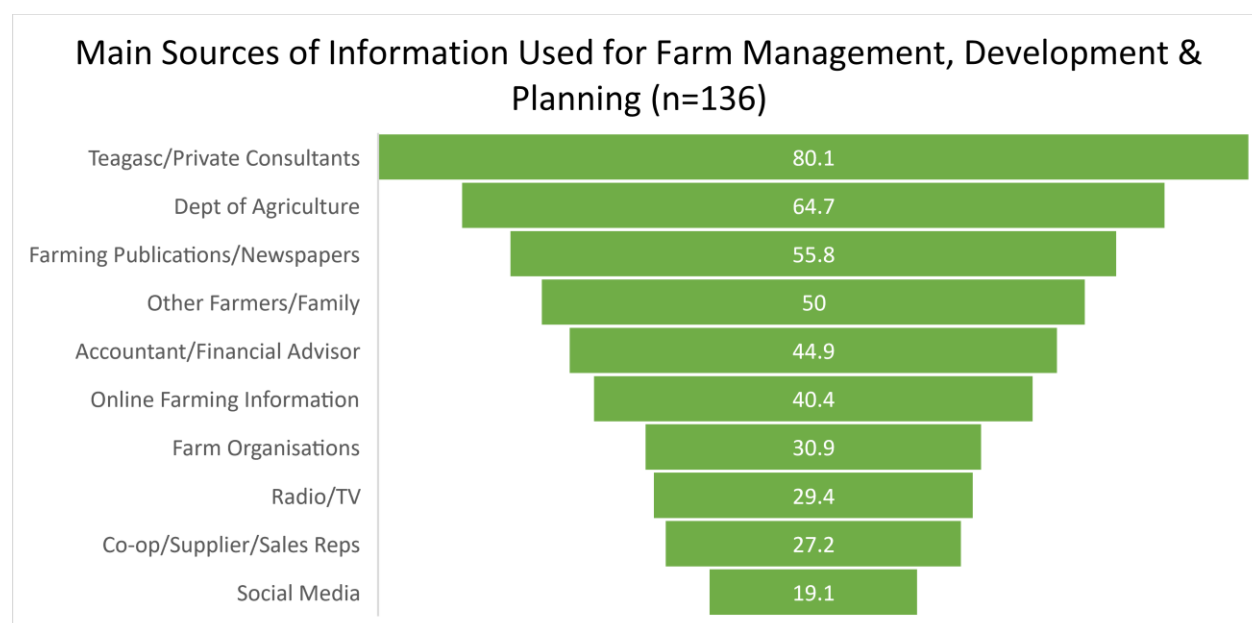
**Table 31 Average Livestock Numbers on Farms**

The average number of suckler cows was 21 while there was an average of 17 cattle of less than and over 1 year of age. While on sheep farms, there was an average of 106 ewes (Table 31).

Livestock	Average No.	Range
<b>Dairy Cows</b>	78	60-125
<b>Suckler Cows</b>	21	3-120
<b>Cattle &lt; 1 year</b>	17	1-88
<b>Cattle 1 year+</b>	17	1-150
<b>Ewes</b>	106	20-450
<b>Other Sheep</b>	63	1-300

### 8.1 Sources of Farm Information and Advice

Four out of five (80%) farmers received information/advice from Teagasc/private consultants and two thirds (64.7%) from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Figure 19). Some 55.8% received information from farming publications and half from other farmers/family members. Interestingly, one in five (19.1%) gained information from social media. *The findings from the research in 1998* (Whyte & Phelan, 1998<sup>33</sup>) *indicate that there were some differences in the sources of information for farmers (question was limited to top 3 choices whereas in current survey, no limit on the sources used) in 1998 including: other farmers/family (84.2%); Teagasc/private consultants (42.4%); farming publications/newspapers (29.7%); radio/tv (24.2%); Department of Agriculture (9.7%); and farm organisations (7.9%).*



**Figure 19** Main Sources of Information Used by Respondents for Farm Management, Development and Planning

<sup>33</sup> Whyte, N., & Phelan, J., 1998. Op cit.



## 8.2 Future Advice, Information and Training Needs

The main areas of advice, information and training required by farmers to support the future development of the farm are presented in Table 32. Common trends related to: maximising the schemes/grants; improving farm income; succession; and online/digital.

**Table 32 Main Advice, Information and Training Needs to Support the Future Development of the Farm**

Future Advice Needs	(n=59)	Future Information Needs	(n=61)	Future Training Needs	(n=53)
	%		%		%
Maximising the schemes/grants	17.0	Farm grants/schemes	21.3	IT skills/Social media	34
Improved income from farming/Investment	13.6	Online related to farming	18.0	Online services/business	22.6
Succession/Wills/Inheritance	11.9	Increase profitability/Efficiency/Future prospects	11.4	Record keeping/Accounts/Time management	11.3
Online/Digital Aspects of Farming	10.2	Diversification	9.8	Financial/Grassland management/Profitability	11.3
Efficiency/Farm/Financial management/Investment	10.2	Brexit	6.6	Green Cert Course	7.5
Prospects for future	8.5	Digital/IT skills/Upskilling	6.6	Spraying	5.7
Developing alternative farm enterprises	6.8	Farm development/improvement	4.9	Health & Safety	5.7
Maintaining land with low activity	6.8	Energy crops	4.9	Access to grants/Funding/Schemes	3.8
Supports/Pension Entitlements/Fair Deal	5.1	General information	4.9	General training	3.8
General advice	3.4	Forestry	3.3		
Sheep	3.4	Financial management/Record Keeping	3.3		
Nature/Biodiversity/Sustainability	3.4	Encouraging young people into farming	1.6		
Brexit - clarity	1.7	Revenue/Taxation	1.6		

### 8.3 Farm Development

Despite the fact that farming contributes a relatively low level of overall household income, considerable development had occurred on farms over the past 5 years including: increased output/livestock numbers (30.1%) (32.3%-1998 *report*); investment in machinery/equipment (26.5%)(55.7%-1998); investment in farm buildings/facilities (22.8%)(67.4%-1998); investment in livestock (21.3%); and increased area farmed (18.4%)(25.5%-1998) (50% *had invested in farmland improvement/infrastructure in 1998*) (Table 33).

Looking to the future, the main plans were to: invest in livestock (26.5%); invest in farm buildings (20.6%) (42.3%-1998); invest in machinery (18.4%)(36.2%-1998); and increase output (17.6%)(12.2%-1998). However, one quarter (23.5%)(5.2%-1998) planned to reduce output/livestock numbers, 12.5% (1.6%-1998) planned to reduce the area farmed and 11.8% planned to plant forestry. One in five (19.9%) planned to retire/step back from active farming/transfer the farm within the next 5 years (Whyte & Phelan, 1998<sup>34</sup>).

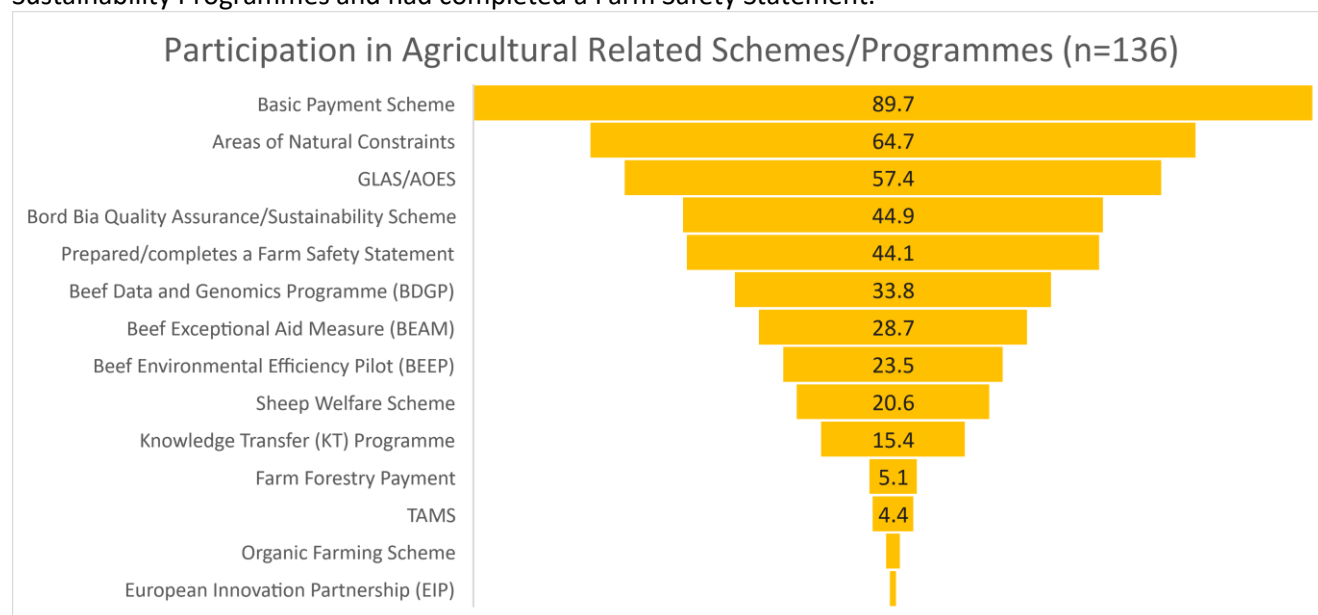
**Table 33 Main Aspects of Farm Development (Past and Future) (n=136)**

Farm Development Aspects	Past 5 years	Next 5 years
	%	
Increase output/livestock numbers	30.1	17.6
Invest in machinery/equipment	26.5	18.4
Invest in farm buildings/facilities	22.8	20.6
Invest in livestock	21.3	26.5
Increase area farmed (owned and rented/leased)	18.4	6.6
Reduce output/livestock numbers	17.6	23.5
Invest in farmland improvement/infrastructure	14.7	17.6
Purchase land	10.3	4.4
Reduce area farmed (owned and rented/leased)	7.4	12.5
Inherit/take over family farm	7.4	6.6
Plant forestry	6.6	11.8
Start/increase off-farm employment	5.1	5.9
Retire/step back from active farming/transfer farm	2.9	19.9
Sell land	2.2	2.2
Start a new enterprise (on/off farm)	2.2	5.9
Plant energy crop	2.2	5.1
Cease an enterprise (on/off farm)	1.5	3.7
Cease/reduce off-farm employment	1.5	2.9
Start/expand tourism enterprise	1.5	5.1
Enter collaborative farming arrangement	1.5	2.2
Lease out farm	1.5	4.4
Cease/reduce tourism enterprise	-	0.7

<sup>34</sup> Whyte, N., & Phelan, J., 1998. Op cit.

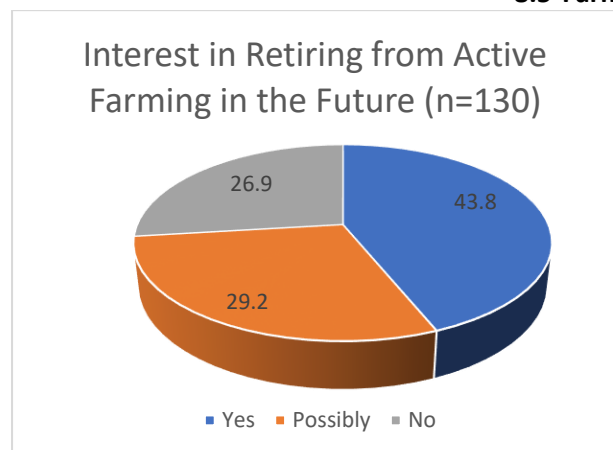
#### 8.4 Participation in Agri-Related Schemes

Three-quarters of respondents were aware of Farm Assist, while some 14% had availed of it in the past 5 years and 15.8% intended to apply/possibly apply in the future. As could be expected, the majority of farmers had applied for the Basic Payment Scheme within the last 5 years (Figure 20). While two-thirds (64.7%) received payments under the Areas of Natural Constraints Scheme. GLAS/AEOS was also important (57.4% participated). Some 44% were participating in the Bord Bia Sustainability Programmes and had completed a Farm Safety Statement.



**Figure 20** Extent of Participation in Agricultural Related Schemes/Programmes over the Past 5 Years (n=136)

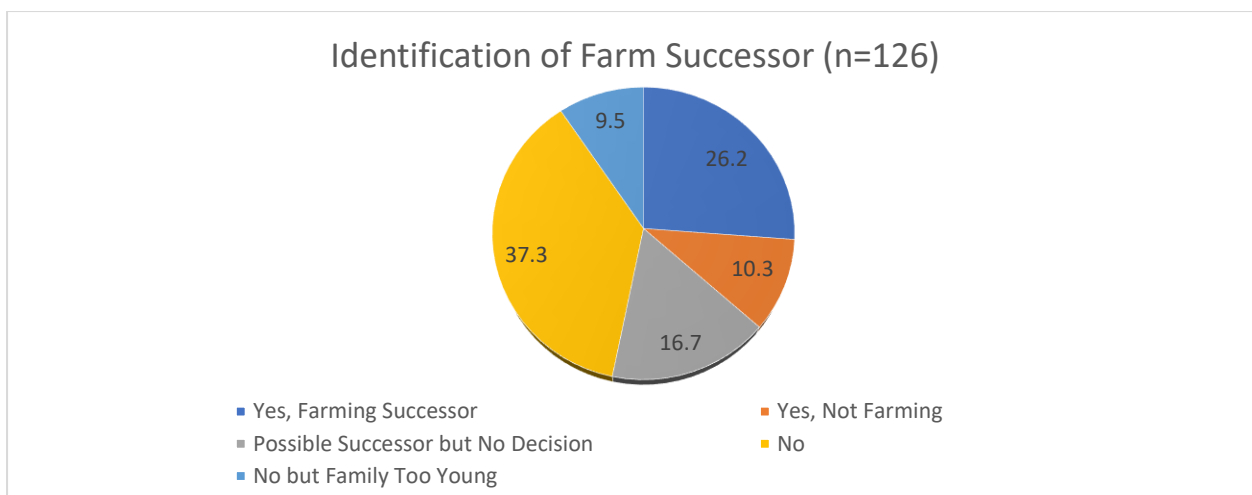
#### 8.5 Farm Succession



**Figure 21** Interest in Retiring from Active Farming at Some Stage in the Future (n=130)

Three-quarters (73.1%) of farmers stated that they would like/possibly like to retire from active farming at some stage in the future (Figure 21). One quarter (26.2%) of farmers had identified a farming successor, while a further one in ten (10.3%) had a non-farming successor identified. The remainder either had no successor or no decision made at this stage (Figure 22). *In 1998, 28.4% had a successor identified, while one fifth (20.1%) had no successor and almost half (45.9%) were uncertain about whether they had a successor or not (Whyte & Phelan, 1998<sup>35</sup>).*

<sup>35</sup> Whyte, N., & Phelan, J., 1998. Op cit.



**Figure 22 Extent to Which Respondents Had a Successor Identified for the Farm (n=126)**

The main concern about succession/transfer/inheritance was that the farm was not viable (30.8%), while 22.2% were concerned about the tax burden on successors and the same proportion that no family member was interested in the farm (Table 34).

**Table 34 Main Concerns/Fears About Succession/Transfer/Inheritance (n=81)**

Concerns about Succession/Transfer/Inheritance	%
Future income from the farm - not viable	30.8
Tax burden on successors	22.2
Family with no interest in farm/Children educated & moved away	22.2
Cost of succession/transfer	7.4
Not thought about it	7.4
Fear that successor could sell farm/make bad decisions	7.4
Legal issues/costs	3.7
Fighting between family members	2.5
Fair Deal Scheme	2.5
Difficulty in getting Green Cert	1.2
Do not want family farming just to please the parent	1.2
implications of being in a partnership on succession	1.2
Future income in retirement	1.2
Some of family might want a site	1.2
Fear of lack of control after succession	1.2

Some 22.8% of farm respondents had received advice/information on farm succession/inheritance. The main sources of advice/information were: solicitors (45.2%); accountants (32.3%); advisor/consultant (22.6%); family/friends (12.9%); and farm organisations (6.5%). The main types of information/advice required on succession/transfer/inheritance were general information (31.5%) and tax implications (31.5%) (Table 35).

**Table 35 Main Aspects of Information/Advice Required on Succession/Transfer/Inheritance (n=54)**

<b>Information/Advice on Succession/Transfer/Inheritance</b>	<b>%</b>
General information/advice - Understanding what is involved in succession	31.5
Tax implications	31.5
Succession planning/Preparing for transfer/Options	13.2
Legal aspects	11.1
Costs of succession	9.3
Do not know yet	9.3

### **8.6 Perspectives on the Future in Farming**

Respondents identified EU payments/schemes as the main opportunity in farming (16.6%) (highlighting the important role which they play) (Table 36). Some 16.6% perceived the healthy way of life as an opportunity, 13.3% saw opportunities in taking on more land while 12.2% identified diversification (alternative enterprises). One in ten respondents considered forestry as an opportunity and 8.9% identified other farmers retiring/exiting farming as an opportunity for them.

**Table 36 Main Farming Opportunities Facing Households (n=90)**

<b>Main Opportunities in Farming</b>	<b>%</b>
EU payments/Schemes	16.6
Healthy way of life/Outdoors/Quality of Life/Rural Living/Rear a family	16.6
Expand including buy land/Taking on more land	13.3
Alternative enterprises - Diversification	12.2
Farm development/Investment/New sheds/Well developed farm	11.1
Forestry	10.0
People getting out so land becoming available	8.9
Biodiversity/Organic farming/Sustainability	7.7
Own land/Valuable asset/Sell land/Sites/Transfer to family	7.7
Enjoy farming	5.6
Social aspect	5.6
Engage with people/Get to know people/Meet people	5.6
Income/Increase income	5.5
Better quality livestock/New technology/Improve management/Improve breeding/Improve efficiency	5.5
Increase livestock numbers	4.4
Renewable energy/Climate change	4.4
Pass on knowledge/Teach children	3.3
Tourism	3.3
Continuation of current enterprises/New enterprises	3.3
Learn more about farming	2.2
Opportunity to retire	2.2
No major debt	2.2
Good quality niche markets	2.2

The biggest challenge identified in farming was bad weather, long winters and flooding (31%) while poor land was identified by 23.3% (Table 37). Income was seen as a challenge by 22.4% of farmers and beef prices were specifically identified by 14.7%. Other challenges of note included: labour

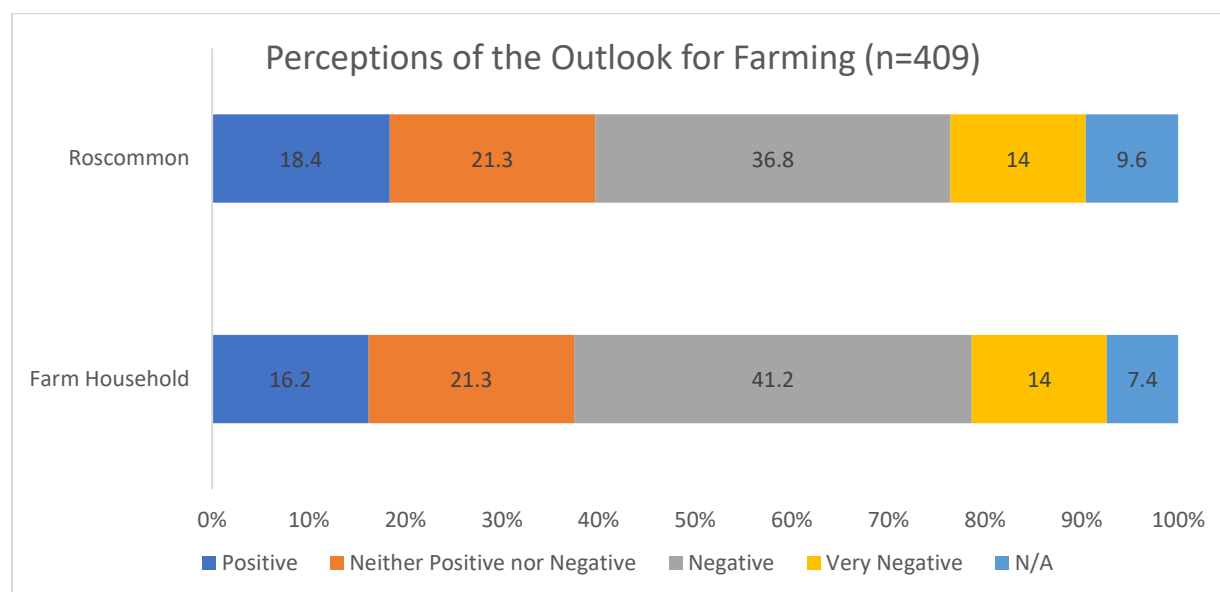
(14.7%); succession (12.2%); Brexit (11.2%); fears over CAP grants/schemes (9.5%); and climate change/environmental issues (9.5%). *It was interesting to note that in the 1998 research (Whyte & Phelan, 1998<sup>36</sup>) the two main challenges identified were beef prices (91.4%) and income (72.8%).*

**Table 37 Main Farming Challenges Facing Households (n=116)**

<b>Main Challenges in Farming</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Bad weather/Long winters/Flooding</b>	31.0
<b>Poor land</b>	23.3
<b>Income/Profit/Uncertainty over income/Fluctuating Income</b>	22.4
<b>Beef prices</b>	14.7
<b>Labour</b>	14.7
<b>Succession - including costs/tax</b>	12.2
<b>Brexit</b>	11.2
<b>Insufficient grants/Schemes/Abolishment of these/Fear of losing payments/CAP</b>	9.5
<b>Carbon footprint/Climate change/Environmental issues/Sustainability</b>	9.5
<b>Costs - inputs</b>	8.6
<b>Maintaining livestock numbers due to age/health/ability to work</b>	7.8
<b>Hard life/Work/Time consuming/Quality of life/Work life balance</b>	7.7
<b>Bureaucracy/Regulations</b>	5.2
<b>Lack of diversification options/Cost of diversification/Investment</b>	4.3
<b>Government not interested in farming/Rural areas dying/Social decline</b>	4.3
<b>Broadband</b>	3.4
<b>Age/Aging farm population/Lack of young farmers</b>	3.4
<b>Disease - animal health</b>	2.6
<b>Uncertainty</b>	2.6
<b>Isolation/Loneliness/working on own</b>	2.6
<b>Off farm employment</b>	2.6
<b>Housing/children not able to move out</b>	1.7
<b>Neighbours not aware of farming</b>	1.7
<b>Representation/New farm organisations</b>	1.7
<b>Land expensive - cannot afford to purchase</b>	1.7

<sup>36</sup> Whyte, N., & Phelan, J., 1998. Op cit.

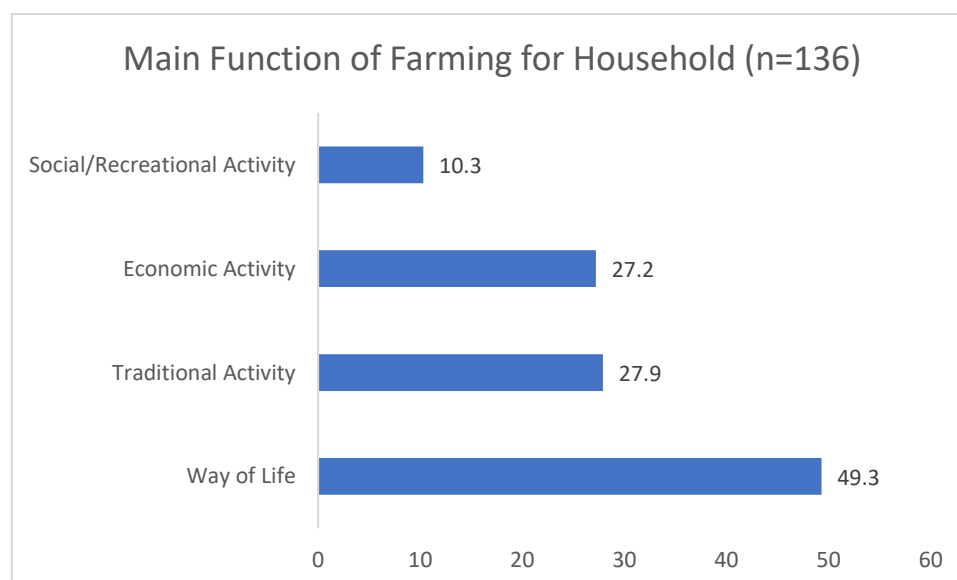
Overall the respondents' outlook for farming in their own household and Co. Roscommon was negative with only 16.2% positive for their own future in farming (55.2% were negative) and 18.4% positive about farming in Co. Roscommon (50.8% were negative) (Figure 23).



**Figure 23** Perceptions on the General Outlook in Farming for Their Own Household and Co. Roscommon (n=409)

### 8.7 Main Functions of Farming

Half (49.3%) of farmers identified '*way of life*' as the main function of farming for their household (Figure 24). However, only 27.2% identified farming as an *economic activity*, a similar proportion who identified it as a *traditional activity*.

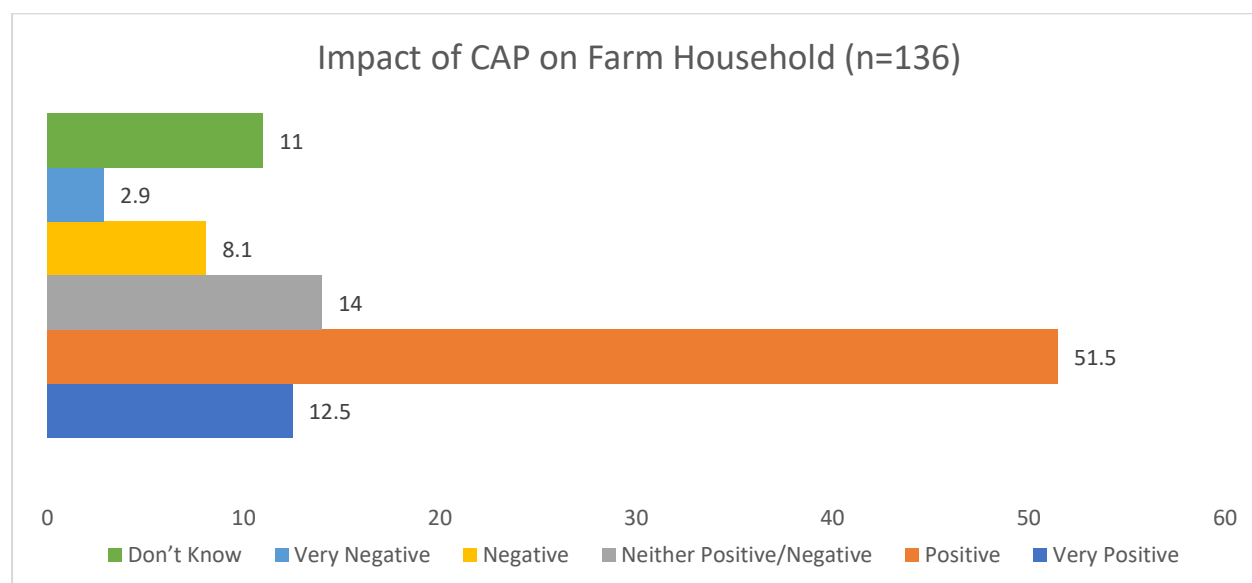


Note: Respondents were able to identify more than one function

**Figure 24** Main Functions of Farming for the Household as Identified by Respondents (n=136)

### 8.8 Impact of CAP

Some 63% of farmers believed that the impact of CAP was very positive/positive for their farm household while only 11% considered the impact as being negative (Figure 25).



**Figure 25 Perception of the Impact of CAP on Their Farm Household (n=136)**

One third (35.3%) of farmers stated that they would not be farming without the CAP payments while a further one quarter (26%) said that it assisted with farm income (Table 38). However, one in ten (9.5%) stated that it gave too much to larger farmers and not enough for smaller farmers.

**Table 38 Main Comments Made by Respondents on the Impact of CAP on their Farm Household (n=85)**

Main Comments Made on the Impact of CAP	%
Could not survive without payments/No farming without it/Incentive to farm	35.3
Assist with cash flow/Income/Keeps farmers going/Supports	26
Too much for big farmers/Not enough for small farmers	9.5
Too much bureaucracy/Imposed too many strict restrictions on farmers/Regulations/Red tape/Not worth the hassle of compliance	7.1
Need greater EU support/need revamp/should include more climate change	7.1
Positive overall/Made farming easier	6.9
Conditioned to obey EU masters	2.4
Young farmer scheme was great benefit	2.4
Vital for rural Ireland/Country would not have developed without it	2.4
Future cuts in CAP will have negative impact	2.4
Have not seen much improvement	2.4
Should not be trying to farm the payments	1.2
Getting better	1.2
Provided cheque in post but not market price for product	1.2
Does not impact on tillage much	1.2
Provides valuable information	1.2
Better off if payments subsidised the cost of inputs - feed, diesel, fertiliser etc	1.2
There would still be farming without CAP	1.2



## **9. RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS**

A series of conclusions are presented in this section which have been developed following reflection on the key findings from the research process. It is anticipated that local organisations/agencies/service providers may draw further conclusions relevant to their own activities following a review of the findings.

### **9.1 Employment and Occupations**

The overall education level of survey respondents has increased significantly since the 1998 research reflecting: the increase in the proportion of people with third level qualifications; a higher level of education among the general population; and a more educated work force with a wide range of qualifications.

The level of self-employment and enterprise development was broadly similar to national figures, however, it was relatively low. This highlighted both the potential to encourage greater entrepreneurship and self-employment but also the challenges faced by individuals in establishing small businesses. Foremost in these challenges were cashflow for small businesses, demand for products/services and staff to work in small businesses. It was also evident that financial issues (cost of investment and ability to raise finance) were the main reasons cited for not establishing a new enterprise even when it had been considered. Therefore, supports for enterprise development should include a focus on financial measures to get businesses up and running.

The range of jobs/occupations held by people living in rural Roscommon reflects the diversity of employment in the area and the dependence on a wide number of sectors for jobs.

People living in Roscommon were not only dependent on a thriving local economy/job market but also that of the surrounding counties in the west, northwest and midlands. The core areas for employment were a triangle between Carrick on Shannon, Athlone and Galway. The prosperity of families in rural Roscommon was largely dependent on the prosperity of this wider area.

While many people work in their immediate locality, generally rural householders commute to employment/college and typically they were spending almost one hour per day commuting. However, given the rural location and necessity to travel to large urban areas for employment, commuting was always going to feature and there is limited scope to reduce the commute time, unless there was a considerable societal shift towards '*working from home*' which may be more likely to happen now following the experience of people working from home during the Covid 19 pandemic. However, the commute could be improved by the standard of local roads and traffic management on approaches to urban areas and availability of long-term car parking in urban areas.

### **9.2 Incomes**

As expected, the most significant source of income for households in Co. Roscommon was from employment with social welfare and farming also significant sources of income.

While farm income was present in one third of households, generally its contribution was relatively small with only a minority who were dependent to any significant extent on the farm income. Nonetheless farming was a contributor in these households and efforts will need to be undertaken to sustain this income and the ongoing development of the farm as a financial contributor.

The dependence of households on social welfare as a source of income indicated the stage of life cycle many households are at (older/retired & younger families in receipt of child benefit), the

inability of some to participate in the workforce but also the vulnerability of these households to political decisions on social welfare payments (which were outside of the control of members of the household).

It was evident that there are a wide range of financial concerns among households however, it was concerning that the greatest concerns related to day to day and health care expenses. The cost of education was also a significant concern for households. These issues highlighted the need for household budgeting and financial management skills.

### **9.3 Living in Roscommon**

Peace and tranquillity were appreciated as one of the major advantages of living in rural Roscommon and the opportunity to be '*close to family/friends*'. People valued the opportunity to have their own space to live individually or with their families. While these aspects might seem idealistic, they were what people want and are possibly the attributes that could be promoted to others to encourage them to stay or to come to live in rural Roscommon. There may also be an opportunity to specifically encourage families to move to live in Co. Roscommon (as a possible solution to high property prices and rural decline). It might be worthwhile to seek to encourage people to acquire and renovate older houses in the countryside or rural towns.

Rural transport was the most significant challenge identified to living in rural Roscommon. The issue related to transport include: dependence on having a car/two cars to access services/get about; the lack of and cost of alternatives to public transport (e.g. taxi's which may not be accessible, practical or affordable in rural areas); and distance to public transport where available. Transport serves as both a challenge to accessing services but also prohibits access to services.

In addition to transport, general access to services of various types posed a challenge in rural areas, it was evident in the report that while many services were generally accessible, they were problematic for individuals. Therefore, service providers need to constantly review the extent to which services are accessible and determine who may be excluded or distanced from the services. Communication services (broadband and mobile phone coverage) were also problematic in rural areas. It is interesting to note that rural broadband/mobile phone services are considered to be a greater problem than rural roads.

### **9.4 Quality of Life**

It was obvious that despite the challenges in accessing services, the rural population of Co. Roscommon are very satisfied with the quality of life experienced by themselves and their families. Living in Co. Roscommon was perceived as good for individuals and their families.

Households were significantly more positive than negative about the future prospects for themselves and their households.

### **9.5 Access to Services**

The core services of shops and post offices were perceived as being easy to access by rural residents (despite the closure of many small local shops and rural post offices) while the majority of people perceived transport services as difficult to access.

There appeared to be potential to increase the extent to which the public are aware of and access to the services and supports provided by Local Enterprise Office, Local Training & Education Board and LEADER.

Some of the key areas of advice/information that were sought by rural residents included: addressing isolation/loneliness; dealing with stress/mental ill health; relationship advice/support; and job/career advice.

### **9.6 Social Activities**

The extent to which people engaged in social activities depends on the personality of the individual in addition to the availability of suitable opportunities for social interaction. However, it is important to encourage local organisations/clubs to provide/facilitate activities and also to seek to address where gaps occur (e.g. alcohol-free activities for younger people).

The critical importance of sports clubs in rural areas was evident in the level of engagement by rural residents. Vibrant sports clubs not only provided opportunities for physical activity but also volunteering in the running of clubs and obvious related social interaction. The challenge for many clubs was securing adequate volunteers to assist in the running of clubs. Supports were also required to encourage volunteering in rural clubs and support individuals in acquiring the necessary skills to run and manage voluntary organisations. Overall, rural communities need greater engagement in voluntary groups/activities by a wider cohort of the community in order to survive and prosper and best serve their local community.

Similar issues relate to community/charity/church groups and social organisations. Efforts were required to support and encourage those groups/organisations which may be under pressure to maintain their activities (which in many cases provide important services in local areas).

It was evident during the Covid 19 pandemic crisis in 2020 that voluntary/community/sports clubs play a key role in the wider social and community fabric and therefore need to be fostered and encouraged for both their specific purpose/goal but also for the indirect community/social benefit.

### **9.7 Future Training Needs**

There was considerable interest among the rural population in acquiring ongoing training both related to career/employment (agricultural, safe pass, manual handling) and life skills (IT-digital skills, first aid etc). The challenge for organisations was to facilitate the delivery of training in a format and timeframe that would attract engagement from the community. Organisations may need to pool their resources in targeting training in certain locations and then offer a suite of programmes from which people could select that which was of most interest to them. The digital training which was ongoing in Co. Roscommon may have potential for wider roll-out and possibly at different levels e.g. those with little/no IT skills and those who may be PC literate but wanted to learn more about making the most from mobile technology e.g. smart phones, apps etc. The reality following the Covid 19 Pandemic was that the delivery of all aspects of training will change and providers will have to adapt.

### **9.8 Impact of Brexit**

There was concern that Brexit would impact on households in Co. Roscommon, however reflecting the general situation across Ireland at that stage (late 2019), there was considerable uncertainty and no agreement over how Brexit would impact. Much of the concern related to rising cost of living, agricultural prices/income, trade (imports/exports) and travel. At local county level, it was considered unlikely that it would be possible to take significant actions to tackle any of these issues, however, the provision of information and advice would help households to address the issue and to inform themselves.

### **9.9 Farming in Co Roscommon**

The findings from the research relating to farm families in the Co Roscommon, confirmed the dominance of lower margin beef enterprises with a minority engaged in higher margin dairy and tillage enterprises. Therefore, the potential to increase income may be modest. However, focus should continue to be placed by Teagasc, private consultants, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine on measures to secure and improve the incomes of beef farmers.

It was evident that farmers were accessing information and advice on farming from a wide range of sources, however, the primary sources/channels of information are Teagasc/Private consultants and Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. It was also evident that the extent to which farmers engaged with sources of information and advice had increased significantly over the past 2 decades (since 1998 report). The important role of online sources of information and social media was also highlighted and were now key channels for information and advice. The challenge was to effectively utilise these channels for the future by targeting of information and providing focused messages and points of reference for farm families.

### **9.10 Farm Development**

Despite the fact that the majority of farmers were engaged in low margin enterprises, there was and continued to be plans for ongoing development and investment in farming which highlighted the importance of measures which support and encourage farm development and investment.

However, one of the most striking findings was the fact that one fifth of farmers planned to retire/step back from active farming/transfer the farm within the next 5 years. This presented a number of issues including:

- Need for information/guidance on the process of transfer;
- Support for older farmers in adjusting to retirement/less active involvement in farming;
- Support for young farmers in becoming established in farming;
- The exploration of options for retirement/stepping back when no family successor (such as linking with Macra na Feirme Land Mobility Service); and
- Seeking to ensure that land is not abandoned/neglected and protecting the current level of economic activity from farming.

There was a low level of plans to develop new or diversified enterprises which aligned with the current low level of diversification/enterprise development/self-employment. While it may be worthwhile to encourage farm diversification, it was uncertain how this could be undertaken. However, it was always considered worthwhile to profile and highlight successful entrepreneurs/businesses and highlight the lessons learned in the process of establishing these enterprises. In doing so, it may serve to encourage enterprise among others.

### **9.11      Participation in Agri Related Schemes**

There was a high level of participation in the core agricultural schemes which reflected the importance of these schemes to farmers in terms of farm development, management and income, the awareness created and information provided on these schemes by all stakeholders and the support in application provided by Advisors/consultants. In addition, some schemes had compliance elements as well which required engagement by farmers. It was critically important for the future of farming in Co. Roscommon that a range of adequately resourced agri related schemes continued for the future.

### **9.12      Farm Succession**

It was interesting to note that the majority of farmers would like/possibly like to retire from active farming at some stage in the future, therefore highlighting a changing attitude among farmers who did not intend to '*stay farming forever*'. However, those without successors would need options in order to do so.

The level of farming successors was low which indicated potential challenges for the future in terms of what would actually happen the farmland in the county and who would farm it. There continued to be considerable uncertainty about who would take on the land after the current farmer. Family succession was no longer as traditional as in the past and typically land was inherited by a family member who may not wish to farm and have limited farming knowledge. Therefore, actions needed to be taken not only to support farmers in their succession decisions but also to provide advice and guidance to inheritors who were not intent on farming the land themselves and make them aware of the options open to them.

It was evident that farm families require information/advice on the process of succession and the options to consider and tax implications of transfer primarily.

### **9.13      Challenges in Farming**

There were no easy solutions to the main challenges which farm families identified (weather, poor land & poor incomes) and therefore advice/guidance was probably most needed in coping with and best managing these challenges and the best options to overcome them.

### **9.14      Perception of Farming**

It was concerning that farm families were generally negative about the outlook for farming.

The reality of farming activity in Co. Roscommon was evident by the fact that only just over one quarter of farmers identified it as an '*economic activity*' for their farm, the same proportion who identified it as a '*traditional activity*', while it was more likely to be a '*way of life*' for half of farmers. Therefore, it was challenging to bring about changes in farming when the majority of farm families were not focused on it as an economic activity.

The significance of the CAP to farmers in Co. Roscommon was demonstrated by the fact that almost two-thirds of farmers considered that the impact of CAP on their farm household was positive and only one in ten perceived them as negative. CAP has both supported farm incomes and encouraged farm investment/development. In reality, the only profit on most of the farms in the research areas was derived from the CAP payment supports.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **MEMBERS OF PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE**

The members of the Project Steering Committee included:

- Martina Earley – Roscommon LEADER Partnership (RLP)
- Noel Connolly – Roscommon LEADER Partnership (RLP)
- Linda Sice – Roscommon LEADER Partnership (RLP)
- Charlie Devaney – Teagasc
- Tom Gunning – Irish Co-operative Organisation Society (ICOS)
- Jim O Connor – Roscommon Irish Farmers Association (IFA)
- Tim Farrell – Roscommon Irish Cattle & Sheep Farmers Association (ICSA)
- Patricia McCormack – Agricultural Consultants Association (ACA)
- Debbie Donnelly – Macra Na Feirme
- Marion Nolan – Roscommon Irish Country Women’s Association (ICA)
- Richard Regan – Roscommon Citizens Information Service (CIS)
- Anne Mannion – Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETb)
- Dolores McSharry – Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETb)
- Gary Greene – Accounting and Taxation Services Ltd.
- Anne Marie Murphy – Healthy Service Executive (HSE) ‘Health and Wellbeing Division’
- Mike Donnelly – Money Advice & Budgeting Services (MABS)
- Patrick Towey – Roscommon Home Services (RHS)
- Tom Harrison – Older People’s Network (OPN)

**APPENDIX 2**  
**RESEARCH SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Roscommon Rural Living Survey Questionnaire – Autumn 2019**

Interviewer Name \_\_\_\_\_ Location DED \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Household Profile**

1. Does the person completing the survey describe themselves as the head of household<sup>37</sup> or spouse/partner of head of household? Head of Household Spouse/Partner of Head of Household  
*(For farm household, respondent must engaged in farming or someone with knowledge of farming)*

2. What age category is the head of household and spouse/partner? *Please [✓]*

	Head of Household	Spouse/Partner of Head of Household
18-35 yrs		
36-50 yrs		
51-64 yrs		
65 yrs or older		

3. What is the gender of the head of household and spouse/partner? *Please [✓]*

Head of Household		Spouse/Partner of Head of Household	
Male	Female	Male	Female

4. How many people normally reside in this household? *Record number in each age group*

Adults (18-64 yrs) – not in education	Adults (65 yrs or older)	0-4 yrs	5-12 yrs	13-18 yrs	18+ yrs – in Education

5. What is the highest level of education attained (or currently undertaking) by the head of household and spouse/partner? *Please [✓]*

Education Level	Head of Household	Spouse/Partner of Head of Household
Primary		
Secondary		
Trade Qualification		
Agricultural Qualification		
Third Level Certificate/ Diploma		
Third Level Degree or Higher		

**Occupation and Business**

6. Does the Head of Household and/or Spouse/Partner have a self-employed business/diversified farm enterprise/ (other than farming)? *Please [✓]*

	Head of Household	Spouse/Partner of Head of Household
No enterprise/self-employment		
Yes – On-farm enterprise/business		
Yes – Off-farm enterprise/business		

<sup>37</sup> Head of Household is defined as a person who is individually or jointly responsible for making decisions and earning an income within the household.

7. If yes to Q.6, please complete the following questions:

- a. What are the biggest challenges/obstacles faced in establishing and running an enterprise/being self-employed?

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- b. What, (if any) supports are required by your business currently to improve efficiency, profitability, sustainability?

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8. If no to Q.6, please complete the following questions:

- a. Have you ever considered establishing a new enterprise/being self-employed in the past?

Yes

No

- b. If you considered a new enterprise/being self-employed but not yet established, why not?

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9. What is the occupation of the head of household and spouse/partner? – *Please [✓] all that apply*

	Head of Household	Spouse/Partner of Head of Household
Farming (owned or renting)		
Self-Employed		
Full-time Employed		
Part-time Employed		
If employed full or part-time – what is the job?		
Unemployed		
Retired		
Student		
Working in the Home		
Carer		
Unable to Work – Illness/Disability		
Other – list		

10. For those who are working outside the home/students, where do you work/study (area/town) and what is the average time (minutes) it takes to commute to work/study?

*Record location & number of minutes for one way journey*

	Head of Household	Spouse/Partner of Head of Household
Location (Area/Town)		
Minutes (one way)		



## Living in Rural Roscommon

11. Think about where you live, here in rural Roscommon what if any are the:

<b>Advantages to Living Here</b>	
<b>Disadvantages to Living Here</b>	
<b>Opportunities Presented by Living Here</b>	
<b>Challenges to Living Here</b>	

12. How would you rate the quality of life experienced by you and your family in Co. Roscommon? [✓]

Very Poor                      Poor                      Neither Poor nor Good                      Good                      Excellent

## Accessing Supports/Services

13. Please rate the ability of your household to access the following services? *Please [✓] all that apply*

	Very Easy	Easy	Neither Easy nor Difficult	Difficult	Very Difficult	N/A
<b>Post Office</b>						
<b>Garda Station</b>						
<b>Childcare</b>						
<b>Primary/Secondary Schools</b>						
<b>Further Education/Training</b>						
<b>Doctor/Hospital Services</b>						
<b>Elder/Day Care Services</b>						
<b>Shops</b>						
<b>Transport Services</b>						
<b>Social Activities</b>						
<b>Broadband Service</b>						

14. To what extent are you aware of the services provided by the following and to what extent has your household engaged with/contacted them over the past 3 years? *Please [✓] all that apply*

	Awareness				Contact/Engagement		
	None	Some	Considerable		None	Some	Considerable
<b>Roscommon County Council</b>							
<b>Roscommon LEADER Partnership</b>							
<b>Local Enterprise Office</b>							
<b>Teagasc/Private Consultants</b>							
<b>Department of Agriculture – local office</b>							
<b>Department of Social Protection (Welfare) – local office</b>							
<b>Other Government Dept's – local office</b>							
<b>Local Training &amp; Education Board</b>							
<b>Other – List</b>							

15. How would you rate the availability of these supports in this area?

*Please [✓] all that apply*

	Extremely Difficult to Access	Difficult to Access	Neither Easy nor Difficult to Access	Easy to Access	Very Easy to Access
Farm Advice & Information					
Personal/Household Financial Advice					
Job/Career Advice/Guidance					
Advice on Stress/Mental Ill Health					
Guidance on Dealing with Isolation/Loneliness					
Relationship Support/Advice					
Legal Advice/Information					
Education/Training Services/Information					

16. What other supports of a similar nature to the list above are not available/easily accessed in this area?

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### Community Involvement/Social Interaction

17. How often does the head of household and the spouse/partner of head of household engage in social activities (either formal (clubs/groups/events/classes) or informal (meeting friends/coffee)? *Please [✓]*

	Head of Household		Spouse/Partner of Head of Household
More than once per week			
Once per week			
More than once per month			
Once per month			
Few times per year			
Rarely/Never			

18. To what extent are the head of household and spouse/partner currently involved in the following organisations in your community?

*Please [✓] all that apply*

	Head of Household				Spouse/Partner of Head of Household		
	Actively Involved	Low Level Involvement	Not Involved		Actively Involved	Low Level Involvement	Not Involved
Sports Club							
Community/Charity/ Church Group							
Agri Cooperative/ Farm Organisation							
Farm Organisation							
Social Group/ Organisation							
Men's Group							
Women's Group							
Youth Group							
Other							

19. What social activities/types of activity are missing/hardest to access in this area?

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### Training/Brexit/Future Perspectives

20. What aspects/types of training are required by the head of household and spouse/partner over the next 2 years? **Record comments**

Head of Household	Spouse/Partner of Head of Household

21. Do you think Brexit will impact on your household over the next 5 years?

**Please [✓]**

No

Yes

Possibly

**If yes/possibly, how might Brexit impact on your household?**

*Don't know exactly but will impact*

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22. In general, how positive or negative are you about the future (social & economic) for your household over the next 10 years in Co. Roscommon? **Please [✓]**

Very Positive

Positive

Neither Positive/Negative

Negative

Very Negative

Please comment on your response:

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### Income

23. What sources of income have the head of household and spouse/partner in 2019?

**Please [✓] all that apply**

	Head of Household	Spouse/Partner of Head of Household
<b>Farm</b>		
<b>Non-Farm Employment</b>		
<b>Other Enterprise/Self Employment</b>		
<b>Social Welfare/Pension</b>		
<b>What is main source of income for Head of Household and spouse/partner?</b>		

24. **If farm income is present (Q.23),** what proportion of total household income (head of household and spouse/partner) comes from farming (including EU payments)? \_\_\_\_\_ %

a. Over the next 5 years, do you anticipate that the % of income from farming (including EU payments) to change? **Please [✓]**

Increase

Decrease

Stay Same

Don't Know

25. If in receipt of social welfare (Q.23), what is the nature of the social welfare received by head of household and/or spouse/partner? *Please [✓] all that apply*

	Head of Household	Spouse/Partner of Head of Household
Pension		
Illness/Disability/Invalidity/Injury Payment		
Job Seekers Benefit/Back to Work Payment		
Maternity/Paternity Benefit		
Child Benefit		
Farm Assist		
Rural Social Scheme		
Back to Education Allowances		
Other Social Welfare		

26. What are the main income concerns facing your household, list the top 3 concerns? ✓ *the top 3*

- Pay day to day expenses \_\_\_\_\_
- Health care expenses \_\_\_\_\_
- Elder care expenses \_\_\_\_\_
- College/school expenses \_\_\_\_\_
- Insecure income \_\_\_\_\_
- Job insecurity \_\_\_\_\_
- Mortgage/housing costs \_\_\_\_\_
- Other borrowings \_\_\_\_\_
- Fluctuating farm income \_\_\_\_\_
- Overall level of income \_\_\_\_\_
- Affording farm investment \_\_\_\_\_
- Financial management/budgeting \_\_\_\_\_
- Others – please list \_\_\_\_\_

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27. What was the average household income of the Head of Household and Spouse/Partner in 2018? (include employment income, farmed income, pensions, social welfare and farm basic payments) [✓]

- Less than €25,000 \_\_\_\_\_
- €25000-50000 \_\_\_\_\_
- €50000-75000 \_\_\_\_\_
- €75000+ \_\_\_\_\_
- No Comment \_\_\_\_\_

## Farm Profile

28. Who is the person completing this section? **Please [✓]**

Head of Household

Spouse/Partner of Head of Household

Other (please list relationship to Head of Household) \_\_\_\_\_

29. What size farm is currently operated? Please record area in **hectares** (1 hectare = 2.471 acres)

a. Owned \_\_\_\_\_

b. Rented/Leased in \_\_\_\_\_

c. Rented/Leased out \_\_\_\_\_

30. What is the main farm enterprise? (**record one enterprise**) \_\_\_\_\_

31. What other enterprises are on the farm? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

32. Could you provide us with an indication of the current livestock numbers on the farm? **Record numbers**

Dairy Cows		Suckler Cows	
Cattle/Calves under 1 yr		Cattle over 1 yr	
Breeding Ewes		Other Sheep/Lambs	
Horse/Ponies		Other – List	

33. How many **hectares** of the following crops have you in 2019? **Record hectares**

Cereals		Fruit Crops	
Forestry		Energy Crops	
Vegetables		Other – List	

## Information/Advice/Training

34. What are the sources of information currently used for farm management, development and planning?

Select all sources utilised in the past 3 years **Please [✓] all apply**

Teagasc/Private Consultant \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dept of Agriculture \_\_\_\_\_  
 Accountant/Financial Advisor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Co-op/Supplier/Sales Reps \_\_\_\_\_  
 Farm Organisations \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Farmers/Family \_\_\_\_\_  
 Farming Publications/Newspapers \_\_\_\_\_  
 Radio/TV \_\_\_\_\_  
 Online Farming Information \_\_\_\_\_  
 Social Media \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other – list \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

35. What areas/aspects do you need **advice/information/training** to support the future development of the farm? **Please list all that apply**

Information	Advice	Training

## Farm Development – Past and Future

36. How has the farm developed over the past 5 years and what plans have you for the next 5 years?

**Please [✓] all that apply**

	Past 5 years		Next 5 years
Increase area farmed (owned and rented/leased)			
Reduce area farmed (owned and rented/leased)			
Purchase land			
Sell land			
Increase output/livestock numbers			
Reduce output/livestock numbers			
Inherit/take over family farm			
Start a new enterprise (on/off farm)			
Cease an enterprise (on/off farm)			
Start/increase off-farm employment			
Cease/reduce off-farm employment			
Start/expand tourism enterprise			
Cease/reduce tourism enterprise			
Invest in farm buildings/facilities			
Invest in farmland improvement/infrastructure			
Invest in livestock			
Invest in machinery/equipment			
Plant forestry			
Plant energy crop			
Enter collaborative farming arrangement			
Lease out farm			
Retire/step back from active farming/transfer farm			
Other significant development – please list			

## Participation in Schemes

37. Are you aware of the Farm Assist payment? Yes ☐ No ☐
- If yes:**
- Have you availed of it at any stage in the past 5 years? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Do you intend to apply for it in the future? Yes ☐ No ☐ Possibly ☐

38. Are you currently participating in or have you participated within the past 5 years in the following Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine schemes? **Please [✓] all that apply**

Basic Payment Scheme (Single Farm Payment)	_____
Areas of Natural Constraints (Disadvantaged Areas)	_____
Beef Exceptional Aid Measure (BEAM) (recent compensation package)	_____
Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP)	_____
Beef Environmental Efficiency Pilot (BEEP)	_____
Sheep welfare scheme	_____
GLAS/AOES	_____
Knowledge Transfer (KT) Programme	_____
European Innovation Partnership (EIP)	_____
TAMS	_____
Organic farming scheme	_____
Farm forestry payment	_____
Bord Bia Quality Assurance/Sustainability Scheme	_____
Prepared/completes a Farm Safety Statement	_____
Other – please list _____	
_____	
_____	

## Farm Succession

39. Would you like to totally retire from ‘active farming’ at some stage in the future? **Please [✓]**
- Yes ☐ No ☐ Possibly ☐

40. Have you identified a successor for your farm? **Please [✓]**

Yes, farming successor	_____
Yes, but not farming	_____
Possible successor but no decision made	_____
No	_____
No but family too young	_____
Other – please list _____	
_____	

41. What concerns/fears have you about succession/transfer/inheritance of the family farm?

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42. Have you got advice/information on farm succession/inheritance? Yes ☐ No ☐

- a. If yes, who did you get advice from?

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43. What information/advice relating to succession/transfer/inheritance is required by your family?

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### Future Perspectives

44. What are the main (top 3 of each) farming opportunities and challenges facing your household?

Opportunities	Challenges (accepting that income will be a challenge, please ask for further challenges)
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

45. What do you believe is the general outlook for farming within your farm household and Roscommon? ✓

	Very Positive	Positive	Neither Positive nor Negative	Negative	Very Negative
Farm Household					
Co. Roscommon					

46. What is the main function of farming for your household?

*Please [✓]*

Economic activity \_\_\_\_\_  
 Social/Recreational activity \_\_\_\_\_  
 Traditional activity \_\_\_\_\_  
 Way of life \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other activity – please list \_\_\_\_\_

47. Overall, how would you consider the impact of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been for your farm household (taking account of the EU direct payments, various investment, farm improvement, advice and environmental grants, various rules and regulations)? *Please [✓]*

Very Positive      Positive      Neither Positive/Negative  
 Negative      Very Negative      Don't Know

Please comment on your response:

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**Thank you for participating in the survey**