

**N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin
Oral Hearing**

Compulsory Purchase Order

and

**Environmental Impact Statement
Oral Hearing**

Agriculture

Brief of Evidence

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N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin Oral Hearing

Brief of Evidence by Freda Salley

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1 INTRODUCTION

My name is Freda Salley. I am a senior Agricultural Consultant with Philip Farrelly & Co, Agricultural Consultants. I hold a degree in Agricultural Science from University College Dublin. I have been working with Philip Farrelly & Co for over nine years. While working with Philip Farrelly & Co. I have specialised in providing agronomy and property services to Local Authorities and National Bodies in relation to major infrastructural works.

In particular I have been employed to assess the impact on agriculture of major road developments including the M11 Gorey to Enniscorthy, N5 Westport to Turlough, and the N2 Slane Bypass

With respect to the N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin proposed road development. I was responsible for the completion of an Impact Assessment on affected agricultural properties. This involved carrying out the following tasks

- Assessing the impact on each of the individual farms directly affected by the proposed road development;
- Desktop reviews and consultation with the design team; and
- An assessment of the Macro effect of the proposed development on Agriculture.

Areas covered in the Agricultural Impact Assessment can be found in Chapter 11 – Agriculture, Section A, Volume 2 of the Environmental Impact Statement for N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin proposed road development.

1.1 INSTRUCTIONS

Philip Farrelly & Co was appointed by Sligo County Council to carry out the following task for the N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin Proposed Road Development.

- To assess the impact on each of the individual farms directly affected by the proposed development and to categorise the impact as Not significant, Minor, Moderate, Major or Severe;
- To suggest Mitigation Measures;
- To predict the Residual Impacts;

- To assess the Construction Impacts and recommend Mitigation Measures; and to assess the macro effect of the proposed development on agriculture locally and nationally for inclusion in the EIS.

2 METHODOLOGY

The assessment of the existing agricultural environment was carried out through a desktop survey of available mapping and the completion of 79 farm surveys. On one land parcel (which is a bog area) a roadside inspection was carried out as all of the landowners could not be contacted, on twelve farms with not significant impacts, and on one farm with a moderate impact farms surveys were not completed as the landowner could not be contacted or cooperation with the assessment was withheld. A detailed desk top assessment was carried out on the basis of a roadside inspection for the farms where the farm survey did not take place. The detailed farm surveys took place between 2006, 2009, 2012 and 2013. A roadside inspection of all affected land parcels was undertaken in November 2013 to verify land use. On two farms, an additional assessment was conducted by an equine specialist, Mr. Michael Sadlier, as to how the proposed road development would impact on equine enterprises.

The surveys assessed how the proposed road development would impact on the current farming activities and what mitigation measures would be necessary to alleviate any negative impact.

An agricultural consultant from Philip Farrelly & Co visited these farms in order to carry out the following tasks:

- To conduct an appraisal of the farm facilities and layout; and
- To gather data via a questionnaire to enable an assessment of the impact and detail mitigation measures required as a result of the proposed road development.

Farms were examined and categorised according to the following criteria:

- Land take;
- The degree of sub-division;
- The type of farm enterprises carried out;
- Farm size;
- Impact on farm buildings and/or facilities; and

- Impact on shelter

The significance of the effect of the proposed road development on individual farms has been assessed using the criteria presented in Tables 1 and 2 attached to this brief as **Appendix A**. The criteria and the levels of impact are based on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) “*Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Statements*” (March 2002) and “*Advice notes on current practice in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements*” (September 2003).

3 RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

The existing land use environment along the Proposed Road Development can be described as agricultural. The land consists of moderate agricultural range and usage. The main enterprises are beef, dairying, and mixed livestock.

4 PREDICATED IMPACTS

The main impacts to agricultural enterprises during the construction and operational phases of the proposed road development include:

- Landtake
- Sub-division
- Disturbance

Landtake

Reduction in land area can reduce the productivity of farms and result in increased costs. In general the larger the field size the more useful the field. The degree of impact varies with the area of the land take, the quality of the land acquired, location of land acquired, type of farm enterprise, and whether or not the land take results in sub-division of the land holding.

Sub-division

Sub-division of a land parcel occurs when a road alignment splits a field or land parcel into two or more pieces. This results in the fragmentation of the farm into a greater number of management units.

Disturbance

Daily farm operations may be disturbed as result of the construction of the proposed road development. Disturbance includes alteration of access to land parcels, removal of farm buildings or facilities. Electricity, water and land drainage systems may be disrupted during the construction of the proposed road development. Disturbance to farm holdings may also include noise and dust impacts associated with construction activities.

Table 11.5 Summary of Individual Farm Impact is presented in Chapter 11 Agriculture - Agriculture EIS Volume 2 Main Report of the Environmental Impact Statement for the N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin proposed road development. This summary table details the overall impact on all farms and gives a breakdown of the farming enterprise on the farms where the overall impact is major or severe. The table details the number of farm holdings which are sub-divided, and gives the number of land parcels where farm facilities have been affected. It also details the number of land parcels where access provisions are required to severed area or where access gates to land parcels are affected.

5 MITIGATION MEASURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mitigation measures generally relate to the sub-division impact and include accommodation works such as the provision of accommodation access roads, and new field access points. Further measures to compensate farmers due to land acquisition, drainage work and loss of facilities will be agreed at a later stage subject to approval for the proposed road development being granted. There are 39 farms of the 92 farms on which new access will have to be provided. There are 51 farms on which the existing access point will be affected or a new access point off an existing road may be required.

On the sub-divided areas where no access is available, new access provision will be required. The extent and complexity of such access provisions vary with each farm depending on the nature of the impact and the type of enterprise being carried out. In most case simple gateways will suffice, while in other cases new accommodation roads will have to be constructed to provide access across the proposed road development to sub-divided lands. Timber post and rail fencing with stock proofing as appropriate will be provided along the main line, local and accommodation roads.

The local authority will be responsible for maintenance of the fence along the national

road while the landowner will be responsible for maintenance of the fence along local and accommodation roads.

6 RESIDUAL IMPACTS

Following the recommended mitigation works the residual impact will still be major on eight farms. This represents a 15.2% reduction in the level of farms with a major overall impact.

As a result of the mitigation works being implemented there is an increase in the number of farms with a moderate degree of impact. The implementation of recommended mitigation measures would change the residual impact from Major to Moderate on some farms. On forty-seven farms, there will be a moderate degree of residual impact. This represents a 12% increase in the level of farms with moderate impact.

On twenty- two farms there will be a minor degree of residual impact. This represents a 3.3% increase in the level of farms with minor impact.

On fifteen farms there will not be a significant degree of residual impact

7 CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Construction impacts

The construction of the proposed road development will result in disturbance to farm holdings. The construction impacts of the proposed development include

- Construction noise and vibration;
- Dust;
- Restricted access to severed land parcels during construction;
- Disturbance of field drainage works; and
- Disturbance of services.

Construction noise

Increased levels of noise may occur as a result of construction traffic and excavation works. In general, animals become accustomed to regular noises and sounds.

Intermittent noise can cause fright and distress particularly to sensitive animals such as equine stock. Good communication between the contractor and the landowners

during the construction phase will facilitate the organisation of farm enterprises so that vulnerable livestock are kept as far away as feasible from the construction work during critical times.

Dust

Dust generated from the exposure of soil to the atmosphere during construction may cause annoyance or nuisance to the farmer and farm animals. Livestock are at risk of eye irritations from high levels of windblown dust particles. This stress may reduce productivity and increase management difficulties, especially on dairy and equestrian farms. Implementation of the mitigation measures set out in Chapter 9 Air Quality and Climate Change Volume B of the Environmental Impact Statement for the N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin proposed road development will minimise the potential for such disturbance.

Restricted access to sub-divided land parcels during construction

Access to sub-divided land parcels will still be required during the construction period. It is to be expected that there will be increased difficulties in providing such access during the construction phase due to the need to allow machinery and equipment continual movement along the construction corridor. The landowner will be provided with access to all sub-divided land during the construction of the proposed road development where possible. Where access is temporarily disrupted the landowner will be notified in advance. Liaison between the contractor and individual landowners (aided by the appointed project liaison officer) will minimise difficulties caused by the restriction of access to severed land parcels.

Disruption of field drainage works

It is to be expected that field drainage systems currently in situ will be disturbed and in place severed by the construction of the proposed road development. The drainage design of the proposed development is designed to intersect field drains and carry the drainage to a suitable outfall.

Disturbance of services

Where existing water and electricity supplies to fields or farm yard are severed, the supply will be reinstated by the provision of ducting where possible. The location of the ducts will be agreed in advance of road construction in consultation with

landowners. In some cases where ducting is not possible an alternative water source or electricity supply will be made available.

8 RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS

Submissions generally relate to the following items

CPO Ref 238

This submission states that there is a loss of silage ground

It is acknowledged that the acquisition will result in a loss of silage ground. Increased management input or operational changes due to land take are matters for compensation and this can be dealt with at the appropriate time should the scheme receive approval from An Bord Pleanala.

CPO Ref 186

This submission queries the correctness of the Agronomy report on this farm

A comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment was carried out. The overall impact of the proposed road on the farming system is assessed as described in Table 11.5 Volume 2 of the Environmental Impact Statement for the N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin proposed road development and is assessed as a Moderate impact

9 SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

It is acknowledged the proposed road development will impact on 92 farm units. The impact of the proposed road development would be felt by individual farmers and farm units rather than nationally or regionally.

The area of land being acquired for the proposed road development is not significant in terms of the national area or the agricultural area in County Sligo.

There are positive impacts on agricultural property including the following:

- Improved access between plots of agricultural lands on farms due to reduction in traffic on existing heavily populated existing N4 road.
- Access to and from agricultural properties along the existing N4 using agricultural machinery will be significantly safer due to the reduction in traffic on the existing N4

APPENDIX A

Table 1 Significance Criteria for Overall / Residual Impact

EPA Glossary of Impacts	Level of Impact	Criteria
Neutral, Imperceptible or Slight Impact	Not Significant	An impact is not significant where the farm enterprise suffers a slight inconvenience such as relocation of access or loss of shelter.
Significant Impact: Positive or Negative	Minor	Minor impact occurs where the farm enterprise suffers inconvenience as a result of the proposed scheme. Sub-division would not occur or is insignificant and the farm buildings and facilities would be left in place. Typically only a small portion of land would be removed at the boundary of the farm.
	Moderate	Moderate impact occurs where the farm enterprise can be continued as before but with increased management or operational difficulties. While portions of the land would be severed the enterprise mix would be such that the farming system could continue perhaps with reduced stock numbers or additional labour, contractor or other charges.
	Major	Major impact occurs where the farm enterprise cannot be continued without considerable management or operational changes. There would be significant sub-division on the affected land parcel(s). The route may affect farm buildings and / or facilities. Access to the severed portions of land can only be achieved through the use of accommodation roadways to access severed lands. Where the impact is major an enterprise change may be necessitated e.g. from dairy to drystock.
Profound or Significant Impact: Negative only	Severe	Severe impact occurs where the farm enterprise cannot be continued as a result of the proposed scheme. This would occur where land-take and sub-division was of such a nature to make the holding unworkable and/or where important farm buildings and facilities were removed. Impact of this degree would be rare and is most likely to occur on a dairy or stud farm.

Table 2 Significance Criteria Used to rank Sub-division of Land Parcels

EPA Glossary of Impacts	Level of Impact	Criteria
Neutral, Imperceptible or Slight Impact	Not Significant	The route passes generally along the external field boundary leaving the bulk of the land in one unit. There is no sub-division caused.
Significant Impact: Positive or Negative	Minor	The route passes generally along the external boundary leaving the bulk of the land in one unit. There may be sub-division of a small area. Farmyard facilities are not affected.
	Moderate	The route passes through the land parcel causing sub-division. It is divided into two units. Access is available to the two areas. Where present, the farm buildings and facilities remain on the larger area.
	Major	The route passes through the land parcel causing sub-division. It is divided into two units and there is no access to the severed area or it may be a by way of a considerable distance. In addition both areas may be irregularly shaped and less useful.
Profound or Significant Impact: Negative only	Severe	The route passes through the land parcel causing sub-division. It is divided into two units. There is no access to the sub-divided area. The sub-divided area is greater than two thirds of the land parcel. There is a loss of access to farm buildings and / or facilities.