



The world's first national  
food sustainability programme



Origin Green Ireland  
Campaign  
Key Messaging



# Origin Green Public Awareness Campaign

## Messaging Document

### WHY?

#### The Motivation

The motivation behind Origin Green is to assist the Irish food industry in producing food in the most sustainable way possible.

#### What is sustainable food production?

'Sustainable food production' means the production of safe, nutritious food within a viable food industry that simultaneously protects and enhances the natural environment and the local community.

In essence, it means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the future.

#### Why is sustainable food production important?

It's important for the simple reason that our future depends on it.

As populations grow\*, the need for food also grows. So too does the pressure on limited natural resources such as soil and water. Therefore, it's vitally important that food is produced in a way that protects these natural resources rather than depleting them, while also being respectful to the community, now and into the future. The food industry must also play its part in minimising greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to climate change.

These are huge challenges. But, for Ireland, they present a great opportunity.

\* The world's population is estimated to increase by over a third by 2050, from the 2012 figure of 7 billion to over 9 billion people. [FoodWise 2025]

#### Why is Ireland so well suited to sustainable food production?

Ireland has many natural advantages when it comes to food production.

Our climate makes a long, grass-growing season possible. It gives us plenty of rainwater. And our weather conditions are ideal for rearing livestock and growing many crops. Our grass-based system is more efficient and environmentally sustainable than intensive indoor animal feeding systems.

Agriculture and food production in Ireland are central to who we are. So we have a responsibility to make sure the resources we use to produce food actually benefit society and the environment, now and into the future.

With Origin Green, this responsibility becomes an opportunity.

## WHAT?

### The Programme

#### What is Origin Green?

Created by Bord Bia, Origin Green is Ireland's national food sustainability programme.

It brings together the entire food industry – from farmers to food and beverage producers, retailers to food service operators – with a common goal: sustainable food production. That means the production of safe, nutritious food within a viable industry that simultaneously protects and enhances the natural environment and the local community. Crucially, Origin Green is about measuring and improving how we do this on an ongoing basis.

Origin Green members include farmers and food businesses. These include:

- Food and beverage manufacturers
- Retailers
- Food service operators

#### What do Origin Green members do?

Origin Green works differently for farmers and for food businesses.

#### Origin Green for farmers

Bord Bia has been auditing and certifying good farming standards in food safety, traceability and animal welfare for over twenty years through its Quality Assurance Schemes. In 2012, these well-established schemes were expanded into Sustainable Assurance Schemes, marking the beginning of Origin Green. Responsible farm management measures include biodiversity and the use of water, energy, feed and fertiliser.

Farmers become members of Origin Green by participating in Bord Bia's Sustainable Assurance Schemes.

Bord Bia Quality Assurance auditors inspect Origin Green farms every 18 months and compile data on the sustainability of each farm.

The information gathered by each auditor is combined with data from two other national livestock databases; the [Animal Identification & Movement \(AIM\)](#) and the [Irish Cattle Breeders Federation \(ICBF\)](#). Following each audit, the farmer receives notification of the results in a feedback report on the farm's performance, with reassessments every 18 months. This allows them to make informed decisions on increasing the sustainability of their farms.

There are over 50,000 farmers in the newly launched Sustainable Beef and Lamb Assurance Scheme and over 15,000 in the Sustainable Dairy Assurance Scheme. These represent more than 90% of all beef produced and 85% of all dairy farms in Ireland.

#### Origin Green for food businesses

Ireland's food business members commit to a mandatory mix of target areas specified by the Origin Green Charter. The mandatory areas from which targets are set form the basis of a business's 3-5 year sustainability plan. The plan is independently verified by international inspection, testing and verification specialists, SGS, to ensure the targets are viable and robust. Each plan is reviewed annually and monitored for progress against the set targets. Membership of the programme is confined to those setting and achieving targets.

#### **The mandatory mix of areas include:**

- Raw material sourcing (minimum 1 target in this area)
- Manufacturing processes and operations (such as energy, water, waste, emissions and biodiversity (minimum 3 targets in this area))
- Social sustainability, including health and nutrition; community initiatives; and employee wellbeing (minimum 2 targets in this area)

At present, Origin Green includes 272 companies with independently verified and annually monitored sustainability plans. These 272 members represent 90% of total Irish total food and drink exports. A further 160 companies are preparing plans for verification.

## WHERE NEXT?

### Setting a Baseline for the Future

Through Origin Green, the entire food industry is measuring its sustainability performance. The aim is to set a baseline against which to measure future improvements.

#### For farmers

Each week, a team of over 100 auditors undertake around 800 inspections on the beef and dairy farms of Origin Green members. As part of this, over 160,000 farm carbon footprint assessments are assisting in the setting of a baseline.

Bord Bia has also set a target to transition its other Quality Assurance Schemes (egg, poultry, pig and horticulture) to Sustainable Assurance Schemes by 2018.

#### For food businesses

In 2012, 8 founding member businesses signed up to Origin Green. Today, there are 270 members, representing 90% of total Irish exports. A further 162 companies are preparing plans for verification. They range in size from sole operators to large multi-national organisations.

When it comes to setting targets, a one-size-fits-all approach is not adopted because no two businesses are identical. Targets that are specific and demanding to each business are set.

The programme expanded in 2016 to include retail and food service members, of which there are now 6 pilot companies on board.

Origin Green members committed to more than 1,600 ambitious sustainability targets in 2016. Such is the collective impact of Origin Green's business membership that results such as these are expected:

- A waste reduction equivalent to 50,000 wheelie bins in just three years
- An energy reduction equivalent to taking over 4,000 cars off the road
- Saving enough water to fill 660 Olympic sized swimming pools by the end of 2017

The scale and diversity of the Origin Green member base allows for significant quantifiable change on a national scale. The credibility of the process is guaranteed by independent verification, and is rooted in science and best practice.

#### The future

Sustainability is not an end goal, nor even a final destination. It is an ongoing project. It is a way of being, of doing, of adapting to become better and more responsible producers and providers of food for today and for the future – for the benefit of all.

Collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, both in Ireland and abroad, has been vital in the development and roll out of Origin Green across the entire food and drink supply chain in Ireland. This work of partnering and collaborating will continue into the future.

Origin Green needs to constantly evolve, measuring what matters on an ongoing basis. This is to ensure that sustainable food production is both viable and achievable, but – most importantly – to

ensure that it makes a positive difference. Our ambition for Origin Green is to shape food production for a growing global population in a way that reduces its impact on the environment and ensures the industry's future viability, while also enhancing its positive impact on society into the future.