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Session 2: Agriculture  
Discussant

# Questions for discussion

- Do we care about global GHG reduction or are we really only concerned about changing the numbers for Ireland?
  - Raises issues of accounting rules and incentives but also our legal obligations
  - How do we include agriculture appropriately in regulatory structures at national level?
- The potential for technological solutions for mitigating agricultural emissions
  - But how to drive those efficiencies?
- The role of private standards in driving GHG reductions
  - The challenges of marketing our own livestock production as sustainable while showing awareness of the need for more sustainable consumption habits

# Global rules

- The global perspective is sensible, but
  - Given technology limits, global solution really depends on reducing consumption, particularly if we look beyond 2020 to 70-80% reductions by 2050
  - IPCC Inventory method vs LCA consumption oriented supply chain approach
  - Raises questions about the institutional rules and their perverse incentives (EU overall GHG performance less impressive in LCA terms)
  - Carbon leakage can be used as an argument against action under inventory method
  - Inventory method gives no incentive to reduce meat consumption (unlike the way in which energy is accounted)

# European rules

- Allocation of EU emission reductions between quota and non-quota sectors, and across MS in the quota sector, is far from optimal
- Agriculture not included in ETS system
- LULUCF not included
- But the rules are there, we have signed up to national targets, and this has to be reflected in decision-making
- Should agriculture get a free ride ? When designing least-cost reduction options, carbon leakage argument is not relevant
- Associated emissions reduce social value of additional agric output under FH2020 – how to reflect this in farm-level decision making (methane and nitrous oxide not included in carbon tax)?

# Technology

- There are technology options, but they are limited
- MACC curves show 'no regrets' options, but then steep increase in curve
- Increased efficiency can lower emissions, but very slow efficiency improvements at national scale in beef production in particular
- Issues:
  - Whether improvements are captured in IPCC inventory?
  - What is the cost per tonne CO<sub>2</sub> abatement from each measure?
  - How to incentivise farmers to adopt 'no regrets' measures?
  - Least cost economic analysis complicated by CAP protection and subsidies
  - At a minimum, avoid subsidies (Suckler Cow Welfare Scheme)

# Private sector initiatives

- Bord Bia initiative should be welcomed
- Will help to drive efficiency improvements at farm level
  - Provided some of the premium is reflected back to farmer
- Significance will ultimately depend on consumer responses
  - Issues around carbon labelling
- Needs a nuanced marketing effort to promote our sustainable beef production while attempting to reduce overall meat consumption