

## WHAT CAN I DO TO PREPARE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE?

# The Agricultural and Horticultural Rural Business

### Ask Yourself?

In addition to the potential impacts that are common to all businesses, the agricultural and horticultural sector faces a further set of issues. These are directly affected by climate, and extreme weather events can have a significant impact. Ask yourself how your business may be affected both negatively and positively by the following potential changes in Northern Ireland:

- Increased rain and increase **flood** risk.
- Reduced water availability in summer (may affect water availability for livestock, yields of fruit, vegetables and cereals and irrigation availability).
- Higher temperatures and increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere (some crops, including grasses may flourish).
- Longer growing season.
- Changing climate conditions (could make it possible to grow alternative crops, including crops for energy such as Willow, and allow certain forest species such as Sitka Spruce to become more productive).
- Increase in storm events could provide opportunities for increased water storage for use during water shortages.
- Higher summer temperatures and reduced cloud cover (could increase the risk of heatstroke and sunburn for livestock in open pasture).
- Higher average winter temperatures (could reduce problems for livestock in freezing weather).
- Higher winter temperatures and fewer days of freezing weather (affects vernalisation of winter cereals and formation of flower buds on some fruit trees).
- Higher annual temperatures (could increase the risk of pests and diseases in arable and horticultural crops).
- Higher temperatures and reduced summer rainfall (could increase the demand for outdoor leisure and tourism, which could create opportunities for diversification).

### Take Action:

Think about current trends and potential climate changes and seek further advice – **see below**.

### Further Information:

- A range of resources are available via the **DARD RuralNI** gateway, including information on renewables (e.g. heat from biomass, wind and solar power, anaerobic digestion etc.) and farm diversification:  
<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/ruralni/>
- Water conservation publications page:  
<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/library/publications/33993.aspx>
- Waterwise on the farm:  
<http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/PDF/GEHO0307BLVH-E-E.pdf>
- Waterwise for business:  
<http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/PDF/GEH00406BKNL-E-E.pdf>
- The following booklets 'Thinking About an Irrigation Reservoir?' and 'Rainwater Harvesting: an on farm guide ' are available from the EA publications catalogue':  
<http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/>

This information has been adapted from the Weathering the Storm Business guide produced by the West Midlands Climate Change Adaptation Partnership. The concept originated and was developed by the following funding partners within the West Midlands: Environment Agency, Sustainability West Midlands, UKCIP, Government Office West Midlands, Advantage West Midlands, Business Link West Midlands and DEFRA.

All rights to the original material are reserved.