

Social  
Democrats

# Holly CAIRNS TD

*Representing West Cork*



## **Tánaiste must stop scaremongering and support farmers through inevitable changes in the sector – Holly Cairns TD**

Cork South West TD and Social Democrats Spokesperson on Agriculture, Holly Cairns has called on the Minister for Agriculture, Food, and the Marine, sector leaders, and representative organisations, to work together, in a serious and urgent fashion, to agree measures to reduce our carbon emissions, in a just transition that supports farmers.

Holly said:

“It has taken a global pandemic for many to realise how important our food producers are, and it has exposed just how vulnerable the Irish agri-food sector is. We need far better measures in place for future potential crises like the climate and biodiversity one or Brexit, but this has not and is not being taken as seriously as it should be by government. Tánaiste Simon Coveney’s recent comments regarding reducing emissions & how that could ‘decimate’ Irish farms adds to a false narrative that significant change in the sector will negatively reshape Irish agriculture and undermine farmers’ livelihoods. This results in resistance to climate action from the very communities that will be most severely affected by climate change.”

“We need leadership that supports farmers through what are inevitable changes because there is a general knowledge now, that if we don’t, we’re simply passing the problem onto the next generation, for political expediency. We can’t reach our emission targets without reducing herd numbers; this is no secret - science, senior civil servants, most farmers, and much of the population know this. The government is increasingly on its own in blatant denial of fact or reason. So instead of time and resources focusing on a just transition, what we get from Irish politics is pointless debate - pitting farmers against environmentalists and business as usual - financial incentives for farmers to damage the landscapes upon which the future of the industry depends.”

“Refusing to make meaningful changes in the agri-food sector gives little or zero consideration to the next generation, including the next generation of farmers. It is time to change the way we talk about farming in this country. Instead of viewing farmers as the problem, we need to realise that they are the solution. We need the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to actively encourage better ways of farming to reduce emissions and restore biodiversity. We need payments and CAP reform that supports family farms and protects the sector in a sustainable way. We need real leadership before it is too late”



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