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# Regulations – Threat or Opportunity

Pesticides, GMOs, Nitrates & Greening

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# Regulations – a view

- The Sustainable Use Directive for pesticides
  - Glyphosate – the flagship of change
- ‘Nitrates’ for fertiliser use and land management
  - A new case for healthy soil
- Is GMO now an historic scientific technology
  - The question of gene engineering
- Greening – a cost and inconvenience on tillage farms
  - Three-crop rule and EFAs

# REGULATIONS



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Feels like ....



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**There is one thing worse than regulation ....**

**... REGULATION CONTROLLED BY POLITICIANS**

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# Regulations are essential but....

- Regulation is essential for to provide order and to control issues for the common good
- Provide a level of fairness for those who feel that are above or beyond the rules
- Sometimes they are an official replacement for basic education
- Stupid rules give rise to a disrespect for all regulations

# GMOs

- A good example of political interference and hypocrisy
- Can't grow but we can import
- Legislation prevented from moving on
- No real crop opportunities for Ireland.
- Potential for non-GMO food exports
- Provides opportunity for more native crop production
- GM is 'Old technology' - Major concern now is for the new plant breeding technologies or NBTs



# Pesticides

- Losing actives for efficacy and resistance management
  - >1000 AIs now down to 400 and falling – biologicals
- Risk management replaced by potential hazard assessment
- Safety must be a priority
  - Danger  $\approx$  risk  $\neq$  hazard
- Fewer new actives
  - Cost & requirements
- Political interference in registration process
  - glyphosate, neonics etc
- Other withdrawal drivers
- More actives to go
  - Endocrine disruptors
- Resistance management is now close to impossible
- Forcing a rethink on dependency on chemicals

# Nitrates

- Constrained the use of N & P
- Reminding growers of the real benefits of rotation
- Buffer zones led to new weed pressures
- Is N still the main yield limiter?
- Soil health is a major driver of yield potential and efficient nutrient use
- P timing and zero rates were issues
- Regulations can often show knowledge deficiencies in research
- 2m non-cultivated zone by watercourses – weeds and idle land
- Increasing the interest in a healthy soil

# Greening & others

- Diversification and EFAs added cost and complication
- Rotation had been forgotten
  - Increased dependence on inputs and higher cost
- Farmers were willing to continue down the cul de sac
- Are there better ways to implement it?
- Farmers rediscovering the benefits of rotation
- Soil organic matter testing
  - Led to a renewed interest in soil
- TAMS & GLAS have increased interest in catch crops
- Protein crop scheme
- Buffer zones
- GAEC – Ploughing direction!!
- IPM must be real
- Soil health test?

# Summary

- Regulation – not all bad
- Soil organic matter test drove interest in soils
- Three-crop rule put pressure for rotations and better farming
- Buffer zones help water quality
- Is there a better way? - Education first

Thank you.

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