

## COVID-19 – EMPLOYEE SUPPORTS

30<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Mart Manager,

The outbreak of COVID-19 and the subsequent measures taken by the Irish Government to contain its spread present the Irish co-operative livestock marts sector with severe challenges. Chief among these challenges is the management of employees in the various circumstances upon the closure of livestock marts.

There are several questions that co-operative livestock mart managers will have in relation to the Government supports available to them and their employees, such as:

1. Are there separate schemes for staff/employers affected by layoffs arising from COVID-19?
2. If employees avail of the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment:
  - Do employees apply for this and get paid for it by DEASP or does the mart apply, put it through payroll and recover it from Revenue?
  - Are employees, such as part-time employees, earning less than the €350 per week offered by the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment entitled to the full payment amount of €350?
3. If the mart avails of the Temporary COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme:
  - What employees are entitled to be subsidised?
  - Do we keep them on the payroll?
  - Can they still work for the mart or must we lay them off?

In this note, we will answer these questions.

### 1. SCHEMES

There are two main schemes for employers encountering a possible layoff scenario. These are the [Temporary COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme](#) and the [COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment](#).

### 2. PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT PAYMENT

This payment is applied for by the employee upon being laid off and paid directly to the employee by the state. [Details on how employees apply can be found via this link](#). This is not paid through the employer's payroll. The payment is available at a flat rate to all employees who have been made

unemployed due to a downturn in economic activity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, regardless of their salary/hours prior to being made unemployed. Employees entitled to more than the flat rate, such as employees with dependants, should apply for jobseeker's allowance instead of this payment.

### 3. TEMPORARY WAGE SUBSIDY SCHEME

The Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme encourages co-operatives and other employers affected by the emergency to keep staff on the payroll. It is our understanding that:

- Employees are entitled to the subsidy regardless of whether they are still working full hours, temporarily not working or are currently working on reduced hours.
- Employees earning up to €38,000 are entitled to 70% of their salary up to a cap of €410 per week (net).
- Employees earning between €38,000 and €76,000 will be entitled to 70% of their salary capped at €350.
- Employees earning more than €76,000 are not entitled to avail of assistance under this scheme.

It is critical to note that, as a result of the unprecedented circumstances brought about by the outbreak of COVID-19, **the advice set out is subject to change and is not a “one size fits all” solution**. Therefore, it is advisable to consult with your co-operative's HR advisors and contact Sinead Farrell on [sfarrell@icos.ie](mailto:sfarrell@icos.ie) or Darragh Walshe on [dwalshe@icos.ie](mailto:dwalshe@icos.ie) if you have any queries relevant to the matters outlined above.

Co-operatives are directed to the [public health advice issued by the HSE](#) for questions arising as a result of COVID-19. It is essential that all co-operatives abide by this advice.

Yours sincerely,

Darragh Walshe  
Legal and Development Executive  
ICOS