

A blueprint for sustainable food

Origin Green is improving sustainability across all dimensions of Ireland's food supply chain.

By Deirdre Ryan

Origin Green is Ireland's food and drink sustainability programme, established by Bord Bia (The Irish Food Board) in 2012. It is driving sustainability improvements across the entire supply chain from farmers to manufacturers, to food service and retailers.

Recognising that Origin Green was uniquely placed to play a pivotal role in helping the Irish food and drink industry deliver meaningful contributions to the advancement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its associated targets, the programme continues to evolve to advance this global agenda.

Many of Ireland's food and drink producers and dedicated farmers are eight years into their Origin Green journey. The key benefits of the programme are more environmentally aware farms, an important focus on community and enhanced sustainable food and drink production, which ultimately contribute to sustainable livelihoods.

Since its inception, Origin Green has grown to collaborate with 53,000 farms and 330 leading Irish food and drink companies. Providing programmes for farmers, manufacturers and retailers, Origin Green is independently monitored and verified at every stage. Members of Origin Green account for 90% of Ireland's food and drink exports and 70% of its domestic retailers.

Commitment to the SDGs

Over the past five years, all members have achieved significant results and the programme's critical focus on proof and progress provides strong foundations for facing the challenges of the future. Over 260,000 carbon assessments have taken place on beef and dairy farms over this period. Origin Green's Progress Update highlights that farms that joined the Sustainable Beef and Lamb Assurance Scheme (SBLAS) in 2014 saw an average of 5% reduction in CO₂ per unit of beef produced, while farms that joined the Sustainable Dairy Assurance Scheme (SDAS) in the same year saw an average of 9% reduction



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in CO₂ per unit of milk produced. Food manufacturers also reduced energy usage by 11% and water usage by 17% per unit of output.

Origin Green has incorporated the SDGs and the corresponding targets in its objectives and uses them as guidance in the ongoing development of the programme. In 2016, Bord Bia demonstrated the alignment of the Origin Green Charter with nine of the 17 UN SDGs. The Charter guides the development of a three-to-five year plan committing to specific sustainability improvements across three key areas: raw material sourcing, manufacturing/operational processes and social sustainability.

Subsequently, with the addition of new target areas to the charter, such as packaging under raw material sourcing, and diversity and inclusion under social sustainability, the Origin Green Charter now aligns with 15 of the 17 UN SDGs.

To further support Origin Green's alignment with the UN SDGs, Bord Bia became a United

Nations Global Compact (UNGC) member on 26 June, 2018. This further guides Bord Bia's ongoing development and evolution of the Origin Green programme into the future, and deepens Bord Bia's steadfast commitment to promoting the delivery of the SDGs within the Irish food and drink industry. ■

For more information visit: Origingreen.ie

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