

Food Security - Ireland and the World

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What we'll cover

Ireland is quite food secure - for now.

We take away from the food security of the world with our resource intensity

This is all the more serious with war and other crises

We are very exposed on feeds and fertilizers

N derogation = lynchpin to our expansionism

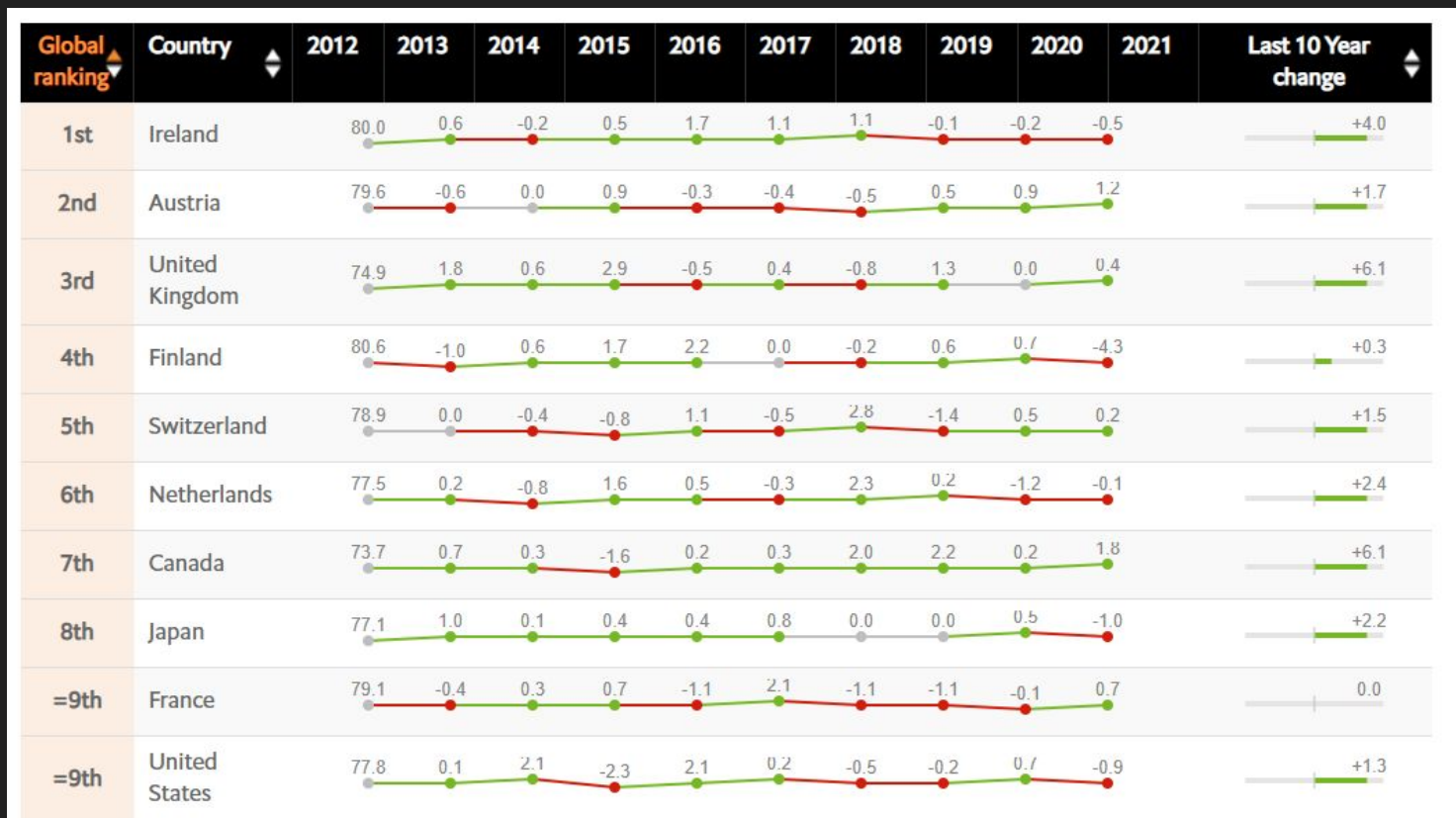
What we can do to reduce this exposure (via CAP and other routes - cooperation projects; organics; mixed farming; horticulture groups, fruit;)

Learning from places trying to live within boundaries (e.g. Cloughjordan)

Ireland scores well globally on Food Security

Global ranking ▲▼	Country ▲▼	Overall score	Affordability ▲▼	Availability ▲▼	Quality and Safety ▲▼	Natural Resources and Resilience ▲▼
1st	Ireland	84.0	92.9	75.1	94.0	74.1
2nd	Austria	81.3	90.5	75.2	91.2	65.7
3rd	United Kingdom	81.0	91.1	72.7	89.6	69.0
4th	Finland	80.9	91.7	66.2	93.8	75.1
5th	Switzerland	80.4	89.0	76.9	86.4	65.1
6th	Netherlands	79.9	89.7	73.7	92.2	61.2
7th	Canada	79.8	87.6	77.7	94.5	54.4
8th	Japan	79.3	90.0	75.7	83.4	61.9
=9th	France	79.1	90.3	67.0	92.1	67.5
=9th	United States	79.1	88.7	71.0	94.3	61.3
11th	Germany	78.7	90.1	69.3	87.8	66.0
12th	Israel	78.0	90.6	75.2	90.7	47.6
13th	Sweden	77.9	91.0	62.7	92.3	67.3
14th	Czech Republic	77.8	88.3	69.1	81.4	70.9
15th	Singapore	77.4	87.9	82.9	79.1	46.7

Ireland has scored well globally on Food Security



Food Security Metrics (Global Food Security Index)

Affordability

Availability

Quality and safety

Natural resources

(explore [here](#))

score / 100	Strengths (13)
100	Change in average food costs
100	Food safety net programmes
100	Sufficiency of supply
100	Nutritional standards
100	Micronutrient availability
100	Protein quality
99.7	Proportion of population under global poverty line
98.8	Food safety
93.9	Food loss
89.1	Market access and agricultural financial services
83.8	Inequality-adjusted income index
78.7	Political and social barriers to access
78	Agricultural research and development
"Strengths" are defined as any indicator score above 75.0	

Where we fall down

Irrigation Infrastructure (down 18.1%)

“A measure of the percentage of cultivated agricultural area which is equipped for irrigation.

Volatility of agricultural production (down 21.9%)

“A measure of the fluctuations in agricultural production, as captured by the standard deviation in the growth rates of cereal and vegetable production over the most recent 5-year period for which data are available.”

Flooding (down 10.9%)

“A measure of extreme precipitation under climate change” (using mid level IPCC projections)

Grassland (down 19.7%)

“A measure of greenhouse gas emissions from the drainage of organic soils”

Oceans Rivers and Lakes (down 7.7%)

Eutrophication (down 16.8%)

Food import dependency (down 16.4% - cereals is the metric)

Food Security agency (down 32.7%) (an assessment of whether the government is responsible and can be held accountable for food security)

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already we see the pressure coming from
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So even though we're top of the class,
already we see the pressure coming from
over-specialisation (e.g. import dependency
in cereals, flooding, lack of hort infrastructure
for dealing with climate change etc)

More Caveats

Being best of a bad lot isn't great - billions are obese or malnourished in a world of plenty. We're 3rd for "natural resources and resilience" globally overarching category globally - yet only score 70% overall here (very low in many categories e.g, drought, eutrophication)

Country by country is a limited metric (e.g. climate refugees will try to go to stable places, global shocks happen)

They use **an overly optimistic neo-liberal paradigm** (e.g. we're not on target for "mid level IPCC predictions from 2014" for global climate performance - we're on target for far worse, based on actual behaviour - not based on promises that haven't previously been kept, based on the business plans of MNCs and the behaviour of Putin, Bolsonaro etc)

War in Ukraine doesn't mean a a food
security crises it means

War in Ukraine doesn't mean a a food security crises it means an animal feed and mineral fertilizer exposure situation that needs a transition towards sustainable numbers/breeds/farming practices

More caveats

See Covid 19 stats for neo-liberal optimism - compare US to Vietnam.

WEF - [US is most prepared country globally](#) for a pandemic - November 2019 (Vietnam was around 100th)

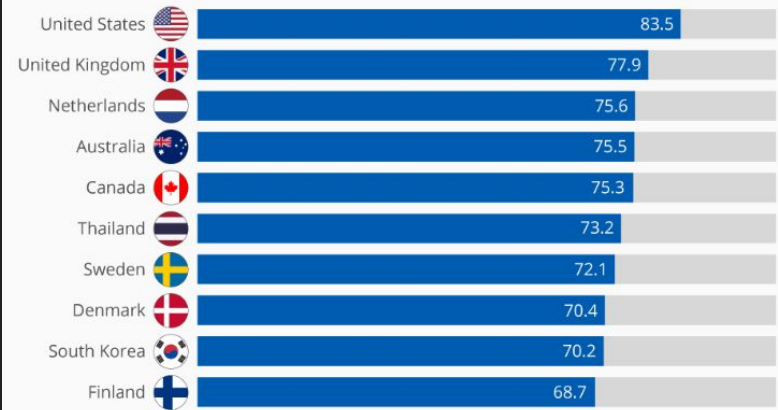
As well as being rich, being especially free market orientated and having access to the global economy was presumed enough for US to be number one in pandemic preparedness

US population 327 million covid deaths 1,024,546
Vietnam's population 97 million covid deaths 43,056.

aka - public (state) vs private (neo-liberal) approaches helps in an emergency...**we are in an emergency!**

The Countries Best Prepared To Deal With A Pandemic

Index scores by level of preparation to respond to an epidemic/pandemic*



* 2019, 100 = greater level of preparation. Index benchmarks health security on factors critical to fighting disease outbreaks.
Source: 2019 Global Health Security Index

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More Caveats

Our regressing areas are **still declining** - and CAP (til 2027) won't help much

Worsening crises - especially **war in Ukraine** - further compound these issues - and our exposure.

Our export based model is completely dependent on increasingly expensive inputs of feeds, fertilizers and fossil fuels, leading to...

bailouts (pig meat) and **emergency responses** (**silage, fodder crops, previous fodder crisis**)

while avoiding a genuine transition towards more sustainable options

"For three years straight, Ukraine has been the biggest supplier of maize into Ireland, shipping 284,908 tonnes here in 2021.

Many farmers in Ukraine, the world's sixth-largest exporter of soya, have been unable to plant this season's crops amid military bombardment.

Sanctions against Russia will also have an impact. Russian fertiliser accounted for 22% of Ireland's total fertiliser imports in 2020, the last year for which figures are available." ([March 2022](#))

As long as there is an N derogation, v few people will transition to organic dairy.
Conventional with N derogation is more profitable.

Over-specialisation

From [Rural Ireland on the Move](#) pg 36

“Overall production of the three main cereals (wheat, oats and barley) decreased from 2,396,000 tonnes in 2019 to 2,013,000 tonnes in 2020 (-16%)...combined drop in the production of all three main winter cereals (-47.7%), despite a combined rise in the production of all three main spring cereals.”

“rapid loss between 2014 and 2018 of our self-sufficiency in feed grain, from **41% to 21%**, because of imports. Presciently, the Teagasc report Crops 2030 warned that, “in the context of Origin Green, this deficit highlights a significant vulnerability concerning authenticity of Irish food exports when such a large proportion of our animal feed is reliant on imports”.

CSO March 2022 - overall cattle numbers were up 44,300, with dairy cow numbers making up 36,800 of this...meanwhile...



**Rural Ireland
on the move:**
farm diversification
and just transition



(See pg 49-50 for Ireland & fruit security)

Avoiding Transition

we have targets to decrease emissions on between 21-30% in agriculture by 2030. (note - these are **overall, absolute targets** - efficiency of production of highly resource dependent products is not enough)

While dairy vision group has made interesting noises of late, in reality we continue with emergency measures and have extended the Nitrates Derogation - 6000 farmers can continue to grow numbers and feed and fertilizer use.

(only 4 MS still use this, Ireland is increasing its use of it - European Court of Auditors noted)



Charlie McConalogue ✓ @McConalogue · Mar 17

Great news today that we have secured the Nitrates Derogation until 2025 with a midterm review in 2023.

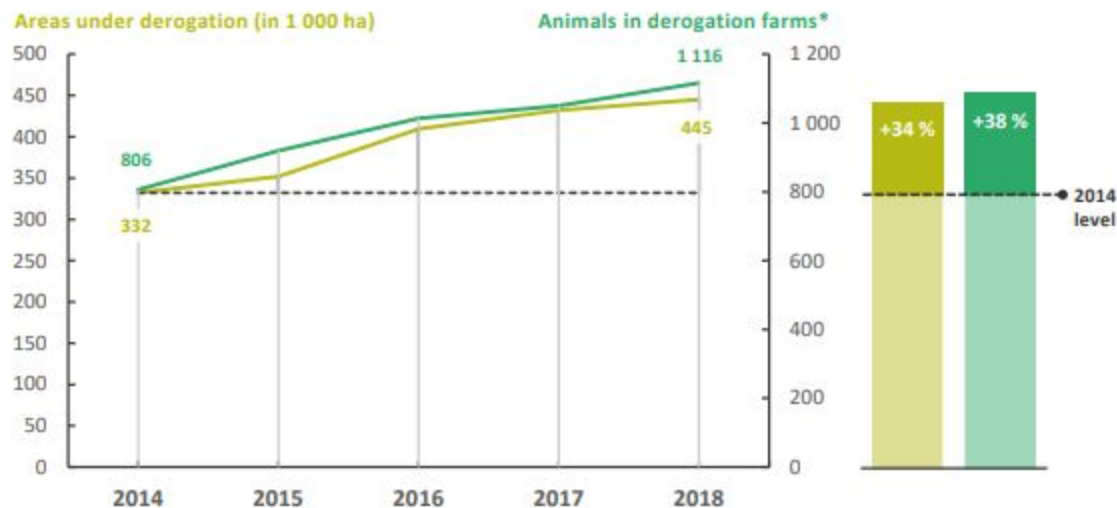
The Derogation is an important tool to support productive farming.

The new Derogation has a range of measures with higher levels of ambition to improve our water quality.



Fianna Fáil and 5 others

Figure 16 – Evolution of the Irish areas under derogation from the Nitrates Directive and associated number of animals



**recalculated by ECA (in 1 000 livestock units)*

Source: ECA based on Nitrates Derogation Review 2019: report of the Nitrates Expert Group, July 2019, p. 12.

Avoiding transition

“without the Nitrates Directive, total N₂O emissions across the EU in 2008 would have been 6.3 % higher, mainly due to the increase in total nitrogen leaching in ground and surface waters. However four member states – **Belgium, Denmark, Ireland and the Netherlands** – have obtained a derogation from the Nitrates Directive: “and these four countries are among the highest greenhouse gas emitters per hectare of utilised agricultural area”. Worryingly “since 2014, in Ireland, the area under derogation has **increased by 34%** and the **number of animals in farms with derogations grew by 38%**. In the same period, **emissions from chemical fertilisers increased by 20%**, emissions from manure applied to soils by 6% and indirect emissions from leaching and run-off by 12 %” (ECA quoted in [ARC2020](#))

Avoiding Transitions

A satellite image of the Earth from space, showing the Americas. A large hurricane is visible in the Atlantic Ocean to the west of North America. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

Disaster capitalism
Never miss the opportunity a
good crisis offers



WAR IN
UKRAINE



Avoiding Transitions

CAP won't help much

Threats to a Just Transition

We are about to agree a CAP that will embed BAU until 2027

Some good elements (cooperation projects, eligible acres, some minimal redistribution) but mostly...

No climate targets

Unambitious eco-schemes (by design)


Doesn't meet its own environmental assessment



Threats to a Just Transition

European Commission Assessment of Ireland's CAP plan: "the Commission has doubts about the effective contribution of the CAP strategic plan" to the general CAP objective on environmental protection – one of three overarching CAP objectives. It is in this context that "further **improvements** and more **ambition** are **required** for the Commission to approve the CAP strategic plan" as the letter states.



A close-up photograph of a black and white cow, likely a Friesian, standing in a metal stall. The cow's head is the central focus, with its white face and black patches clearly visible. It has a yellow identification tag on its left ear. The background shows the repetitive structure of metal bars and pipes, suggesting a dairy farm setting. The lighting is bright, coming from the side, creating strong highlights and shadows.

”the Commission has doubts whether what is proposed goes far enough. In this context, it particularly has in mind the substantial growth in the size of the Irish dairy herd in recent years – a growth which has had very substantial implications for agricultural greenhouse gas emissions, for quality of air, water and soil, and for biodiversity” ([more here](#))

Note - there is still (just about) time to change some things - eg eco-schemes are “stipulated” to show ambition and measurability. Ireland has avoided this so far, but Commission has earmarked this.

CAP livestock payments in organic also need to be higher (still time!) - lower stocking rate, no fertilizers, less feed imports.

In short

Ireland is kinda food secure, within a limited and flawed paradigm, but we make the world less food secure by using up huge levels of resources in an overly destructive manner.

Thanks for your attention!