

Farmers` aid from EU to drop with CAP pay freeze

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By Sarah Collins in Brussels | Irish Independent

Irish farmers could see EU aid payments dwindle as the bloc freezes agricultural spending over the next seven years.

Despite a e50bn increase to the bloc's next seven-year budget, payments under the common agricultural policy will remain at 2013 levels for the following seven-year cycle, with direct aid to farmers capped at e281bn.

Extra cash is being allocated for building projects in Europe's poorer regions and for science and research grants.

The figures for each country will be worked out year by year under individual budgets.

And to compensate for the clampdown, farmers will be able to benefit from a e429m-a-year fund. It has been used to aid ex-Dell, Waterford Crystal and SR Technics workers in Ireland.

An Irish Government spokesperson said the proposals, published late yesterday, would have "important medium to long-term implications for the Union's and for Ireland's economic and sectoral interests".

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