

## Benchmarking

**Benchmarking is funded under Axis 1 of the Rural Development Programme.**

**Benchmarking aims to contribute to the creation of a more competitive agricultural industry through the provision of quality information to farmers and growers from which they can make business decisions.**

The scheme is delivered on behalf of DARD by an appointed agent who works in association with the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE). The appointed agent is responsible for the recruitment of farmers, the collection and collation of data and forwarding the cleansed data to CAFRE. CAFRE's role is to analyse the data, quality assure the benchmarking figures, send out reports to the farmers and provide advice based on the information.

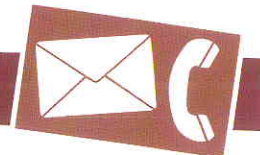
This information seeks to help farmers to see where their business sits in relation to others of a similar type and size — not just in terms of profitability, but also in terms of output and costs. The support and assistance provided by previous benchmarking programmes has demonstrated how beneficial it is in improving business competitiveness and sustainability.

### Who can apply?



Benchmarking is open to full or part-time farmers and growers. While there is no minimum size requirement for entry, the benefits to be gained from the programme increases with the scale of the enterprise being benchmarked.

### How do I apply?



The opening and closing dates for schemes/programmes supported by the Rural Development Programme are advertised and promoted widely.

The Rural Development Programme website [www.rdpni.info](http://www.rdpni.info) provides a full list of what is currently open for applications together with further details of each scheme/programme and how to apply. If you do not have access to the Internet or require additional information please contact us using the details provided overleaf.

**Please Note:** If you have previously benchmarked any of your farm enterprises, we will contact you, directly, inviting you to continue with the process.

### What happens next?



A visit to your farm will be arranged. During the visit, information necessary for the benchmarking of your enterprise(s) will be collected. This information, together with that relating to all participating farms, will be entered onto the CAFRE computer system and compared with averages for that sector. A copy of the report will be sent to you and your appointed CAFRE adviser.

CAFRE advisers specialise in designated business areas e.g. dairying, beef and sheep, arable, pigs etc. When your adviser receives a benchmarking report he or she will arrange a farm visit to discuss the results and make recommendations for the future. Follow-up visits may take place at the request of the farmer.