**Summary of Responses to the Consultation on DAERA draft Knowledge Framework**

In total 26 responses were received. A list of those who responded to the consultation is below;

Agri Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)

Aquaculture Initiative

British Horse Society

CAFRE College Advisory Group (CAG)

Choice Housing Ireland Ltd

Council for Nature Countryside and Conservation (CNCC)

Down Royal Racecourse

Downpatrick Racecourse

Equine Council Northern Ireland (ECNI)

Fermanagh & Omagh District Council

Food & Drink Sector Skills

Godolphin Ireland

Horticultural Forum NI

Landscape Institute Northern Ireland (LINI)

Leopardstown Racecourse

Moy Park

National Trust

Newry & Mourne District Council

NI Grain Trade Association (NIGTA)

NI Institute Agricultural Science (NIIAS)

Northern Ireland Flower and Foliage Association (NIFFA)

Paul Crawford Veterinary Services

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

Rural Development Council

Ulster Farmers Union (UFU)

Ulster University (UU)

1. **Do you agree that DAERA’s involvement in education, training and technology exchange provision should be driven by DAERA’s policy objectives and strategic goals?**

There were 20 responses to the question. 15 responses (75%) agreed, five responses (25%) disagreed. Six responses did not answer the question.

The majority of responses agreed with the question, but concern was noted around encompassing all sectors.

The Ulster Farmers Union (UFU) stated that the Framework should be relevant to all dimensions of agriculture and horticulture, including equine and forestry. Similarly Leopardstown Racecourse noted that strategic goals will only be achieved through individuals educated in specific areas.

The Rural Development Council (RDC) noted that DAERA should ensure a breadth of provision required to meet all strategic outcomes, including ‘a thriving rural economy’. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) agreed with the objective to improve environmental performance of the industry and stated that environmental/sustainability elements should be incorporated into educational provision.

The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) stated that to fully meet policy objectives and strategic goals, DAERA’s involvement should cover the full spectrum of knowledge provision, from high-quality undergraduate and postgraduate education, to the training of technologists and effective exchange of knowledge with decision makers.

The Horticulture Forum for Northern Ireland noted that horticulture has always been deemed to be part of agriculture.

CAFRE College Advisory Group (CAG) stated that the Strategic Plan should focus on the current and future needs of the land-based, food, equine and environmental sectors of the NI agri-food industry.

The Aquaculture Initiative, the Food and Drink Sector Skills, the National Trust, the Northern Ireland Institute of Agricultural Science (NIIAS), Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Moy Park, Paul Crawford Veterinary Services and the Ulster University (UU) all stated agreement with the question.

All of the responses that disagreed were from the equine sector. They cited lack of reference to the equine sector in the framework.  Down Royal Racecourse, the Equine Council for Northern Ireland (ECNI) and the British Horse Society stated that education should be in line with policy objectives and strategic goals thus implying an inclusive and comprehensive policy. However they were disappointed that there was not an inclusion of equine industry within the framework and a lack of a documented equine policy. All stated a desire for the Equine industry to be referenced in the Framework. This point was also made by Downpatrick Racecourse and Godolphin Ireland. Leopardstown Racecourse also noted a desire for the inclusion of equine, although their response did agree in principle with the question asked.

**Departmental Response**

DAERA is encouraged that the majority of responses agreed that DAERA’s involvement in education, training and technology exchange provision should be driven by DAERA’s policy objectives and strategic goals.

The concern around encompassing all sectors has been noted. As outlined in the draft Framework the draft DAERA 2020 strategic plans defines the following strategic outcomes;

1. Sustainable agri-food, fisheries, forestry and industrial sectors.
2. A clean, healthy environment, benefiting people, nature and the economy.
3. A thriving rural economy, contributing to prosperity and wellbeing.
4. A well led, high performing organisation focused on outcomes.

These objectives were developed to encompass the full remit of DAERA’s responsibility and will drive the focus of the DAERA Knowledge Framework.

The draft Framework stated;

‘DAERA has no interest in funding education, training and technology exchange provision in response to demands not linked to its policy objectives and strategic goals’.

What this means is that existing education and training provision in areas deemed to be ‘non-core’ will be subject to regular review to ensure provision is justified and when sanctioned, should move towards full cost recovery. New ‘non-core’ education and training provision, when justified, will be on the basis of full cost recovery. The determination of ‘core’ and ‘non-core’ will be informed by the draft DAERA strategic outcomes (as outlined above) and may evolve over time to reflect any changes to DAERA’s long term strategic goals. The wording in the Framework has been updated to provide clarity.

Equine education is an important part of the Department's existing provision. As outlined above, education and training provision in all areas will be subject to the same consideration.

1. **The suggested focus of the draft Framework is on the education, training needs and technology exchange provision of the land based and food processing sectors. Do you agree with this specific focus and approach?**

There were 21 responses to the question. 10 responses (48%) agreed, 11 responses (52%) disagreed. Five responses did not answer the question.

There was a split response to this question.

Food and Drink Sector Skills, Horticulture Forum for Northern Ireland, LINI, NIIAS, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and UU agreed with the focus of the Framework.

Moypark and the National Trust agreed and noted the importance of environmental interventions. Similarly the Ulster Farmers’ Union agreed but also noted a wish to encompass less land based sectors such as pig and poultry sectors.

AFBI stated agreement in principle but noted that the focus is too narrow and should recognise the importance of undergraduate and postgraduate education in agricultural and food sciences.

CAFRE CAG disagreed because “the draft does not place sufficient importance on the contribution made by other sectors to the Northern Ireland economy, which are intrinsically linked to the land-based and food processing sectors. These sectors include Equine, Drinks Manufacturing, Rural Development, Fisheries, Forestry and Environmental Management.”

Similarly the RSPB stated a more general audience should be targeted. Aquaculture Initiative disagreed due to lack of support for aquaculture, RDC disagreed stating that the focus is too narrow and fails to meet wider strategic outcomes of the Department including agri food, fisheries, forestry and industrial sectors, wider rural economy and the environment. Paul Crawford Veterinary Services stated that the framework did not explicitly reference Veterinary Nursing education.

The British Horse Society, Downpatrick Racecourse, Down Royal Racecourse, ECNI, Godolphin Ireland and Leopardstown Racecourse all disagreed on the basis the Framework should also encompass the equine sector.

**Departmental Response**

The draft DAERA Knowledge Framework is a high level document. Whilst all sectors within the industry are not explicitly named, the suggested focus is far reaching.

The draft DAERA Knowledge Framework details target groups of ‘Land Managers and Workforce’ and ‘Food Processing Workforce’.

Paragraph 6 (i) of the framework “Land Managers and Workforce” notes that:

‘Managers and workers in the agriculture and horticulture sectors must be equipped with the appropriate business and technical skills to operate a business that can be economically and environmentally sustainable, and in certain instances to meet regulatory requirements’.

The Agriculture Act (Northern Ireland) 1949 defines agriculture as;

“agriculture” includes, without prejudice to any other provision of this Act, horticulture, fruit growing, seed growing, dairy farming and livestock breeding and keeping, the use of land as grazing land, meadow land, market gardens and nursery grounds, and the use of land for woodlands where that use is ancillary to the farming of land for other agricultural purposes, and “agricultural” shall be construed accordingly[[1]](#footnote-1).

The same Act defines livestock as

“livestock” includes any animal kept for the production of food, wool, skins or fur or for the purpose of its use in the farming of land[[2]](#footnote-2)

These definitions demonstrate that the framework will encompass intensive land based sectors such as pig and poultry. In order that land managers can operate in an environmentally sustainable way, environmental management will be a key component of education and training provision.

Whilst the focus of the draft Framework is on the education, training needs and technology exchange provision of the land based and food processing sectors, the Framework does outline how objectives for wider environmental and rural issues will be met in other ways, ensuring complementarity with other education providers and influencing other providers through its Rural Champion role.

The draft Framework stated;

‘DAERA has no interest in funding education, training and technology exchange provision in response to demands not linked to its policy objectives and strategic goals’.

What this means is that existing education and training provision in areas deemed to be ‘non-core’ will be subject to regular review to ensure provision is justified and when sanctioned, should move towards full cost recovery. New ‘non-core’ education and training provision, when justified, will be on the basis of full cost recovery. The determination of ‘core’ and ‘non-core’ will be informed by the draft DAERA strategic outcomes (as outlined above) and may evolve over time to reflect any changes to DAERA’s long term strategic goals. The wording in the Framework has been updated to provide clarity.

Equine education is an important part of the Department's existing provision. As outlined above, education and training provision in all areas will be subject to the same consideration.

1. **Do you agree with the objective of the draft Framework?**

There were 22 responses to the question. 11 responses (50%) agreed, Nine responses (41%) disagreed and two responses (9%) stated ‘Do not know’. Four responses did not answer the question.

CAFRE CAG stated agreement in principle but also note a belief that the focus needs broadened, to ensure that the development of skills and knowledge is achieved across all sectors impacting on, and contributing to, the success of the agri-food industry and wider rural economy.

Similarly Fermanagh District Council stated agreement but noted a desire for the aim/objective to be widened. The RDC also stated the focus is too narrow.

The RSPB stated agreement but noted that the basis for allocation for funding should be up-to-date, rigorous and complete.

Food and Drink Sector Skills, Moypark and UU noted the importance of R&D and innovation.

Aquaculture Initiative, AFBI, NIIAS, the National Trust and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and Paul Crawford Veterinary Services stated agreement.

The British Horse Society, Downpatrick Racecourse, Down Royal Racecourse, ECNI, Godolphin Ireland, Leopardstown Racecourse disagreed on the basis that the Framework is too constrained and excludes equine education.

UFU and the Horticulture Forum for Northern Ireland noted that consideration could be given to educating the wider public about food and farming.

**Departmental Response**

The concern around broadening the focus of the Framework has been noted. As outlined in the draft Framework the draft DAERA 2020 strategic plan defines the following strategic outcomes;

1. Sustainable agri-food, fisheries, forestry and industrial sectors.
2. A clean, healthy environment, benefiting people, nature and the economy.
3. A thriving rural economy, contributing to prosperity and wellbeing.
4. A well led, high performing organisation focused on outcomes.

The objective in the framework were developed to align with DAERA’s strategic plan and will drive the focus of the DAERA Knowledge Framework.

The draft DAERA Knowledge Framework states;

‘The Framework aims to ensure that individuals, organisations, and businesses within the agri-food industry have access to high quality, relevant and accessible education, training and technology exchange provision to improve productivity, resilience, environmental performance and sustainability.’

The definition of agri-food is stated as ‘the complete agri-food supply chain, including those enterprises engaged in agriculture and the processing of food and drink into value-added food items’

The Department therefore does not agree that the focus is narrow.

The draft Framework stated;

‘DAERA has no interest in funding education, training and technology exchange provision in response to demands not linked to its policy objectives and strategic goals’.

What this means is that existing education and training provision in areas deemed to be ‘non-core’ will be subject to regular review to ensure provision is justified and when sanctioned, should move towards full cost recovery. New ‘non-core’ education and training provision, when justified, will be on the basis of full cost recovery. The determination of ‘core’ and ‘non-core’ will be informed by the draft DAERA strategic outcomes (as outlined above) and may evolve over time to reflect any changes to DAERA’s long term strategic goals. The wording in the Framework has been updated to provide clarity.

Equine education is an important part of the Department's existing provision. As outlined above, education and training provision in all areas will be subject to the same consideration.

1. **Do you agree with the key principles of the draft Framework?**

There were 21 responses to the question. 15 responses (71%) agreed, 5 responses (24%) disagreed, 1 response (5%) stated ‘Do not know’. 5 responses did not answer the question.

The majority of respondents agreed with the key principles of the framework.

AFBI noted agreement and stated that the core focus is appropriate.

Newry Mourne and Down District Council and UU stated agreement and noted support for partnership/collaboration. Similarly Food and Drink Sector Skills noted agreement and stated that whilst schools and FE sectors currently deliver some land based and food industry courses, there is scope for much future collaborative development and partnership delivery. Moypark stated that partnership and collaboration could be strengthened with the inclusion of private sector companies.

The British Horse Society, Down Royal Racecourse, ECNI, Godolphin Ireland and Leopardstown Racecourse stated agreement for the principles (despite the lack of equine reference) and that partnership/collaboration is demonstrated by the CAFRE Enniskillen campus. Downpatrick Racecourse also stated agreement but on the provision that equine is included.

Some responses disagreed on the basis that the focus was too narrow. Aquaculture Initiative states that while the main educational and training needs of the fisheries sector are addressed by SeaFish, the Aquaculture sector has a separate but related training need.

RDC stated that DAERA’s remit extends wider than agriculture, horticulture and food sectors and its belief the Framework should reflect that. RSPB stated environmental sustainability should be at the heart of the Knowledge Framework.

The Ulster Farmers Union noted that the Framework does not cover some areas of agriculture and the forestry sector and raised concerns about the effectiveness of the Departments rural champion role through the Rural White Paper and Rural Proofing. They stated that under the Quality principle that the Department should ensure there is industry representation from all sectors in a “relevant governing body”

UU stated that further clarification is required around how quality assurance and standards through the use of a relevant governing body would align with University governance processes. It also called for clarification around the statement of remaining open to directing training provision through a suitable delivery agent’

CAFRE CAG disagreed and made a number of comments on the key principles including:

* the Framework should clearly set out the responsibility and remit of the Department in ensuring the delivery and quality of programmes to prevent fragmentation in delivery.
* restricting the remit to agriculture, food and horticulture risks could limit potential synergies and growth which will arise from complementary sectors, as listed in Section 2 (These sectors include Equine, Drinks Manufacturing, Rural Development, Fisheries, Forestry and Environmental Management).
* introducing cost neutrality for specific programmes could limit the ability to develop education and training programmes in new and emerging agri-food related sectors in the future. If a programme does not meet DAERA strategic objectives, then DAERA should consider the appropriateness of funding being made available for its delivery.

**Departmental Response**

DAERA is encouraged that the majority of responses agreed with the key principles of the draft Framework and in particular for collaboration/partnership.

The Framework is a high level document and it is intended that the work streams that will arise from implementation of the framework that will look in more detail at issues such as the responsibility and remit of the Department in ensuring delivery and quality of programmes to prevent fragmentation in delivery. Implementation of the framework will also provide opportunities to ensure more effective collaboration and partnership.

The draft Framework stated;

‘DAERA has no interest in funding education, training and technology exchange provision in response to demands not linked to its policy objectives and strategic goals’.

What this means is that existing education and training provision in areas deemed to be ‘non-core’ will be subject to regular review to ensure provision is justified and when sanctioned, should move towards full cost recovery. New ‘non-core’ education and training provision, when justified, will be on the basis of full cost recovery. The determination of ‘core’ and ‘non-core’ will be informed by the draft DAERA strategic outcomes (as outlined above) and may evolve over time to reflect any changes to DAERA’s long term strategic goals. The wording in the Framework has been updated to provide clarity.

Equine education is an important part of the Department's existing provision. As outlined above, education and training provision in all areas will be subject to the same consideration.

DAERA notes that arrangements are in place to meet aquaculture training needs through Bord Iascaigh Mhara.

UFU and UU comments have been noted. The reference to ‘relevant Governing body’ in the draft Framework refers to independent inspectorates (e.g. Education and Training Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education). These inspectorates are concerned with the quality of education and training provision. Such assessments are separate from assessing the content and relevance of education and training provided by DAERA. The wording of the quality principle in the Framework has been updated to provide clarity.

The use of delivery agents for training provision is currently utilised by DAERA (e.g. contracts were awarded for elements of the Farm Family Key Skills Programme[[3]](#footnote-3)). The reference to the use of delivery agents in the draft Framework signals DAERA’s commitment to consider and utilise the most appropriate delivery channel.

1. **Do you agree with the intended outcomes of draft Framework?**

There were 20 responses to the question. 17 responses (85%) agreed in principle, Three responses (15%) disagreed. Six responses did not answer the question.

Most responses agreed in principle with this question however concerns were raised about several areas. Of the 17 responses that agreed in principle;

* Six called for inclusion of equine (The British Horse Society, Downpatrick Racecourse, Down Royal Racecourse, ECNI, Godolphin Ireland, Leopardstown Racecourse),
* Two stated that more detail or definition is required (CAFRE CAG and Horticulture Forum for Northern Ireland) and
* Three stated concern at the proposed educational attainments for a head of farm and food managers, and questioned if the attainments were realistic and achievable (Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Food and Drink Sector Skills and Moypark).

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council agreed in principle but raised concern regarding the target groups, namely that some have been disengaged from mainstream education for a significant period of time and may struggle with the qualification target in the outcomes section (explored further in response to Question 6).

AFBI and NIIAS welcomed the proposed involvement of researchers in the delivery of knowledge.

UU noted that the intended outcomes are ambitious.

UFU disagreed with the question and noted that more should be done to encourage farmers to improve their knowledge as opposed to forcing them down a route to achieve qualifications. RSPB disagreed on the basis that environmental performance should be reflected in the key principles or intended outcomes.

The outcome regarding involving researchers in the delivery of knowledge to CAFRE was viewed more as an activity than outcome.

NIFFA stated that the strategic outcomes are too limited and do not consider the wider aspects of horticulture, ornamental, flowers and foliage and landscaping.

**Departmental Response**

DAERA is encouraged that the majority of responses agreed with the intended outcomes of the draft Framework however notes concerns that some may be unable to meet the educational targets set in the outcomes. The target would not be implemented on a retrospective basis and as outlined in the draft Framework, the requirement would apply to commercial farms (i.e. where the farm represents the primary source of income)

Life Long Learning is noted as a key principle in the draft Framework. The draft Framework states;

‘DAERA will seek to encourage continuous life-long learning. Access to training will be designed to be flexible and formal education programmes will, wherever possible, allow progression.’

The educational targets will be reviewed by DAERA to establish if a qualifications framework or pathway progression to qualifications could be developed to assist heads of agricultural/horticultural businesses and food processing managers achieve these outcomes.

The outcome regarding involving researchers in the delivery of knowledge to CAFRE will be moved to the ‘Partnership and Collaboration’ section.

As outlined in the draft Framework the draft DAERA 2020 strategic plan defines the following strategic outcomes;

1. Sustainable agri-food, fisheries, forestry and industrial sectors.
2. A clean, healthy environment, benefiting people, nature and the economy.
3. A thriving rural economy, contributing to prosperity and wellbeing.
4. A well led, high performing organisation focused on outcomes.

The objectives in the framework were developed to align with DAERA’s strategic plan and will drive the focus of the DAERA Knowledge Framework.

The draft Framework stated;

‘DAERA has no interest in funding education, training and technology exchange provision in response to demands not linked to its policy objectives and strategic goals’.

What this means is that existing education and training provision in areas deemed to be ‘non-core’ will be subject to regular review to ensure provision is justified and when sanctioned, should move towards full cost recovery. New ‘non-core’ education and training provision, when justified, will be on the basis of full cost recovery. The determination of ‘core’ and ‘non-core’ will be informed by the draft DAERA strategic outcomes (as outlined above) and may evolve over time to reflect any changes to DAERA’s long term strategic goals. The wording in the Framework has been updated to provide clarity.

Equine education is an important part of the Department's existing provision. As outlined above, education and training provision in all areas will be subject to the same consideration.

1. **A key outcome proposed in the draft Knowledge Framework is that anyone taking over as head of a commercial farm or horticulture business (i.e. one where the farm represents a primary source of income) should have at least a Level 3 relevant qualification (equivalent to ‘A’ Level or level 3 NVQ), i.e. the minimum qualification for anyone in a managerial position.**

**Do you agree with that approach? Does the qualification level seem appropriate and by what date (year) should this be implemented?**

There were 19 responses to the question. 11 responses (58%) agreed in principle, two responses (11%) disagreed. Six responses (32%) commented on the question but did not agree or disagree. Seven responses did not answer the question.[[4]](#footnote-4)

There was general agreement on the benefits of education. However Food and Drink Sector Skills and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council noted concern that such a requirement may exclude some farmers and suggested that flexibility should be incorporated, for example considering a hierarchy whereby the educational target is for medium/large farms only, or ensuring a sufficient time period is given to allow heads of business to meet the educational requirement. Similarly UU noted that the opportunity to access education and training is important and that it should be ensured that the target group are able to meet any entry criteria for qualifications leading to this award.

CAFRE CAG and RDC noted concern around education being a prerequisite to accessing funds. Similarly UFU and NIIAS stated that farmers should be encouraged rather than forced.

Food and Drink Sector Skills suggested that the requirement should be implemented within 8 years. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council stated that sufficient time should be allowed for implementation but did not suggest what date should be used.

National Trust stated that such a requirement would be difficult to apply. Horticulture Forum for Northern Ireland and NIIAS stated that more detail on what courses would be acceptable is required.

**Departmental Response**

DAERA is encouraged that the majority of responses agreed with the proposed outcome given the positive correlation between training and educational attainment with higher levels of output and family farm incomes. DAERA notes concerns regarding flexibility and the use of an educational target being necessary to access funds.

It is important to set educational outcome levels that are relevant to the sector needs and that are achievable by the target groups in the sector. It has been noted that there are a number of land managers who may not have accessed training or education in a number of years. It is therefore important to set an educational outcome that is relevant to their business.

The target would not be implemented on a retrospective basis and as outlined in the draft Framework, the requirement would apply to commercial farms (i.e. where the farm represents the primary source of income)

Life Long Learning is noted as a key principle in the draft Framework. The draft Framework states;

‘DAERA will seek to encourage continuous life-long learning. Access to training will be designed to be flexible and formal education programmes will, wherever possible, allow progression.’

The educational targets will be reviewed by DAERA to establish if a qualifications framework or pathway progression to qualifications could be developed to assist heads of agricultural/horticultural businesses and food processing managers achieve these outcomes.

1. **A key outcome proposed in the draft Knowledge Framework is that DAERA working with other providers, will seek to ensure that all new manager level appointees in the food processing sector should have at least a Level 5 qualification in a relevant discipline (equivalent to foundation degree or higher national diploma (HND)), i.e. the minimum qualification for anyone in a managerial position.**

**Do you agree with that approach? Does the qualification level seem appropriate and by what date (year) should this be implemented?**

There were 16 responses to the question. Seven responses (44%) agreed in principle, Two responses (13%) disagreed. Seven responses (44%) commented on the question but did not agree or disagree. Ten responses did not answer the question.

There was general agreement in principle for qualifications. However, similar to responses to the previous question, some concerns were raised;

CAFRE CAG and RDC both questioned why the suggested Level 5 for food processing sector differs from the suggested Level 3 for head of farm.

Moypark, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and UFU all noted that such a requirement would act as a barrier to those entering the industry or to diversification.

Food and Drink Sector Skills suggested the use of framework for progression with food operatives needing level 2 qualifications and level 3 for a first time manager.

UU noted that the opportunity to access education and training is important and that support should be available.

Paul Crawford Veterinary Services suggested that the industry should determine qualifications of staff.

**Departmental Response**

It is important to set educational outcome levels that are relevant to the sector needs and that are achievable by the target groups in the sector.  It has been noted that there are a number of land managers who may not have accessed training or education in a number of years.  It is important to set an educational outcome that is relevant to their business hence the reason for the difference in qualification level set for the head of commercial farm or horticulture business and a manager in the food manufacturing sector.

Whilst a lower level may be appropriate at supervisory level in the food processing sector, managerial level refers to those with significant responsibility, who will be responsible for driving and leading the sector in the future. A Level 5 qualification is deemed to be appropriate.

It is therefore appropriate to set outcome levels in the farm or horticulture sector and the food processing sectors at different levels.

Life Long Learning is noted as a key principle in the draft Framework. The draft Framework states;

‘DAERA will seek to encourage continuous life-long learning. Access to training will be designed to be flexible and formal education programmes will, wherever possible, allow progression.’

The educational target will be reviewed by DAERA to establish if a qualifications framework or pathway progression to qualifications could be developed to assist heads of agricultural/horticultural businesses and food processing managers achieve these outcomes.

1. **Do you have any views on the conclusions reached by DAERA to screen out further assessment in respect of Equality Impact Assessment;?**

There were six responses to the question. 5 responses (83%) noted that equine is an inclusive industry and one response (17%) agreed that equality impacts should be kept under review. 20 responses either stated no comment or did not respond.

**Departmental Response**

DAERA will keep equality impacts under review during implementation.

1. **Is there any other aspect of the proposals you wish to comment on?**

There were 20 responses to this question. Key points raised include:

* The Northern Ireland Flower and Foliage Association said “This Framework is very disappointing from the perspective of flower and foliage growers and the businesses which depend on this aspect of horticulture – floristry and wedding businesses.  The role of CAFRE at Greenmount could be seriously undermined by such limited vision.”
* AFBI said “The current drive appears to be entirely focused on the provision of expertise and capability at the ‘workface’ within the agri-food sector.  Whilst this is important, the report ignores the crucial role of high quality graduates in agricultural and food sciences in leading innovation and driving advances in the agriculture and food processing sectors.”
* Horticulture Forum for Northern Ireland said “The evidence base which has been used to support the construction of the DAERA Framework has been much too limited.  There is no correct understanding of the term ‘horticulture’. The Chartered Institute of Horticulture defines it as follows:

‘*Horticulture is the science, technology, art and business of cultivating and using plants to improve human life.  Horticulturalists and Horticultural scientists create global solutions for sustainable, nutritious food and healthy/restorative and beautiful environments’.*

“The evidence base has not drawn on the flower and foliage sector or ornamental and bedding plant production.  These are now significant in terms of turnover and numbers employed and is estimated to be £15 million in Northern Ireland.  There has also been too little information gathered about the importance and relevance of landscape development and grounds-keeping sectors, particularly to tourism and the health and well-being of the public at large.”

* The Equine sector raised their concerns about lack of inclusion of equine in the framework. ECNI reinforced that the equine industry is a major contributor to the economy and that equine education provides a major opportunity for young people.
* The Aquaculture Initiative said “The main educational and training needs of the fisheries sector are addressed by Seafish. However, it should be noted that The Aquaculture sector has a separate but related training need.
* The UFU said “The UFU wishes to reiterate the need for any DAERA knowledge framework to encompass the entire breadth of agriculture, horticulture and forestry across all levels of the agri food industry. The sector is very diverse and any potential for improving knowledge must be open to all areas and reflect the different systems.  The UFU believe the consultation misses the opportunity to revise the current CAFRE curriculum to provide a greater emphasis on grassland management, soils and business management. The UFU believe that the technical side of education in NI is strong but much more should be done to improve the strength of business delivery for students. “
* Choice Housing Ireland Limited stated that the strategic priorities are not in the correct order. The response went on to state that ‘desirable objectives can only be achieved in a thriving and rural economy, so it must be the over-riding objective of the Department’.
* RSPB stated that ‘the Framework must incorporate learning around environmental issues, in schools and in communities, to encourage and enhance the knowledge and skills of our whole community in a process of lifelong learning’.
* AFBI reiterated concern that the focus of the Framework is provision of expertise and capability at the ‘workface’ and ignores the crucial role of high quality graduates
* CNCC and LINI both noted concern that Knowledge Framework unnecessarily reduces itself to alignment with only economic aspects of government policy. The environmental role of sustainable agriculture will improve wellbeing – as sought in the overall purpose of the proposed Programme for Government. A Knowledge Framework for sustainable agriculture serves and benefits all aspects of the proposed PfG and this should be clearly stated.

**Departmental Response**

DAERA has considered all the views submitted. DAERA notes that the majority of points raised in response to this question were also raised in response to earlier questions. The Departmental response to earlier questions is therefore considered to cover this section.

The draft Framework will be revised in line with the Departmental response.

1. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/apni/1949/2/data.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/apni/1949/2/data.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.cafre.ac.uk/industry-support/farm-family-key-skills/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding [↑](#footnote-ref-4)