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**Ireland v. United States:
Agricultural and Environmental Sustainability Policies**

By

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**An Honors Thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of
Science in Business Administration in Finance and Accounting.**

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Fayetteville, Arkansas**

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Ireland—a small, but charming country that contains small pieces of nearly every aspect of the world’s beauty. With green hills, steep cliffs, beaches and beautiful waters, caves and bogs, cities with old buildings, small towns with farms, islands, and so much more, Ireland is only truly appreciated by those who have witnessed its allure firsthand. The entire country can be described as pure, crisp—untouched, even. Original European homes and castles from hundreds of years ago can be seen as if the family inhabiting them had vacated only yesterday. Ireland has a special way of preserving its country; something many Americans could hardly even dream of. The United States is just the opposite. Although some areas of the country have maintained its originality, such as federally preserved national parks, unoccupiable deserts, and ocean floors, nearly everything else has been modernized, renovated, and undergone deforestation in one way or another. Valerie Volcovici (2019), an author for Thomson Reuters writes, “The United States has lost the equivalent of nine Grand Canyon national parks, or 24 million acres [...] of natural area, between 2001 and 2017 due to agriculture, energy development, housing sprawl and other human factors.” If this devastating number has occurred within the last 20 years, what do we think has been done with our country since 1492 when Christopher Columbus discovered what we now call “home”? While Americans wake up to the sound of cars honking on the nearby highway, the Irish are hearing cattle bellow for breakfast or a neighbor ringing their bicycle bell. The sustainability measures Ireland and the European Union have taken to preserve their nation is unmatched in comparison to the United States.

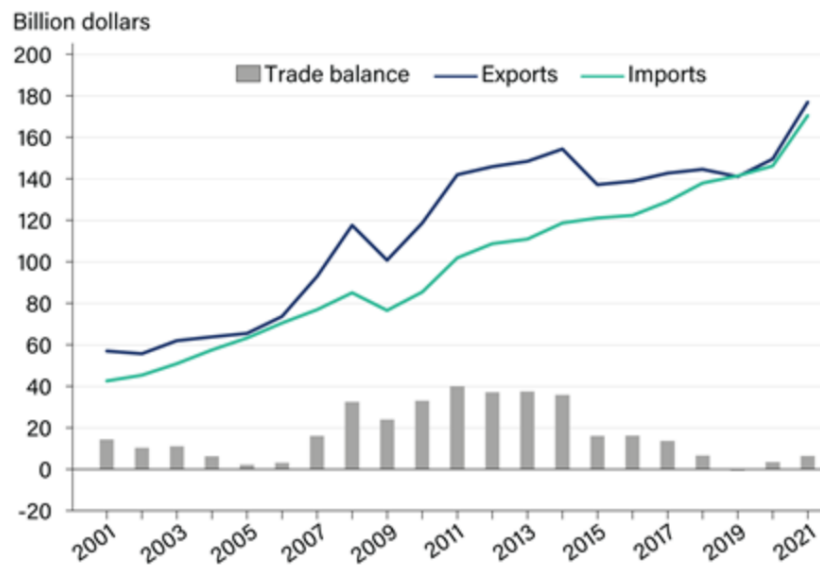
Although the Irish have been working together to increase the sustainability of their country, it is not wholly due to environmental do-gooders coming together to make the world a better place. It is largely due to the European Union and the introduction of the Common Agricultural Policy (further referred to as CAP) in the mid 1900s. The CAP was originally designed to support farming after many years of war and famine in Europe and has since been modified to adapt to the changing demands of not only consumers themselves, but also the demands of the environment (“Feeding Europe”, n.d.). Included in the foundation of the CAP today are the policy’s original goals: “increasing productivity and stabilising markets, ensuring the availability of food at reasonable prices, [and] providing fair living standards to farmers” (“Feeding Europe”, n.d.). Although we can observe these goals being implemented and carried out throughout the history of the policy—as explained in subsequent material—it is important to note that the future of the CAP is quickly approaching the European Union. Beginning in 2023, there will be reforms to create a “new” CAP that increases focus on the performance-based aspects of the policy by identifying new objectives for the entire Union itself, state provisions, and obligations for individual farmers. Ultimately, the goals of the EU’s reformatations to the CAP are to “provide more targeted support to smaller farms; enhance the contribution of agriculture to EU environmental and climate goals; [and] allow greater flexibility for member states in adapting measures to local conditions” (“Common agriculture”, n.d.).

Throughout the centuries, the United States has developed a variety of policies similar in objectives, yet different in structure to the European Union’s Common Agricultural Policy. As one of the leading agriculture producers, the United States farming industry has employed over 960 thousand people country-wide and encompasses over 2 million farms (“Topic”, n.d.). To get here, though, the United States went through a series of ordinances, acts, and bills to promote expansion, land settlement, and agricultural production by granting land to settlers, price supports, and supply and demand regulation, all dating back to 1785 post-Revolutionary War. Prior to 1932, the agricultural policies in the United States “focused on land distribution, support for education and research programs to increase agricultural productivity, and programs to

provide farmers with market information” (“Story Map”, n.d.). Between the Land Ordinance of 1785, the Homestead Act in 1862, the Agricultural Credits Act of 1923, and the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1929, the United States made fair attempts at beginning and increasing agricultural production and efficiency throughout the nation. These pieces of legislation, though, were merely a starting point, and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, believed more could be done. In the 1930s, the government introduced the first farm bill

and attempted to regulate supply and demand to influence agricultural commodity prices. While it worked for a time, it later was deemed unconstitutional, and revisions were made. As years passed, each president made their own amendments to the farm bill as they saw fit. As of March 31, 2022, there have been eighteen farm bills passed (“Preparing”, 2022), and as an indicator of overall performance, in 2021, the United States exported \$177 billion in agricultural products

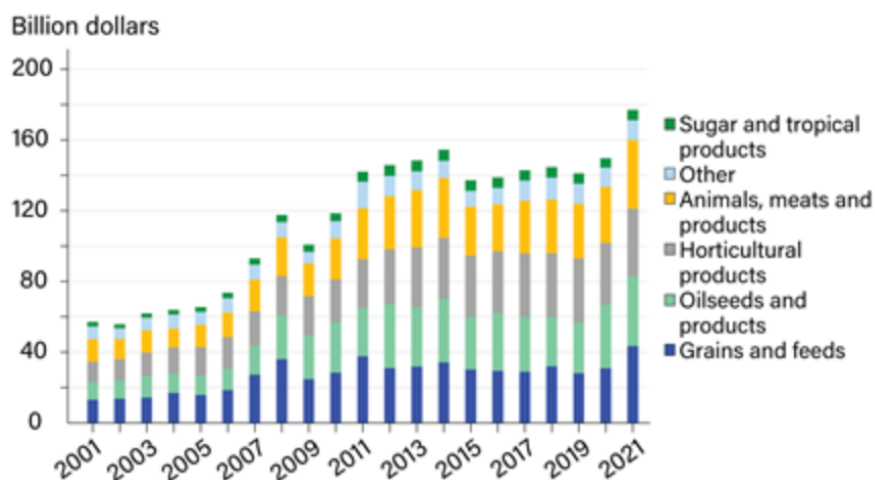
U.S. agricultural trade, 2001-21



Note: Calendar year values in nominal U.S. dollars.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

U.S. agricultural exports, 2001-21



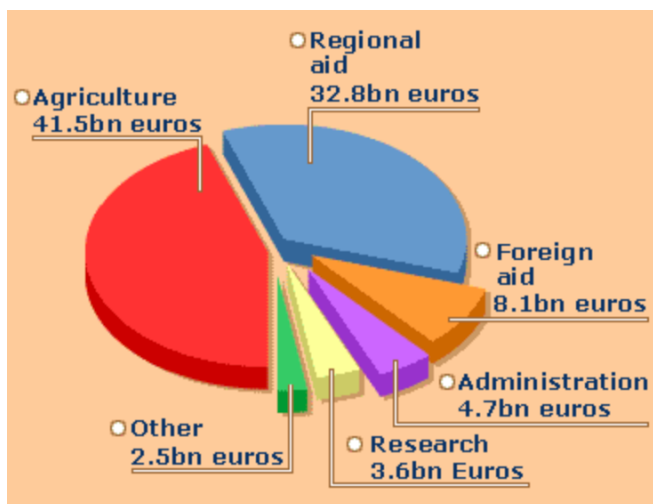
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

(“USDA”, n.d.). These figures are broken down further in the charts, demonstrating agricultural trade growth from 2001 to 2021 (above), as well as the exports arranged by product (left) throughout this period. The farm bill, however, is not the only environmental project the United States has in progress. Dating back to 1872, legislation and programs have been created around the establishment of national parks, environmental

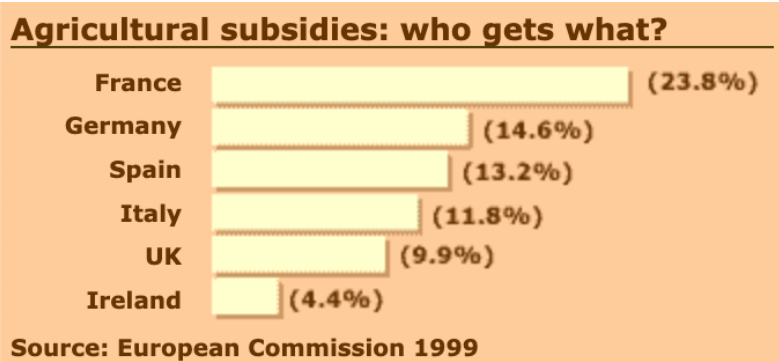
sustainability measures, as well as preservation tactics to create and maintain a more

environmentally respectful lifestyle. The sustainability practices paired with the dynamic farm bill closely resemble the structure and objectives of CAP.

As mentioned before, the European Union’s Common Agricultural Policy has been modified continuously with the changing of the environment and the needs of Europeans. In the first stages of development in 1962, the CAP was put into practice following the devastations of the second World War. During this time, both farming wages and production were extremely low, and Europe needed to increase productivity in order to continue being sustainable. The goals at this time were to increase overall productivity, provide farmers with a reasonable living wage, stabilize the market, and have the ability to guarantee the availability of supplies (“Timeline”, n.d.). The first reform to the CAP came in 1968 with the Mansholt Plan, in which Sicco Mansholt, the European Commissioner for Agriculture, predicted there could be potential issues from over-production. His response to this, the Mansholt Plan, optimized land and created larger farming units to “improve the standard of living for farmers and avoid market distortions” (“Timeline”, n.d.). This plan was not met with instant approval, though. While many feared Mansholt would diminish the small farms, the plan ended up being “very successful in its initial objective of making Europe more self-sufficient with food products” (“Sicco Mansholt”, n.d.). However, the Mansholt Plan did not come without its challenges; at this time, the CAP guaranteed farmers would receive a contracted price for their goods regardless of the quantity produced. Over ten years later, the EU started experiencing surpluses, and food was either wasted or sold at extremely low prices, resulting in a quota-system and a levy for those who exceeded such. In 1992, though, the first large-scale reform to CAP was adopted; the MacSharry reforms shifted the CAP from guaranteeing prices of goods—like in 1962—to being a market support system, providing direct income support to farmers, forcing farmers to become more intentional about their production practices. Throughout the evolution of the CAP, the rules had become more flexible, and in return, farmers were incentivized to protect the environment and increase the quality of the food they were producing.

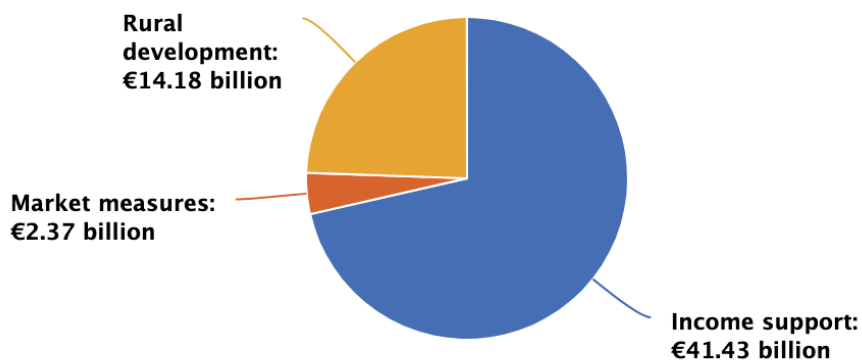


Just before the turn of the century, nearly 40 years after the first implementation of the CAP, the European Union was still providing almost 50% of the total budget to the policy even though the opportunities in farming were significantly fewer compared to other economic sectors. The charts to the right from the BBC News website (n.d.) show the European Union Budget in the year 2000, as well as the allocations of said budget



for the agricultural sector between the countries. With EUR 41.5 billion budgeted to agriculture, that equates to greater than today's \$76 billion, and only 4.4% of that amount was actually supposed to go to the country of Ireland itself. It was during this time that the second "pillar" of the CAP was adopted. In this "Agenda 2000" program, rural development and agricultural competitiveness were highlighted not only to find revenue in lower-populated areas, but also to increase the population and make rural areas more livable. The key driver of these objectives is the LEADER approach, a method to "engage the energy and resources of people and local organisations as development actors rather than beneficiaries, empowering them to contribute to the future development of their rural areas by forming area based Local Action Group (LAG) partnerships between the public, private and civil sectors" (Duquenoy, 2019). At the core, the LEADER approach includes seven features, outlined by Duquenoy. First, a bottom-up approach remains at the center, allowing individuals to help create local strategies and participate through each phase afterwards. This collaboration between communities and the citizens of these communities increase the likelihood that families will genuinely follow the guidelines and ultimately lead to a longer-lasting attempt at sustainability. Second, an area-based approach focuses on the area as a whole rather than specific projects. Taking the entire area into consideration provides opportunities to recognize strengths and weaknesses that would contribute to the success of the CAP strategies formulated by the first feature. Third, local partnerships—previously referred to as Local Action Groups—provides opportunities for action, rather than spectating. It is important that both businesses and individuals are given ample options to participate in this process with varying effort requirements. The fourth feature in the LEADER approach is an integrated and multi-sectoral strategy, such that "partnerships and their Local Development Strategies (LSDs) therefor aim to capitalize on the links between local sectors to exploit the potential multiplier effects. In doing so they explore and address the needs and opportunities of the area in an integrated way to achieve the desired common goals" (Duquenoy, 2019). The fifth feature is networking, promoting and stimulating LEADER activities, and the sixth is innovation, solving problems with new solutions. Communicating and these activities to others and staying current in regard to technological and societal improvements increases awareness for the CAP and ultimately helps to include all individuals in achieving a common goal. Finally, cooperation is the seventh feature the LEADER approach includes, requiring members both territorially and nationally to work together to foster innovation and knowledge within their sector. By utilizing the LEADER approach and its seven features to implement "Agenda 2000", the CAP is able to further its missions in rural development efficiently and with cooperation of the stakeholders of the policy while the communities engage in the design and delivery the strategies to be implemented within their area.

After recognizing the need for increased rural development and implementing a program to satisfy such, 2013 posed new challenges. During this time, the world is now facing threats from climate change, animal extinction, general food safety, and the depletion of natural resources. It is because of these new threats that once again, the CAP needed more adjustments. This attempt included a more equal financial support distribution, additional support for smaller farms, incentives to join a career in agriculture, and increased rural development projects. As of 2019, the EU provided nearly EUR 58 billion to farmers, as noted in the chart below ("CAP Strategic Plan", 2022). Prior to joining the European Union in 1973, Ireland was primarily dependent on farming; while agriculture is still important to the Irish economy today, farmers no longer have to feel isolated while facing the threats climate change, inflation, or agricultural



shortages. With that being said, because of the CAP, Ireland received EUR 10.68 billion in funding throughout 2014-2020—something that never would have happened had Ireland not joined the European Union (“Just the Facts”, 2022). 2021 then brought out a

new approach, allowing individual countries to develop their own strategic plans using the new financial support allocations in previous reforms to satisfy their specific needs, while still aligning with the original CAP values. These 2021 modifications to the policy gave countries the opportunity to allocate their time and resources as necessary in order to meet the needs of their country, making the CAP more efficient from the bottom-up while simultaneously optimizing the funding they provide to these countries. As a whole, these reforms to CAP brought about more sustainable-focused goals, such as funding on a compliance basis (similar to before), rewards for specific practices, priority direct payments to younger farmers and smaller farms, and more.

Throughout the age of the Common Agricultural Policy, the European Union has monitored the state of the economy, environment, and agriculture industry and made changes as was saw fit. Up until COVID-19, the benefits of the CAP had been taken for granted as Europeans were no longer in desperation for agricultural products, proving the CAP to be a successful, ongoing project. “Today, the single market offers European farmers access to 447 million customers in 27 countries, allowing them to distribute their produce beyond national borders” (“Feeding Europe”, n.d.). However, as the country and environment evolve, as does the CAP, and the European Union is planning for a major reform to the policy throughout the years 2023-2027. While there will be objectives to achieve throughout the entire European Union, member states will also receive guidance on how to achieve these goals, measurement tools will be established, and planning mechanisms and provisions will be required throughout the nation, as quoted below:

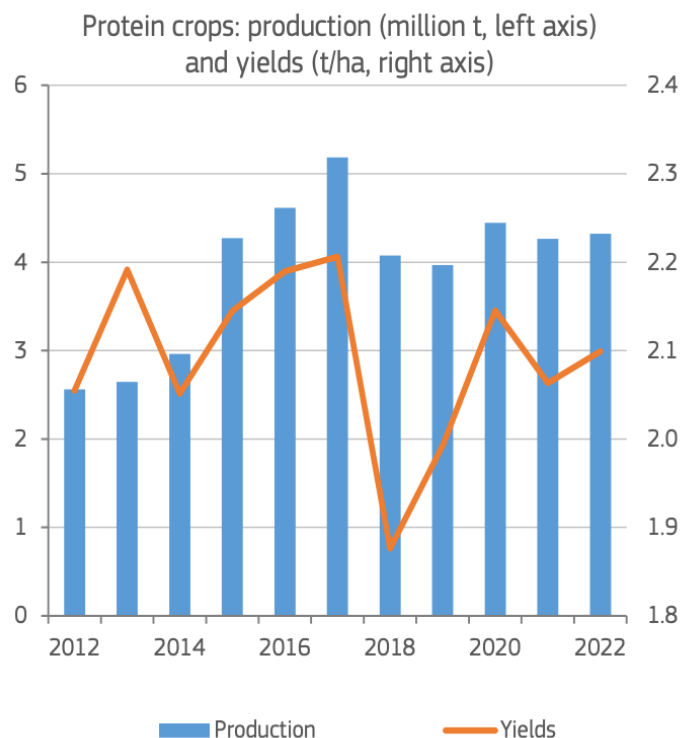
“Each EU member state has to carry out an extensive analysis to identify its specific needs and draw up a CAP strategic plan; each plan sets out how the member state will use CAP funding to meet those needs, including the tools to be used and specific targets; each CAP strategic plan requires approval from the Commission to ensure that it remains consistent with the EU-wide objectives; countries must submit performance reports to the Commission to show progress towards the targets set as result indicators” (“Common agricultural policy”, n.d.).

While up to this point, the European Union as a whole has effectively maintained the dynamic nature of the Common Agricultural Policy in order to adhere to the evolving needs of both Europeans and the environment. The 2021 reforms allowed countries to practice freedom in establishing their own strategic plans, and now, the success of those modifications has provided

the Union an opportunity to grow even further. Ireland, specifically, has a budget of nearly EUR 10 billion to implement the aspects of the new CAP and has three goals: to protect the income of farming families, recognize the dedication of all farm families, regardless of geographic location, and support climate ambitions (“CAP Strategic Plan”, 2022), and combines both pillars of the original CAP—Pillar I, direct payments; Pillar II, rural development.

Ireland’s CAP Strategic Plan (further referred to as CSP) is built to focus on economic support, environmental and climate goals, and sustainable rural development. To achieve economic goals, Ireland is developing a new pay structure for direct payments—Pillar I of the original Common Agricultural Policy—to eliminate the income deficiency farmers are experiencing compared to other

sectors of the economy. In this new pay structure, the country anticipates using a “combination of an upper limit of high payments, redistributive support for small and medium sized farms, and the harmonization of the amount of payments to farmers” (“Ireland’s”, n.d.). This method of direct payment allocation will allow smaller mom-and-pop farmers to increase their growth rate and competition within the market while simultaneously maintaining the growth of larger farms by not condoning their extensive capture of market share. Additionally, Ireland plans to provide competition incentives to farmers who grow protein crops (peas, beans, etc.), resulting in not only increased production, but also an expansion of rural development. The chart on the right depicts production and yield trends in protein crops.

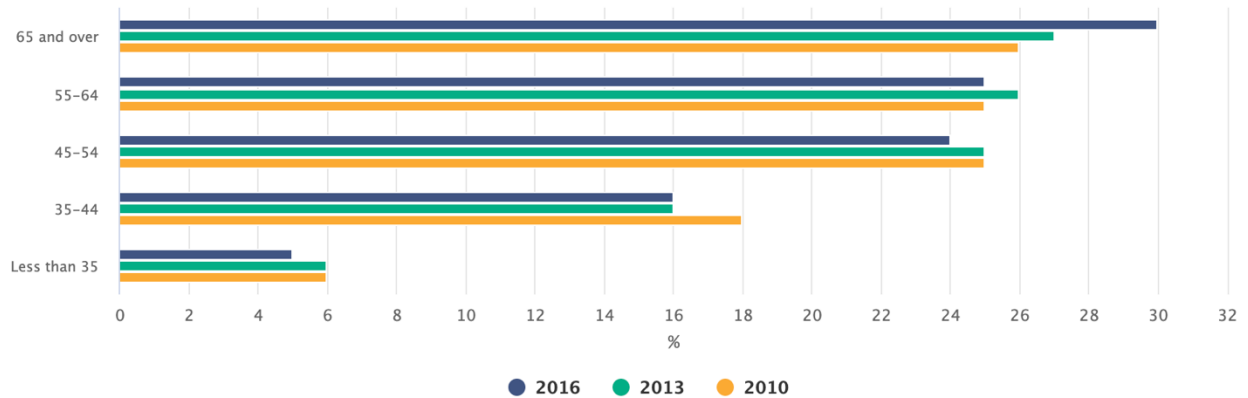


Although growing conditions were challenging, production is still estimated to grow, especially with the help of the CSP’s new incentives to grow such crops (“Short-term Outlook”, n.d.).

While agricultural development can be done quickly and efficiently with powerful machines and diesel-fueled equipment, there is a rising concern regarding greenhouse gas emissions. Ireland plans to combat these issues and achieve environmental and climate goals by putting strict practices in place that minimize emissions, erosion, and water contamination, and there are intentions to allocate portions of land to protect biodiversity among plants and wild life, ultimately predicting to improve the quality of water by 32% (“Ireland’s”, n.d.).

Finally, Ireland’s CSP is committed to attracting new agricultural participants of varying diversity to the market. With farmers being predominantly older men, the agricultural industry could potentially face a drastic decline in production without the involvement of younger individuals to maintain the farms. To prepare and mitigate this risk, Ireland’s CSP includes bonuses and higher financial support not only to young farmers, but women, as well, to diversify the makeup of growers. In the chart below from the Central Statistics Office (2018), notice that

Figure 22.3 Percentage of farm holders classified by age and year



the percentage of farm holders for any given year that are older than the age of 45 dominate the percentage of those under the age of 45. It is because of this scenario that the CSP is determined to provide worthy incentives to attract the desired level of diversity within the sector.

Interestingly enough, farmers and farmers-to-be are not the only ones receiving special treatment within the practices of the CSP. “The Irish CAP Plan will include measures designed to meet societal demands in relation to animal welfare and food safety, including through reducing use of antimicrobials and pesticides. [...] Support will be provided to improve animal welfare for over 330,000 livestock units, particularly in the dairy, beef, sheep, big, and poultry sectors” (“Ireland’s”, n.d.). Using these formalities, Ireland’s CAP Strategic Plan appears to effectively utilize the European Union’s original CAP objectives while understanding the needs of their people. Although 2023 is only beginning, the CSP’s results show potential; as quoted by the Irish Minister for Agriculture, Food, and the Marine, agriculture is the “heartbeat of rural Ireland,” (“CAP Strategic Plan”, n.d.) and with the time, energy, and resources Ireland’s CAP Strategic Plan anticipates providing for them, farmers and their families will undoubtedly be treated as such.

The United States, on the other hand, has a different approach to environmental and agricultural policy. Instead of creating a singular, continuous program like the CAP, the Federal government has created a farm bill emphasizing the sustainability of agriculture that is being revised on a consistent basis, as well as several policies and acts to separately support environmental threats. To begin, the first official farm bill—the Agriculture Adjustment Act—for the United States was put into place in 1933 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt when crop prices desperately needed regulated during the Great Depression. After the stock market crashed and many workers were laid off, families lacked the resources to purchase goods, and the demand for such goods decreased drastically. As a result, farmers needed to reduce their prices and overproduce their goods to simply be able to afford their living expenses; after threats from farmers to leave the cities and towns without necessities, in addition to damages from blockades and mobs, the government finally passed the farm bill. Ultimately, it was decided that the surplus of crops the farmers were producing was the issue, resulting in the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) of 1933 that “set limits on the size of the crops and herds farmers could produce. Those farmers that agreed to limit production were paid a subsidy” (“The Great Depression”, n.d.). Because of the limited production supply, the demand for these commodities increased and farmers’ profits on their products were restored. In 1936, though, Supreme Court case *United*

States v. Butler, the AAA was deemed unconstitutional, and once again, farmers' income spiraled down to the same level it was just five years prior ("American Agricultural Policy", n.d.). A second Agricultural Adjustment Act was issued in 1938 with the same intentions as the first in an attempt to solve this problem once again.

The second issue the United States faced in regard to product prices was in 1973 when President Nixon—still in office—noticed the United States was exporting nearly 25% of its wheat to the Soviet Union ("American Agricultural Policy", n.d.). Because of this, wheat prices skyrocketed, and Congress passed the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973—also known as the 1973 farm bill. This bill discontinued payments to farmers for planting land, and instead, rewarded production by the unit. While this ultimately lowered product prices, supply and demand were still not balanced, neglecting the long-term issue in the agricultural market. The overall result of this bill was one the American people never saw coming; now that food prices were lower, families could purchase more food—in terms of calories—for less money. "Subsidized foods became less expensive, yet were higher in energy than unsubsidized crops such as fruits and vegetables, so Americans were financially inclined to purchase them" ("American Agricultural Policy", n.d.). In retrospect, this was only the beginning of a journey to malnutrition and obesity in the United States.

Following the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act, the number of small farms began to decrease while the size of them increased. The American economy was now more focused on larger, more specialized production centers. The chart below from the USDA demonstrates these trends throughout this time. At the turn of the century, the United States had 5.7 million farms utilizing approximately 146 acres each, containing five products on average. At the time of the farm bill in 1973, the number of farms had decreased by nearly three million, and each farm more than doubled in size.

It is also important to note—that as mentioned previously—the average number of commodities produced per farm was reduced drastically, simply proving that product specialization was becoming more relevant as time passed. It was also during this time that environmental hazards, such as greenhouse gases, deforestation, and water contamination, were becoming issues among the larger production facilities, leading to the severe environmental and climate change threats the United States is facing today.

Several years after the bill, in 1985, a shift in the objectives of the farm bill came about. Rather than being primarily concerned with balancing supply and demand, controlling prices, and monitoring production, the public became more

100 years of structural change in U.S. agriculture

	1900	1930	1945	1970	2000/02
Number of farms (millions)	5.7	6.3	5.9	2.9	2.1
Average farm size (acres)	146	151	195	376	441
Average number of commodities produced per farm	5.1	4.5	4.6	2.7	1.3
Farm share of population (percent)	39	25	17	5	1
Rural share of population (percent)	60	44	36 (1950)	26	21
Off-farm labor*	NA	100 days	27	54	93

NA = not available.

*1930, average number of days worked off-farm; 1945, percent of farmers working off-farm; 1970 and 2000/02, percent of households with off-farm income.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Agriculture, and Census of Population, various issues, 1900-2000; USDA Census of Agriculture, 2002; and B. Gardner, *American Agriculture in the Twentieth Century*, 2002.

aware of the negative impacts farming and production had on the environment. The difference between the 1985 farm bill and others was that “the 1985 Farm Bill was the first to have a specific title devoted to conservation. The true breakthrough of the 1985 Bill can be found in the change in the language it uses to describe the importance of soil conservation for reasons other than productivity gains” (Lovejoy, 2005). This bill established the Conservation Reserve Program that “moves land formerly in agricultural production into a conservation reserve” (“Summary and Evolution”, n.d.). Any land that posed an environmental threat was put into this reserve, ultimately restricting agricultural activity to occur on such. Soil conservation, decreasing water contamination, improving air quality, sustainable agriculture, and general revisions have encompassed the majority of the new farm bills that have been passed since. Unlike the European Union’s Common Agricultural Policy, farm bill reformations and modifications are not nearly as drastic and are changed more frequently, resulting in less significant marginal results.

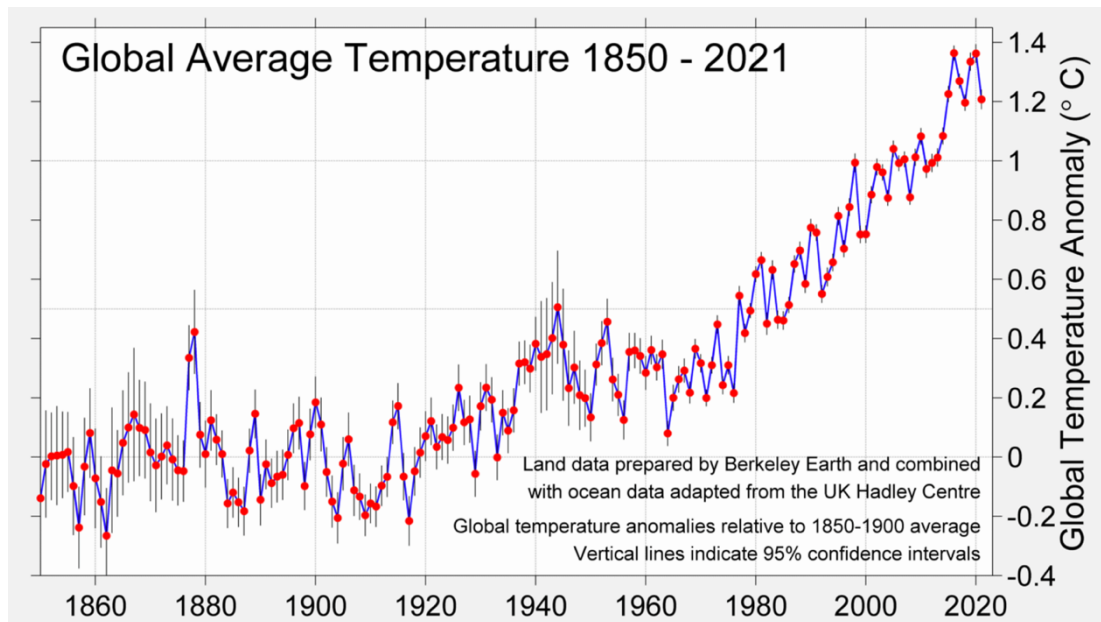
Separate from the United States farm bills, though, are a series of environment and climate change acts and policies specifically intended to control pollution and further environmental sustainability initiatives. The first of several pieces of legislature was the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1948, the first Act meant to combat water pollution in America by increasing awareness and setting quality standards (“The United States”, 2017). The pioneering Act for air pollution, the Air Pollution Control Act, passed nearly twenty years later in 1963, and in 1967, the first piece of legislation was passed to protect endangered species. In 1970, though, President Nixon formed the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA), making it “mandatory for federal agencies to look at the environmental impact of actions before making a decision” (“The United States”, 2017). In general, by understanding the effect decisions have on the environment, agencies, businesses, and individuals can not only identify areas in which their practices are causing the world harm, but they can also begin the search to replace such practices with ones that are more sustainable and prevent future harmful effects that would have been caused if not identified. Shortly after the 1970 mandate, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was formed. According to *The United States Environment and Climate Change Timeline* (2017), the purpose of the EPA was to protect both humans and the environment from harm while simultaneously working to resolve environmental issues. With a protection agency in place to monitor the progress and maintenance of the Acts while also seeking out solutions to environmental discrepancies, the United States could now make effective improvements in the sustainability sector of their government.

More recently, however, climate change and average global temperature have been increasingly worrisome among the environmental community, and for good reason. The graph below from Rohde (2022) shows the global average temperature trend for the years 1850 through 2021. It can be observed that even in the last 40 years alone, the average temperature has increased significantly, despite the climate change efforts made previously in United States history. The United States Environmental Protection Agency is continuously trying to understand, measure, and communicate this threat while taking control in a sustainable way. To do so, the EPA uses various tactics to measure greenhouse gas emissions, reduce and regulate them through industry collaboration, invest in resources, and analyze the potential impacts climate change can have on both the economy and physical well-being to prepare for all potential outcomes (“US EPA”, 2021). Luckily, the EPA is not the only one working to reduce the risk of climate change; President Joseph Biden and his administration have also showed commitment by issuing an Executive Order in 2021 in which he “laid out a vision for a United States government-wide approach and a set of coordinated domestic actions to address the risks and

opportunities posed by climate change” (“Action Plan”, n.d.). In a summary provided by the Regulations website, in his Executive Order, President Biden:

“declared the Administration’s policy to listen to the science; to improve public health and protect our environment; to ensure access to clean air and water; to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; to bolster resilience to the impacts of climate change; and to prioritize both environmental justice and the creation of the well-paying union jobs necessary to deliver on these goals.”

With the Federal government continuously trying to preserve and restore the environment, critical issues—like the effects of climate change—may be able to be reversed before it is too late.



While trying to prepare for ominous environmental threats such as climate change and global warming can be extremely challenging due to the magnitude of the damage, agricultural sustainability policies in the United States are simpler to prepare for. Farm bills are periodic in nature, and they are reviewed and modified every few years. While ideally the bill should attempt to solve a long-term agricultural issue, many preceding farm bills do none of the sort and only temporarily solve a given issue. Nevertheless, the United States Government is forward looking and has developed the Global Food Security Strategy for the years 2022-2026 in an attempt to end hunger, poverty, and malnutrition worldwide. This strategy has five specific areas that will ultimately contribute to more sustainable ways of sourcing and providing food. U.S. Agency for International Development (2022) outlines these five as such: equity and inclusion; an ambitious approach to climate change; proactively countering the COVID-19 pandemic’s long-term effects; integration of conflict mitigation, peacebuilding, and social cohesion; and working across the entire food system. The first area—equity and inclusion—consists of working together locally to “intentionally engage” all who can and want to participate in the future sustainability measures. Similar to Ireland’s CAP Strategic Plan, the United States has also recognized the importance of growing from the bottom upward. The second highlight attempts to

“address short- and long-term effects of climate change that can undermine agricultural practices, labor, and livestock, prioritizing locally led solutions” (“U.S. Government Global”, 2022). Preparing for the unfortunate fate of unstoppable climate change is extremely important in times like the ones we are currently living in; although there have been many attempts at reducing the effects of climate change, the world is simply advancing more rapidly than we can preserve it. If the effects of climate change is inevitable, prioritizing how to handle these effects when they arise will lead to more effective operations down the line. While climate change has been a growing concern for many years, the COVID-19 pandemic placed unprecedented challenges that are still requiring special attention. The new Global Food Security Strategy has plans to fight back against COVID-19’s effects of food system disruptions and economy setbacks. Conflict mitigation, peacebuilding, and social cohesion is the fourth area the Strategy will address, integrating “social, political, and local dynamics within programming to improve food security and nutrition outcomes and build resilience” (“U.S. Governmental Global”, 2022). Finally, working across the entire food system is fifth important improvement the Global Food Security Strategy plans to integrate. Considering the entire agricultural supply chain not only allows for a better understanding about where food originates and the logistical challenges that occur between farm to table, but it also shows where the whole system is lacking and what small changes may greatly improve the process.

To conclude, the United States and Ireland have varying practices to achieve similar objectives. While the European Union has maintained and updated a uniform policy throughout its existence, the United States instead created short-term solutions to a long-term problem. Not only does the United States tend to solve issues in the short-term, the policies between agricultural production and environmental sustainability are not necessarily aligned or remotely relative to the other. While the United States’ new Global Food Security Strategy implements parts of both agricultural and environmental sustainability, much of the history was not based off of integration between the two. By creating farm bills and environmental sustainability policies separately, it is difficult and inefficient to create and maintain two differing sets of objectives and procedures, when instead, they could be used in tandem and create a higher quality result. The 2021 reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy, though, effectively resemble the business concept of aligning goals among shareholders and employees of a company. By allowing member states to create individual strategic plans designed for their own population, the European Union is passively achieving its environmental sustainability goals through the work of the people. The concept of the European Union working in conjunction with the citizens to achieve similar goals outlined in the Common Agricultural Policy is only improving the quality of life for Europeans and the surrounding environment. Ultimately, the United States struggles with producing legislation in the best interest of production, revenue, political standing, and short-term financial goals. Ireland, on the other hand, has been given a guide as to which practices to follow to achieve specific, meaningful goals that invests not only in the country as a whole, but most importantly, in the community. While the governmental structures within the European Union and the United States are very different, they both ultimately are attempting to create a positive impact on the sustainability of agriculture and the environment as a whole. In the end, both nations are beginning to understand that the greatest impact occurs when working together with those directly affected by agriculture and the grounds on which we walk. While many of the environmental issues we see today cannot even be stopped by one nation alone, the Common Agriculture Policy, Ireland’s CAP Strategic Plan, the Global Food Security Strategy, and ever-changing farm bills are just a few steps in the right direction.

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