

# FEEDING THE FUTURE WITH CANADIAN TECHNOLOGY

## Case Study Summary - Ireland

Ireland is a global technology hub – home to headquarters of eight of the top ten US technology companies and sixteen of the world's top twenty software companies. It ranks highly in terms of ease of doing business – particularly in terms of favourable tax treatment for businesses. Ireland ranked 11th in Forbes' "Best Countries For Business" and 22nd in the Global Innovation Index from the World Intellectual Property Organization, with strong scores in business sophistication, knowledge and technology outputs, and institutions.

In terms of agriculture, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations considers Ireland to have "one of the strongest entrepreneurial ecosystems in Europe," with high rankings in the quality of its agricultural science and animal and dairy science. Over 66% of the country's land is used for agriculture – 99.7% of that being for family farms - with over €19 billion in agri-food exports in 2022. Given the importance of agricultural production to Ireland, support for a thriving agri-food ecosystem is a priority, with a variety of initiatives working to support that goal.

### ***Food Vision 2030***

Due to the important role of the family farm in Ireland's food production system and economy, the country has implemented policies and programs to develop agricultural technologies that support stronger, more sustainable farms and rural communities. The government's strategy, Food Vision 2030, envisions Ireland becoming a world leader in food systems which are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable by 2030, and includes measures to drive innovation, improve cross-sector collaboration, focus on the end user and measurable outputs, shift to a "mission-driven, challenge-focused" innovation system, and take a strategic approach to research and development. Reaching this goal would require:

- Knowledge exchange - researchers engaging with end users, peer-to-peer learning, and translation of research into practice on farms and in businesses
- Resources – market opportunities for farmers and payments for sustainable outcomes (carbon sequestration and storage, energy generation and ecosystem services)
- Rural development – improving broadband availability, increasing employment opportunities, and targeted support for underrepresented groups (young farmers, women in agriculture)

### ***International Partnerships***

Strategic international partnerships have allowed Irish researchers to access various funding avenues, including USDA research funding through the US-Ireland Research and Development Partnership, agricultural research funding through a partnership between the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund and a Silicon Valley VC firm, and others.

Other international initiatives are meant to provide Irish expertise to international partners, including the Irish Forum for International Agricultural Development, which brings together researchers, policymakers and practitioners to maximize the Irish agricultural contribution to poverty reduction in developing countries, and Sustainable Food Systems Ireland, a consultancy group that provides technical assistance to partner countries in agri-food development and regulation.

### ***Building on European Union Initiatives***

Numerous EU programs and policies influence Ireland's sustainable ag-tech efforts, including the Common Agricultural Policy, Common Fisheries Policy, European Green Deal, Circular Economy, Biodiversity Strategies, and the Farm to Fork Strategy (includes EU Carbon Farming Initiative). The Food Vision 2030 Strategy is designed to align with policy directions in the EU's European Green Deal. Ireland is part of the EU's Common

Agriculture Policy; their 2023-2027 Strategic Plan focuses on supporting family farms and climate goals. It includes a number of elements, including:

- a program to support up-skilling and professional development for agricultural advisors
- a program that supports knowledge transfer to farmers
- a funding program for agri-environmental programs, the Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme

### **Entrepreneurship**

Ireland is an attractive place for start-ups, with strong support provided by Local Enterprise Offices, an educated workforce, strong investor communities, and a strong export-oriented agri-food industry, along with government support and favourable tax rates and incentives.

In addition to Ireland's low corporate tax rate, start-ups can claim additional tax relief for their first three years of trading. There are also R&D tax credits of up to 25%, tax deductions related to intellectual property and an Employment Investment Incentive for investors who finance certain start-ups.

### **Academia**

Academic institutions also adopt strategies that support the government's goal of developing ag-tech innovation. University College Dublin, for example, received funding to deliver a new food and agriculture innovation and entrepreneurship training program – building on a number of programs at the institution that already support sustainable ag-tech development, along with strong international partnerships, ambitious recruitment strategies and capacity building, and leadership in research collaborations.

### **Conclusion**

Ireland is focused on becoming a leader in sustainable food systems, recognizing the importance and interconnectedness of economic, environmental and social sustainability. Lessons for Canada include:

- Tax incentives can support start-ups, employment and R&D.
- Consider the agri-food system as a whole, from primary agriculture to processing and beyond
- Put more focus on the end user – create more opportunities for input from farmers and end-users to help move ideas from research to development.
- Take a strategic approach to R&D funding, including seeking greater private sector investment.
- Support workforce development, re-training and knowledge transfer to improve rural prosperity.

### **Relevant Policies**

[CAP Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027 Summary - Ireland](#)

[US-Ireland Research and Development Partnership in Agriculture](#)

[Food Vision 2030: A World Leader in Sustainable Food Systems](#)

For more information:

[Feeding the Future with Canadian Technology Final Report](#)

