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# Independent Resilience Review of Agricultural Shows in Northern Ireland

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*Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.*



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

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# 1. Introduction and Background

Agricultural Shows have a long and prestigious history and are central to the fabric of rural communities in Northern Ireland. Originally established to promote best practice in the breeding of livestock and crop production through the application of science, equipment and mechanisation, today their role covers a far greater spectrum of farming and rural life. They are central in promoting agri-food produce, communicating the farming story to the public, supporting the rural economy together with playing an important part in the social and cultural calendar.

Many businesses and sectors were adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and agricultural shows were certainly not immune. Virtually all shows were forced to cancel in 2020 and only a few being able to take place in 2021. This resulted in shows losing the opportunity to raise vital funds that would help prepare for the 2022 season and beyond.

Appreciating the challenging environment in which show organisers were operating during the 2022 season, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) launched a 'Bounce Back Support Scheme' to offer financial assistance to shows to assist with new or increased costs following the pandemic.

However, it became apparent from engagement with show organisers that there was a need to review the current levels of support available to agricultural shows, to ascertain their longer-term resilience and explore the alignment of shows activities with DAERA's strategic objectives.

Therefore, DAERA commissioned this independent review to identify the opportunities and constraints for the sector, develop a strategic framework and principles within which the sector can adapt, grow and become more prosperous which, in turn, will inform decision making by the industry and policy development within the department.

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## 2. Scope of the Review

The review set out to consider the challenges and opportunities that agricultural shows face, including:

- Identification of the issues facing shows both currently and in the future.
- Determining the current financial and non-financial resilience of shows.
- Identifying current support, including capital support (both financial and non-financial) already accessed by shows from public sector.
- Identifying ways in which shows can assist each other and the wider rural community.
- The extent to which shows should be seen as 'rural' or 'community' shows, rather than agricultural shows.
- The role Government Departments and Local Government can play in supporting shows in the future, subject to applicable State Aid / Subsidy Control rules.
- Identification of future options including the assessment of options in terms of cost, non-monetary and risk.
- Establish a framework that will align future funding / support to shows with the aims and objectives of DAERA.

From this analysis, the review will provide recommendations to enable the industry to respond to the above challenges and opportunities and inform departmental policy making.

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## 3. Methodology

A primary objective of the review was to reach out to all agricultural shows across Northern Ireland and other key stakeholders to gain maximum insight and understanding of their issues and needs. To achieve this, the following methodology was adopted.

### Stage 1 - Identification of the Consultees and Stakeholders

A consultee list was drawn up of all the agricultural shows and ploughing associations in Northern Ireland, including representatives from the Northern Ireland Shows Association (NISA), the Irish Shows Association (ISA) and government officials.

### Stage 2 – Preparation of the Consultation Questions

A list of questions was produced, to use as a framework for the discussions with consultees, designed to capture the information required to satisfy the brief outlined above.

### Stage 3 – Consultation Process

Individual consultations took place with the stakeholders identified in Stage One. A full list of all the consultees is included within Appendix A.

### Stage 4 – Summarising and Presenting an Update Report

The feedback from the Consultation Process was summarised into key themes and an update was provided to DAERA officials. These helped to shape discussions around possible support measures and identified areas where further research was required.

### Stage 5 – Further Research and Engagement

Further research and engagement was conducted, as necessary, to help inform the review, with particular focus on what targeted support would help shows respond to the challenges and opportunities.

### Stage 6 – Final Report

This final report was produced capturing all the findings and outlining recommendations for the way ahead.

## 4. Consultee Overview

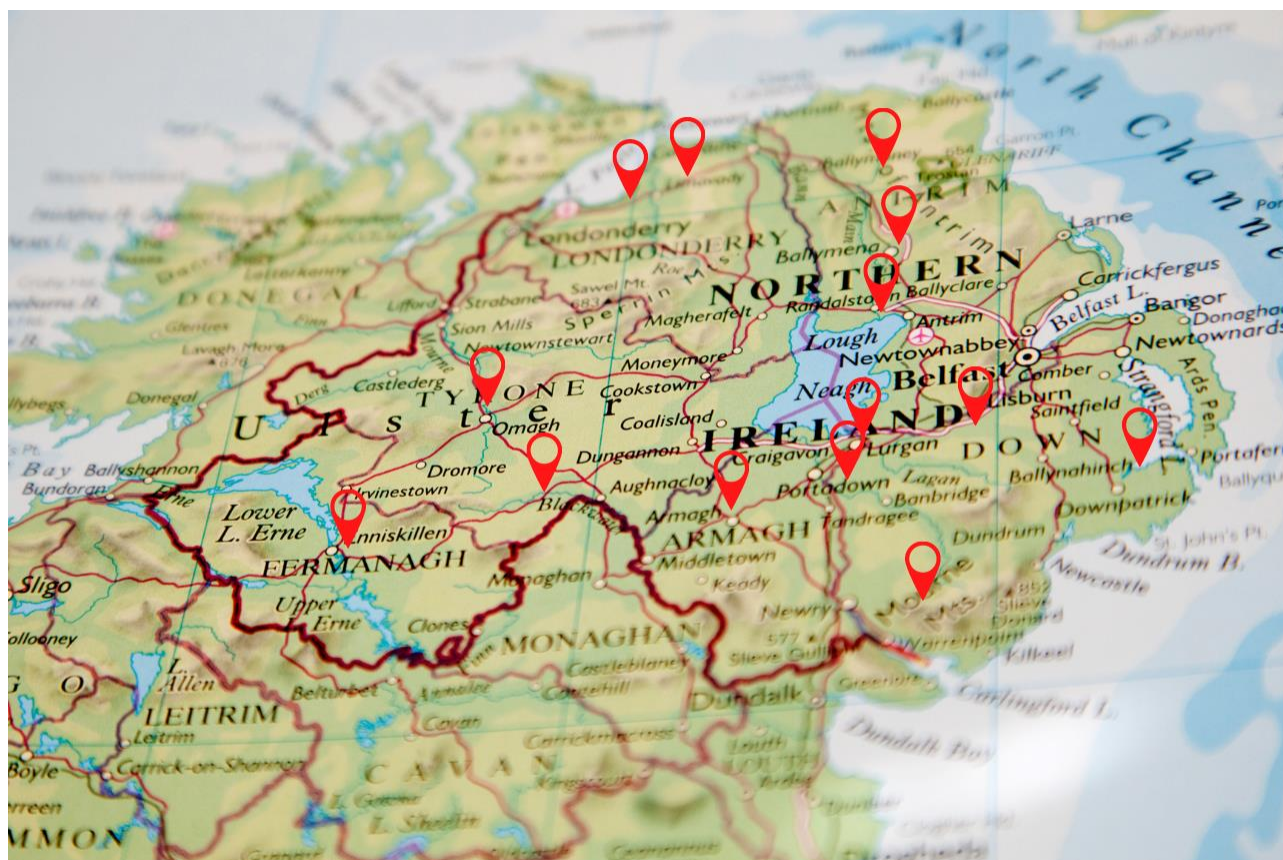
The review consulted with **16 agricultural shows and ploughing associations** across Northern Ireland.

The events span **23 days** each year.

They attract almost **250,000 visitors** annually.

Collectively, they rely on over **1,340 volunteers**.

**2 shows were cancelled** in 2022.



The individual consultations took place during May and June 2022. Many were prior to their shows being held. While every effort has been made to capture feedback and experiences of this year's show season, the timescales for completion of this report meant that not all shows were contacted after their event.

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## 5. Key Issues facing Shows

### Re-building financial reserves following the pandemic

Virtually all shows were forced to cancel in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a consequence, many reported losses ranging from circa £10,000 to £25,000 per year, with two shows stating losses between £40,000 and £50,000 in 2020.

This left their financial reserves depleted. With no income being generated from holding an annual show or any grant funding and continued overhead costs to meet; such as office rents, insurance, utilities, bank charges and affiliation fees etc, show societies had to make use of their financial reserves. While all shows will have different levels of financial reserves and assets, the use of substantial funds over two years has made an impact, severely affecting the financial resilience of some shows. It was also noted that prior to 2020, shows would have reinvested any surplus made to improve facilities and the content of the show recognising the need to constantly evolve and innovate.

With most shows expecting a breakeven position, at best, this year, there was some concern over their ability to re-build reserves to pre-pandemic levels and cover the past losses. Having reserves is essential for any organisation holding outdoor events as income and profit can be severely impacted by bad weather and other risks, such as livestock disease and public health issues.

### Dealing with increasing show staging costs

Many reported that the costs of staging their show had increased by up to 30% due to the impact of inflation. Everything from the cost of hiring equipment including marquees, portable toilets, generators, crowd barriers to security, catering, medical cover and even printing had increased considerably over the past two years.

One consultee said “our medical cover costs have doubled from £500 to £1,000, I am concerned about paying the £500 let alone the increase”.

Coupled with inflationary cost pressures there have been supply chain issues and lack of availability of certain items and contractors. Some contractors have gone out of business due to the pandemic and the shortage of labour has put huge pressure on operators, particularly tentage and catering. Therefore, several shows mentioned that staging this year’s event was both a cost and logistical challenge. Adding to the increased pressure

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of making the show Covid compliant, increased marque sizes, one-way systems, crowd barriers and the hiring in of professional security personal.

In trying to re-cover the increased costs, shows were generally reluctant to increase admission prices, given their desire to encourage visitors to return, thus putting more emphasis on the need to attract other funding and sponsorship.

## Encouraging the return of livestock exhibitors and competitors

The risk of a two-year hiatus without any show is that some livestock exhibitors might decide to stop showing their animals or attend fewer shows in future. Generally, entries of livestock exhibits across cattle, sheep and equine classes were down on 2019 levels, while some poultry competitions were forced to cancel due to Avian Influenza.

The drop in livestock entries was not the case for all classes and all shows but was a common theme in most of the consultations held. The rising cost of showing and getting animals in show condition being an explanation given as well as some exhibitors being out of the swing and routine of showing animals. Movement restrictions around Bovine TB was also viewed as a challenge for shows alongside wider disease risks with one consultee commenting on the choices made by some exhibitors to minimise movements in order to preserve the health status of their herds and flocks etc.

In addition, the increased pressure on the small family farm, labour issues, an ageing farmer population and the need to work off farm, was viewed to have an impact on exhibitor numbers. However, there is a lot of pride from farmers to still come out and show their animals.

Furthermore, preparing show animals can take several months and with the prevalence of the Omicron variant at the beginning of 2022, there remained a degree of uncertainty whether shows would run this season or not, which did not help matters. Some also felt that livestock exhibitors have successfully adopted alternative means of marketing their stock, particularly through social media which could be viewed as more effective than attending shows.

One show secretary felt that there were possibly too many shows in Northern Ireland and suggested perhaps there should only be six, or shows specialise, as currently the support from sponsors, traders and exhibitors is diluted by the number of shows and individuals and companies cannot afford to attend all of them.



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Looking ahead, however, most show organisers were confident that exhibitors would return next season, and this was hoped to be a relatively short-term issue, but shows cannot become complacent as having a strong entry of livestock is an important draw for visitors.

### Attracting sponsorship

The challenge of attracting sponsors was a general theme in the consultations. While it was a mixed picture across the shows with some reporting that their sponsors had been very loyal and one show managing to double their sponsorship from 2019 levels, several stated that companies had withdrawn or reduced their support. One consultee felt that sponsors were prioritising support to the Balmoral Show, at the expense of some of the smaller shows, while others said that sponsorship took longer to negotiate and some companies deciding to sponsor but not bring a trade stand due to staffing costs, particularly over a weekend. There was recognition, however, that some of the sponsorship packages needed re-negotiating with one secretary commenting that “some people have paid £100 for 10 years”.

### Motivating volunteers and attracting youth on committees

All shows rely heavily on volunteer time and effort. Everything from the pre-show planning to the manning of the event on show day. And with no events since 2019, several show secretaries were concerned going into the show season about motivating their volunteer stewards and getting them re-engaged.

Sadly, some committee members died during the pandemic, with the loss of their knowledge, experience and expertise being felt.

Furthermore, with ageing committees, shows are aware of the need to attract greater youth involvement. Most had good relationships with local Young Farmers Clubs and benefited from their involvement, particularly on show day, but the challenge was getting youth to attend committee meetings and share ideas. Some consultees commented that holding Zoom meetings got better youth engagement and attendance.

The comment was also made that YFC members cannot be simply used as “workhorses” to help with show build-up and breakdown. That would deter youth involvement. Instead, they need to feel that their opinions are being valued and they have the freedom to suggest new ideas and ownership of any new initiative at shows. The

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challenge will be for clubs and members to find the time to get involved given their incredibly busy calendar of events and competitions.

Traditionally, the voluntary effort at shows would keep costs down, but the risk of fewer volunteers and youth coming forward is that it might increase the cost base of shows in future.

In addition, there was a level of concern over finding people who would be willing to organise shows. While some secretaries were employed, some on a self-employed contract basis and some voluntary, all noted that in organising events you must have a passion and be willing to go over and above. Finding people who have the means and willingness to do that appears to be getting harder, which is a concern as a number of secretaries stated their intention to step down from their roles, which some have held for circa 25 years.

It is also important to appreciate how the role of Secretary has changed over the years and the pressures on them have increased. The responsibilities which now fall on the show secretary requires considerable knowledge and understanding of all the components of modern event management, to include compliance, health and safety and licencing, which is a lot to expect from a part time or voluntary position.

### Maintaining and growing visitor numbers

With the rising cost of living and pressures on disposable incomes, attracting strong visitor numbers could be a potential challenge going forward. That said, the experiences seen at shows across Northern Ireland this summer would suggest that there is a very strong public appetite to attend shows. People have returned in numbers exceeding that of 2019 in most cases, with favourable weather being a big help, and a strong sense that people across the community are keen to rebuild the social links which have been missing in the past two years and have become more aware of what is on their doorstep.

It appears that, by and large, the pandemic has not affected attendee behaviour with a real sense of excitement and atmosphere reported at the shows this season. Making sure that people return year on year will require a focus on having enough attractions and family entertainment on offer, making people feel that shows offer value for money and a great day out.

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## 6. Financial and Non-Financial Resilience

Agricultural shows in Northern Ireland have been running for almost 200 years. They have endured world wars, outbreaks of foot and mouth disease and political change. Therefore, arguably, they can be described as very resilient. But a show's fortunes can change very quickly. For example, a dysfunctional committee, poor administrative support and leadership, a lack of support from local and central government and bad weather can lead to the depletion of financial reserves that can all threaten the existence of shows. While ensuring a show is on a strong financial foundation with adequate reserves is fundamentally important, it will not, however, guarantee its long-term resilience if any of the issues mentioned above exist.

Before the pandemic struck and the subsequent losses of the past two years, most shows would have described themselves as very resilient, but two years later their outlook has changed to somewhat resilient/potentially weak. This view is mainly held by shows with very limited financial reserves and are concerned by the rising cost pressures and unpredictable income.

Most shows receive funding from their local borough councils, but this is not on an even footing. Funding ranges from £1,000 to £15,000 per show, with the majority receiving around £5,000. One consultee felt that the inconsistency in local council funding can create tension and a divide between shows who receive generous support and those who do not.

Funding from the local borough councils usually require a detailed application with an itemised breakdown of expenditure linked to the staging of the event, such as the hire costs for marquees, generators, toilets, signage and printing etc. From the consultations, it appears that the support is made on the basis of the show's positive impact and contribution to the local economy and community. However, it appears that each council has different set of criteria and grant title, making it difficult to compare and to know what is available to apply for.

In addition, some shows receive funding from the Northern Ireland Regional Food Programme to support more targeted initiatives such as artisan food marquees and cookery demonstrations etc. This has been positively welcomed; enhancing the shows'

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content and link with local food producers, strengthening their educational role to the wider community.

The Balmoral Show also receives support from the Tourist Board for its contribution to the visitor economy.

Some shows receive non-financial public-sector support, with some local councils providing crowd barriers, portable toilets, bins, signage and free waste disposal etc. But this support would be welcomed by all.

During the consultations many of the shows referenced the support shows in the Republic of Ireland receive from their central government. A summary of their funding model is outlined below.

### **Government Funding for Agricultural Shows in the Republic of Ireland**

The Irish Shows Association (ISA) successfully lobbied their central government for core funding to support agricultural shows, which led to a funding package that started in 2018. Initially, €812,000 was set aside for distribution between the 123 agricultural shows in southern Ireland. The ISA is responsible for administering and distributing the funding on behalf of the government.

All shows are entitled to the same maximum sum of money, upon submitting proof of expenditure. Funding is levied at 75% of all show expenses, including the cost of tentage/marquees, mobile toilets, advertisements, schedules, catalogues, road signs, judges' expenses and utilities etc. The only ineligible items are insurance (as the government offers a rebate to shows), prize money (as the government views this as an item that should be sponsored) and any food costs.

Each year the funding pot is reviewed and in 2022, all shows are entitled to a maximum sum of €6,200.

The ISA is responsible for keeping all records and the government will audit 15 or 16 shows at random each year.

The advantages of this funding model are that it is simple to administer, and all shows are treated equally. The disadvantage is that some of the larger shows may lose out in terms of the proportion of their costs they can recover, while some of the smaller shows may not fill their proportion of funding.

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To help shows improve their resilience, a package of support is required. A package of both direct public funding to all shows and other non-financial support measures such as training for grant applications and department personal ‘on the ground’ would be of great benefit. Without this support there is a danger that some shows may not survive, two have already cancelled this year and are unsure of their future plans.

During the consultations process, the point was made repeatedly that shows are largely run by volunteers who give of their free time to keep these long-established traditions alive in their areas. Therefore, any future funding package must be built on both simplicity and accountability, making sure any application process is not overly complicated.

### **Welsh Government Innovation Fund for Agricultural Shows**

In 2021, the Welsh Government established an Innovation Fund whereby agricultural shows of all sizes could apply for financial support to deliver new and innovative solutions to current challenges.

The fund was administered by the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society on behalf of the Welsh Government.

Applications were expected to consider at least one of the following criteria:

- Delivering efficiency, working in partnership, health and safety compliance, use of technology, reducing carbon, communication, waste management, engaging with the next generation, promoting the Welsh language and culture, knowledge transfer and education, improving the customer journey and biosecurity compliance.

Examples of items shows could apply for included:

- Equipment – e.g. cashless payment terminals, electronic tag readers
- Training costs/staff development – e.g. social media or marketing training
- Online communication platform – e.g. organising a virtual show, websites, online entry systems
- Education – e.g. information leaflets, educational days, podcasts
- Community engagement – e.g. introducing new competitions and collaborating with other shows

Note this is a non-exhaustive list.

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An initial funding pot of £25,000 was made available and the aim was to support as many shows as possible and where the fund could not support the total cost of a project, a contribution was offered. The fund was oversubscribed, and further funding was made available by the Welsh Government, bringing the funding pot to approximately £38,000. There have not been any further rounds of funding following the initial one, but it is understood that discussions are ongoing about a potential further round in future.

### **€250,000 Funding for New “Breeder’s Choice” Series in the Republic of Ireland**

In May this year, the Irish Minister for Agriculture announced a multi-year investment in the agricultural showing scene within the Republic of Ireland. Over next five years, the Minister announced that €250,000 will be invested in the grassroots showing sector with the rolling out of a brand-new class aimed at showcasing the best of beef breeding heifers. The new class will be administered by the Irish Shows Association (ISA).

The “Breeder’s Choice” class will be open to four and five star breeding heifers in two separate classes – traditional breeds and continental breeds. Pedigree as well as commercial heifers are eligible for the classes. Over the course of the summer, more than 60 shows will benefit from the new class.

The requirement for four and five star in-calf or maiden heifers aligns to the aims of the Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP) and the incoming Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme (SCBP) in the next CAP to increase the number of these heifers in the suckler herd. Four and five star animals in the suckler herd can bring greater milk as well as overall efficiency to beef animals.

Jim Harrison, secretary of the Irish Shows Association welcomed the announcement by the Minister. “We are delighted to have partnered with the Minister and the Department on this exciting new initiative which will see a major investment made in our network of shows. It gives farmers, breeders and handlers great confidence in the show circuit going forward with this initial five-year investment in the Breeder’s Choice class. I now urge all farmers and handlers to get their quality four and five star heifers out and into their local show this summer to avail of this exciting new showing class.”

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## Rules and Conditions of the Competition

- 1) The competition will be run at every show that has cattle classes.
- 2) This competition is open to all Continental / Traditional Genotype 4\* or 5\* heifers, suitable to make a Suckler Cow.
- 3) Heifers may be in-calf or maiden. All heifers must be between 12 months and 24 months of age on the date of the show.
- 4) Each heifer can attend up to five shows. If a heifer enters more than five shows, she will automatically be disqualified.
- 5) All heifers must be haltered trained and led by a competent adult.
- 6) The foregoing rules should be read in conjunction with ISA General Rules.

Entry fee to show: €10

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## 7. Shows helping each other and the community

### Shows helping each other

Several shows across Northern Ireland already co-operate and help each other with stewarding duties on show day. Others assist by renting or loaning equipment such as sheep pens, poultry cages and handwashing stations to other shows. Also, the NISA hold annual meetings and workshops where show organisers and volunteers can exchange ideas, share experiences, templates and best practice, help problem solve, compare notes and show dates etc. This is also done on a more informal local basis where secretaries of nearby shows would share information and liaise with each other on a regular basis, with examples of WhatsApp groups being used.

In addition, NISA runs four championships – beef, dairy, sheep and Clydesdales, which rotates each year and helps to encourage more exhibitors to attend shows.

While shows were appreciative of the support network of NISA, many felt that more could be done collaboratively. Comparisons were made with the ISA who have the benefit of more resources (and have some members in Northern Ireland). For example, the ISA provides a group insurance cover for its member shows in the south and runs a number of programmes, such as their newly piloted Youth Programme aimed at getting more young people involved in shows and introducing new ideas.

Other suggestions included shows adopting a collaborative approach with the hire of some of the major equipment, such as marquees, with the aim of reducing costs, and sharing card payment terminals, benching and barriers etc. Some believed there was an opportunity to introduce a volunteer/steward recognition programme, to recognise and reward long service.

#### **Lantra Rural Event Training**

Aimed at supporting agricultural, sporting, cultural and social event organisers across the UK following the pandemic, Lantra worked in conjunction with a number of bodies to develop a new Rural Event Training course.

It is recognised that it is important for all event organisers and safety officers to be aware of their responsibilities and legal obligations in terms of event safety, planning,



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risk assessments and insurance. Therefore, this course was designed to ensure that everyone involved knows how to deal with any situation and what actions to take before, during and after an event.

The course content focuses on the issues that need to be considered when planning any rural event, including health and safety, dealing with accidents and emergencies, event administration, site management, livestock and equine management, dealing with animal movement, welfare and biosecurity, marketing, and finance.

The course is delivered online, inclusive of a pre-recorded webinar and six short e-learning modules; each module has an assessment at the end of it. Learners have the option of completing the full course or the mandatory modules only (mandatory modules include health & safety, site management and administration); the modules completed are denoted on the downloadable certificate awarded at the end of the course.

The course can be studied at the learners' own pace at a time convenient for them. Learners can access the modules as many times as they wish to reinforce their learning and make sure the quizzes are passed successfully. The cost of the course is £30+VAT per person.

More information can be found on the Lantra website – <https://elearning.lantra.co.uk/register/103/55>

## Shows helping the wider community

Shows are such an important part of our cultural life, bringing rural communities together and tackling the issues around isolation and mental health. They also deliver significant economic benefit, and their loss was felt all across Northern Ireland during the pandemic. They provide a showcase for competitors' farm animals, horses, food businesses, home industries and schools exhibits and provide a platform for local businesses to show and sell their wares. Most importantly, shows provide a welcoming environment where rural and urban families can come together, bridging the divide between town and country. They are important cross-community events, with opportunities to build links with local sporting organisations to further strengthen the cross-community element of shows. During the consultations, a comparison was made to sport villages which are included within some shows across the UK.

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## 8. ‘Rural’ or ‘Agricultural’ Show?

Shows are increasingly seen as community events where rural and urban dwellers come together. While it is clear that shows appeal to traditional farming communities, there is a growing number of visitors from non-farming backgrounds. Livestock competitions rank highly as one of the most important attractions for visitors, together with family-based activities and entertainment. Shows have had to evolve to remain relevant to the communities they serve and introduce new elements to keep attracting visitors.

Recognising the changing visitor profile at shows and the need to keep their visitor appeal, several comments were made that the show must be a “family day out” and people need to be “entertained” and “we’re in the entertainment business”. It is a key part of the strategy to get people through the gate and to boost income.

One of the positives to come out of the pandemic has been in the increased public interest in the food system. This growing appetite to learn more about the land and how food is produced is an opportunity for shows and ploughing matches. Education has always been an important component of the shows, originally it was educating farmers on new practices and now it is to educate the public about agriculture and creating a strong link between farmers and non-farmers.

As generations become further away from the land and emotionally disconnected from farming, we’re seeing people question the ethics of eating meat, the environmental impact of livestock and the welfare of farmed animals. The role of shows in bridging that divide is becoming ever more important.

Therefore, events must continue to find a balance between evolving to meet the needs of its visitors and retaining their traditional agricultural appeal.

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## 9. Role of Government

### Local Government

As mentioned in section six, several borough councils support their local shows, but the level of funding varies greatly. Ideally, all shows would be treated equally by all local councils, but that framework does not currently exist and may be difficult to implement given the different policies and budgetary pressures within each local authority.

All shows who currently receive financial and non-financial support from their local councils value that support and want to see it continue, and in some cases increase to have greater parity with other shows.

### DAERA

DAERA currently provides support to agricultural shows in a number of ways. Firstly, it provides sponsorship to shows, although the sums are relatively nominal with only £5,000 shared across all shows, linked to visitor numbers.

Secondly, DAERA would have a presence at shows by bringing a trade stand. Before the pandemic, DAERA would attend eight shows per year, on a rotational basis, while attending the Balmoral Show and the Royal Ulster Winter Fair every year. This year, however, DAERA has taken the decision to attend every show during the 2022 season. Attendance at the shows is viewed as important outreach for the department in communicating and supporting farmers, along with being a public statement of support to shows.

Thirdly, DAERA operate the Regional Food Programme to raise the profile of quality regional food and a number of shows have benefited from this programme to help fund food halls and ancillary activities.

Finally, a Bounce Back Scheme was launched earlier this year to support shows as the return following the pandemic. Funding of up to a maximum of £10,000 per show was made available to meet any new and/or increased costs in connection with running the show in 2022. Eligible costs include advertising, hire of marquees, generators, portable toilets, hand sanitation stations, signage, barriers, contactless payment equipment, security, health and safety and others.

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The Scheme was open to those shows which promote agricultural activities and ploughing competition associations who met the following criteria:

- Listed on the Northern Ireland Shows Association schedule for 2022 or holding a show in 2022, or
- received DAERA sponsorship funding during 2019.

Shows were required to provide copies of financial documents detailing the associated expenditure before any funding can be released, together with declaring any funding received from other public-sector bodies which would be taken into account as a part of the financial support assessment.

Initially the closing date was at the end of May, but that was extended by a month given the timing pressures on show organisers who were in the middle of pre-show planning and preparations.

There was a level of expectation that the shows would receive £10,000 each to help them ‘Bounce Back’ from the pandemic, however the level of information and criteria required by the application process was viewed by some as complicated with no guarantee of being eligible to receive the full amount.

## Views of Consultees

All consultees felt that there was a role for DAERA in supporting shows and believed that more could be done. The announcement of the Bounce Back Scheme raised a level of expectation that shows could receive £10,000 each, which most believed is a reasonable sum to support the running costs of shows going forward. One consultee said that “the department must give immediate support” to those shows which are struggling financially.

When asked what their rationale was for seeking financial support, there was a strong consensus over the role of shows in supporting the rural economy and bringing communities together. Shows deliver on a number of DAERA’s strategic objectives and serve an important function in informing the public about food production and tackling issues around rural isolation. They showcase to the general public the high standards involved in food production, linking livestock to food, educating non-farming visitors and build support to the local agri-food sector. Ploughing associations also believed that

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funding would be essential to preserve the art of ploughing and farming identity and heritage of Northern Ireland.

When asked what additionality they could deliver should any funding be forthcoming from DAERA, some responded by saying that ensuring their survival was their number one priority and could not guarantee much additionality as they re-build from the pandemic. Others re-iterated their important role in bridging the divide between urban and rural communities and funding would help them introduce new elements to the show, thus ensuring they continue to evolve and maintain their relevance and appeal.

There was a strong desire to see a framework implemented offering equal funding for shows, ensuring all shows were treated the same. One consultee asked for the support from local councils to be standardised, giving equal backing to the shows in their areas. And several mentioned funding to support youth initiatives would help with the long-term resilience of shows.

The decision of DAERA to attend all shows was welcomed and shows would like to see this being continued. The point was made with communication increasingly going online, shows provide an excellent platform for DAERA officials to meet farmers face-to-face, and in a more casual setting rather than a formal office environment. Equally, having a stand at a show enables farmers to talk to their local representative building valuable relationships and understanding.

With regards to non-financial support, several of the consultees said that support from DAERA officials in offering shows more 'manpower' in completing permits, movement licences, forms and biosecurity advice at shows would be appreciated. Equally, more health and safety support or liaison would be beneficial from local councils. Several commented that the presence of the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Edwin Poots MLA, at show launches and shows this summer was appreciated.

## DAERA's Strategic Priorities

In considering future support, the review was tasked with developing a framework that will align any funding with the aims and objectives of DAERA. According to DAERA's Business Plan for 2021-22, success for the department would see them deliver their core purpose which is to have "sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape

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valued by everyone” and, thereby, improving the lives of the people living in Northern Ireland.

To achieve this purpose, the department has four key strategic priorities which align to the Programme for Government Outcomes.

<b>1. Economic Growth</b>	<b>2. Natural Environment</b>	<b>3. Rural Communities</b>	<b>4. Exemplar Organisation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•To enhance our food, forestry, fishery and farming sectors using efficient and environmentally sustainable models which support economic growth.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•To protect and enhance our natural environment now and for future generations whilst advocating its value to and wellbeing for all.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•To champion thriving rural communities that contribute to prosperity and wellbeing.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•To be an exemplar, people focused organisation, committed to making a difference for the people we serve.</li></ul>

The work of shows fit squarely into these four priorities. They support economic growth for the agri-food sector through competitions and displays, they champion the value of being in countryside to people’s health and well-being, they bring rural communities together and provide a unique platform for DAERA to be an exemplar people focused organisation in providing face-to-face interaction with farmers and the public.

There is also an opportunity for shows to play a leadership role in driving forward the industry, introducing innovation at its events whether they are new competitions and displays aimed at increasing productivity on farms, or driving excellence through recognising the skills required for environmental sustainability, through to supply chain integration by encouraging producers to engage with consumers thus informing people about the food system.

All this fits within the overarching agenda of having sustainability at the heart of DAERA’s activities.

Shows will also need to evolve to remain commercially relevant in the context of the changes that will happen to farming in the years ahead, including the changes to support payments, dealing with changing trade patterns, changing public tastes and dietary beliefs, increased regulation over biodiversity, air and water quality and the impact of climate change and debates over land use etc.

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From consulting with the department, their view is to see any future funding not only recognise the work which is already done by shows, but a strong focus on ‘adding value’ and rewarding additionality, justifying the use of public money to the taxpayer. And with the tightening of public budgets and possible reduction in the block grant, pressure on the levels of funding potentially available means that the criteria for future support needs to be strong and clear. Furthermore, collaboration with the shows sector will be key, to ensure their long-term resilience.

### Minister’s ability to award grants

As part of the review, it is worth noting the Minister’s ability to award grant funding to shows is underpinned by statute, as outlined in section 12 of the Agriculture Act (Northern Ireland) 1949.

#### **Agriculture Act (Northern Ireland) 1949**

##### ***12 Miscellaneous grants for agricultural purposes.***

The Ministry may, with the approval of the Ministry of Finance, make grants on such terms and subject to such conditions and for such purposes as the Ministry thinks proper—

- a) to any society established for the purpose of holding agricultural, horticultural, poultry, farm produce and industrial shows, displays or exhibitions, and such other shows, displays, exhibitions and competitions as the Ministry may from time to time determine; and
- b) to any association, institution or club, not being an association, institution or club operated for profit, which has amongst its objects the development of agriculture, horticulture or apiculture or of any branch thereof or the welfare or training of farmers or agricultural workers or of women whose work is associated with farming activities.

### State Aid / Subsidy Control Rules

As mentioned in the scope of this review, any future support to shows would be subject to state aid and subsidy control rules. Therefore, it is useful to set out those rules briefly in this report.

Financial assistance provided by public authorities must comply with applicable State aid / Subsidy control rules. Any financial assistance offered to shows would be subject to

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the terms of Regulation (EU) 1407/2013 (the industrial de minimis regulation). This allows a business or entity to receive up to €200,000 (or sterling equivalent) over a rolling three year period.

Shows must declare any de minimis aid they have received in the last three fiscal years that was awarded either under the terms of Regulation (EU) 1407/2013 or Article 364(4) of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement).

Potentially, any financial or in-kind assistance from a public authority may be awarded as a deminimis aid. Any aid received as part of this measure will be relevant to declare if you subsequently apply for aid from another measure that provides aid under de minimis rules.

Furthermore, the department is aware that given the support currently made available by local councils, the regional food programme and others, there is a need to have safeguards in place to avoid issues around double funding and making sure any future funding framework is in line with the principles of managing public money.



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## 10. Potential Framework for Future Funding – Options

A number of potential options for how a framework of future funding for shows could be structured is set out below. According to the scope of the review, any funding and support would need to align with the aims and objectives of DAERA.

### Option 1 – Core Funding to All Shows

Offer core funding to all shows with monies distributed equally to support their running costs. The core funding would also be linked to a set of outcomes, in line with the strategic priorities of DAERA. Examples of such outcomes could include:

- the introduction of new competitions to recognise environmental skills and/or sustainable farming practises,
- displays of new equipment and technology to improve productivity on farms,
- initiatives linking food and farming; improving supply chain integration,
- educational content and dedicated areas at shows helping to inform the public about farming and food production,
- ensuring the highest standards of animal health and welfare,
- efforts to lower the carbon footprint of shows,
- outreach work to contribute towards the prosperity and wellbeing of rural communities,
- the completion of mandatory training by secretaries and volunteer stewards, to improve shows’ resilience and viability.

These are merely examples and shows would not be expected to meet all of them. The outcomes would need to be set at a level which are proportionate to the level of funding on offer and can be easily evidenced through the scheme application/reporting process.

In terms of the level of core funding, it would depend on the budget available. The Bounce Back Scheme had a budget of £200,000 but that is understood to be a ‘one off’ scheme to help shows return this season with no guarantee of similar funding levels going forward. That said, most shows had a level of expectation of core funding in the region of £10,000 each because the review fell in the middle of the Bounce Back Scheme application window. Also, some shows referred to the level of funding being offered in

the Republic of Ireland, which was €6,200 (approx. £5,320) per show in 2022. Therefore, most consultees believed that the level of core funding should be between £5,000 and £10,000 per show per year. That, however, would be subject to funding availability within DAERA.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All shows would be supported on an equitable basis.</li><li>• It would provide much needed support to the ongoing running costs of shows, while also helping DAERA deliver on its strategic objectives.</li><li>• It would encourage shows to evolve and introduce new elements and activities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It would require a comprehensive application process and submission of supporting documentation to adhere to the principles of managing public money; this may require additional effort on the part of show secretaries and may provoke responses highlighting limited staffing resource issues and the ability of shows to undertake this additional work.</li><li>• If the conditions attached to the funding and outcomes are too demanding, shows may be put off from applying.</li></ul>

## Option 2 – A Two-Tier Funding Model

Implement a two-tier funding model, consisting of:

### Tier 1 – Core Funding

A core funding layer where all shows are supported on an equitable basis to support their running costs, linked to a set of outcomes as outlined above.

### Tier 2 – Innovation Fund

A second layer of additional funding open to individual applications to support targeted initiatives, competitions or activities that align with DAERA’s strategic priorities and drives innovation at shows. The department could offer a list of possible funding items to choose from, alongside the ability for shows to submit their own ideas, that are in line

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with the broader objectives. The fund could also be open to multi-year projects, subject to the necessary reporting and management.

Examples of funding items and projects could include:

- new technology and software to drive efficiency at shows,
- education days and collaboration with local schools,
- new competitions and awards recognising the key skills required by farmers in the future, for example improving soil health, carbon sequestration, modern breeding techniques, use of data and sustainable farming practises etc.
- hosting international events and championships, such as international shearing and ploughing competitions etc.
- youth engagement programmes and community initiatives to attract younger people to get involved with shows (for example creating links with organisations such as the YFCU, the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and Princes Countryside Fund etc.)
- more events and activities outside the main show,
- improved marketing campaigns including social media, press releases etc.
- commissioning visitor surveys to capture valuable data,
- create a carbon and waste reduction plan; and pathways to net zero,
- facilitation with strategic planning for shows and societies,
- hosting panel discussions on the future of farming,
- bursaries to fund travel scholarships to learn from other shows and fund attendance at show-related conferences including those organised by the ASAO (Association of Shows and Agricultural Organisation), the RASC (Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth) and the IAFE (International Association of Fairs and Expositions), for example.

These are purely examples to stimulate thought, discussion and ideas.

Assuming the budget was split 50/50 between tier one and tier two, that would enable core funding of approximately £5,000 per show, with a further fund of £100,000 open to individual applications. Some sort of cap and scoring criteria would need to be developed to assess each application. However, should the total budget be in the region

of £100,000, consideration may be given to offering circa £3,000 per show as core funding and reducing the tier two funding pot to approximately £50,000.

### Pros

- All shows would be supported on an equitable basis within tier one.
- It would provide much needed support to the ongoing running costs of shows, while also helping DAERA deliver on its strategic objectives.
- It would encourage shows to evolve and introduce new elements and activities, to remain relevant and viable.
- It would encourage shows to be even more innovative and ambitious in pitching ideas for support through tier two.
- Tier-two funding could potentially offer more targeted support to deliver more 'added value' to DAERA.

### Cons

- It would require a comprehensive application process and submission of supporting documentation to adhere to the principles of managing public money; this may require additional effort on the part of show secretaries and may provoke responses highlighting limited staffing resource issues and the ability of shows to undertake this additional work.
- If the conditions attached to the funding and outcomes are too demanding, shows may be put off from applying.
- What if tier two is over or under subscribed? Will the additional funding be attractive enough to encourage applications from shows?

## Option 3 – A Single ‘Innovation Fund’

Offer funding on the basis of an ‘Innovation Fund’ open to individual applications for targeted initiatives, competitions or activities that align with DAERA’s strategic priorities and help drive innovation at shows. The Department could offer a list of possible funding items to choose from, alongside the ability for shows to submit their own ideas, that are in line with the broader objectives. This would be a fund similar to Tier Two in option two above, but with no core funding for each show.

Pros
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would encourage shows to evolve and introduce new elements and activities, to remain relevant and viable.</li> <li>• It could potentially offer greater 'additionality' and 'added value' to DAERA.</li> </ul>

Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would require a comprehensive application process and submission of supporting documentation to adhere to the principles of managing public money; this may require additional effort on the part of show secretaries and may provoke responses highlighting limited staffing resource issues and the ability of shows to undertake this additional work.</li> <li>• Some shows might not receive any funding, and therefore feel unfairly treated.</li> </ul>

### Option 4 – Continue to do the same

Alternatively, the Department may choose to continue to offer the 'pre-pandemic' level of support, which includes sponsorship of £5,000 distributed across all eligible shows, attendance at shows with a trade stand on a rotational basis, in addition to ongoing Regional Food Programme funding.

Pros
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An established model with no additional resource capacity required within DAERA to administer.</li> </ul>

Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other than the good work achieved through the regional food programme, it offers little in terms of creativity and incentivisation for shows to innovate and become more resilient in the future.</li> </ul>

A summary of all the options and their funding requirements is included within Appendix B.

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## Administration

In implementing any new framework for funding and support, its administration and accountability must be considered. In accordance with any programme of public funding, each option would be subject to an application process, submission of supporting documentation, compliance with state aid rules and the avoidance of double funding. This has an administrative burden on both the applicant and the body administering the framework for the government. From the consultations held, the need for minimal bureaucracy and simplicity was a central theme. Also, from discussions with DAERA, there may be limited internal capacity to manage a new framework, which might open the opportunity for an external body or umbrella organisation to administer the funding on behalf of government.

Other important points to consider in implementing any new framework include:

- Any new funding should be complimentary to the existing public sector funding already in place.
- A policy should be adopted for the assessment of the level of reserves held by a show and its financial viability when processing a funding application. The point was made during the review that public money should not be used to merely add to organisational reserves and questions were raised over the appropriateness of funding organisations which were not financially viable.
- Consideration should be given to how additional funding for multi-year projects would be managed most effectively. Would all funding be released in annual increments with reporting requirements and would increments be conditional on certain targets being met from the previous year?
- A communication plan would need to be developed to help inform shows about how the new framework will operate, providing support as necessary to ease the application process.

These points and questions would need to be worked through by DAERA, striking the right balance between being accountable for managing public money and minimising the layers of administration.

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# 11. Conclusions

The network of agricultural shows and ploughing competitions is the backbone of so many rural communities across Northern Ireland. They serve an important function in promoting the agri-food industry and fostering a positive public image of farming to an increasingly urban audience.

Their loss in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic was felt, both socially and economically, in the communities and regions they serve. Their forced cancellation also left the financial reserves of shows severely depleted with several reporting losses between £20,000 and £40,000 over the two years, and some in excess of this.

Despite the difficulties of the past two years, all shows (apart from two) made a return in 2022. It is true that show organisers approached the 2022 show season with some degree of trepidation given the impact of rising inflation, with show staging costs reported to have increased by up to 30%, adding further financial pressure on shows which, in some cases, had little reserves to absorb further losses, and a degree of uncertainty over how many sponsors, traders, exhibitors, stewards and visitors would return.

During the one-to-one consultations, the key issues facing shows were noted as:

- re-building financial reserves following the pandemic,
- dealing with increasing show staging costs,
- encouraging the return of livestock exhibitors and competitors,
- attracting sponsorship,
- motivating volunteers and attracting youth on committees, and
- maintaining and growing visitor numbers.

However, the experiences of the shows held this year have been reassuringly positive. Despite the challenges outlined above, visitors returned in numbers with many shows reporting attendance figures in excess of 2019, thus proving the public appetite to support shows, the desire to re-build social links and the growing interest in the food system.

With regards to public sector funding, shows currently receive support from a number of different sources including some sponsorship from DAERA, the regional food programme, grant funding from local borough councils and NI Tourism. Support from

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local borough councils varied considerably between shows with funding ranging from £1,000 to £15,000 per show, with the majority receiving around £5,000, and some benefiting from in-kind support.

Many consultees referred to the funding model adopted in the Republic of Ireland where the ISA is responsible for distributing funding on behalf of the government, on an equal entitlement basis of €6,200 per show in 2022.

With regards to the work of DAERA, shows can play a key role in delivering on its strategic priorities. They support economic growth for the agri-food sector through competitions and displays, they champion the value of being in the countryside to people's health and well-being, they bring rural communities together and provide a unique platform for DAERA to be an exemplar people focused organisation in providing face-to-face interaction with farmers and the public.

There is also an opportunity for shows to play a leadership role in driving forward the industry, introducing innovation at its events whether they are competitions and displays aimed at increasing productivity on farms, or driving excellence through the recognising the skills required for environmental sustainability, through to supply chain integration by encouraging producers to engage with consumers thus informing people about the food system.

All this fits within the overarching agenda of having sustainability at the heart of DAERA's activities, building a compelling business case to support shows in future.

Now is an exciting time for the shows sector, re-building from the pandemic offers an opportunity for change and introduce new elements. A new funding package would provide a welcome boost and incentive to take advantage of this opportunity.

That said, funding alone will not secure the long-term resilience of shows. There is a continued need for shows to collaborate, share knowledge and experience, take advantage of training support and work with other membership organisations to increase youth engagement.

All in all, the role of shows in championing the very highest standards in farming and building a community that understands and values the agriculture of Northern Ireland is more important now than it has ever been.



## 12. Recommendations

It is recommended that DAERA:

1

- Launches a new multi-year programme of funding and support for agricultural shows, with outcomes aligned to its strategic objectives. Possible options for the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to consider have been outlined in section 10, with the preferred being option two.

2

- The administration of the programme is handled by an external body on behalf of the government. The body could offer greater communication between shows and government, and potentially develop a framework whereby all public sector funding could be co-ordinated and aligned in order to maximise the benefits.

3

- Ensures that all application processes are simple and straightforward, recognising the part-time and voluntary nature of show organisers.

4

- Includes a training element as a condition and/or pre-requisite to any funding, to build greater resilience within shows and promote enhanced skills amongst show organisers and volunteer stewards.

5

- Encourages greater collaboration between shows to help with long-term resilience. And further strengthening of the links between NISA and other membership organisations such as YFCU, UFU, ISA and ASAO etc, with a particular focus on increasing youth involvement at shows, lobbying capacity, leadership and direction.

6

- Commissions an economic impact assessment to determine the positive economic contribution of shows across Northern Ireland, providing useful evidence to underpin ongoing support and to establish for every pound invested in shows what return is yielded.

7

- Continues to attend all shows with a trade stand and consider offering the services of DAERA officials or vets to support shows with licensing and biosecurity advice etc.

8

- Finally, the framework of support and funding is reviewed in three or five years' time to assess what elements have worked well and what might need changing.

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## Appendix A: Consultees

Association of Show and Agricultural Organisations (ASAO)

Antrim Show

Armagh Show

Ballymena Show

Ballymoney Show

Balmoral Show

Castlewellan Show

Clogher Valley Show

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)

Fermanagh County Show

Irish Shows Association (ISA)

Killyleagh Show

Londonderry/Limavady Show

Lantra

Lurgan Show

Omagh Show

Mullhead Ploughing

Northern Ireland Ploughing Association

Northern Ireland Shows Association (NISA)

Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth (RASC)

Royal Ulster Beef & Lamb Championships

Royal Ulster Winter Fair

Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster (YFCU)

The following shows were also invited to take part in the review.

Newry Show

Saintfield Show

## Appendix B: Funding Options Summary Table

Option	Funding Requirement	Example Outcomes	Pros	Cons
<b>1 – Core Funding to All Shows</b>	At £5,000 per show and assuming there would be 18 eligible shows/events, the funding requirement would be <b>£90,000</b> , plus any further costs in administering the package of support.	Examples of potential outcomes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the introduction of new competitions to recognise environmental skills and/or sustainable farming practises,</li> <li>displays of new equipment and technology to improve productivity on farms,</li> <li>initiatives linking food and farming; improving supply chain integration,</li> <li>educational content and dedicated areas at shows helping to inform the public about farming and food production,</li> <li>ensuring the highest standards of animal health and welfare,</li> <li>efforts to lower the carbon footprint of shows,</li> <li>outreach work to contribute towards the prosperity and wellbeing of rural communities,</li> <li>the completion of mandatory training by secretaries and volunteer stewards, to improve shows' resilience and viability;</li> <li>and more.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All shows would be supported on an equitable basis.</li> <li>It would provide much needed support to the ongoing running costs of shows, while also helping DAERA deliver on its strategic objectives.</li> <li>It would encourage shows to evolve and introduce new elements and activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It would require a comprehensive application process and submission of supporting documentation to adhere to the principles of managing public money; this may require additional effort on the part of show secretaries and may provoke responses highlighting limited staffing resource issues and the ability of shows to undertake this additional work.</li> <li>If the conditions attached to the funding and outcomes are too demanding, shows may be put off from applying.</li> </ul>
<b>2 – A Two-Tier Funding Model</b>	The funding requirement would vary depending on budget availability.  Should core funding be offered at £5,000 per show under tier one	Examples of funding items and projects could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>new technology and software to drive efficiency at shows,</li> <li>education days and collaboration with local schools,</li> <li>new competitions and awards recognising the key skills required by</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All shows would be supported on an equitable basis within tier one.</li> <li>It would provide much needed support to the ongoing running costs of shows, while also helping DAERA deliver on its strategic objectives.</li> <li>It would encourage shows to evolve and introduce new elements and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It would require a comprehensive application process and submission of supporting documentation to adhere to the principles of managing public money; this may require additional effort on the part of show secretaries and may</li> </ul>

	<p>and a further fund of £100,000 be made available under tier two, the total funding requirement would amount to <b>£190,000</b>, plus administration.</p> <p>Alternatively, should core funding be offered at £3,000 per show under tier one and a further fund of £50,000 be made available under tier two, the total funding requirement would amount to <b>£104,000</b>, plus administration.</p>	<p>farmers in the future, for example improving soil health, carbon sequestration, modern breeding techniques, use of data and sustainable farming practises etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hosting international events and championships, such as international shearing and ploughing competitions etc.</li> <li>• youth engagement programmes and community initiatives to attract younger people to get involved with shows,</li> <li>• more events and activities outside the main show,</li> <li>• improved marketing campaigns including social media, press releases etc.</li> <li>• commissioning visitor surveys to capture valuable data,</li> <li>• create a carbon and waste reduction plan; and pathways to net zero,</li> <li>• facilitation with strategic planning for shows and societies,</li> <li>• hosting panel discussions on the future of farming,</li> <li>• bursaries to fund travel scholarships to learn from other shows and fund attendance at show-related conferences including those organised by the ASAO (Association of Shows and Agricultural Organisation), the RASC (Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth) and the IAFE (International Association of Fairs and Expositions), for example.</li> </ul>	<p>activities, to remain relevant and viable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would encourage shows to be even more innovative and ambitious in pitching ideas for support through tier two.</li> <li>• Tier-two funding could potentially offer more targeted support to deliver more 'added value' to DAERA.</li> </ul>	<p>provoke responses highlighting limited staffing resource issues and the ability of shows to undertake this additional work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the conditions attached to the funding and outcomes are too demanding, shows may be put off from applying.</li> <li>• What if tier two is over or under subscribed? Will the additional funding be attractive enough to encourage applications from shows?</li> </ul>
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<b>3 – A Single ‘Innovation Fund’</b>	<b>£50,000 - 100,000</b> , plus administration.	As per the outcomes under tier two above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would encourage shows to evolve and introduce new elements and activities, to remain relevant and viable.</li> <li>• It could potentially offer greater 'additionality' and 'added value' to DAERA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would require a comprehensive application process and submission of supporting documentation to adhere to the principles of managing public money; this may require additional effort on the part of show secretaries and may provoke responses highlighting limited staffing resource issues and the ability of shows to undertake this additional work.</li> <li>• Some shows might not receive any funding, and therefore feel unfairly treated.</li> </ul>
<b>4 – Continue to do the same</b>	<b>£5,000</b> (in addition to ongoing support through the regional food programme)	As per current outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An established model with no additional resource capacity required within DAERA to administer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other than the good work achieved through the regional food programme, it offers little in terms of creativity and incentivisation for shows to innovate and become more resilient in the future.</li> </ul>