

Gurteen Agricultural College

# Environmental and Sustainable Farming

Level 6 Certification

In association with

**Susliving**

Module 6

Sustainable Farming and Environmental  
Protection Schemes, Biotechnologies

**6.1 Main Issues Facing Irish Agri-Food  
Sector**

### The Main Environmental Issues Facing the Irish Agri-food Sector

#### Components affecting the Sustainable Agri-food Sector

1. Climate Change
2. Water
3. Air
4. Soil (Biodiversity)

- 1) Climate Change : a major challenge to farming & to industry.
  - a) The need to reduce GHG emissions (soil & land management)
  - b) Tackling future climate change conditions (EPA projections)
- 2) Water : the importance of protecting water resources in Ireland.
  - a) Needs to be carefully managed
  - b) Need to improve and improve water quality (nitrates regulations)
  - c) Need to manage soiled water on farms
- 3) Air : identify gases emitted as a result of agricultural practices.  
The main gas emitted from agriculture is ammonia. This has implications for the health of the ecosystem (Biodiversity).  
Main Management Strategies
  - i) Improved use of manures
  - ii) Reduced fertilizer inputs

#### 4) Soil / Biodiversity

Biodiversity is a key issue in relation to environmental sustainability.

A National Biodiversity Plan is designed to protect & reduce loss of biodiversity (EU Birds and Habitat Directives).