

Biodiversity Management Practices on dairy farms relating to Watercourse¹

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Abstract (*Less than 150 words*)

An on-farm, face-to-face questionnaire was administered in 2013 to 149 dairy farmers in County Waterford in Ireland. Information was collected on farmers' attitudes to and engagement with farming practices that influence stocks of biodiversity on their farms.

Farmers considered their watercourses were important as habitats for wildlife, to regulate water flow and help drainage and as a visual landscape feature. The main advantage as seen by them of having watercourses was as a back-up supply of water.

The majority (85%) of farmers in the study had their watercourse banks fenced. Some 63% of farmers in the study had riparian margins of at least 1.5 metres in width along their watercourses. Only slightly over one-third (36%) of farmers in the study prevented their livestock drinking access to their watercourses. Dairy farmers who had engaged in agri-environment schemes had better watercourse management practices such as fencing watercourses and creating watercourse margins.

¹ Based on extract of PhD Study entitled: *An examination of biodiversity management practices on Irish farms and how this can be measured: the case of dairy farmers in County Waterford.* of Catherine Keena (Degree awarded pending revisions, July 2019)