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Minister scraps straw scheme

AMY FORDE
NEWS EDITOR
aforde@farmersjournal.ie

Minister for Agriculture Charlie McConalogue has moved to intervene in the straw market, by suspending the Straw Incorporation Scheme for 2024 due to fodder concerns.

The news comes as harvest 2024 kicks off in earnest, with some farmers already chopping straw under the scheme the minister plans to suspend. "Last winter, depleted national reserves of straw and resulted in very little availability in the early months of this year.

"At present, although growth is improving, the indications are that fodder is still behind where we would like it to be. "While I appreciate that tillage farmers may be disappointed by this move, there is a very strong market for straw this year due to the shortage and the need to replenish sup-

plies," he said. The minister urged livestock farmers to secure straw and fodder supplies for the winter. Tillage farmers have reacted furiously to the shock development. The scheme is worth a maximum of €10,000 to an individual tillage farmer. IFA grain chair Kieran McE-

voy said tillage farmers will be very disillusioned at the move, while Bobby Miller, Irish Grain Growers Group chair, said farmers were "shocked and disgusted".

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Pádraig Connery chopped his winter barley straw on Tuesday night in Clashmore, Co Waterford, just hours before Minister for Agriculture Charlie McConalogue announced that he was seeking to suspend the scheme for this year. The move could cost Connery €7,500. \ Patrick Browne



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