

PAT JESS

What sort of assistance do you get from government, from the EEC?

SEAN MCCLOSKEY

Well at the moment we get, the governments give us these grants here for, actually for the Cooperative itself to develop a new system. The system that we have in at the moment, you get 40% of a grant of the overall costs, and if we want to develop a new system, the same thing goes, you know. It's because we're in the Gaeltacht area. You know, we're supposed to speak Irish, we develop the Irish culture and all the rest of it, you know.

[Auction]

But the EEC give us I think it's 7.50 at the moment for a ewe premium, a ewe breeding premium. They will come and inspect us round in June/July and inspect the ewes and they cull any old ewes or broken mouths or something like that, and the government then give us a premium as well to maintain the ewes.

PAT JESS

Agriculture in South West Donegal is heavily dependent on subsidies. Given the size of the farms and the costs involved, it's not surprising that the area is considered severely disadvantaged. But this cooperative has to become self-sufficient to survive, yet wider and often adverse economic circumstances will inevitably affect it.

SEAN MCCLOSKEY

The co-op intends surviving in, when we started this programme up originally, we were to survive on our own after five years, but we ran into the recession here and it hit us quite badly here. So they have give us another three years to produce figures that we would be able to run on our own, and at the moment we're on a breakeven point. You know, we can sort of maintain ourselves without going with assistance.

PAT JESS

So things are beginning to look good.

SEAN MCCLOSKEY

Such things are beginning to improve definitely.

[End of recording]