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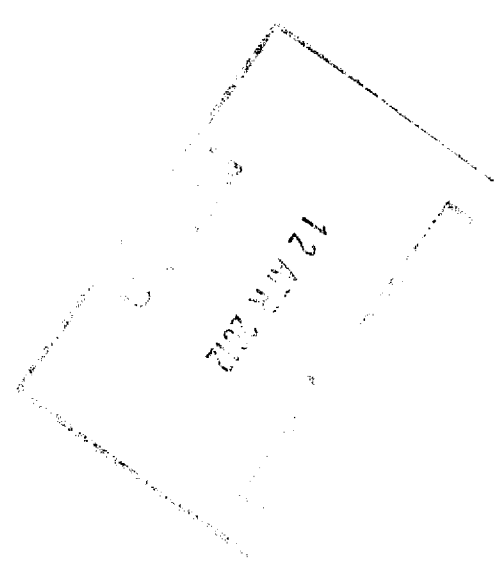
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1 INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed development at Patrick O'Connor Poultry growing operation at Rathcahill West, Templeglantine, Newcastle West, Co Limerick has been prepared on behalf of Patrick O'Connor by Montgomery EHS. The proposal development is the construction of two additional poultry house at Rathcahill West, Templeglantine, Newcastle West, Co Limerick

2 BACKGROUND TO THE DEVELOPMENT

2.1 PRESENT SITUATION

This E.I.S. forms part of a planning application to Limerick County Council on behalf of Patrick O'Connor, Rathcahill West, Templeglantine, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick for permission to construct one Poultry House, along with all ancillary structures (to include meal storage bins, soiled water tank, etc.) and associated site works.

The applicant, Patrick O'Connor currently operates and manages the adjacent 2 poultry houses which currently have a capacity of 20,000 each.

There are 1 person employed directly at this site with additional jobs in the areas of transport, feed, hatchery, etc. indirectly employed. The operation of the proposed development will be along broadly similar principles to that carried out on existing poultry houses within the county; however it will be carried out in a welfare compliant environment. This will involve the feeding, management and husbandry of birds and general site management.

All birds produced on this site will be sent to the one of the chicken processing plants in Ireland which is:

- Carton Bros, Shercock, Co Cavan
- Western Brand, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo
- Cappoquin Poultry, Cappoquin, Co Waterford
- Shannvale Foods, Clonakilty, Co Cork

The additional proposed poultry house will be alongside of the existing two poultry houses and is operated by the applicant. While this proposed poultry farm will be managed and operated in conjunction with the existing poultry houses.

This site of the proposed development is agricultural land, owned by Mar. Patrick O'Connor the owner / operator of the existing poultry houses and forms part of his overall landholding of 1.4 Hectares, adjacent to, and including the site of the proposed development. This site is located just off a local national primary route (N21) in the town land of Rathcahill West, Templeglantine, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick and is less than 0.5 Km's off the regional route, the N21, between Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale.

This proposed site is situated c. 9 km's south west of Newcastle West, Co. Limerick

The E.I.S. relates to an application seeking planning permission for the erection of one poultry house with a capacity for 34,000 birds for the production of chicken for human consumption in welfare friendly system. Total site capacity upon completion of proposed development will be c. 74,000 birds. The proposed houses are to be constructed in accordance with, and to comply with, S.I. No. 14 of 2008 EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (WELFARE OF FARMED ANIMALS) REGULATIONS 2008.

2.2 NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT

According to figures announced in November 2010 by Bord Bia's, the volume of poultry sold in Irish retail over the past year has increased by 6%. The Irish retail chicken sales are valued at €175 million.

At a conference in November 2010 Dermot Ryan, Deputy Chief Inspector at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food drew attention to the Department's recently launched Food Harvest 2020 report and the particular provisions of this initiative that "will be significant to the development of the poultry and egg sector over the coming decade." He highlighted the importance of research into "new technologies aimed at improving production efficiencies as well as further development of innovative and value-added output as crucial to competitiveness and future growth."

Speaking at the event Aidan Cotter, Chief Executive, Bord Bia commented "The poultry and egg sector remains a valuable and integral part of the Irish agricultural economy, with output at farm level estimated at €150 million in 2009 (€120 million from poultry meat and €30 million from eggs). The sector is a significant employer in rural Ireland with over 6,000 people employed in poultry processing and egg packing and up to a further 850 farms involved in the production of poultry and eggs."

Ireland has one of the highest levels of poultry meat consumption within the EU, with in excess of 30kg per capita consumed and this volume is increasing with annual chicken sales up by 5% over the past year. However, one of the greatest issues for the poultry meat sector is the level of imports which continue to exert downward pressure on the market and the indigenous Irish poultry industry.

The increase in the capacity at Patrick O'Connor poultry farmer will help meet the growth in the sector description of the development

2.3 DO NOTHING AND DO SOMETHING SCENARIOS

The Do Nothing Scenario looks at the environment, as it would be if no development was carried out. In the Do Nothing Scenario, the capacity would not be increased to 74,000 birds. The long term viability of the operation would have to be considered.

In the Do Something Scenario, capacity increase to 74,000 birds and the two new poultry houses will be constructed.

3 POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

This section outlines the likely significant Environmental Impacts arising from the proposed increase in capacity of the poultry growing capacity to 74,000 from 40,000. Where possible, design measures have been included to reduce or eliminate possible impacts but where this has not been possible, mitigation measures have been proposed to reduce or eliminate the identified impacts.

HUMAN BEINGS

Human beings interact, to a greater or lesser extent, with all aspects of the receiving environment. Therefore, impacts on any aspect of the environment have the potential to impact on human beings. The impact of the scheme as it specifically relates to human beings is covered under the headings, *Community, Human Health, Air Quality, Noise and Vibration and Landscape and Visual Impacts*.

3.1 COMMUNITY

Patrick O'Connor poultry growing operation at Rathcahill West, Templeglantine, Newcastle West, Co Limerick is located to the South West of Newcastle West, town and some 40km from Limerick City. Other settlements in the area are Strand, Templeglantine and Ashford.

At a regional, county and district level, it was considered that there will be no negative effects on population structure or trends, or on the local settlement pattern. However, the proposed developments at Patrick O'Connor poultry operation will have positive economic benefits and ensure sustained employment over the additional 20-year period. The poultry industry is a significant employer in the Limerick Region. A knock on indirect effect leading to support of local services within the community is envisaged. Potential negative visual, noise, air quality and traffic impacts on human beings have been dealt within the relevant sections of the EIS.

3.2 AIR QUALITY

The air quality impact assessment was carried out by Montgomery EHS for the proposed development.

The proposed expansion to the Poultry Operation was also considered in terms of dust dispersion.

The existing operation indicates that the air quality in the vicinity of the plant is good with no significant impact to air quality as a result of existing site operations.

The proposed operation will be identical to the existing operation. The proposed additional poultry operation will have dust levels within relevant guidelines and that the future site operations will not have a significant impact on air quality.

Construction activities such as excavations and earth moving may generate quantities of construction dust, particularly in drier weather conditions however; these will be of a short duration and mitigation measures will be implemented. The effect of construction activities on air quality, in particular construction dust, will not be significant. An odour management plan has been generated in order to establish the measures necessary to minimise odour.

3.3 NOISE

Montgomery EHS carried out a baseline noise survey at 4 locations in the vicinity of the proposed development in order to assess and quantify the existing noise environment. Noise levels during the operational phase of the development were then measured to assess the noise impact of the development at nearby residential locations.

The noise climate in the vicinity of the existing site is relatively low. The fact that no complaint has ever been received indicate that noise levels from the plant's current operations do not have a significant impact on the noise levels of the surrounding area, and that there will be no impact from increasing capacity of birds.

The potential noise and vibration impacts on the surrounding area from extending the poultry operation were considered for two distinct stages: the short-term impact of the construction phase and the long-term impact of the operational phase.

During the construction phase of the project, there is a potential for generation of a temporary increase in noise and vibration due to the nature of activities undertaken during site preparation and development, such as rock breaking and excavation. However, the application of noise limits on construction activities and hours of operation, along with adherence to the guidance set out in British Standard BS 5228 1997 "Noise Control on Construction and Demolition Sites" will ensure that noise and vibration will be kept to a minimum.

Therefore during the operation phase, it is predicted that noise levels will remain below the site's IPPC noise level limits at the nearest noise sensitive locations.

3.4 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

Montgomery EHS assessed the landscape and visual elements of the proposed development. The existing poultry facility and associated infrastructure does not visually dominate the immediate landscape. The landscape itself is rural and agricultural and much of the landscape surrounding the site is low-lying with little topographic relief. Residential property is generally dispersed along local roads through increased development; there are a number of poultry units in the area and considered part of the local landscape.

The site where the proposed poultry house will be constructed is not visually prominent as it is the rear of the existing poultry houses. The existing hedgerows will be retained and strengthened to reduce the visual impact of the proposed poultry houses.

As such the site is neither sensitive nor vulnerable in landscape terms and in overall terms is typical of a landscape type that is widespread in the area.

Given the nature and impact of the existing facility, the proposed extension will not result in significant overall landscape and visual impact, though locally minor visual impact will arise.

Construction work will take place at a relatively low level and against the backdrop of the existing poultry houses with its various on-going activities. This impact will cease once the construction phase is complete.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

This section covers the potential effects of the proposed development on the natural environment. The site and the lands surrounding are not part of any ecological designation, both national and EU. The site is of low ecological value, which is improved grassland with the land utilised for silage production.

3.5 TERRESTRIAL ECOLOGY

Montgomery EHS surveyed the flora and fauna within the site of the proposed poultry houses. The Rathcahill West site is surrounded by improved grassland for silage production and grazing of cattle. The main impact on terrestrial ecology since the operation commenced was the removal of grassed area for the existing poultry houses. No significant impacts on terrestrial ecology are anticipated increasing the capacity to 74,000 birds. There is poor quality of habitats within the area of the proposed poultry which is limited to improved grassland. This habitat is generally widespread around the limerick region. The grassland is probably the species poor habitat as it is established on limestone and shallow soils. The area provides a habitat for birds and mammals of local importance and the loss of habitat resulting from the development will have a slight negative impact.

3.6 AQUATIC ENVIRONMENT

An assessment of the aquatic environment surrounding Mr O'Connor existing poultry operation was carried out by Montgomery EHS. The site has limited water bodies with a small drainage ditch. Surveys of the habitats and flora and fauna were carried out. None of the species of plants and animals recorded were of specific nature conservation importance or interest.

The site will only discharge clean runoff that is collected and discharge to the drainage ditch. The increasing capacity and the additional poultry house will mean an increase in the discharge volume to the drainage ditch. No significant impact on the ecology of the area is expected from the increase in discharge from the clean surface water to the drainage ditch.

During construction care will be taken that no accidental spillages will pollute the surrounding water bodies. Water runoff from the construction site will also be intercepted to ensure that no suspended solids are released.

3.7 SOILS GEOLOGY AND HYDROGEOLOGY

An assessment of the soils, geology and hydrogeology at the site of the proposed development was carried out by Montgomery EHS. The soil types occurring within the footprint of the proposed poultry houses are mostly made up of glacial till. The site of the proposed two poultry houses will be excavated

3.8 CLIMATE

There are no direct impacts predicted on the existing macroclimate as a result of the proposed expansion. The expansion will however increase the viability of the poultry operation thereby facilitating the continued emission of pollutants such as NO_x into the atmosphere. Air quality emissions will be licensed by the EPA as part of Patrick O'Connor's IPPC licence. In setting limits for industry in an IPPC licence the EPA take account of national and EU legislative limits and guidelines for air pollutants and also Government policy in relation to Climate Change.

MATERIAL ASSETS

3.9 AGRICULTURE

The proposed poultry houses will occupy an area of approximately 0.6ha, of which all are agricultural lands. Agricultural enterprises in this area and the surrounding land include dairying and drystock.

The lands proposed for the extension are wholly within the ownership of Patrick O'Connor. The area is currently utilised used for silage production. This practice will discontinue if the proposed additional goes ahead and there will be a slight impact on volume of silage production due to the loss of volume of silage. Dust control measures during the construction and operation of the poultry operation will ensure that there will be no impact from dust on the surrounding lands or livestock.

3.10 NON-AGRICULTURE MATERIAL ASSETS

Existing poultry operation and the development comprises of an extension to an existing business operating for 20 years. So it would be expected to have no impact on non-agricultural materials assets such as property commercial enterprises.

3.11 NATURAL AND OTHER RESOURCES

Montgomery EHS assessed the impact on natural and other resources in the vicinity of the proposed extension to the proposed poultry operation and any impact on natural resources due to increased capacity from 40,000 to 74,000 birds. Overall, the proposed extension and increase in production rate will have some slight negative impacts on natural and other resources. There will be no significant impact on natural resources from the increase in use of raw materials for feeding and heating the additional poultry house. Construction materials in required will be brought from nearby sources.

ARCHITECTURAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

An assessment of the impact of the poultry houses construction on architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage was undertaken by Montgomery EHS. No recorded archaeological sites within the proposed development area were identified and therefore no known archaeological remains will be affected by the proposed development. The site of the proposed development is considered to be of low significant archaeological potential.

FIGURES

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