**Message from Minister Heather Humphreys**

Welcome to the 2024 Cappamore Agricultural Show

I am delighted that my Department will once again provide funding to support this show and indeed to support over 120 agricultural shows across the country. This is the second year where we have provided a record investment of €1 million across all of the shows. The total funding provided by the Department of Rural and Community Development for agricultural shows since 2018 is now over €4.3 million. I know that this is money well spent.

Our agricultural shows play a vital role in community life and raise awareness of the important role agriculture plays in our society. These shows are the threads that build bridges between our towns and villages, and the hinterlands that support them. They act as a platform for local producers to showcase their products and have become a key date in the calendar for the farming community, local producers and visitors to engage, share ideas and experience all that is good about life in the country.

Each show has its own unique offering and such is the interest in these shows, I understand that exhibits increased by 15% last year. It is great to see the growing interest in these wonderful events. Entrants travel from neighbouring counties and beyond to compete, as do the many thousands of spectators who have an interest in livestock and the farming way of life.

It should be acknowledged that without the ongoing efforts of the show committee, volunteers, sponsors, local businesses and local organisations that play a role in each of these shows, the shows would just not happen. I want to thank all of you for your continued contribution. This really demonstrates the importance of communities working together, something that we are so fortunate to have in spades here in rural Ireland, where everyone looks out for each other.

I hope to attend a number of the shows around the country this year and I look forward to personally meeting many of you throughout the summer as we all enjoy what the Agricultural Shows have to offer.

Go n-éirí go geal libh!