



FF and Greens clash on climate change policies

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TWO Government ministers were at loggerheads yesterday after a Fianna Fail Cabinet member dismissed Green Party plans to tackle climate change.

Agriculture Minister Brendan Smith warned on greenhouse gas **emissions** that "making significant cuts from **agriculture** will be very difficult".

The commitment, contained in the Programme for Government, would place "significant downward pressure on animal numbers," Mr Smith said.

This "makes no sense" because if Ireland was to reduce cattle numbers, the global climate change situation would actually be worsened, he insisted.

Markets

This was because "Irish beef would simply be replaced on world markets by beef produced in a much less sustainable way".

The Green Party was angered by the minister's comments and his declaration that he intended to press for "flexibilities" to ensure that the State could meet its climate change **targets** "without doing damage to our **agricultural** sector and our rural economy".

"All sectors will have to



Brendan Smith: warned that making significant **agriculture** cuts would be very difficult.

make their contribution," declared a spokesman for Environment Minister and Green Party leader **John Gormley**, administering a rebuke to Mr Smith.

"Every single sector has to play its part in making these reductions, including **agriculture**," the spokesman added.

Cows are particular emitters of **methane**, one of the worst climate-change gases, mainly through belching.

Green party activists have been annoyed by previous Fianna Fail ministers for **agriculture** attacking the Green Party - at least before the parties entered Coalition together.

There had been persistent claims by FF ministers in the run-up to at least the last two elections that Green party policies would devastate Irish **agriculture**.