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## **IFA: Cohabiting law puts farms at risk**

By Ray Ryan Agribusiness Correspondent

The Irish Farmers' Association is urging the Government to withdraw part of the Civil Partnership Bill that creates legal liabilities for cohabiting couples.

Mr Bryan said he believed it would be a cause of serious concern to the farming community that legal claims for property transfer, a lump sum, maintenance payments or a share in pension entitlements or a claim on an estate, could arise following the ending of a relationship between a couple living together for as little as three years.

"This means people previously living together would find themselves open to maintenance and property claims quite similar to those arising following a marriage break-up with the potential also for costly legal disputes and court proceedings."

He said the provisions relating to cohabitants have the makings of bad law and the Government would be unwise to proceed with this part of the bill in the absence of proper public debate and scrutiny on the airwaves and in the media.

Mr Bryan said the provision of an opt-out clause, whereby people living together would have to engage solicitors, get legal advice and make a legal agreement about their financial affairs, is entirely unsatisfactory and unrealistic.

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