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Dillon election 'a kick in the teeth for IFA establishment'

JOHN Dillon was elected president of the IFA at a marathon 12-hour count in Dublin yesterday and immediately promised to deliver more for Irish farmers.

At the third and final count, the Limerick man polled 492 votes against 447 for his nearest rival Raymond O'Malley, who surprised many observers by coming second.

Monaghan man John Boylan was eliminated on the first count, with Laois man Padraig Walshe going out in the second count.

John Dillon stayed away from the count centre until the final tally. His arrival into the centre was greeted with sh from his followers who claimed it was a victory for the "ordinary farmers of Ireland and a kick in the teeth for the the IFA".

One declared that the "Taliban had won" and warned the media to treat their man fairly.

"Farmers are being treated like dirt in this country," they declared.

Dillon canvassed on the simple but effective platform of "Dillon delivers" and on his acceptance speech he pror "even more" for Irish farmers.

"I want farmers to be able to say I made a difference," he declared.

He spoke of delicate negotiations at national and EU level on new and difficult environmental regulations, on ex in farming and on food safety.

"I will use ability and diplomacy to deliver on all these issues," he added.

He said farmers and rural life have been pushed down the priority list.

"They should remember that we are the custodians of the countryside."

John Dillon has been deputy president of the IFA for the past four years and has always considers himself to be holding more radical and militant views than many of the association's more well known voices.

Also elected yesterday were Ruaidhri Deasy from Roscrea, deputy president, while Donal Kelly of West Cork is vice-president, Monaghan's Eugene Sherry is the North Leinster/Ulster vice-president and Matt Merrick is the n vice-president.

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