

# Farming For Nature July & August 2021 Newsletter

Welcome to the July - August edition of the Farming for Nature Newsletter, containing news and upcoming events, helpful nature-friendly tips for your farm, and other useful resources - including words of wisdom from our inspiring farmers!

The countryside is alive with the sounds, smells, tastes and colours of summer. Silage and hay season are in full tilt, spring calves and lambs are getting stronger on fresh grass and milk, and fields of corn are maturing nicely in spite of the relatively low temperatures. The rich scent of elderflowers, meadowsweet and honeysuckle, the heavenly songs of skylarks and the frantic antics of swallows, damselflies and other winged wildlife can make even the shortest of summer strolls a pleasure. Of course, this doesn't happen everywhere, but with the right management our countryside is a treasure. Our current series of farm walks are an ideal insight to these natural wonders and into the fantastic work which many farmers are doing for nature around the country.

The Farming for Nature initiative was established to help acknowledge and support those farmers who farm, or wish to farm, in a way that improves the natural health of our countryside. It was set up by people with a genuine interest in the wellbeing of our rural landscapes, many of whom work on a voluntary basis to build up this network and profile the good practices that are happening across the country. There are ways in which we can all get involved in this initiative, so please read on and see what you can do.

## NEWS

## **The 2021 Farming for Nature Ambassador Awards**

As outlined in our previous newsletter, we received 48 nominations for this year's Farming for Nature Ambassador Awards. The standard of 2021 nominees across the board is outstanding, but we managed to put together a shortlist of nominees who progressed to the next stage in the Ambassador Awards. Over the past 6 weeks, our judging panel have been out and about visiting our shortlisted farms across the country in order to learn more about the incredible work they are doing to incorporate, protect and enhance nature on their land. We have also sent a member of our own team out to meet our shortlisted nominee farmers which has further given us the opportunity to learn first-hand the various ways in which our farming community are working to increase biodiversity and support nature on their land.

Feedback from the farm visits so far has been extremely positive. The diversity of this year's nominee farms is wonderful and it has been very exciting to see our farmers support nature on their land with such a strong sense of innovation, passion and care. From learning about indigenous microorganisms and their role in regenerating soil biology, to no-till cereal production. From creating habitats for rare orchids and butterfly species to making animal bedding from rushes. From rewetting and rewilding to conservation grazing

- we have covered a lot of ground and learned a tremendous deal from our farmers in the process. Hopefully you have been following our adventures on social media.

Once the farm visits are complete and every shortlisted nominee has had the opportunity to showcase their farm and elaborate further on their farming system(s) and practices for nature, we will then come together with the judging panel and collectively decide on this year's list of Farming for Nature Ambassadors. At this point we will also create a final shortlist for the 2021 Farming for Nature Public Awards which are set to take place in October.

We have continued to share stories far and wide across our social media platforms in an effort to inspire and encourage positive change amongst the farming community here in Ireland and beyond. We would like to take this opportunity to again thank all of our wonderful nominee farmers for their support and for the admirable work they continue to do on their land to protect, enhance and support nature.

These Ambassador awards are sponsored by Bord Bia's Origin Green programme.

**Meet the 2021 Nominees [here](#) and the 2021 Judging panel [here](#).**

## Fantastic Farm Walks lined up for the Summer

It's been great to get out and about again on our farm walks around the country and the demand has been huge - people are clearly keen to visit and learn from the Farming for Nature Ambassadors. We are still opening bookings on a phased basis so adding your name to a notification list is the best way to ensure a space - you'll be informed once the bookings open.

These farm walks are an opportunity for our Ambassadors to showcase their contribution to nature and good farming practices on their land. The walks cost €10 to attend in order to reduce the number of no-shows. This is a not-for-profit initiative and all monies received will be circulated back into the farming community.

### July

10th	11-1.30pm	Mervyn Auchmuty Co.Roscommon	<a href="#">Book Now</a>
11th	2-4.30pm	Mimi Crawford Co.Tipperary	<a href="#">Waiting List</a>
17th	2-4.30pm	Mark Hurst Co.Kildare	<a href="#">Book Now</a>
24th	2-4.30pm	Thomas & Claire O'Connor Co.Kerry	<a href="#">Book Now</a>

### August

7th	2-4.30pm	Sinead Moran Co.Mayo	<a href="#">Waiting List</a>
14th	11am-1.30pm	John McHugh Co.Laois	<a href="#">Book Now</a>

21st	2-4.30pm	Bridget Murphy Co.Sligo	<a href="#">Book Now</a>
28th	2-4.30pm	Kate Egan Co.Westmeath	<a href="#">Book Now</a>
<b>September</b>			
4th	2-4.30pm	Ailbhe Gerrard Co.Tipperary	<a href="#">Notification List</a>
11th	2-4.30pm	Donna Mullen Co.Meath	<a href="#">Notification List</a>
18th	2-4.30pm	Shackleton Family Co.Cavan	<a href="#">Notification List</a>
25th	2-4.30pm	Kate Egan Co.Westmeath	<a href="#">Notification List</a>
<b>October</b>			
2nd	11am-1.30pm	Olly Nolan Co.Dublin	<a href="#">Notification List</a>
9th	2-4.30pm	Sinead Moran Co.Mayo	<a href="#">Notification List</a>

**Farming For Nature would like to thank the farmers for their generosity in hosting these farm walks. And thanks to DAFM and NPWS who support these walks.**

## Result-based payment schemes

There has been a lot of coverage in recent weeks about 'result-based payment' schemes, following the strong farmer interest in the new REAP scheme and also in the context of the new CAP. The Burren Programme, pioneers of the result-based approach in Ireland over a decade ago, have recently released some short films outlining how this works on the ground on Burren farms [burrenprogramme.com/videos/](http://burrenprogramme.com/videos/)  
Another useful resource featuring a range of case studies and resources from across the EUU is the European Result-Based Payment Network [www.rbpnetwork.eu/](http://www.rbpnetwork.eu/)

## Farmer Q&A sessions are available to listen back to

Our 'Ask the Farmer' series ran throughout this Winter and Spring with 13 superb Ambassadors having an informal chat with us on-line about their farm and farming system and then an open floor session with the attendees. These proved hugely popular and a great way to listen to these eloquent spokespersons for nature. You can now listen to all of these either on our [YouTube channel](#) or by following [this link](#) to our website.

## Join our FFN Forum

This is a forum for farmers to ask questions and share information around farming for nature. It was set up to encourage and support farmers that wish

## Check out our farming podcasts

Farmers! Here is a podcast by you, for you! Listen to a wide range of farmers talk about how they farm with nature for a

to include nature more in their farming practices. While it is primarily for farmers, we welcome users that are able to contribute from related fields.

[Access Forum](#)

sustainable future. New podcasts will be coming soon including our most recent monthly ambassadors and our Q&A sessions. While there has been a delay due to Covid restrictions we hope to have new podcasts available soon. Please rate, review and share these podcasts.

[Podcast channel](#)

## Other News & Events

- In association with Teagasc ConnectED, Dairy Sustainability Ireland, and Food Drinks Ireland Skillnet, the National Rural Network is currently hosting a series of online webinars called the Signpost Series - including Dr James Moran on the 2nd July and Bruce Thompson on the 9th July info and registration [here](#).
- Feeding Ourselves 2021 – ‘Practicing Food Sovereignty’, 1st and 2nd July. Info and registration [here](#).
- The Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, are seeking proposals from the research community to help address climate change and other emerging and complex environmental problems. Up to €10.5 million is available for new research projects. More info [here](#).
- Farm Safety Week. 19 July 2021 - 23 July 2021. Ireland and the UK have joined forces for Farm Safety Week 2021, taking place from July 19th to 23rd. The theme this year is "Rethink Safety". More info [here](#).

## Your Farm

## **A monthly calendar for noticing nature on your farm**

We are developing a month-by-month guide to spotting different forms of nature on your farm and practical tips to help you encourage even more! This is just a start, we need your help to develop this further – please send in your ideas and help us create a rich calendar for what is on the farm and practical notes on how to enhance it: [info@farmingfornature.ie](mailto:info@farmingfornature.ie)

Thanks to all the Ambassadors that fed into this work so far and to Mark Robins for collating it. View the Wildlife Calendar's [here](#).

## **Best Practice Guidelines & Illustrations**

We have created management guidelines which contain simple actions that you can do on your farm to enhance biodiversity. They also include clear illustrations on good, moderate and poor management to help guide you. We hope you find them useful! View them on our website [here](#).

**About Us**

[Meet the Team](#)