



Ambassadors 2021
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For Nature Ambassdor

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**Welcome to September-October
Farming For Nature Newsletter**



Welcome to September-October Edition of the Farming For Nature Newsletter

This bimonthly publication contains news and upcoming events, offers helpful nature-friendly tips for your farm, and shares useful resources, including words of wisdom from our farmers!

We are likely all noticing the same subtle differences that intuitively tell us about the changing of the seasons; the closing in of the early morning and late evening light, the drop in temperature and the dew sitting on the grass well into the hours of the day. The calendar reminds us that the Autumn Equinox on the 22nd of September won't be long coming round. The change of season on a farm generally brings with it a change of pace. While the work is far from over for most, hopefully many farmers out there have their crops and fodder saved and can take a breather to reflect on what no doubt has been a busy spring/summer farming season. Nature too is at a time of transition, with summer flowers giving way to a nutritious harvest of berries and nuts, a vital foodstore for our wildlife over the winter months ahead. Here at FFN, we too are in a period of transition as we welcome 23 new Ambassadors to the family this year! Lots more information on this below...



2021 Farming for Nature Ambassador Awards

The last of the summer weeks were spent finishing up our farm visits across the country and what an adventure it was. Lucy, a member of the Farming for Nature team, was lucky enough to visit all 30 of this year's nominees. She described the experience as "a most inspiring and educational tour of the country. From the hills of Donegal to the rolling lowlands of Wexford – I met all sorts of farmers and farming families, saw all sorts of farms and finally learned all sorts about the different ways that our FFN nominees are supporting nature on their land. It was truly a breath of fresh air to meet so many inspirational people who are really walking the walk when it comes to nature action on their land. The diversity of this year's nominees was incredible, with every farm offering something creative and insightful. We covered tillage, beef, dairy, sheep, horticulture, forestry, rewilding and high nature value farming – focusing on topics such as holistic planned grazing, min-till, chemical-free fruit and vegetable production, composting manure, multi-species grassland management and more. It is safe to say that this year's Farming for Nature nominees are nothing short of an outstanding group of devoted and

enthusiastic people who are deeply committed to creating, maintaining and sharing the ways in which they farm in tandem with the natural world”.

Our judging panel were also busy out and about visiting our nominees and sending us their valuable feedback based on their farm visits. We met with our 14-member judging panel via zoom on the 24th of August to discuss each nominee and following an in-depth discussion we decided upon 23 fantastic new ambassadors to add to our network. As you can imagine it was no easy decision. We would like to take this opportunity again to thank all of our wonderful 2021 nominees – for sharing their stories, welcoming our team to their farms and finally for their dedication and commitment to supporting nature on their land.

As in previous years, we have decided to showcase 7 of these Ambassadors to focus on initially through FFN public vote award. Of course, this is no competition, but simply a way of sharing the stories of some of these superb farmers and highlighting the various ways in which they are supporting nature on their farms. The remaining 16 ambassadors will be showcased throughout the next year as our FFN monthly ambassadors.

Farming For Nature Ambassador Awards – Public Vote is now open

We are delighted and excited to introduce you to our first cohort of seven wonderful FFN Ambassadors for 2021. We are encouraging members of the public, farmers, policymakers and whoever is interested to view a series of short films that provide an insight into these farms and the inspiring work that is being done. You can really help us in this quest by sharing the Ambassador’s short films with your network so that as many people as possible can gain a better insight into farming for nature, and by voting for your favourite film as a show of support for the work of these farmers. See our Ambassadors below and click the green button to watch their video and learn a bit about what they’re up to. Enjoy!

[VOTE HERE](#)

2021 Farming for Nature Farm Walks

So far we have had a really successful season of FFN farm walks and we would like to take this opportunity to thank our exceptional ambassadors for opening their farms to the public and so generously sharing their time, wisdom and stories. So far, we have run 14 farm walks with over 250 fellow farmers and interested parties in attendance. And we're not done yet there are a few more farm walks scheduled up until October, see details here; <https://www.farmingfornature.ie/events/farm-walks/>

Attendees of the farm walks get a detailed insight into their farm of choice, comprising of a tour of the land, an overview of the farming system and a demonstration of how our farmers support nature, biodiversity and wildlife on their farms. This year's farm walks so far have covered a spectacular diversity of farming systems – from market gardening to micro-dairying, from tillage to beef production, and everything in between! There is so much knowledge and experience to share, so many like-minded people to meet and so many stories to inspire and encourage – these farm walks really are educational and enjoyable outings. This type of on-site, peer to peer learning is key in building up knowledge and sharing ideas for other interested parties looking to make changes on their land.

Our farm walk series will finish up in October for the Winter period, but we'll be back next year with more farm walks, more farmers, more creative ideas and more knowledge to share! Thank you again to all of our host farmers and to all of you who attended our farm walks so far.

Season by Season

The passage from summer to autumn brings with it all sorts of changes in the natural world. We are so accustomed to so many of these changes that we often forget to take time to observe and enjoy the transitions that are occurring all around us. For example, the swallows and swifts are gathering in preparation for their return trip across Europe and towards the African sunshine. September in the countryside often brings to mind the humble blackberry – “like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it” as so beautifully described by Seamus Heaney in his poem

Blackberry Picking. Not only are blackberries in abundance at this time of year, there are haws, crab-apples, rosehips, rowanberries and spindle fruits. In the olden days, many of these berries would have been used to make medicines and tinctures, to build immunity for the winter months ahead. Of course for many people, the Autumn season is still a time for pots of jam and chutney!

Have a look at our quick reference guide to September's nature calendar and actions here: <https://www.farmingfornature.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Natures-calendar-September.pdf>

The Hares Corner

Our friends over at the Burrenbeo Trust have recently launched a new project called 'The Hare's Corner' and are inviting landowners in Co. Clare to dedicate a small space for nature by creating a mini woodland, a mini orchard, or a pond on their land. The 'Hare's Corner' is an old farming expression for the corner of a field or an area of rough ground which wasn't intensively farmed, so instead it was 'left to nature'. This initiative is funded by the Dept of Agriculture and Clare County Council and if successful might be a way support landowners in other places to undertake small but meaningful environmental actions on their holdings.

Find out more here: <https://burrenbeo.com/thc>

The Farming for Nature Network Grows

We received great news from our Austrian colleagues this week, as their national Farming for Nature initiative has been launched and is now up and running. In its first year, FFN Austria received 35 nominations and they are now in the process of interviewing/visiting these farmers to learn more about their farming systems and practices for nature. We look forward to watching their progress and sharing ideas/learnings so we can collectively build our network, strengthen our impact and inspire further change. We are excited to see their farm videos and understand how things are done in Austria – we will share any videos that come our way (with subtitles of course!). In future years we hope this network expands further and that we can organise exchange visits for this wonderful international network of farmers for nature.

Burren Winterage Weekend

No Autumn season in Ireland would be complete without the annual Burren Winterage Weekend. A key part of this festival is the Burren Winterage School which is this year scheduled to go ahead as an in-person event that will take place over the October Bank Holiday weekend (22nd – 23rd October).

While Friday the 22nd will focus on Ireland's rich range of European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI) projects, Saturday the 23rd will see our annual FFN get-together where we plan to welcome all FFN Ambassadors, nominees, volunteers and stakeholders to the Burren for a day of farmer-led workshops and farm walks, culminating in the ceremony for our 2021 Ambassador Public Vote Awards. We are all jaded from virtual meetings at this point, so needless to say we are excited to host an in-person event that will be a relaxed, educational and interactive day for the FFN community. This event will have limited capacity and booking will be essential, so we encourage anyone with a strong interest in Farming for Nature to save the date. Of course, for those of you following the FFN Public Vote

Awards from home – we will be sharing updates with you throughout the evening via social media to keep you all in the loop. More information on booking and attending coming soon on www.burrenwinterage.com

Biofarm 2021

A great range of national and international farmers and researchers are lined up to speak at Biofarm 2021 on the 8th November. This is a great educational resource for farmers. More information in booking here <https://nots.ie/events/biofarm-2021/>

About Farming For Nature

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. Learn more by visiting our website.

www.farmingfornature.ie