



Welcome to November- December Farming For Nature Newsletter

Welcome to the November-December 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!

For many farmers, the long winter evenings bring with them an easing of farming activities, and with that a good opportunity to reflect on the past year. The pandemic, market and political factors, as well as mixed weather conditions throughout the year have presented both challenges and opportunities to the farming community. Additionally, the ongoing COP26 is proving to be a topical concern for farmers, environmentalists, policy makers and the general public. There is yet a lot to understand of the outcomes of the COP26 conference, and its implications for farmers. However, so far, 45 countries have committed to addressing loss of forests, damage to soils and quickening destruction of ecosystems that play a critical role in absorbing carbon and cooling the planet. We at FFN certainly support all of these measures, and we will we continue to do

whatever we can to support farmers who are farming or who wish to farm in ways that protect nature.

Amidst this, we come to offer inspiration and optimism by the example of our 23 wonderful Farming for Nature Ambassadors whom we welcomed to our growing network this year. Our annual Farming for Nature gathering and awards ceremony was held in October – to gather so many incredible ambassadors in one room and to give them space to share their farming stories and wisdom, was nothing short of extraordinary. These wonderful individuals and their families show a way forward for Irish family farming that respects our natural environment while making a decent living from the land. Lots more information on these farmers below. Please support these farmers by watching their videos, buying their products and services and attending upcoming on-line and farm-level events. Meanwhile here is a teaser of what went on...

[Burren Winterage School 2021 video](#)



23 Ambassadors join our network in 2021

We are delighted and excited to welcome 23 inspiring new farmers to our growing Ambassador network this year.

These are:

- Anthony Mooney (Bryanstown, Co. Kildare)
- Cathal Mooney (Heather Hill Farm, Co. Donegal)
- Colm Gavin (Lettereragh, Co. Mayo)
- Gearoid Maher (Cappamore, Co. Limerick)
- Eoghan Daltun (Beara, Co. Cork)
- Fergal Anderson & Emanuela Russo (Loughrea, Co. Galway)
- Gerard Deegan (Cooksborough, Co. Westmeath)
- Graham Harris (Donadea, Co. Kildare)
- Henry O'Donnell (Inishowen, Co. Donegal)
- James Breslin (Inishowen, Co. Donegal)
- Joe & Aoife Reilly (Glasraí Organic Farm, Co. Mayo)

- Louis McAuley (Burtonstown, Co. Meath)
- Madeline McKeever & Holly Cairns (Brown Envelope Seeds, Co. Cork)
- Michael and Norman Dunne (Owenstown, Co. Kildare)
- Michael McManus (Spa Cottage Farm, Co. Leitrim)
- Muller Family (Glendree Organic Farm, Co. Clare)
- Nia O Malley (Loughatorick, Co. Galway)
- Nicholas Redmond (Ballygarrett, Co. Wexford)
- Noel Kiernan (Derrycolumb, Co. Longford)
- Pat McKenna (Carrickrose, Co. Monaghan)
- Paul Moore (Middleton, Co. Cork)
- Rod and Julie Calder-Potts (Highbank Organic Orchard, Co. Kilkenny)
- Thomas Stack (Summerhill Dairy Farm, Co. Limerick)

Following on from our Public Vote campaign which took place in September and October, we will continue to feature the remaining 16 Ambassadors on a bi-monthly basis over the coming months. Keep an eye on our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter platforms to learn more about these wonderful farmers and the valuable work they are doing for nature on their land. We will continue to work with these new ambassadors to produce podcasts, 'Ask the Farmer' sessions, farm walks and more. Click below to see our growing network of Ambassador farmers.

[Current Ambassadors](#)

Meet some of our new Ambassadors up close

Each newsletter we will profile some of our new ambassadors. This November/December we have 3 Ambassadors from varied farm systems and land types. Welcome please; Fergal Anderson & Emanuela Russo, Gearoid Maher, and Louis McAuley.

Fergal Anderson & Emanuela Russo (Co.Galway)

Fergal Anderson & Emanuela Russo, of Leaf and Root Farm, run a market garden in Loughrea Co. Galway. The farm is comprised of 30 acres in total, 25 of which is mixed forestry. The remaining 5 acres are used to produce a vast range of agroecologically produced vegetables and fruits, including but not limited to, beets, chard, kale, radish, blackcurrants, gooseberries, loganberries, apples, plums, pears and a range of medicinal herbs. They sell their produce direct to customers and supply restaurants in Galway. Fergal and Emanuela have been working on the land for 8 years – gradually building the soil and transforming the land into a productive farm that is economically and ecologically sustainable. More information about their farm below. **Or learn directly from Fergal himself by registering for his online Ask the Farmer Q&A below.**

[Fergal & Emmanuel's Farm](#)

Gearoid Maher (Co.Limerick)

Gearoid farms 80 hectares in Co. Limerick. He has a dairy herd of purebred friesians, milking 80 cows in total. The animals graze from mid-March to the end of October. Hay and silage are cut from the land and fed to the cattle during the winter months. Gearoid feeds locally grown sugar beet to the cows over winter, this has halved the amount of concentrates fed on the farm. *“I reduced my nitrogen use by approx. 25% on the farm last year as I now have the proper equipment.”* He has been gradually increasing the clover content in the grassland and has sown some multispecies grass swards on the farm – with the aim of improving the soil biology and reducing the amount of fertilizer needed in the future. Gearoid is passionate about increasing biodiversity on the farm. Gearoid doesn't believe in chasing targets on his farm – he enjoys a slower pace of farming ensuring both his animals and nature thrive – *“The old rule of thumb was a cow to the acre – and that has been my ethos all along. If I can farm a cow to the acre without pressure then that's what I'll do.”* More information about Georoid's farm below. **Or learn directly from Gearoid himself by registering for his online Ask the Farmer Q&A below.**

[Gearoid's Farm](#)

Louis McAuley (Co.Meath)

"I'm delighted to be chosen as a farming for nature ambassador. I hope to be able to showcase our regenerative farming system and how we can combine soil, habitat and environmental best practice and still deliver safe, high quality and high yielding crops while maintaining acceptable farm profits." Louis McAuley and his family manage a 1700-acre farm in county Meath. Approximately 1400 acres of the land is used for cereal production such as winter wheat, winter barley, oilseed rape, beans and oats. All of the cereal grown on the farm goes to their feed mill where they produce animal feed for cattle, sheep and horses. Up until 6 years ago the farm would have been a conventional plough-based tillage system. At that point, they noticed a decline in soil health and crop yields – *"The soil is one of our main assets on the farm. We wanted to introduce a system where we were improving our soil year on year, all the while producing crops."* In 2015 a low disturbance direct drilling system was implemented on the farm, meaning the seeds are sown direct into mulch/stubble and there is no ploughing or major soil disturbance which protects the soil biology and structure. More information on Louis's farm below. **Or learn directly from Louis himself by registering for his online Ask the Farmer Q&A below.**

[Louis's Farm](#)

Kildare Farmers win the 2021 Public Vote

As part of the 2021 National Farming For Nature Ambassador Awards, there was a Public Choice Award and the winners were Michael and Norman Dunne from Owenstown, Co. Kildare. This father-son duo are a great example of farmers who, over the past number of years, have been gradually moving away from an intensive tillage operation to a regenerative farming system operating under the principles of conservation agriculture.

Following their win, Norman stated *"We are both extremely appreciative of all the support to win the public vote. To follow in the footsteps of the greats of Jim Cronin and Thomas O'Connor is quite a daunting task. But to be considered as equals really strives us forward. Here's to an exciting year ahead and many more of farmers empowering each other with their knowledge of their landscape and their soils and of course their care for nature!"* More information on the Dunnes' farm below.

[Dunnes' Farm](#)

Ask the Farmer Q&A is back

The 'Ask the Farmer' series runs this Winter and Spring where a number of our amazing Ambassadors will be on-line to tell us a little more about their farm and farming system and to answer your questions about farming for nature. These 'live' evening sessions will be every other Tuesday and include a short interview with the featured farmer and then an open Q&A session where you can 'ask the farmer' about whatever you would like to know, with a focus on practical management advice. It is a great opportunity to learn from our Ambassadors who work with nature every day on their farms, and also to share your own ideas and experience of 'Farming for Nature'.

So far this season we have these farmers. Please register using the button below.

- 16th November 2021 8pm **Making small changes for nature on a tillage farm** with Kildare farmer NORMAN DUNNE.
- 30th November 2021 8pm **Grazing high nature value uplands sustainably** with Galway farmer NIA O MALLEY.
- 14th December 2021 8pm **Building short supply chains – direct selling veg** in east Galway with Galway farmer FERGAL ANDERSON.
- 11th January 2022 8pm **Adapting an intensive dairy farm to work alongside nature** with Limerick farmer GEAROID MAHER.

- 25th January 2022 8pm **Moving from intensive tillage to profitable biological farming** with Meath farmer LOUIS MCAULEY.

[Ask the Farmer Q&A Registration](#)

Nature's Calendar this winter

Wondering what wildlife to look out for and what practical actions you can take on your farm this winter. See below.

[Nature's Calendar - Winter](#)

This Christmas Support Farmers that Support Nature

Dare we say, but the Christmas season is looming and the season presents a good opportunity to shop locally from sustainable producers. We have gathered together some products and services that our Farming For Nature Ambassadors provide. This is a great opportunity for you to engage with, and meaningfully support, these farmers in the lead up to the Christmas Season. These are listed under various themes of food products, education, accommodation and other) and ordered alphabetically by farmers' names. Just click on the below button to find out more.

[Ambassador products & offerings](#)

Nominations for the 2022 Ambassadors

Nominations for our next round of Ambassadors will be open for the month of January. So get thinking of who you would like to put forward for next year's awards. We will let you know when the nominations are open in the next newsletter More information on the Ambassador Awards below.

[Ambassador Awards FAQs](#)

Thanks to all our volunteers and supporters

A massive thank you to all our funders, volunteers, supporters and above all the farmers that give us so much of your time and expertise. None of this would be possible without your input. Keep up the good work of supporting nature on your farms and spreading that message. Here's to 2022 and continuing your valuable work!

Finally a big thank you to the most recent member of our team, Programmes Officer, Lucy Bowler for joining us on this journey the last 6 months. Lucy did a phenomenal job of pulling together the Ambassador Awards this year. Whilst she is following many of our feathered migrants down south for the winter, we hope to see Lucy back on our shores next March for another season of the Ambassador selection process.

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

”
[Unsubscribe](#)

♥ [POWERED BY TWILIO SENDGRID](#)