



## Welcome to September-October Farming For Nature Newsletter

Welcome to September-October Edition of the Farming For Nature (FFN) Newsletter, a bumper-full edition of news, upcoming events and links to great resources for those who want to farm for nature!

This 'harvest period' is upon us and here at FFN we are busy working with our own rich harvest of 15 new FFN Ambassadors from all across the country. These Ambassadors-in-waiting represent 15 Irish farm families doing great things for food, for their community and for nature. We are very excited to introduce you to 5 of them in the coming weeks through short films made with each of them – a lovely mixture of dairy, beef, sheep, tillage and mixed farming enterprises. Between now and the end of October we would like you to vote for whichever one inspires and impresses you most. We encourage all of you to 'view, vote and share' these films as a way of showing your support for these farmers and what they do, as well as opening eyes as to how farmers can support nature on

their land - the perfect antidote to the negative narrative that seems pervasive just now.

We are also encouraging you to join the last of our farm walks with some really great options this month: such a lovely time to explore rural Ireland in the company of those who know it best, and pick a few blackberries and hazelnuts while you are at it! Or join us for the Burren Winterage Festival (Oct 28-30th) when you get to meet and hear from this year's Ambassadors, learn about exciting new projects such as 'The Hare's Corner' and 'The Horse's Mouth' – as well as joining in on the annual Winterage cattle drove. Lots of opportunities ahead anyhow so we really hope you can join us and spread the word about Farming for Nature. Happy Harvest - or Bíodh Meán Fómhair maith agaibh go léir

[What is Farming For Nature? Listen to our short podcast here](#)

## **Farming For Nature Ambassadors 2022 Announced**

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 35 of this year's shortlisted nominees. She described the experience as *"a most inspiring and educational tour of the country. From the Kerry to Monaghan, from Waterford to Leitrim – I travelled the highroads and byroads of Ireland, meeting all sorts of farmers and farming families, seeing all sorts of farms and learning all sorts about the different ways farmers are supporting biodiversity 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. 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 the nominees and sending us their valuable feedback based on their farm visits. We met with our 14-member judging panel in August to discuss each nominee and following an in-depth discussion we decided upon 15 fantastic new ambassadors to add to our network in 2022. As you can imagine, this was no easy decision. Drumroll please....

### **HERE ARE THE FARMING FOR NATURE AMBASSADORS FOR 2022**

**Andrew Chilton** Alpaca, Co. Roscommon  
**Aonghus Ó Coistealbha** Market gardening, Co. Galway  
**Brigid O'Connor** Sheep, Co. Kerry  
**Bronagh & Cathal O'Rourke** Beef, Co. Clare  
**Colm Flynn** Tillage, Co. Kildare  
**David Dennison** Vineyard & orchard, Co. Waterford  
**Gerry Fitzsimons** Beef, Co. Cavan  
**James Ham** Forestry & beef, Co. Westmeath  
**Mark Gillanders** Tillage & beef, Co. Monaghan  
**Mark Harold Barry** Tillage, forestry & beef, Co. Tipperary  
**Maurice Deasy** Tillage & sheep, Co. Tipperary  
**McDonagh Family** Horticulture & mixed stock, Co. Mayo  
**Pat Mulrooney** Dairy, Co. Tipperary  
**Paul McCormick & Jacinta French**, Beef & nature, Co. Cork  
**Sean Condon** Dairy, Co. Limerick

We would like to take this opportunity again to thank all of our wonderful nominees – for sharing their stories, welcoming our team to their farms and most importantly for their dedication and commitment to supporting nature on their land.

As in previous years, we will feature 5 of these Ambassadors in our annual Public Vote Award which will run from September to October this year. These 5 farmers represent a cross-section of our 2022 FFN Ambassadors. 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 10 ambassadors will be showcased on a monthly basis throughout the upcoming year. More on this below...

## **Farming For Nature Ambassadors Awards - Public Vote is now open**

We are delighted and excited to introduce you to our first cohort of wonderful FFN Ambassadors for 2022. 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 these farmers are doing on their land.

### **HERE ARE THE 2022 PUBLIC VOTE AMBASSADORS**

**Brigid O'Connor** Sheep, Co. Kerry

**James Ham** Forestry & beef, Co. Westmeath

**Mark Gillanders** Tillage & beef, Co. Monaghan

**Mark Harold Barry** Tillage, forestry & beef, Co. Tipperary

**Sean Condon** Dairy, Co. Limerick

Click below to see their videos to learn a bit about what they're up to and vote for your favourite one. Enjoy

**Voting closes on the 28th October!!**

[Videos and voting](#)

**Farm Walks - still more in the pipeline this Autumn**

So far, this year we have had a really successful season of FFN farm walks. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our exceptional ambassadors for opening their farms to the public and for so generously sharing their time, wisdom and practical advice. Since April, we have run 20 farm walks across the country with over 370 fellow farmers and interested parties in attendance. And we're not done yet, there are a plenty more farm walks taking place in September and into October, see details and book by clicking the below green button.

### **STILL TO COME THIS AUTUMN...**

**10th September** 2pm **Darina Allen** Mixed stock Cork

**11th September** 2pm **Donna Mullen** Mixed stock Meath

**17th September** 2pm **Olly Nolan** Horticulture & mixed stock Dublin

**18th September** 11am **Colm Gavin** Sheep Mayo

**25th September** 2pm **Michael McManus** Beef Leitrim

**3rd October** 2pm **Fergal Smith** Mixed stock & horticulture Clare

tbc Thomas Stack Dairy Limerick

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 HNV farming, from tillage to beef production, and everything in between!

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.

[Farm Walks Schedule & Bookings](#)

## The Horse's Mouth

We are delighted to announce a pilot farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing and mentorship service. This pilot is aimed at supporting farmers and landowners who may be looking for on-the-ground practical advice from fellow farmers on how they might improve their land's natural capital.

This new pilot service is in response to the many queries we have received over the years from farmers and landowners who are seeking on-site advice about how to enhance the biodiversity of their land but aren't quite sure how best to proceed. Many have asked for a fellow farmer to visit and provide practical tips on what they can do to improve the environmental condition of their farms, to learn how these Farming For Nature farmers did it on their own farms – 'from the horse's mouth' as such. Though every farm is different, you can't underestimate the value of some sound practical advice and encouragement from a fellow farmer.

FFN has a thriving network of 'Ambassador' farmers through their annual Ambassador Awards programme. Many of these Ambassadors have offered their time and expertise to be mentors on this programme. 'The Horse's Mouth' pilot project will involve one of these mentors walking the land with the owner and sharing simple, practical advice and encouragement. **In order to be considered as a host for a visit by a mentor, please visit our website and fill out the short application form by the DEADLINE 15th September.**

More information and application form below

[The Horses's Mouth](#)

### **Farming For Nature Gathering (Burren Winterage Weekend)**

The annual Farming For Nature gathering will be held on the 29th October 2022 in Corofin, the Burren, Co.Clare as part of the Burren Winterage

Weekend 2022. This will be a day of farm walks and panel discussions held between 10.30am-5pm, followed by entertainment (with very special guests) and the annual Farming For Nature Ambassador Awards from 7-9pm. This event allows us to come together to celebrate farmers across Ireland who are striving to work alongside nature, and to share ideas on how these great custodians might best be supported at a time of great challenge and opportunity.

All farmers and other interested parties who want to join this discussion and know more about farming for nature are welcome to attend. Just €20 (€10 if an Ambassador) to attend. **Join us! More details and how to book below.**

The Burren Winterage Weekend is an annual celebration of the Burren's farming tradition of Winterage. Enjoy a wide range of farming, heritage, cultural and family events around the October Bank Holiday weekend. All events are culminated with community cattle drive on the Sunday. Details of events happening at the Burren Winterage Weekend will be added to the below website over the coming weeks. Keep an eye out and join us there for it all.

[Book Farming For Nature Gathering in the Burren](#)

[Burren Winterage Weekend](#)

### **Nature's Calendar this Autumn**

Last chance to admire the swifts and swallows before they head south or to do a nature audit of your farm with all its wildflowers, bees and butterflies whilst they are still visible. October will start to bring new visitors to our shores like the geese, fieldfares and redwings. These are just some of the things you can expect to see and hear over the coming months. For more information on what wildlife to look

out for and what practical actions you can take on your farm to help nature, see our September and October nature calendars below.

[Nature's Calendar - SEPTEMBER](#)

[Nature's Calendar - OCTOBER](#)

### **Groundtips Podcasts**

We continue to add new podcasts to our series every few weeks. These short audios are a great way to listen to what our farmers are up to on their land and how they are carrying out certain actions to improve nature on their farm. They can be enjoyed whilst out to in your tractor, car or when you are working the land. Subscribe to our podcasts through the usual means (Spotify, iTunes etc) and you will be notified when new episodes are issued. Meanwhile, click below for our latest episode on '**How to attract birdlife to the farm**' with Kildare farmer Anthony Mooney.

Please rate, review and share in order to help get the message out there.

['How to attract birdlife to the farm' podcast](#)

### **Groundtips - advice from farmers for farmers**

This section of our website provides practical advice and tips from farmers in their own words on how they have enhanced nature on their land. We have decided to

share these with you each newsletter. This month we cover **Bats** with ambassador Donna Mullen. See below.

[Groundtips - Bats](#)

### **Forum**

This section of our website is for farmers to ask questions and share information around farming for nature. Whilst it is primarily for farmers we welcome users that are able to contribute from related fields. Recent queries include *'How do I prune my apples?'* and *'Looking for participants for a survey on regenerative farming project'*. To view any of these or to put your pressing questions on the Forum just go to the below link, register your email and then you are go to go!

[Forum](#)

### **Best Practice Guidelines on Peatland Management**

Have you got time this autumn to look at your peatlands and identify how you get the best out of these areas. Peatlands include raised bogs, blanket bogs and fens. These are important habitats for livestock, valuable ecosystems and if in good condition, act as a major carbon store. This guide gives you some actions on what you can do on your farm to enhance your peatlands this Autumn.

[Best Practice Guide to Peatland Management](#)

## **In other news:**

### **Trees on the Land**

Trees on the Land provide simple schemes for landowners to access quality native tree mixes each season at a nominal cost to the landowner. They work with farmers, smallholders, community groups, councils, schools, colleges, sports clubs and many other landowners to coordinate sites to accommodate trees. Application Deadline: Applications for trees will close at 6pm on Sunday 16th October. [www.treesontheland.com](http://www.treesontheland.com)

### **National Organic Training Skillset**

The National Organic Training Skillset (NOTS) have a number of online and in-person training courses coming up for farmers and landowners including a 3-day regenerative agriculture workshop with American farmer and soil conservationist - Gabe Brown. More information [here](#).

### **Biofarm**

The national conference on Biological Farming, Biofarm will be held on the 7th-11th November in both Co.Leitrim and online. More information [here](#).

**(If you are are a FFN Ambassador or state/relevant body and wish to let our audiences know about an event please do not hesitate to send me details on [info@farmingfornature.ie](mailto:info@farmingfornature.ie))**

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**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, learn more by visiting our website or following us on all the usual social media channels.

[www.farmingfornature.ie](http://www.farmingfornature.ie)



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Farming for Nature

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