



Farming For Nature

Autumn Newsletter

Welcome to our latest Farming for Nature newsletter!

Our third newsletter of the year coincides with the festival of Lúnasa and the ushering in of Autumn and the harvest. We are a few weeks late but we were waiting to share news of the wonderful bounty that is coming this season - the exciting arrival of our new Farming For Nature Handbook which you can now **preorder**. As well as that, is the arrival of our first animation for school children - more on this below.

Meanwhile, our Ambassador series of farm walks have been extremely fruitful this season. Each walk has provided an extraordinary platform for knowledge-sharing amongst farmers, aspiring farmers and conservationists. It is really

encouraging to see that most of the walks are selling out, even after additional spaces are added. So, with just 5 walks left, if you're interested in attending any of our walks, book as soon as you can because when they're gone, they're gone!

Applications remain open for Our 'Horses Mouth' farmer to farmer mentorship programme. The first 50 applications will be considered. So if you or someone you know is interested in improving their land for biodiversity but is at a loss for where to start, follow the link below for more information.

This years Farming for Nature Ambassadors have now been chosen and will be announced at the Burren Winterage Festival on October 26th. We have a great line up planned so don't miss out on the farming festival of the year!

Read on for this and more news!



The Farming For Nature Handbook is ready for PREORDER!

Drumroll please! **We are really excited to announce that the Farming For Nature Handbook is completed and in preproduction phase.** It is due to be launched in early December. **However, you can pre-order now and be one of the first to have it in your hands!** Don't miss out on our early bird special, click below to visit our shop.

We have been working away on this book for the last 18 months and are now getting close to its arrival. It is currently in the hands of the publisher. This handbook was inspired by the regular requests we received from people wanting to learn how best to manage their land for nature.

With over 76,000 words and stunning illustrations, this handbook is designed to help guide users who want to 'farm for nature'. Each of the 12 chapters contains 'top tips' from farmers with decades of experience in farming for nature, as well as management recommendations based on extensive research. This book will guide and inspire you on your farming for nature journey, regardless of your farm size, enterprise type, or starting point.

Thanks to NPWS and DAFM for their support of this book.

You can now preorder it at a discounted rate of just €25 by clicking below. This offer closes at the end of September when the full rate of €30 will be applied.

[**PREORDER your copy here**](#)

New Animation for Parents & Schools

is now here

Just in time for the dawning of a new school year, why not start your terms with our brilliant new animation on 'How Nature and Farmers can Help Each Other'.

Just 5 mins long, it aims to be a valuable resource for teachers of primary and secondary, parents, farmers or anyone with an interest in farming, nature, and food production. We all might learn a thing or two! Thanks to NPWS and DAFM for supporting this animation.

Watch by clicking on the [below](#).



The Annual Farming For Nature Gathering

Save the date - The 2024 Annual Farming For Nature Gathering will be in Kinvara, Co. Galway on the **26th October** as part of the Burren Winterage Weekend. This event allows us to come together to celebrate farmers across Ireland who are striving to work alongside nature. It also allows us 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 be part of this discussion and know more about farming for nature are welcome to attend.

If you haven't been before, it is always a fantastic occasion with Farming for Nature hosting farm walks and panel discussions, our annual Ambassador Awards, and much more over the weekend all culminating with the famous cattle drive. It's an event not to be missed - stay tuned on the below website for more. Information will be up in late September but at least you have the date in the diary!

[Burren Winterage Weekend](#)

Ambassador Awards 2024

It's nearly here - the arrival of the Farming For Nature Ambassador 2024.

After a long journey that starts in January with the nominations, then interviews, farm visits and assessments and more...we are finally nearly there. It is all secret who will be our Ambassadors just yet...but here is what we have been up to in the last few months.

Since we last filled you in, Farming for Nature have been all over the country from Nephin Beg in West Mayo to Ballymoney in the sunny south east in the past few months. Such is the extraordinary interest in nature-friendly farming across

the country and across all system types. From hill-sheep farming to big tillage operations, the appetite for more sustainable, biodiverse food systems is pronounced.

At this stage, we have now visited all 21 of the 2024 Farming for Nature Ambassador nominees on their farms. After much debate and discussion, the ambassadors have now been chosen. However, that information will be kept on a strictly need to know basis for the time being!

Our new Ambassadors will be announced and receive their awards at the Burren Winterage Weekend happening over the October bank holiday later this year.

We are excited to announce that in addition to the Ambassador awards, there will be a new award this year. To celebrate the work of the late Michael Hickey, one of the very first Farming for Nature ambassadors, we will be awarding the Michael Hickey Outstanding Hedgerow Award to one deserving nominee.

All roads now lead to the Burren - As mentioned before, save the dates **(26th-27th October)** in your diary!



Our Ambassador Farm Walks Continue

with 2 more walks just announced!

24th August @ 2pm, Thomas & Claire O' Connor, Co. Kerry

From Wheatgrass to Organic Pork – Abundance from Marginal Land when Farming for Nature. [Sold out, join the waiting list here](#)

25th August @ 2pm, Olly Nolan, Co. Dublin

Pollinator-Friendly Farming in the Dublin Mountains. [Book here](#)

NEW 8th September @ 2pm, The Pickersgill Family, Co. Westmeath

A Productive Mixed-Stock Farm Working with Nature. [Book Here](#)

21st September @ 11am, James Gilmartin, Co. Leitrim

Farming for the Head, Heart and the Pocket – Regenerative Systems for Sustainable Farming [Book Here](#)

NEW 24th October @ 11am, Tom Tierney, Co. Kildare

No-Till and Conservation Agriculture with Room for Nature and Forestry

[Book Here](#)

These farm walks are a great opportunity to meet likeminded farmers and to gain an insight into the creative and inspiring ways that farmers can incorporate, protect and enhance nature on their land. The walks cost €10 to attend. This is a not-for-profit initiative and all monies received will be circulated back into the farming community.

Thanks so much to all the farmers that have done such great walks for us so far.

[All Farm Walks - Book Here](#)

The 'Horse's Mouth' Mentorship Programme still has a few spaces left.

Our farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing and mentorship service is in full swing around the country with 45 farms being visited. A farmer recently visited in Roscommon said: *"To have a farmer out to give you advice, to come to your land and share what they know. This type of peer-to-peer help is invaluable and just brilliant to receive for such a low cost."*

This programme is aimed at supporting farmers and landowners who are looking for on-the-ground practical advice from fellow farmers on how they might improve their land's biodiversity and be productive farmers. Though every farm is different, you can't underestimate the value of some sound practical advice and encouragement from a fellow farmer. Sound like something you would like to avail of - we still have 5 spaces available. Just read the below information and fill in the simple application form to be considered. The cost is just €50 to you.

The Horse Mouth Programme is supported by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

[Apply to the Horse's Mouth Mentorship programme](#)





Back row L-R: Lisa Gifford, Tom Tierney, Mariann Klay

Front row L-R: Pickersgill Family; Diana and daughter Pen

Meet the last of our 2023 Ambassadors up close!

Pickersgill Family - Farming in Co. Westmeath, Diana and her daughter Pen run one of the most remarkably diverse systems with Dexter cattle, Herdwick sheep, pigs, poultry, bee hives, forestry and a strong emphasis on habitat protection. You can watch their video [here](#).

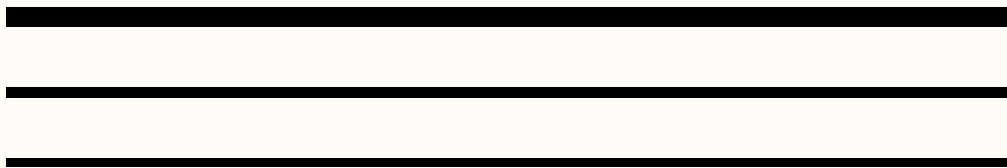
They are hosting a farm walk on the 8th September, book tickets [here](#).

Tom Tierney - Tom is a tillage farmer in Co. Kildare who is a big advocate for conservation and no-till agriculture. He also manages 30 acres of forestry and 12 acres set aside for wildlife conservation. You can watch his video [here](#).

Tom is holding a farm walk on the 24th October, book tickets [here](#).

Lisa Gifford - Lisa is a goat farmer in Co. Leitrim. She has a dairy where she and her family produce award-winning cheese and ice-cream. She is a proponent of rare native breeds such as the Irish goat and manages a low-input, species rich grassland system. You can watch her video [here](#).

Mariann Klay - Mariann runs a successful thorough-bred horse stud in Co. Kildare. She manages an extensive, chemical-free system. She has had a pond dug on the farm, encourages thick hedgerows and manages an area of wetland on the farm. Watch Mariann's video [here](#).





Building a Pond

Ponds are game-changers in terms of building biodiversity on the farm. That's probably why our guide to building a pond is one of the most popular pages on our website.

Simply put, where there's water there are insects, where there are insects there are predators like birds that eat them which will draw larger creatures like mammals to eat them and so on.

While there may not be much eating for the top of the food chain - homo sapien, they do help provide a sanctuary away from the stresses of the world.

Where there's water, there's life!

Download our best practice guide to building a wildlife pond on your land below.

[Building a Pond](#)

Nature's Calendar - Autumn

Observations & Actions

What wildlife should you be looking out for at this time of year? What practical actions can you take on your farm to help nature this Autumn?

Find out using our nature's calendar below.

[Nature's Calendar - Autumn](#)

Farmers - Listen Up! Our Latest Podcasts

Our latest podcast is '[Making Money from Field to Fork](#)' with Liam and Justina Gavin of Drumanilra Farm Co. Roscommon. The Gavins have pioneered the country's first organic fast-food restaurant with much of the produce coming from their very own farm.

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One from the archives! **Olly Nolan** is a beekeeper, farmer and producer of Great Taste award-winning Heather honey. He's holding a farm walk on the 25th

August. [Here](#) he is back in 2018 to give you a flavour of what you might expect on his farm walk.

Farming For Nature Podcasts

Forum

This is space for farmers and others 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.

Forum

Groundtips - Advice from Farmers for Farmers

Groundtips provides practical advice and tips from farmers in their own words on how they have enhanced nature on their land.

This month we are covering **Agroforestry** with tips from ambassador Clive Bright on why agroforestry is such an important component of your farm.

Amongst the benefits Clive says - *'Sheep with adequate shelter and shade have shown a 10 – 15% greater weight gains than those without.'*

Click below to find out more.

[Agroforestry](#)

Events Calendar

We post all our events including our farm walks on our calendar on our website. Upcoming events:

Summer Seed Saving with Madeline McKeever

20th Aug Ballymaloe Cookery School Organic Farm, Shanagarry, Co. Cork

Field Exchange Festival

31st August-1st September Brookfield Farm, Tipperary

NOTS - Introduction to Agroforestry Course,

3rd September Crecora, Co. Limerick

Fields Good Regenerative Agriculture Festival,

7th September Glenarm, Ballymena, NI

Farming for Nature Panel at Earth Rising

22nd September Featuring Farming for Nature ambassadors Andrew Bergin, Kate Egan and Bruce Thompson Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin

Please email sarah@farmingfornature.ie if you want an event posted.

[Events Calendar](#)

Calling all BOOKWORMS

If the FFN Handbook isn't exciting enough, Ambassador Donna Mullen has also released a new book called 'Make Your Home a Nature Reserve'. In it, Donna describes how to make your space – from a windowbox to a suburban garden to a farm – inviting to nature. And learn all about Ireland's wildlife, from tiny plants to large mammals. Buy online or in major bookshops.

A poem by Jane Clarke

Finally we leave you with this beautiful piece by poet, Jane Clarke. Jane has been working with some of our farming Ambassadors to capture the work they do for nature on their land. This month we join Lisa Gifford and her family of Goats in Leitrim.

The Goats of Leitrim Hill Creamery

A low hill above Lough Scur –

four does and a buck chew the cud

on a heap of hay in the sun.

Their kids run circles,

butt heads and jump. The farmer tells me

the history of goats is in their eyes;

the horizontal pupils that helped

spot predators in the desert,

the depth perception for escape
through rocks, across cliff tops.

Here where the fields are small,
the soil waterlogged,

the flock browses for hours
among rushes and sedge, stretches

on hind legs to nibble brambles,
strip bark from willow. At night

they cluster in the galvanised shed,
lick and scratch each other,

one head on the flank of the next.
And when one dies, their companion

grows listless, as if she's lost
her appetite for life.

Jane Clarke

‘The Goats of Leitrim Hill Creamery’ was inspired by a visit
to Farming for Nature Ambassador, Lisa Gifford.

It was funded through the Creative Ireland Climate Action Fund in collaboration with Burrenbeo Trust.



About Farming For Nature

Farming for Nature is an independent initiative set up to inspire and encourage farmers that farm or wish to farm more for nature. We would love to hear any ideas, suggestions or feedback you have. Visit www.farmingfornature.ie or email us on info@farmingfornature.ie.

Farming for Nature is hosted by the charity Burrenbeo Trust and funded by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

www.farmingfornature.ie

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Farming for Nature, Glebe Road, Kinvara, Co. Galway, Kinvara,

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