

IRISH COUNTRYLIVING

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MARYS ON A MISSION

Presenter. President. Podcasters. Nana.
Mary Kennedy and Mary McAleese
on their friendship and evolving roles

IRISH COUNTRY MAGAZINE



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'We're delighted to bring you our fresh and vibrant new look of Irish Country Living'

Welcome to the new look of *Irish Country Living* – a project we've been working on behind the scenes for months.

There has been lots of meetings about mastheads and debates about fonts and a geeky amount of time considering the position of pull quotes. But as the first edition of the rebrand lands in your hands, we hope the hard work has paid off.

Because right throughout the process the priority was you, our reader – to improve your experience and to make your weekly read even more enjoyable.

For that reason, this rebrand is twofold. Visually, we wanted to give our paper a more stylish look and feel; to help you navigate it more easily. From a content perspective, we conducted research to ensure we were continuing to deliver articles that interest you and your rural life.

Firstly, we ran a reader survey in which we collated and analysed the views of 850 readers. Some also agreed to engage in more in-depth analysis and we commissioned an external company to conduct one-to-one interviews. This research gave us a deeper appreciation of our readers' interests and not only guided some of the decisions for the paper that's in your hands today, but also for the content we'll cover in future.

Let me guide you through the paper. *Irish Country Living* is now divided into three sections which are colour coded. Up front, you'll find our features which celebrate rural life, the farmers, food producers and entrepreneurs who are innovating and bringing something new to the table, as well as the inspirational stories of people who push boundaries. Few have pushed boundaries in the way our former president Mary McAleese has, and we're delighted to have her and the very talented Mary Kennedy on our cover, talking about their podcast which is recorded in a small studio in the countryside of Allenwood, Co Kildare.

Also in the first section of the paper are our features on health and food as well as rural affairs. This is a new element we introduced earlier this year in which Jacqueline Hogge is digging under the surface to examine the social issues that impact rural life. Our popular columnists will now be found on page 9 each week and the back page.

In the middle section, you'll find our new lifestyle and culture section. From recipes celebrating Irish ingredients with chef Neven Maguire, to travel and family days out, this is an area you want to see more of. We'll also continue to celebrate Irish folklore, books and sport.

Moving into the third section, here the focus is on careers and business. Education and career progression is extremely important, especially to younger readers. And this is also where you'll find out how to put more money in your pocket.

This has been a massive team effort but special thanks has to be given to our art director, Audrey Kane who embraced this project with plenty of enthusiasm, fresh ideas, hard work and copious cups of Barry's tea.

We hope you like our new look and that each page continues to reflect your rural life.

Editor, Ciara Leahy
cleahy@farmersjournal.ie



Ciara

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Deputy Editor | Deirdre Verney
dverney@farmersjournal.ie



Art Director | Audrey Kane
akane@farmersjournal.ie



Careers & Education | Sarah McIntosh
smacintosh@farmersjournal.ie



Rural Affairs | Jacqueline Hogge
jhogge@farmersjournal.ie



Food | Janine Kennedy
jkennedy@farmersjournal.ie



Property | Paul Mooney
pmooney@farmersjournal.ie

Country vibes

A few of our favourite things...



Dear editor

How lovely it was to see radio and TV presenter Brenda Donohue on the cover of *Irish Country Living* recently (12 October). It brought back so many fond memories of listening to her back in the '90s when she was on *The Gerry Ryan Show* – her infectious laugh and ability to get to the heart of the matter really did make her a favourite in our household. When she visited your columnist, Katherine O'Leary at her home to talk about Katherine's cancer diagnoses for a piece on *CountryWide*, she did so with great compassion and empathy and once again showed why I enjoy listening to her. I can't wait to join you all at the Women & Agriculture conference in the Lyrath Estate and listen to both of these amazing women share their stories.

Yours sincerely,
Mairéad, Co Clare

Picture of the week
Twins Holly and Heidi Cleary herding at Lough Ennell, close to Mullingar in Co Westmeath.
\\Jillian Maye Cleary



Pumpkin fun
There's still time to enjoy some outdoor Halloween fun at Nore Valley Pumpkin Patch in Bennettsbridge, Co Kilkenny. Pick and carve your perfect pumpkin, snap memories at a fun photo booth, enjoy face painting, a bouncy castle and entry to the pet farm. There are tractor and trailer rides, go-karts, an indoor sandpit, and playground — all included in your ticket. Pictured below: Laura Holmes shows off her handiwork at the Pumpkin Patch. Book tickets online at norevalleypark.com



African aid
Christian Aid Ireland continues to make a life-changing difference to the farmers in Africa by helping them with innovative projects. Vhaina Mahweta is one of 4,000 farmers supported to grow sesame in drought-affected Mwenezi, Zimbabwe. She is pictured with Bandon farmer Roy Kingston, who visited projects funded by the aid agency. Check out caid.ie

Coffee Shop tour
Roscommon chanteuse Ciara Lawless is celebrating the launch of her latest single *Girl In A Coffee Shop* with, you guessed it, a coffee shop tour nationwide. The acoustic pop track, which is set to be released on 25 October, blends live-recorded sounds from a real coffee shop with catchy percussion and a memorable sing-along chorus. Ciara, who grew up on a farm in Taughmaconnell, will embark on the tour, hitting cosy venues in Clare, Wicklow, Cork and Westmeath later this month. Check out [@ciaralawlessHQ](https://www.instagram.com/ciaralawlessHQ) on Instagram. \\Oisín Browne



Farm fashion
Alpocalypse is the eye-catching creation of Moate CS students Emma Kinahan, Emma Keane and Lucy Champ, who have qualified for the World Finals of Junk Kouture, the fashion competition promoting sustainability. The alpaca wool used in the outfit was sourced from Emma's organic family farm in Rosemount, Moate, Co Westmeath. The outfit, modelled by Lucy, wowed judges at the Dublin final. \\Ken Byrne

Love is on the air
Love in the Country is at the halfway mark and we're already heavily invested. The series is based on the international format of *The Farmer Wants a Wife* and features singletons living in rural Ireland. Hosted by Anna Geary (below), this uniquely Irish take on the dating programme is definitely one you can watch with the mammy and daddy. Watch Monday on RTÉ 2 at 9.35pm and on the RTÉ Player.



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Marvellous Marys as podcast pals

Former president Mary McAleese and presenter Mary Kennedy have joined forces to become podcasters. With 15 years of friendship, they bring deep and meaningful to a whole new level

By Ciara Leahy

In a small studio on a country road in Allenwood, Co Kildare, the kettle is boiling and the Tun-nock’s tea cakes are being put out. “Tea and tea cakes,” they have become the official menu of our podcast,” says Mary Kennedy, laughing. This relaxed and friendly environment is part of the success of *Changing Times - The Allenwood Conversations*, a podcast hosted by former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese and acclaimed broadcaster Mary Kennedy. But what is really at its core is friendship, one that has been nurtured over 15 years.

Walking the Camino was the first step in their friendship. “We’re both people people,” says Mary Kennedy. “By that I mean, we’re very interested in people, and that extends to community, culture, especially Irish culture, we’re proud of what we have as a country.”

“And we value friendship,” adds Mary McAleese.

Their Camino friendship developed amongst a group of 15 and they still holiday together, where there is plenty of badly sung sing-songs, competitive quizzes, lots of laughter – and a generous helping of life thrown into the mix. “You see, it all started from very sad circumstances,” explains Mary McAleese. “We had a colleague whose children died in a dreadful accident. We started doing the Camino with him and his wife and a group of friends emerged from that. Since then, two people in our group have passed away, and another is very sick. So, we’re also confronted with that fragility of life, but in a way, that bonds us too. We’re all people who really live in the moment and enjoy life because, it can be very short.”

Being friends is one thing but being business partners is a different ballgame and through their podcast, they have learned a lot about each other. “Mary McAleese is very accommodating,” explains her friend. “She is really in tune with what people are going through. I’ve had some difficulties health wise and she is concerned and understanding – there is work and there is life, and she gets that.”

In reply, Mary McAleese says, “I’m always up for a laugh. If there’s one thing that I really cannot get on with in life, is people who are poor faced, I swear, they



Mary McAleese and Mary Kennedy enjoying the photoshoot in Dublin. by Philip Doyle
Clothes supplied by Lennon Courtney at Kilkenny Design. Cover: Mary Kennedy: Freedom A-line danu print dress (€140, now €70), Euphoria jacquard coatigan (€150, now €105). Mary McAleese: Chameleon reversible coat (€200, now €100), Margo jersey top (€45), perfect tapered trousers (€80). Inside: Mary Kennedy: Chameleon reversible coat (€200, now €100), weightless signature sleeve jumper (€40), tapered trousers (€80). Mary McAleese: Freedom swing blouse (€85, now €42.50), ultimate knit trousers (€80), Kate pink crossbody bag (€55, now €27.50).

drag the life out of you. I believe there are two types of people, radiators and drains. And drains do literally that, they drain the life out of you, but Mary is the polar opposites, she is a radiator and always great company.”

Famous faces

It’s not just their famous names that have helped them secure a stellar line-up of guests for their podcast – although let’s be honest, that has helped. They have also created a space for meaningful conversations. A snapshot of guests includes Dermot Kennedy, Daniel O’Donnell, Eileen Dunne, Roz Purcell, Bertie Ahern, Seán O’Fearghail and Noírin O’Sullivan, and while the conversation is certainly varied, it is sometimes deep, and always engaging.

Although neither will admit which

interview they enjoyed most, Mary McAleese says Phil Coulter was perhaps, the guest who surprised her. “After Phil finished school, he went to Queen’s University Belfast to study music. This man is in his 80s and to go to university was a huge deal back then, especially for his parents. He went there for five years but never got his degree because his music took off. He went to London and subsequently, achieved massive success with Eurovision wins, Grammy nominations, number 1 hits, a stellar career. So at the end of our podcast, we ask our guests, if they could change one thing in their life, what would it be? And to our amazement, he explained that he wished he had finished college so that he could have brought his degree home to his Mammy and Daddy. He got quite emotional, and we were both completely taken back.”

“Tell them what you did next,” says Mary Kennedy.

Smiling she continues, “Afterwards, I phoned a colleague in Queen’s. I said, ‘Is it possible that he can get his degree, given everything he has achieved for music? His reply was, ‘whatever it takes, we’ll get it done’.

“So I rang Phil, he was driving home from the studio. He pulled the car in, and next thing, I just heard him sobbing. I thought, wow, here is a man with name recognition the world over, such accomplishments, and he still carries that with him. It really was quite moving.”

For Mary Kennedy, the most thought-provoking interview was Rory O’Connor, known to many from his profile *Rory’s Stories*.

“What struck me is that this guy went through hell in school. He talked about being the dunce and he shares those stories and that vulnerability. Look at him now, he is a comedian, a best-selling author, a mental health advocate, married with three children – very funny, very impressive. But for a long time, he really thought he would end up more or less in the gutter.

“As someone who stood in front of children as a secondary school teacher, that really struck me. Clever students will do well no matter what, but I used to always get a kick out of the weaker students reaching their potential. To think he was just left at the back of the class, you know, you really want to give those people a talking to. He is a huge role model for young guys and girls, and it’s wonderful

that the world we live in now gives him a platform.”

Retirement isn’t really a word that comes into play with the two Marys, having both had such impressive careers. With 15 years on air presenting *Nation-wide*, Mary Kennedy has seen nearly every corner of rural Ireland.

“I’m very optimistic about how rural Ireland is evolving. There are pockets that still need a lot of work and development. But as you go further west, there’s a vibrancy. Since the pandemic, there has been a real change of pace and an improvement in the quality of life. I remember when I used to be filming, leaving Dublin at 6.30am and as we went out the M50, there would be a sea of lights coming in the opposite direction on the way into the city. Now people work from home much more, which means a lot less commuting, more time with family, being involved in their community, the local GAA – all that is breathing life back into rural Ireland.”

Compromise

For Mary McAleese, even though she is nearly out of the Áras as long as she was there, she is always on top of the politics, particularly foreign relations, given her memories of growing up during the Troubles. “Here we are in this millennium where we have so much technology, so much development. We understand that all wars eventually end – they have to end. And they end in negotiation, in compromise. To think that there are people losing their lives in that interim period, until good leaders emerge who are prepared to make compromises, it is very depressing.

“So I look at all the heartbreak, the people, especially children, who have gone to their eternal reward. And having lived through the Troubles, I also think of the aftermath, the young men who never came home, the marriages that never got to be a family. And I just think, what a waste, what an absolute waste. When in the name of all that is good are we going to learn that the best way to live is to live in harmony with your neighbours?

“I don’t want to live in a world where my grandchildren saw what I saw.”

And so the conversation evolves again onto the many roles women play in life. Because, while these Marys embrace all their titles, whether that’s president, presenter or podcaster, they are equally enjoying being known as Nana.





Dr Daniel Curley, manager of Rathcroghan Visitor Centre, pictured inside Oweynagat cave, the birthplace of Halloween. \ Philip Doyle

Beware...‘Gate to Hell’ ready to welcome you

A spook-tacular Roscommon tour takes you underground in search of the origins of Samhain

By Deirdre Verney

The faint light of a small torch twinkles in the entrance to Oweynagat, at Rathcroghan, close to Tulsk in Co Roscommon. When it is switched off, the dark is beyond pitch black below and spookily silent.

I’m sitting in the narrow, slightly muddy entrance to the so-called ‘Cave of the Cats’, the birthplace of Halloween, also known as ‘Ireland’s Gate to Hell’ looking at an Ogham inscription, the earliest form of writing in Ireland. This job can take you

to some unexpected places, and this one is certainly up there.

While I had passed this area many times on journeys west, I had never stopped or realised I was in the midst of the rich farmland landscape of Cruachan Aí that boasts over 240 archaeological sites, 60 alone which are national monuments spanning over a timespan of 5,500 years. Dr Daniel Curley, manager of Rathcroghan Visitor Centre, smiles as he describes the area as an “archaeologist’s dream.”

It has several millennia of “unparalleled evidence of settlement and ritual activity” in Ireland, if not Europe, he says, with ringforts, royal burial mounds, Stone Age

tombs and massive linear earthworks all spread over 6.5 sq km of land in Connacht’s prehistoric royal capital.

For a place like Oweynagat, which is so important at this time of the year, it’s easy to miss and quite hard to find. Walking up a typical rural boren, there is little sign of modernity and no clue to what lies ahead.

Origins of Samhain tour

Greeted quite appropriately given the area’s moniker by two cats, I walk into an ordinary-looking field, which is privately owned by a farmer from Sligo who allows visitors to the Rathcroghan centre in small groups to access it. In the middle of a long hedgerow, I spy a strange-looking opening emerging from the earth. This is the entrance of Oweynagat, a “special spot”, according to Daniel, who is giving a preview of the Origins of Samhain tour which is booked out every year.

Setting the scene, he explains that Rathcroghan was important for all of society at the pagan pre-Christian festivals of Imbolc, Bealtaine, Lughnasadh, and Samhain and it was a place of ritual gathering.

“The last festival of the year marks the transition of autumn into winter, and that’s the festival of Samhain. That’s the point when you brought your livestock home,” explains Daniel.

Depending on how bountiful the harvest was, farmers then had to make a decision on how many cattle to keep for the winter period. Naturally enough, then, Samhain was always marked by a feast to consume the excess.

Samhain in particular was celebrated at the Roscommon site with activity focused on an elevated structure, possibly a wooden temple on the nearby Rathcroghan mound, which would have been lit up for the occasion.

It hosted the ‘Electric Picnic’ of its time, a mass gathering and celebration of the goddess of the land, Medb, before the crowds would disperse off elsewhere.

Here is known as the birthplace of Samhain, according to Daniel – a time of year when it was believed the invisible wall between the living world and the otherworld disappeared and spirits could walk freely among the living.

“In the feasting halls on Samhain night, people were regaled with stories of the monsters and creatures and manifestations that emerged out of the other-world from this cave on our mortal plain in order to create the world ready for winter,” he explains.

Giving a whistle-stop tour of some of the very visceral mythology and stories associated with this hidden part of Roscommon, Medb looms large. Her son Fráoch was brought to the cave when he was mortally wounded by a water creature to be brought back to life.

Then there is the Mórrígan, the shape-shifting goddess of war, and the many creatures who came out of the caves on Samhain night.

“Some of the stories talk about a flock of red birds whose breath is so foul it takes the leaves off the trees coming out on Samhain night. They talk about three giant wild boars that every piece of vegetation they touch withers.

“They talk about female werewolves, three-headed monsters, giant cats, which is part of the naming of the monument, and armies that all emerge out of this otherworldly space.”

Trick or treat

Dr Curley is keen to stress that it is not just his theory that Halloween originated here; it’s borne out of strong evidence.

“We have a manuscript tradition here that’s over 1,000 years old, and the weight of stories that relate to Halloween being associated with this cave is greater than any other location on the island. It’s the stories themselves that are rooting themselves in this place.

“They are telling us that this place is synonymous with Halloween; it is representative of Halloween (Samhain) and the access point between our world and the other world being opened and the Mórrígan (the goddess of war) allowing for the process of winter to take hold,” he explains. Then she returns all the “catatonic energy back into the otherworld at the end of the night. And that’s where we get the bones of Halloween as it is.”

The otherworld wasn’t hell, he contends either, but a “proto-paradise” of Tír na nÓg, where time stands still and people don’t grow old. However, it does have a dark side at Halloween, and lots of the traditions we still hold can be traced back to these times.

“If you look at the Folklore Commission, they record stories whereby you did not leave your home after dusk (on Samhain night), but if you did leave, you did so before dusk and in costume, and that’s where we get the origins of the costume. Disguising yourself so you’re not apprehended by the manifestations that are out there.”

“They [tourists] love the fact that you can access part of not just Irish archaeology but it is a stitched in part of mythology in our early literature”



From top: tour guide Mike McCarthy sitting inside the entrance to Oweynagat or the ‘Cave of the Cats’ near Tulsk, Co Roscommon; below, the hidden cave entrance in farmland. \ Brian Farrell

The idea of trick or treat or feasting in advance of winter has its origins here too.

Sometime in the early medieval period, the karst limestone cave was added to by a manmade entrance with Ogham writing, from the 4th to the 8th century, referring to the earlier stories.

It also became very much associated with warriors who defeat creatures coming out of the cave or warriors who go into it to face their fears. So, Daniel argues that “it is a place of testing, a place of initiation, a rite of passage”.

Sitting in the tight entrance, it’s easy to see why. Due to health and safety, it is no longer possible to go right down into the cave, but with the lights off in the entrance, you get the feeling of being discommoded immediately.

Given that overseas visitors to Rathcroghan make up 45% of people through the doors every year, what do they make of it all? Interestingly, many start enquiring about the tour in January, and quite a few make Rathcroghan and the cave their very reason for coming to Ireland, Daniel says.

“They love the fact that you can access part of not just Irish archaeology but it is a stitched in part of mythology in our early literature,” he adds.

Looking ahead, he is excited about opening a new 13km walking trail through Rathcroghan’s main sites in conjunction with landowners later this year. He is also continuing his work with local farmers on protective measures to preserve the area’s unique heritage.

“The word is spreading, but at the same time we have to pay deference to this place,” Dr Curley, who has just published his first book observes. “It’s been here for thousands of years, and I want it to be here for thousands of years after I’m gone and the landscape with it.”

‘It would be nice if the other residents of my home took cleanliness a bit more seriously’



My granny always told me that there’s no use thinking about what could have been. For example, what if I had followed my teenage ambition, joined a non-governmental organisation and spent my life living and working in developing countries? What if I hadn’t quit piano at the age of 18 and instead pursued a career in music? What if I had never married into a farming family?

When I was a mother of very young children, I sometimes felt hard done by, being isolated on a remote farm in the middle of the countryside. My dear aul’ husband could “escape” – cows needed to be milked, silage had to be made. He physically couldn’t be with our children – they were too little to go out fencing with him and too dependent on their mammy for nurturing and sustenance (their father remains a terrible cook, so not much has changed).

Still, I have no regrets. I’d do it all over again tomorrow; the only difference is I would put less pressure on myself. I think my granny was right. I don’t see the point in looking back and thinking, “what if...”

However, I do often wonder if my house would be cleaner if I didn’t live on a farm.

I went from apartment and rental life straight into home ownership and farm life. At this stage, I don’t know any different, but every time I mop my floors I can’t help but feel that my house is probably dirtier than other non-farming households.

I am a full-on feminist, so my affinity for cleaning has nothing to do with traditional gender roles within my marriage, or as a mother. I just love a clean house and am better at cleaning than anyone I live with. I am hoping someday one of the kids takes a liking to hoovering.

I had to go away for work recently, and while I was looking forward to the break from “mammy-ing”, I also dreaded leaving because I assumed I would return to a bomb explosion.

While the kids have gotten better about participating in housework, they don’t perform to a very high standard.

Now, I’m not complaining about them helping out around the house. But I think most mummies will agree with me: sometimes when your kids “help”, they end up making more of a job for you.

My youngest loves to put away the clean dishes, but she is very creative about where things go. I start to cook only to realise the lid to the pot I’m using is missing. After several minutes of searching, it is finally located in the space under the oven – with the baking trays.

My middle child likes tidying the sitting room area around the sofa. She has gotten really good at covering the sofa with dog-proof blankets, but on closer inspection, it is obvious the children had not been paying attention to my “no food on the sofa” rule while I was away. I see splatters of drinkable yogurt, bits of chocolate and crumbs all over the cushions.

My eldest has decided the upstairs bathroom is too far away and has relocated all of her skincare, to the downstairs bathroom, which is usually reserved for visitors.

“I would invest in a robot hoover, but I feel it would just spread the muck around more”

You might think my husband is better than the kids – and he is, slightly. But you know the difference between something being tidied and something being truly cleaned and sanitised? I’m not sure he does. Every time I come home from a work trip, I feel the need to sanitise every surface and scrub every floor. I try not to take my frustrations out on other people, but it would also be nice if the other residents of my home took cleanliness a bit more seriously.

I suppose this is all in my head because we are entering into the busiest time of year for me, work-wise; the muckiest time of year, farm-wise and the time of year when I like the house to be extra cosy, comfortable and clean. I would invest in one of those robot hoovers, but I somehow feel it would just spread the muck around even more.

A girl can dream, I suppose, without considering all those “What if’s...”

‘Broadband rollout is not fast enough for rural areas’

Some farmers are losing patience in areas of the country that are still waiting for the rollout of fibre broadband through the National Broadband Plan, with many opting for satellite services instead



The National Broadband Plan was established in 2020.

By Jacqueline Hogge

Four years into a government initiative to deliver high speed fibre broadband to every corner of the country – and yet, more and more people living in rural Ireland are opting to gain internet connections through alternative broadband providers. The National Broadband Plan was established in 2020 but several areas of the country, including west Cork, Clare, Donegal, Leitrim, Mayo and Limerick are still waiting to be surveyed, which is the first stage of connection to the scheme. Last August, National Broadband

Ireland (NBI) announced it was ahead of schedule in its rollout, with three years of the seven-year project left to run. However, thousands of farmers, businesses and homeowners throughout rural Ireland have been told they will not be connected to fibre broadband until 2026. This is despite surveys being completed. And even in areas where network construction work is underway, people will not be able to connect to the service until next year. Cathal O’Conaill, business development manager with Údaras na Gaeltachta in Ballyvourney, Co Cork says plans to develop a digital hub in the region are being progressed without reliance on NBI to deliver broadband connectivity. Coláiste Íosógáin, Ballyvourney, a

former boarding school, whose alumni include the late sports broadcaster Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh, is currently being refurbished to provide remote working hubs, office and training facilities to both indigenous and multi-national companies interested in locating on the Cork Kerry border.

“The other huge difficulty people have is the fact that unless they register at the very start, NBI won’t entertain you”

“We hope to have connection to fibre broadband by 2026, which is the date NBI has given us but we can’t bank on that either as we are working towards opening the Campas Íosógáin centre in early 2026,” he says. “The GTeich initiative is a network of 31 innovation and digital hubs with high-speed broadband being developed by Údarás na Gaeltachta in locations throughout Gaeltacht areas. The whole purpose is to give rural areas the chance to compete with urban areas when it comes to development, and part of that is to provide the connectivity that businesses need. “Our goal with Campas Íosógáin is much more than broadband provision,

we are building a business ecosystem and our hope is to attract startup enterprises into this region. So, we are managing at the moment with broadband that is provided by radio signal and gives us a download speed of 700Mbps which is sufficient for now. “We don’t currently have the same internet needs as bigger companies who would require higher speeds and reliability for VPNs, which can eat up bandwidth, but people in the area would say that while our current broadband infrastructure isn’t brilliant, it’s sufficient for what we need now, if not for where we want to go in the future.”

Some farmers are losing patience with the wait for NBI connections, with many along the Mayo Galway border opting for satellite broadband connections to access the internet. Joe Joyce is a sheep farmer who also runs the Joyce Country Sheepdogs tourist attraction nestled between the Maunturk and Partry Mountains near Finny in south Mayo. Located on the shores of Lough Nafaoey, Joe’s agri-tourism business has struggled to secure reliable, fast internet connection over recent years.

Satellite service

“We have been told that NBI will have us connected by 2026 but we can’t wait that long so I – and a lot of my neighbours – have opted for satellite broadband, which is meeting our needs and is an affordable option,” he says. “The service we have is way ahead of anything else on the market and in a way, it’s hard to see how the fibre broadband promised by NBI won’t be redundant by the time it arrives.

“I run an agri-tourism business and I need broadband for my website and emails. The satellite service has been around for a few years but it’s only recently it has become an affordable option. It’s reliable and consistent and it’s made a huge difference to my business since I signed up. “From what I can see, there’s not a lot of forward thinking going into the NBI plan. My neighbour, who lives across the lake is in his 80s and has no intention of connecting to the internet. He has a phone line, which they were able to lay under the lake, but he’s been told they can’t do the same for the internet, so they’re wasting a lot of time, money and effort installing poles all the way around the lake to connect a premises that in all likelihood will never avail of the service. “The other huge difficulty people have is the fact that unless they register at the very start, NBI won’t entertain you. Factories here are having huge difficulty getting connected and one of them is an Údaras company, so if they can’t put pressure on NBI the rest of us have no chance.” A spokesperson for NBI said the progression of the National Broadband Plan would significantly help remove the digital divide between urban and rural communities. “The National Broadband Plan is a seven-year programme, that will ensure Ireland will become one of the first countries in the world to provide high-speed fibre broadband to 100% of its population,” they said.



Joe Joyce, a sheep farmer who runs an agri-tourism business on the shores of Lough Na Fooley in Co Mayo; below, Cathal O’Conaill, business development manager with Údaras na Gaeltachta in Ballyvourney, Co Cork.



“The rollout of fibre broadband is proceeding simultaneously across all counties. At present, over 300,000 premises (53%) have been passed and can avail of high-speed fibre broadband through the NBI network. We are on track to deliver fibre broadband to 10,000 premises each month as we near the end of the programme. 85% of all premises (477,677) under the National Broadband Plan have either moved to or completed the construction phase. “On the ground, we are working hard to maintain momentum to connect all premises under the National Broadband Plan within the agreed timelines. “Last month, NBI connected the first homes in Black Valley, Co Kerry, which was one of the last places in Ireland to be connected to the electricity grid in 1977.”

IN SHORT

- The National Broadband Plan is the largest ever telecommunications project undertaken by the State.
- Over 500,000 premises will be able to connect to the service in the rollout area which accounts for 23% of the population.
- The State Intervention Area for the National Broadband Plan therefore includes over 564,000 premises and over 1.1m people. It also includes any new homes built in the Intervention Area over the next 25 years.

Nationwide events will focus on farming families’ mental health

Farmers and their households are encouraged to attend activities as part of the Social Farming Ireland initiative

By Jacqueline Hogge

A series of regional events will take place around the country in the coming weeks, encouraging farmers and their families to take time to consider their mental health, stress management and overall wellbeing. Facilitated by the Social Farming Ireland network, in conjunction with Leitrim Development Company, South West Mayo Development Company, West Limerick Resources and Waterford LEADER partnership, the first two events took place in Kill, Co Kildare and Ballymoore, Co Galway earlier this week. Three more are planned for Callan, Co Kilkenny on Tuesday, 29 October; Kilmee, Co Limerick on Tuesday, 5 November; and Ross, Co Meath on Monday, 11 November.

Occupational stress

The events will provide farmers with practical advice on managing and improving their wellbeing and mental health while offering a supportive environment to discuss the challenges they face within the agricultural sector. “Farmers can experience high levels of occupational stress from their operations, and often these sources of stress are beyond the control of the farmer,” says Mary Brennan, research and policy officer at Social Farming Ireland. “These events represent a vital opportunity for farmers to not only gain knowledge about ways to help safeguard and improve their mental health and wellbeing, but to connect with their peers in a meaningful way.

“Each event will be delivered by mental health and wellbeing experts and advocates, tailored to address a broad range of farmers mental health and wellbeing issues. Indeed, by addressing mental health openly and providing tools for stress management, we aim to foster stronger and healthier rural communities.” Social farming provides support for people who are experiencing challenges in their lives on typical working family farms. Using the natural assets of the people, place and community, the network provides planned non-clinical, personalised and outcome-focused supports which are in tune with people’s own choices, goals and needs. Social Farming Ireland is a national project and network, funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM). Based in Drumshanbo, Co Leitrim, it is led by Leitrim Development Company in collaboration with other local development companies across the country. The wellbeing events are free to attend and are open to all farmers and their families. Attendees are advised to dress warmly for the occasion as the majority of these events take place on social farms.

People can register at their preferred venue between 6.30pm and 8.30pm on the night but are advised to reserve a place by visiting socialfarmingireland.ie. Further information is available by calling 071 9641772/086 0654136 or emailing socialfarming@ldco.ie.



Corina, Patrick and Christopher Corrigan pictured with social farming participant Martin Hannigan.



‘You can live long and well with multiple myeloma’

Mother-of-four Mag Kirwan from Co Kilkenny, and dad-of-five Dermot O’Leary from Co Cork talk about the treatments that have helped them get on with living with multiple myeloma

Margaret Hawkins
Health



Every year in Ireland, approximately 350 people are diagnosed with multiple myeloma – a cancer of the plasma cells that are made in the bone marrow. Although it is a rare and incurable blood

disorder, it is treatable and some patients can live a normal life. To further explain, multiple myeloma is an abnormal protein produced in multiple sites (bones) in the body, causing bone damage and pain. Kidney damage also occurs because calcium is leaked from the damaged bones. The most common symptoms, therefore, are persistent bone or back pain, as well as kidney problems, anaemia, recurring infections and fatigue. However, the news related to this type of cancer is very positive, according to Mary Kelly, registered advanced nurse practitioner in haematology, based at the Midlands Regional Hospital, Tullamore. She has cared for myeloma patients for 25 years and is in no doubt about the

progress in treatments. “Patients with multiple myeloma are now living much longer as a result of the great treatments available,” she says. “Five-year patient survival rates have increased from 24% to over 70% so it’s very good news.” Concern about patients back in 2006 led Mary to write a thesis on the lived experience of multiple myeloma patients. She found that isolation, lack of support and general lack of awareness of the illness were major concerns. She subsequently set up the support charity, Multiple Myeloma Ireland in 2008, which is based in the Dóchas Centre in Tullamore. It is the first and longest-running support and information group for people living with the disease. Groups across the country have now

sprung up as a result and a podcast began during lockdown called *Living with Myeloma* which has been nominated for a Bullseye award in the Irish Podcast Awards. Mary has three key messages for anyone who is newly diagnosed. “Firstly, this is a very treatable condition. Secondly, anyone with symptoms should get them checked out quickly and thirdly, there is a lot of support for anyone with this illness,” she says. However, making a diagnosis can be challenging. “A lot of tests are needed and that’s one of the challenges for healthcare professionals in the community. GPs may only see one case during their career so they are not looking for it. It can often be a combination of vague symptoms; who



Mag Kirwan of Goatsbridge Trout Farmery in Co Tipperary with her husband Ger; above, advanced nurse practitioner in haematology Mary Kelly pictured with Mag. \ Laurence J Photography

isn’t tired, who doesn’t have back pain, or some bone pain? However, persistent, severe pain are indicators. “Multiple myeloma can sometimes be missed, so if you’ve got recurring symptoms you should be advocating with your GP for further investigation.” **Mag Kirwan’s story** Mag and her husband, Ger, run Goatsbridge Trout Farm near Thomastown, Co Kilkenny. The 59-year-old developed a love of fitness training in 2015, but in late 2019 she got a bad pain in her shoulder. “I went to my local physio first and then to a second physio as it wasn’t getting better,” explains Mag. “Anti-inflammatories were suggested so I had to contact my GP to get a prescription. As it happened, a new doctor looked at blood tests that I had done a few months earlier. Noticing some unusual levels, he advised getting more tests done. After an MRI, he rang to say I had a mass (a tumour) in my shoulder.” A bone specialist then diagnosed early multiple myeloma but after a bone biopsy and a PET scan, Mag was told that it was full-blown multiple myeloma. “This meant a change in my treatment plan, eight months of chemotherapy and the harvesting of my own stem cells in order for me to develop new bone marrow.” Mum-of-four Mag found her eldest son, Ned’s 21st birthday in February 2020 particularly difficult. “I kept wondering if I’d be around to see the next one turn 21, and so on,” she says. However, once she had her treatment plan, she felt more positive. “I knew it would take a year or two of consolidation treatment after the stem cell transplant. During that time I worked when I could and isolated when I had to.” Nearly three years on, Mag says practising gratitude helps her get on with life. “I have a lot going for me. Fifteen years ago there were one or two drugs available – now several new ones have been approved so, even though it’s not curable, it’s treatable. “If you’re lucky and you keep your body and head right, you can live long and well with this. That’s what I believe. “I don’t think too far ahead, I trust my consultant and my trainer. I have a great family and I feel really blessed.” Mag, one of 10 from the Goresbridge

Horse Sales family, believes that she has learned resilience over her lifetime. “My mother was 42 and two months away from having her 10th child when my father died. My brother Jack died later, aged 10, of measles. My mother continued to grow the family business to international success and reared and educated us all. “Life teaches you resilience so then when something like this happens you’re able to fight it and get on with it. I really believe that the power of the mind is incredible and that exercise is great medicine.” **Dermot O’Leary’s story** When dad-of-five Dermot, a 65-year-old dairy farmer from Bandon, Co Cork, had a routine blood test in September 2015, it showed high protein levels in his blood. At first prostate issues were suspected but a few months later, in January 2016, multiple myeloma was diagnosed. “I had no symptoms,” he says, “but looking back I’d often fall asleep at the table after supper. Maybe that was the start of it and I just didn’t recognise it. “I was glad to have a diagnosis in a way but my doctor said ‘you do realise this is cancer?’ I didn’t I suppose, but it sank in over a couple of days.” Dermot attended a support meeting in Tullamore in March 2016, ahead of starting treatment in April. “I had a good chat with the people there,” he says, “and felt, after that, that I could handle what was happening. I was calving cows at the time and working away as normal. I wouldn’t be a worrier. I just got on with it.”

“I had no symptoms, but looking back I’d often fall asleep at the table after supper. Maybe that was the start of it and I just didn’t recognise it”

He underwent a stem cell transplant, which involves tests to assess your general level of health, harvesting to collect the stem cells to be used in the transplant, conditioning ie treatment with chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy to prepare your body for the transplant. Then there is the transplantation of the stem cells and, after that, recovery. “They take out stem cells (enough for two treatments if needed),” Dermot says, “then put them back in again following chemotherapy. There were a few tough days, but it wasn’t the end of the world either,” he says. He has been on a maintenance drug called Revlimid since then and an aspirin every morning to avoid clots. Dermot has been on the board of Multiple Myeloma Ireland since 2019 and set up a support group in Cork. “Early diagnosis is vital,” he insists. “There are horror stories where sports people who have pain in their back



Dairy farmer Dermot O’Leary says early diagnosis is vital.

just assume it’s the legacy of sport. The sooner you get myeloma diagnosed, the better. That’s why we’re trying to get the word out. “Our support groups meet every second month. Being a member helps you feel that you’re not alone and you learn from others too.”

ABOUT MYELOMA

- Multiple myeloma is a blood cancer that develops in plasma cells in the bone marrow – the soft, spongy tissue at the centre of your bones.
- Myeloma affects multiple places in the body where bone marrow is normally active in an adult, ie within the bones.
- Stem cell transplants for multiple myeloma sees a person’s own stem cells removed from the bone marrow and stored until needed. The cells given in a transplant can grow into healthy blood cells in the bone marrow.
- Multiple Myeloma Ireland is now lobbying for funding for a database of patients living with the illness.
- For more information, email info@multiplemyelomaireland.org or see multiplemyelomaireland.org or cancer.ie.

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Recipes



Last weekend, I had a really enjoyable time at the Ideal Homes show at the RDS in Dublin. This is always a great event with great crowds and it was a real pleasure to see so many children out with their families. It was especially good to see so many of them interested in cooking. I was kept busy at the show doing three demos every day with Dunnes Stores Simply Better. This year, our theme was ‘Christmas Made Easy’. In the coming weeks, I’ll be sharing plenty of holiday food recipes and tips here in *Irish Country Living*, as well as some of our traditional Christmas favourites, so be sure to stay tuned.

At the *Ideal Homes Show*, I started each cookery demo with a celebration of Irish seafood followed by a main course of buttermilk-brined roasted turkey. Hogan’s Farm in Co Meath is a second-generation farm with over 50 years in business; now operated by brothers Fintan and Paul. They are great producers and, needless to say, are getting very busy at this time of year.

There were a lot of Irish producers there who are part of the Simply Better range, and it was also great to meet producers and people I met previously while filming my various food trail programmes on RTÉ. Bon Chocolatiers, run by Georgia Quealy and Daniel Linehan, make wonderful Irish artisan chocolate in Athlone. Both are classically trained chefs who worked in top restaurants both here in Ireland and abroad before starting their business. I also got the chance to meet the Meere family from Quinn, Co Clare, where Barry and Orlaigh (Meere’s Pork Products) make a range of traditional sausages and puddings.

Some of the recipes they use go as far as back as Granny Meere, which is really special.

At events like these, I always invite people to join me on stage and I am never disappointed with the culinary talent out there. I am also always happy to have Claire Beasley on stage with me – she is part of our team in the restaurant and cookery school and she keeps the show on the road.

During and after the cookery demonstrations, I have people as young as six years old approach me with questions and comments. I have also met people who have come back to me again to say they are now working as chefs, and I am always so delighted that I may have provided some small bit of encouragement to them.

In addition to the demos, I also do some masterclasses in things like knife skills, or how to prepare and present the perfect cheese board. If there is time afterwards, I am always happy to sign books for people. I have a new book out now called *Eat Out at Home*.

Fishmonger

Today, I am sharing two seafood-forward pasta dishes with two different but equally delicious flavour profiles. The first is this linguine dish, and it is the perfect one-pot meal. If you don’t like linguine or don’t have any on hand, don’t worry – you can use any type of pasta for this recipe. I am very conscious that an increasing amount of seafood is now being enjoyed in Ireland and we certainly notice this at the restaurant. You can use tiger prawns here, but if you want to splurge, use langoustines (Dublin Bay prawns) instead. They really are the king of prawns, with a soft texture and naturally sweet flavour. For the restaurant, we get ours from Mul-laghmore in Co Sligo.

For the seafood spaghetti recipe, it is worth visiting your local fishmonger who may have a seafood mix or will make one up for you. Mussels are great value and we produce excellent quality mussels here in Ireland. The chilli adds the ideal kick, but sometimes I also like to add some smoked bacon or chorizo to the dish – both of which work really well with seafood.



Linguine with prawns, peas and fine beans

- INGREDIENTS: Serves 4-6**
- 500g linguine
 - 175g frozen peas
 - 200g fine green beans, trimmed and halved
 - 450g cooked black tiger prawns
 - Finely grated rind and juice of 1 small lemon
 - 300ml crème fraîche
 - 20g fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves stripped and roughly chopped
 - 20g fresh basil leaves, stripped and shredded
 - Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

1 Cook the pasta in a large pan of boiling salted water for 10–12 minutes or according to the packet instructions, until al dente (tender but still with a bite). Four minutes before the end of the cooking time, add the frozen peas and green beans to the pan.

2 Drain the pasta and vegetables, then return to the pan over a low heat. Add the prawns, lemon rind and juice, crème fraîche and the herbs. Season to taste with salt and pepper and heat through

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FOLKLORE
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Spaghetti with seafood

- INGREDIENTS: Serves 4-6**
- 1.5kg mussels
 - 2 tbsp dry white wine
 - 350g spaghetti
 - 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
 - 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
 - 1 red chilli, thinly sliced into rings
 - 2 small squid, cleaned and cut into thin rings
 - 350g raw prawns, peeled and veins removed
 - 200g cherry tomatoes, halved
 - 2 tbsp chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
 - Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

1 Clean the mussels and remove the beards under cold running water. Place in a pan with a lid and pour over the wine. Cover tightly and cook over a high heat for a few minutes, shaking the pan occasionally, until all the mussels have opened – discard any that do not.

2 Strain through a sieve, reserving 150ml of the cooking liquor, leaving behind any grit. Reserve a few mussels for garnish and remove the remainder from their shells.

3 Meanwhile, twirl the spaghetti into a pan of boiling salted water. Stir once and cook for 10–12 minutes or according to the instructions on the packet, until al dente (tender but still with a bite).

4 Heat the oil in a heavy-based frying pan over a medium-high heat. Add the garlic and chilli and sauté for about 30 seconds, until lightly golden. Add the squid and continue to cook for a few minutes, then tip in the prawns and sauté for another minute or so, until just sealed. Add the reserved cooking liquid and reduce slightly, then tip in the mussels, tomato halves and parsley.

5 Season to taste and then allow to just warm through.



6 Drain the pasta and return it to the pan, then pour in the seafood sauce and fold together until well combined. Divide among warmed wide-rimmed bowls and serve at once.

TOP TIP
Wash the mussels under cold, running water or place in the sink or in a large bowl of cold water. Move them around with your hands to wash thoroughly.

Photographer:
Philip Doyle.
Food styling:
Janine Kennedy.





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Spilling the tea with

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Fed up hospitality professionals hit the streets

1In all my days in hospitality, I have never felt the need to protest – this is what it has come to, though, as the Government’s decision to keep the VAT rate at 13.5% for hospitality left business owners shocked at the proposed 2025 budget.

On 15 October, SME operators and hospitality professionals took to the streets to protest, but it remains to be seen if the right people were listening. According to one rural hospitality business owner, the ones they most wanted the message to reach were not in attendance.

“Our local TDs are very much behind us,” the business owner says. “But the Taoiseach, Paschal Donohoe – the people who needed to hear it didn’t show up, which was disappointing. The march was well supported, it was great to have the Vintners’ Federation of Ireland on board and the Irish Hairdressers Federation, it was very much like ‘We are all in this together.’

“If they don’t do something about this soon, they are going to feel it in the ballot boxes when the election is called.”

Another agri-food business owner says



A protest took place in Dublin on 15 October.

the march gave a feeling of inspiration.

“It reinforced why I am so happy to work in this industry and supply such hard working, dedicated people,” they say. “There were people there who have never protested before in their life, because they just put their heads down and work hard, but they are really struggling with too many things coming at them at the same time.”



4It’s almost time for the Good Food Ireland awards at The K Club in Co Kildare. The awards ceremony will be a “high profile, five star dinner showcasing a wealth of Ireland’s fantastic produce”. Taking place on 11 November, the awards recognise Good Food Ireland members who prioritise sourcing local in their hospitality, retail and food offerings.

I’m just wondering if my invite got lost. I may be bit of a culchie, but I promise I can hold my own during a five star dinner. Jokes aside, these awards are great for showcasing the range of businesses which

truly support their local communities and food producers. Members of Good Food Ireland are inspected once a year to ensure they stick to the high standards set.

This year, finalists include The Apple Farm in Co Tipperary, Praline Pastry and Chocolate Shop in Co Cork, Connemara Smokehouse in Co Galway and Kelly’s Hotel and Resort in Co Wexford.

Last year’s Good Food Ireland Lifetime Achievement Award went to Declan Rice from Arbutus Bread in Co Cork.

[Check out goodfoodireland.ie](http://checkoutgoodfoodireland.ie)



Pictured at the awards are from left: Minister of State, Pippa Hackett, Dolores and Joe Gorman, Garryhinch Wood Exotic Mushrooms, and Jim O’Toole, CEO Bord Bia at Bord Bia’s National Organic Awards which took place in the Bord Bia Global Hub, Dublin. | Chris Bellew Fennell Photography

National Organic Award winners

2Back in my granny’s day, there was no such thing as organic food – it was just called “food”.

Today, organic feels a bit like a sexy status symbol, with new certified organic food products appearing on supermarket shelves all the time. Bord Bia puts on the National Organic Awards every two years to recognise the best of the best among the organic food producing community.

They just announced their roster of 2024 award winners and some names might be

familiar to regular *Irish Country Living* and *Irish Country Magazine* readers, including Garryhinch Exotic Mushrooms, the Urban Co-op in Limerick, Burren Smokehouse Organic Smoked Salmon and Green Earth Organics. The awards were presented at the (very posh) Bord Bia Global Hub in Dublin.

Congrats to Joe and Dolores Gorman of Garryhinch Wood Exotic Mushrooms, winner of the Best New and Innovative Irish Organic Product.

Make my oysters ‘extra’ briny

3I know some Irish diners are iffy when it comes to oysters, but Ireland produces some of the best oysters in the world. As we start to gear up for (yes, I’m going to say it) – Christmas – you should consider giving them a go. The season for Irish oysters runs from September to April, and it is a real treat to try them at this time of year.

The best part is, many Irish oyster producers can ship those tasty morsels directly to your house, complete with shucking knife and easy-to-follow directions on preparation and storage. It’s a bit of fun and by no means rocket science (sure if I can shuck, anyone can shuck).

If you are fully “anti-shucking” but still want to enjoy some oysters, Sligo Oyster Experience has launched a new line of



Aisling Kelly Hunter. | James Connolly

pickled oysters made with their own variety from their farm in Sligo Bay. Pickled oysters are a real delicacy and perfect for grazing boards. While you’re at it, pick up some local trout caviar and serve both with blinis, sour cream and chives.

[Check out sligooystereperience.ie](http://checkoutsligooystereperience.ie)

Anyone for scoops and a yarn?

5If you were at the Ballymaloe Food Festival this past May, you might have caught *A Scoop & a Yarn* taking place. I thought it was one of the nicest parts of the festival. *Scoop* is a bi-annual magazine which celebrates meaningful and diverse food stories. *A Scoop & a Yarn* takes this concept to food events all around the country; bringing up well-known names in Irish food to share their stories, but also encouraging those in the audience to share.

It’s a lovely, intimate experience and if you are planning on going to the Samhain Festival in Co Meath (9-10 November), you will catch the *A Scoop & a Yarn* gang at The Celtic Bar in The Headfort Arms Hotel. On Saturday, find them from 5-7pm with Max Jones, JP McMahon and Máirtín Mac Conlomaire. On Sunday, from 2-4pm with Oisín Davis. Entry is free (and so is sharing).

[Follow @scoopfoodmag on Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/scoopfoodmag)

Banish winter colds

How to help to fight off colds and coughs this winter with good food

Nessa Robins
Home Nurse



It’s important to find ways to support our immune system throughout the year but especially during the season when colds, coughs and flus are lurking. Colds often hit us when we’re already a little run-down or tired. These factors can often be difficult to control but being kind to ourselves by eating nutrient-rich foods will help.

Foods rich in immune-boosting properties, such as seasonal vegetables, berries, fresh fish, garlic, nuts and seeds are important to include in our daily diets.

Most contain vitamin C, also known as ascorbic acid, which is a powerful antioxidant and is probably best known as an immune-boosting nutrient. Fruit and vegetables high in vitamin C content include oranges, grapefruit, lemons, kiwis, red peppers, broccoli, spinach, and kale.

As vitamin C is water-soluble and sensitive to heat, its beneficial properties can be destroyed during the cooking process, so for optimal intake, these foods are best enjoyed uncooked.

Vegetables from the allium family such as onions, garlic, leek, and chives have anti-inflammatory and antiviral properties, which can also help to protect us against colds.

In recent years, there have been many studies to promote the beneficial anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties of turmeric. Due to its mild flavouring a spoonful can easily be added to soups, curries, or stews. Black pepper helps with the absorption of turmeric so it is a good idea to add them together.

It’s important to keep well hydrated and, especially during times of sickness, plain water is best, but a hot herbal tea drink could also be sipped on, aiding hydration while also alleviating some of the symptoms of a cold, such as congestion.

Food styling and photography:
Nessa Robins.



Potato & leek soup

INGREDIENTS: Serves 4

50g butter
2 leeks, washed and sliced
350g potatoes, peeled and diced
1 onion, roughly chopped
Salt and freshly ground pepper
750ml vegetable or chicken stock
75ml milk or cream

To serve

Chives, finely chopped

METHOD

1 Melt the butter in a large saucepan. When it begins to foam add the leek, potato and onion and stir to combine with the butter.

2 Sprinkle with a little salt and a few grinds of pepper. Place a butter wrapper or a piece of greaseproof paper over the vegetables, to help them sweat. Cover with the lid of the saucepan. Sweat over a low heat for about 10 minutes, making sure the vegetables don’t stick to the bottom of the saucepan.

3 When the vegetables are soft but not coloured, add the stock, and continue to cook for another 15 minutes until the vegetables are soft.



4 Using a hand blender or a food processor, purée the soup until it is smooth. Taste and season, if necessary. Pour in the milk or cream and stir well to combine.

5 Pour the soup into serving bowls and garnish with some chopped chives.

Turmeric shots

INGREDIENTS: Serves 4

1 orange, peeled
125g pineapple, chopped
Juice of ½ lemon
½ tsp ground turmeric
Pinch of black pepper
150ml water

METHOD

1 Add all the ingredients to a high-powered blender and blitz until combined.

2 Strain the liquid through a sieve into a jug, and store in a sealed container in the fridge.

TOP TIP: These wellness shots are packed with vitamin C and anti-inflammatory and anti-viral benefits. To gain the maximum nutrients, drink immediately. It does keep for up to two days, if stored in the fridge.

The aroma of autumn is everywhere in Yankee Candle Village in Deerfield.



Fall in love with the sights and scents of New England

A trip down memory lane offered a delicious taste of fall in the Massachusetts countryside

By Michelle Jackson

Few places conjure up the splendour of autumn better than the north-eastern corner of the United States. On a road trip with my daughter, Nicole, we drove through miles of maples, oaks and sycamores each offering their own resplendent palette of fall colours.

Our adventure started in Western Massachusetts paying homage to Nicole's childhood favourite author, Ted Seuss Geisel, who was born in Springfield in 1904. The Amazing World of Dr Seuss Museum opened in 2017 and is a fantasy for lovers of his children's stories. *The Cat in the Hat* sits in the corner with his quotes scribbled all over the walls. A video presentation by Ted's stepdaughter rolls on video next to the desk where he created his fantastic collection of artwork.

As we pass *The Lorax* and his trees Nicole fills me in on the character's story. I'm struck by how prescient Dr Seuss was warning readers about environmental issues through his tales. Outside in the sculptor garden are sculptures of the characters from *Thing One and Thing Two*, *The Grinch* and a host of other characters. In total, there are five museums to visit on the site with one ticket giving entry to all.

Ploughing American style

Western Massachusetts (Mass) is home to the Eastern States Exposition (The Big E), a state fair best described as the Ploughing – but on a whole other level. Hosted in

the town of Springfield, The Big E runs for 17 days every September at the midway point to St Patrick's Day. A huge contingent from Dingle are over for the event and have been coming for 24 years forging a successful collaboration between the two twinned towns.

It's not just an opportunity to display gin, crystal and the beautiful Louis Mulcahy Pottery, the music group Siamsa Tire play in one of the tents accompanied by their dance troupe.

Each evening a Mardi Gras parade flows through the fair and concerts run late into the evening. Replica state buildings of New England's six states were built to house the best of produce with every-

“Western Massachusetts is home to the Eastern States Exposition, a state fair best described as the Ploughing – but on a whole other level”

thing from cupcakes to lavender wine and hand-crafted artefacts on display. Enjoying deep fried vegetables, funnel cake and my first taste of pumpkin beer were all part of the experience.

Springfield is also the birthplace of basketball. Invented in a school gym, on a rainy day in December 1891, the rest is history.

The Hall of Fame is built inside a sphere with interactive displays on three levels surrounding a basketball court and we get to shoot a few hoops before leaving.

Emily Dickinson

I've always known New England was rich in literary heritage but didn't realise the author of another of Nicole's favourite childhood books *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* hailed from the region. Eric Carle was born near Amherst, a leafy college town with charming bespoke stores and a university. We stop off here at 30 Boltwood, a charming restaurant, for some delicious lobster Benedict and salmon bagels.

Carle was taken by his German parents back to their home country when he was five years old but as an adult returned to Amherst to build The Museum of Picture Book Art following the success of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Apparently, a copy of the book is sold every 30 seconds somewhere in the world. The library is a warm cocoon for any child's imagination where you can peruse thousands of books.

Emily Dickinson spent most of her life in Amherst. We visit her house and enjoy an informative guided tour of where she wrote her inspiring poetry. Nicole had studied her poetry and as luck had it, a question about Dickinson came up in her Leaving Cert which helped her considerably.

A few miles north and we are in Deerfield, a historic town with authentic houses from the colonial period and we enjoy some regional treats at the Deerfield Inn. Chowder, wings and mac and cheese are firm favourites on the menu. Deerfield is also home to the Yankee Candle Village so we drop by to make our own candles. The aroma of autumn is bottled in a jar of pumpkin spice and the year round Christmas Shop left us longing to linger all day. With options to make Yankee Candy jars and rooms filled with children's toys and books, it's a paradise for anyone wanting to feel young again.

It would be unheard of to have a girls' trip without some shopping and The Holyoke Mall has all the favourites we've come to expect from a mall in the USA. With over 150 stores, including top brands like Target and Macy's, unique boutiques, and plenty of dining options, it's the ideal destination for shopping.



From top: Michelle and her daughter Nicole enjoy dinner at The Delaney House, Holyoke; taking a tour around The Amazing World of Dr Seuss Museum; Nicole at the Basketball Hall of Fame; and enjoying a Mardi Gras parade at the Eastern States Exposition.

Holyoke is where we enjoyed the best meal of our trip at The Delaney House. Dingle-born chef, Mick Corduff, moved to Western Massachusetts 30 years ago. He now runs a hotel and several hospitality establishments in the area in the idyllic setting next to the Connecticut River.

The Mick

The steaks are the highlight here. There is a vast range from the gorgonzola sirloin, a 10oz sliced sirloin, gorgonzola compound butter, and merlot demi glace; to steak au poivre, a 12oz New York strip and sauce au poivre; and grilled ribeye, a 16oz ribeye, with a choice of bearnaise, cajun or gorgonzola all served with red bliss mashed potatoes – mouth-watering is the only way to describe them and well worth a visit if you are in the area.

For a more laid-back experience, you can nip into the aptly named 'The Mick' where there is live music and contemporary cocktails.

Our trip down memory lane was a delicious taste of a corner of New England that is often overlooked as visitors rush to Boston and big city destinations. While I always enjoy the capital of Massachusetts, this dabble into the countryside was a refreshing change of pace.

It took 20 minutes to get on the motorway to return to Bradley International Airport in Hartford, Connecticut for our direct flight to Dublin with Aer Lingus.

TRAVEL TIPS

- ✈ Fly Direct from Dublin to Bradley International Hartford with Aer Lingus from €209 one way, see aerlingus.com.
- 🚗 Car hire from Hartford was provided by Hertz Ireland. Book direct at hertz.ie or 01 67 67 476. Sign up for free Gold membership for added benefits at hertz.ie/goldenrol.
- 🏨 Stay at the D Hotel Suites and Spa with prices from €173 per room per night in October, see stayatthed.com or to dine at The Delaney House, see delaneyhouse.com.
- 📖 Visit Springfield Museums the home of Dr Seuss, entry for adults €22.50 and children €12, see seussinspringfield.org.
- 📖 Take a literary tour around Emily Dickinson House, entry €18 adults and free for children and students, see emilydickinsonmuseum.org.
- 🏀 Basketball Hall of Fame is a fantastic destination for all the family. Entry for adults €25.50, children and seniors €21, see hoophall.com.

With a suitcase full of delicious souvenirs and some new memories made we made our home but we'll definitely be back.

Michelle Jackson was a guest of Visit Western Massachusetts. For more information on Western Massachusetts see explorewesternmass.com.



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‘This farm would be nothing, without a woman or a girl’

As we celebrate the Women & Agriculture conference, we reflect on women’s contribution on farms



There is a great song written in 1966 by James Brown and Betty Jean Newson that never ceases to invigorate me. There is extraordinary energy in the Van Morrison version recorded live in San Francisco, in December 1993, with Brian Kennedy adding pure soul to a truly great performance.

The song, *It’s A Man’s Man’s Man’s World*, quips ‘it’s a man’s, man’s world but it would be nothing without a woman or a girl’. It was written in the embryonic days of women’s liberation and the re-evaluation of the woman’s value and intrinsic contribution to society. The song is not focused on farming and rural Ireland, but it could well be an anthem that echoes and underscores the position and input of women in Irish agriculture.

In rural Ireland of the 19th and early 20th centuries, many young women made their first foray into the hard work of farm life on one of the two traditional hiring fair days that were held on Old May Day on 12 May and Old Hallow’s Day on 12 November.

Masses of poor labourers, young and old, would assemble in the squares of their local towns, lined up against a gable end of a house, with a small bundle of clothes and some odds and ends under their arms, hoping to find work for six months.

There were old stagers, the experienced hands, who would carry a loy or a spade to mark out their usefulness to the hiring farmers. The bewildered young boys and girls would stand wide-eyed in a mixture of fear and hope that their position would be a good one. The farmer would look them up and down, assessing their looks and physiques and interrogate them. He would ask if they drank, if they were God-fearing, if they were early risers, if they were good milkers and if they were afraid of hard work. The boys were destined for spade work and ploughing while the girls would look to the milking, the dairy, the fowl, and the constant demands of the household – cooking, baking, washing and tending the fire.

At the hiring fair, the choice for a



A young woman fetches the water from the well and carries it on her head, a continual everyday chore of the cailín aimsire. A detail by the artist John Leech (1859).

young innocent girl of which farmer to go with was high risk – one might end up with a pleasant and fair ‘master’ or ‘boss’, as they were known, or the circumstances and experience might be exploitative and deeply negative. A choice had to be made, and the hiring farmer would agree her wages for the six months and seal the bargain by giving her what was termed an ‘earnest’, a small amount of money of two or three shillings. She would hand over her bundle of personal belongings to confirm her side of the bargain. The choice had to be made quickly, if one hesitated and the fair was over, the following week had a small fair where the wages and situations were usually far inferior.

Endless tasks

Once she arrived on the farm, the cailín aimsire or servant girl had an almost endless set of daily tasks and chores to complete each and every day. Her accommodation might have been in an out-house, away from the heat and sanctuary of the main household. She would rise at cock crow and; had to rake the ashes and get the fire going to allow her to bake the bread. Some women would have a

special small, wooden, kneading trough called a losset and in this they would mix the dough to bake brown bread, griddle scones or a cake of sweet bastible bread. Bastible refers to the type of iron pot it was cooked in. While baking the bread, the servant girl would look to the laying hens who were kept in a hen coop at the base of the dresser and gather in the eggs.

Outside she would tend to the fowl houses, feeding the chicks and the pullets, the guinea fowl, the ducks, the geese and the turkeys, making sure they were all safe after the night.

In the time of no running water, she would then gather the enamel buckets and walk some distance to the well and lug the heavy contents home before placing one for the household to wash with. The other was used to fill the heavy iron kettle that she would set hanging on the crane over the fire to boil. The day would see numerous demanding trips to the well for water to boil large pots of spuds, to do the washing and of course, the important work of the dairy.

Cowhouse

Twice a day, the servant girl went into the cowhouse and here she would sit on a small stool and milk the cows by hand. Women were long held to be superior and more sensitive milkers than men and used all their skill in massaging the cows’ udders or singing to bring the full complement of rich creamy milk from each cow.

The pails of milk were brought to the household creamery and placed in low keelers to allow the cream to rise and ripen. She would skim off the cream and put it in the dash churn and begin the long and demanding chore of churning the cream into butter. This was physically very demanding and could take an hour or more, depending on the temperature, for the butter to come. She would wash out the buttermilk with the cold, fresh, spring well water, before salting and packing her round of butter into a 56lb firkin barrel. When the barrel was full, it would be taken to market to be sold and the quantity and quality of the butter provided the income for the luxuries on the farm.

While horses or donkeys and carts were the best form of transport, it often fell to the young servant girls and women to be the so-called ‘burden carriers’. There are accounts of women walking incredible distances to the butter market, with the substantial 56lb firkin of butter on their heads. They used a small round loop of plaited sugán straw on top of their heads to help balance and cushion their heavy loads.

Women also had a strong burden rope made from twisted strips of wood so they could wrap it around awkward bundles of straw, hay and furze and carry them to and from the household.

Equally, the heavy back creels made of woven willow that were used to draw seaweed, manure, turf, animal fodder and everything on the farm were carried by women. As I write this piece, I can hear Van Morrison bellowing out the great truism: ‘this farm would be nothing baby, without a woman or a girl, without a woman or a girl!’

“Once she arrived on the farm, the cailin aimsire or servant girl had an almost endless set of daily tasks and chores to complete”

Shane Lehane is a folklorist who works in UCC and Cork College of FET, Tramore Road Campus. Contact: slehane@ucc.ie



Left: Prepare to be seduced by the music of West Africa; and The Vanishing Elephant.

Where is the elephant in the room gone?

Two major festivals in Belfast and Wexford with plenty of choice



In Belfast, the 62nd Belfast Festival is already underway, but continues until Saturday 23 November, so it is well worth a visit. The other end of the island plays host to the now world-famous Wexford Festival Opera which is just beginning, and finishes on 2 November.

Incredibly, this is the 62nd Belfast Festival, and the expanse of the programme, taking in more than 30 venues, will feature theatre, dance, music, literature, film and visual arts.

The Grand Opera House welcomes the European premiere of *The Vanishing Elephant* for four performances (31 October to 2 November). Suitable for families, with children aged eight and upwards, this magical story of friendship, belonging and adventure is brought to life with extraordinary puppetry. Anyone who was captivated by *The Life of Pi*, or *War Horse*, will enjoy this spectacle.

Musically, there is a broad church of tastes catered for, but one that stands out as a beacon is Les Amazones d’Afrique. Be forewarned – they will appear for one night only, 28 October, at Mandela Hall

in Belfast, and you will almost certainly find yourself compelled to dance and be seduced by the cathartic celebration. This is a collective of incredibly talented female musicians from West Africa, and they blend traditional African rhythms with contemporary pop. The group has played at Glastonbury.

If you can extend your visit to a second night, check out Blues & Ballads at the Grand Opera House on 29 October.

Looking for something free? The 143rd Royal Ulster Academy Exhibition will run throughout the entirety of the festival – and the good news is that it will then continue until 6 January, 2025. The exhibition features work from some 80 academy members, alongside the contributions from 200 artists which were selected by way of public submission.

Wexford Festival Opera

A three-and-a-half-hour drive from Belfast to Wexford will see you at the heart of Ireland’s greatest opera festival. While this musical form might not be to everyone’s liking, the organisers of the Wexford Festival Opera try to entice non-believers with many side events, and perhaps one day these will spark an interest in the genre. Running on various dates until 2 November, here is something to perhaps open the door for potential opera fans.

An ‘opera beag’, or pocket opera, *Puccini: Man of the Theatre* is a specially commissioned work to celebrate the centenary of the composer’s death in 1924.

Check out Wexfordopera.com, and Belfastinternationalfestival.com



A night at the opera...

The newly commissioned *Lady Gregory in America*, sung in English and with a libretto by Colm Tóibín is one not to be missed. This is Tóibín’s third opera, reunited with composer Alberto Caruso, and is special given the author’s close family ties with Wexford and the festival. There are seven performances until 1 November.

On 29 October, soprano Celine Byrne leads a star cast of singers and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra in a gala concert in the O’Reilly Theatre.

Guest conductor Francesco Cilluffo takes the orchestra and singers through a wide selection of opera’s most ravishing arias. This will be a special treat for music lovers.



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Planting a winter wonderland

Pots and containers can bring lots of colour to the garden at this time of year – placement is key

Gerry Daly Gardening



During the winter months, gardens generally lack colour, but a few simple pots or other containers can make a big difference. Not many pots are needed to achieve this, and winter bedding need not be very expensive.

The key to success is the placement of winter pots. Put a couple of pots near the door, or on a paved area close to the house, and they create the illusion that there is some colour outdoors. Place a pot with a few bedding plants and spring bulbs at the end of a garden path or close to a garden seat and suddenly, the area looks less bare. Even in a big garden, a relatively small area of colour can be very effective.

The plants are the most important feature but the pot or container itself is part of the effect and good-quality containers are decorative, even before they are planted up. Choose pots of suitable size for their location. In general, winter pots need to be fairly large. Small pots may need to be grouped together to have the same impact.

Alternatively, a group of pots of varied sizes can look very well.

While it is possible to have window boxes and hanging baskets in winter, just as in summer, they need to be monitored, especially if the weather gets too blustery. Containers above ground level can be damaged or blown down, if they are not heavy enough or well-anchored.

Plants for pots

Having selected suitable locations and pots that look well, the choice of plants can be made. There are three main groups of plants to consider – plants for bulk and greenery, plants for colour and spring bulbs. The plants for bulk and greenery form the backbone of the planting.

One or more of these plants gives presence to a container. These plants can be 40-90cm tall. Suitable bulky or evergreen plants include cordyline, skimmia, small conifers, hebe, elaeagnus, heathers, ivy, aucuba and other evergreen shrubs. These can bulk up a pot greatly. Skimmia and gaultheria have colourful berries.

On a smaller scale, good foliage fillers include bergenia, ajuga, heuchera, sedges and phormium. One or more of these plants can give greenery that lasts all winter and spring.

Ornamental kale or cabbage, in creamy

white or bright purple, is grown for use in winter planting schemes and it lasts until late spring. 'Angel Wings' is a relatively new arrival in garden centres. It is a form of cineraria and has large leaves, completely covered with white hairs, so the entire plant appears white.

Early colour can be provided by hardy cyclamen, chrysanthemums, winter pansies and primroses, all of which are in flower from early autumn. The hardy cyclamen is a relatively recent addition to the choice and it is invaluable in autumn and early winter.

Winter pansies and primroses will flower through the winter and peak in spring. Wallflowers, double daisies and forget-me-nots flower in spring but provide greenery during the winter months.

Spring bulbs

Spring bulbs of several kinds can be used. They can be planted to flower in sequence — snowdrops, crocus, Greek anemones, hyacinths, small tulips, daffodils and large tulips. Two or more kinds can be used to spread the season, and a small group of flower bulbs is better than spacing out single bulbs around the sides of a pot.

When choosing plants, start with the bulk provider, then choose some greenery and then colour providers and spring bulbs. It might be possible to dig up existing garden plants.

Visit a few garden centres if necessary to make a suitable match-up. The small shrubs, such as euonymus, gaultheria, heather and skimmia, and perennial flowers, such as bergenia, heuchera and ajuga, can be planted out in the open ground of the garden after they have served a season in the pot, or perhaps two seasons.

They can be taken out in May when the summer bedding is ready to be



Winter colour in the garden can be very impactful, try some winter pansies. iStock

potted up. Spring bulbs can also be taken out and planted out in the garden as they will be spent by growing within the confines of a pot.

When potting up winter bedding, mix

half-and-half unsterilised garden soil and compost. Then add in 30g of slow-release or general fertiliser per 10 litres of this mix. This gives an open rich compost for planting winter pots successfully.



To-do list

Trees, shrubs and roses: All kinds of pot-grown trees and shrubs can be planted at this time of year.

Fruit, vegetables and herbs: Plant fruit trees, bushes and strawberries. Remove over-mature vegetables and compost them, except if they have root diseases.

Lawn: Moss has had a great year, treat with sulphate of iron if needed.

Flowers: Plant spring bulbs and bedding plants for spring colour, either in pots or in the open soil.

Greenhouse and house plants: Water sparingly to reduce the risk of grey mould disease. Set up a greenhouse frost protection heater to protect tender plants.

Q&A: My apple tree hasn't thrived?

Can you cast any light on the poor performance of apple trees this year. I have one in the back garden which produced very little? - Pat Murphy, Naas, Co Kildare



Biennial bearing can affect apple trees.

Cold, wet weather in spring upset the flying of honeybees and other pollinators. This factor is worse in an exposed garden. Cold weather also affects the growth and energy reserves of the trees and they can abort the fertilisation of the embryo seeds within the developing fruit.

Also, many trees cropped well last year and it is not unusual for trees to take a rest the following year. This is called biennial bearing and it can affect most apple varieties. Some fruit trees have a tendency to bear heavily on alternate years.

The main strategy to discourage alternate bearing of fruit trees is to control excessive fruit setting in any one year by pruning or thinning.

Capturing the beauty of our native breeds

See native breeds from a new perspective with equine photographer Ruth Chamberlain

Helen Sharp Irish Horse



For some photographers, the landscape is the beauty of the subject but for photographer Ruth Chamberlain, the picture is always enhanced with an animal in shot. "They just make it more interesting," says Ruth, who grew up in the Lake District in Scotland. "I picked up photography as a hobby and my pets were my first muses. We always had native Fell ponies."

In fact, the ponies were so part of her life that when she started to post photos of them during the pandemic – to share the stunning scenery with people who couldn't visit the area – she was surprised that many had never heard of them. "That was it, that was my inspiration," she says. "From there, I began my project 'Ruth On The Hoof' to document native breeds in their natural landscape."

Ruth believes that native breeds are hugely important to our collective history, heritage, and culture. "Our society was built on their backs and many areas could not have been settled without them. They have formed the very landscapes in which we live, and are uniquely adapted to their own region. There is a famous saying by Fr Calum MacLellan about the Eriskay Pony. He said, 'Without the people of Eriskay there would be no pony, but without the pony there would have been no people on Eriskay.' I find this saying holds true for many native breeds and we owe them so much. They also have an important role in our future, in biodiversity and finding greener ways to do jobs in the rural landscape – their story has not ended."

The Irish native breeds are equally captivating to Ruth and on a recent visit, she was beguiled by their character and beauty. "The Kerry Bog Ponies are stunning, and by no means to be underestimated due to their size. They are plucky little ponies, but definitely have the sort

of iron constitution and resilience needed to survive in the depths of winter. They have such character and what they lack in stature, they make up in personality.

"The Connemara Ponies are like watching unicorns – it is unusual to see so many ponies that have greyed out completely to white gathered in one place. When I saw them galloping by the sea, I just thought, 'wow, they are simply magical'. Aside from their beauty, I was told they were the "original tractor" for the region and it's easy to see how versatile and necessary they were. They're a large breed that is well-suited to all sorts of work and are perfectly adapted to the Connemara region (which is so different to Kerry). The Irish breeds all combine beauty and elegance with a strong working pony that is still well suited to work today."

Ruth's love of natives hasn't remained simply professional, she currently has two Highland Ponies and a donkey at home. "I grew up with a Palomino pony and a Welsh Section A cross in my younger years, as well as two other Highlands and three donkeys. In short, lots of ponies and donkeys who taught me a lot about how their minds work. I enjoy watching them interact as a herd. The ponies are always wonderful to ride out on the fells, they're so surefooted and you always feel secure on them."

Best moments

For anyone who has aspirations to become an equine photographer, Ruth has some sound advice, "Get to know your camera, it doesn't have to be the best camera in the world – it's all about knowing how to use it. Aim towards taking a certain type of photo (such as a portrait) and learn the best settings to achieve that. Practice makes perfect so keep taking photos and look at how you can improve. Most of all, get to know your subject and their behaviour."

Knowing when a horse or pony is uncomfortable is very important – you want to capture their best moments and not stress them. Always be respectful of horses and their owners and never feed or chase them without asking an owner or carer first. Personally, I don't tend to do "staged" photoshoots as I prefer natural free roaming ponies and I like to spend time with them first, to let them get used to me."



Main:
Connemara stallion, Mountain Cascade at Kylemore Abbey; below, Ruth with Connemara ponies.

by Ruth Chamberlain

Travel is another important part of Ruth's quest for the perfect photograph, "You learn so much from experiencing the animals first-hand. In my case, there are many minor details I learn about each breed that simply cannot be obtained from reading a book."

Speaking to the people who live and breathe their ponies makes each trip unique and gives a whole new perspective on that breed. I travelled to the Faroe Islands last year and learned so much in just a few days there.

"I've always wanted to go to Iceland to see the Icelandic horses – I met their close relatives the Faroese Horse last year so now I'm intrigued. There are a few other breeds in Europe I would love to see in person too, and of course the Mustangs and Chincoteague ponies in the USA."

"A friend once said to me, 'never turn down an opportunity to travel if you can' and I'm glad I listened to his words, it has taken me on some wonderful adventures."

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- Remember to follow @HorseSportIreland on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for the latest updates from our Irish equestrian athletes, both at home and abroad.

Clarification-Killadoran Stud

The comment piece by Helen Sharp in *The Irish Horse* section of the edition of 12 October ("Respect your elders") was placed beside a photograph of a mare and foal at Killadoran Stud.

We would like to clarify that the article had no connection to Killadoran Stud and should have been demarked separately and entitled 'Picture of the Week'.

We apologise to Killadoran Stud owners Liam Buckley and Catherine McCourt for any embarrassment caused.



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Careers&Business

Compiled by Sarah McIntosh smcintosh@farmersjournal.ie



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Women are an integral part of any family farm

The role of women on farms is a key part of our Women & Agriculture conference. Here five farmers tell their story

Historically women have played an essential role on Irish family farms. The most recent CSO statistics show that up to 70,000 women work on farms every day without official recognition for their work. However, every year at our Women & Agriculture conference, we recognise and celebrate women that are involved in farming, agricultural businesses and rural Ireland. Furthermore, the future looks bright in education. In 2023, 41% of those who sat the agricultural science Leaving Cert exam were female. Five farmers talk about their careers and the challenges they have faced – and overcome – over the years.

Suzanna Crampton
Sheep farmer and entrepreneur, Bennettsbridge, Co Kilkenny

Originally from the USA, Suzanna (61) spent most of her summers at her grandparents' small farm in Kilkenny. When she inherited the farm in 1997, she bought her first flock of conventional commercial stock sheep. Due to small acreage, Suzanna decided a pedigree breed would be better suited and came across Zwartbles. With 25 ewes currently on the farm, she has diversified into other ventures including blanket making, hosting tours and creating content on social media. "Women are an integral part of farming, and they have been for generations, but are not recognised as much as they should be. In the last 10 years, so many women have taken the lead in food production and diversification, working

on their farms with their husbands or partners to create a sustainable income through financial and weather fluctuations," says Suzanna.

Denise Twomey
Dairy farmer, Innishannon, Co Cork

Growing up on a small-scale dairy and beef farm, Denise (26) always loved agriculture and helping out on the farm. "It was what I always wanted to do, I never thought of doing anything else. In primary school, I used get my writing homework done and go down and watch the cows being milked while I was doing my reading," she says. In 2016, Denise completed an advanced certificate in dairy herd management in Clonakilty and spent two years managing a neighbouring farm before entering a partnership with her father. They now milk 53 cows and Denise also does relief milking to support her income. Denise knows women have always been an integral part of Irish agriculture. "What has changed is that women are now starting to get recognition for the work they do on the farm. I also think in recent years people are more accepting that women are equally as capable as men at running a farm. "For my generation, there doesn't seem to be as many barriers to face as there would have been in the past. There are different pathways now for people to get into farming with the collaborative options of farm partnerships, shared farming and leasing cows all helping young farmers progress their careers into being business owners."



Christine Curran
Dairy farmer, Modelligo, Dungarvan, Co Waterford

Christine has been milking cows alongside her mother all of her life. She took over the farm 35 years ago when she finished school and farms full-time. Her dad got sick and she became more involved in the farm. She completed a certificate in farming which was the equivalent of the green cert back then. "I always loved farming. After school, I was doing nothing else, I was going farming and that was it. I told nobody because at that time I was at an all-girls school, if I mentioned I was going farming they would have laughed at me. Things are different now because there are so many courses in agriculture," says Christine. She married Thomas, who farmed 10 miles up the road. They joined herds and went into a milk production partnership together. "I took over our family farm, I got the herd number and the land in my name," she says.

The biggest transformation Christine has seen is quotas being abolished, herd sizes increasing and advancements in technology. "They are all a great help, but on the downside of that is all the paperwork and regulations. "We don't know if they will drop the nitrates to 220kg N/ha, we were lucky last year that we stayed at the 250kg N/ha," she tells *Irish Country Living*, so it can be hard to plan for the unknown.

"Women are an integral part of farming, and they have been for generations, but are not recognised as much as they should be"



Denise from Innishannon, Co Cork; below, Christine, from Co Waterford.



Main: Suzanna Crampton, Dylan Vaughn; above, Anne Keohane and her granddaughter Nicole Keohane at the National Dairy Awards.

Anne and Nicole Keohane
Dairy farmers, Innishannon, Co Cork

Anne has always been heavily involved in agriculture and farmed in partnership with her father. When she married her husband John, he too became involved until they took over the farm over together. Her role has always been recognised, and she is the named owner alongside her husband. Her granddaughter Nicole (26) enjoyed helping out on the farm from an early age. When she was 16, Anne taught her to milk cows and she became more involved. "We have been milking together, and with my grandfather ever since," says Nicole. Anne is a strong believer that there has never been any gender barriers in her way, her love of farming began at a young age and was nurtured by her father. "Her gender never held her back – she had the drive and knowledge base," says Nicole. Anne has spent many years being the only woman in the room, having held board positions on Bandon Co-Op, Agri Aware, NDC and Clona Dairies. "I have grown up admiring Anne, and her knowledge, confidence and ability to stand up for herself. "I am also conscious that she was fortunate to have a supportive father, who nurtured her love of the farm. I know of many other women, who are stretched between being a full-time farmer and mother. They are left with no time for themselves, nevermind holding a board position. They may not be a named owner on farm documents or hold shares in their local co-op," says Nicole. "But things have changed especially in terms of succession. It is no longer a given that the eldest brother will get the farm, but rather the most interested or driven, and this includes daughters," she says.

Support for innovative green solutions include a bovine breathalyser

Offaly-based Agri Data Analytics is among the nine start-ups participating in Accelerate Green START programme

By Sarah McIntosh

Earlier this month, the nine entrepreneurs taking part in the latest Accelerate Green START programme were revealed. The pre-accelerator programme, delivered by Bord na Móna in conjunction with Resolve Partners, is dedicated to supporting early-stage startups leading the response to climate action and sustainability.

The companies taking part are Anaula Ltd, WindCapture Technologies, Bionua, Volta Robotics Ltd, Reasire, Restore Innovation, Range Therapy, Agri Data Analytics and EcoRoots. Across six weeks, these startups will get training, mentoring and business advice to help drive their sustainable growth. The participants will have the opportunity to pitch their businesses to a panel of experts at an event on 28 November.

Among the entrepreneurs starting this year's programme are Jack Pilkington and Alan O'Donovan, co-founders of Agri Data Analytics. The Offaly-based company have developed a bovine breathalyser, a device that measures enteric greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from livestock – also known as cattle belching.

Breathalyser for cows

This device gives researchers data to help reduce overall methane emissions in agriculture through genetic improvements in livestock or through adding supplements to the animal's diet. "There is a lot of research going into developing supplementation to reduce methane but there are limited adequate machinery that will measure enteric methane," says Jack. Having identified a gap in the market, Jack looked at developing a model that was cost effective and durable. He travelled to New Zealand and Australia on a fact-finding mission to see what researchers wanted



Jack Pilkington, co-founder and CEO of Agri Data Analytics.

and needed on the ground. The project started two years ago and he entered this programme to gain experience from modules and guest speakers which, he hopes will help accelerate the progress of his company. "I want to promote our technology and demonstrate our ambitions of helping the agri sector beat climate action targets while protecting the livelihood of our farmers. "Coming from a suckler farm in Offaly, I see the frustration amongst farmers but also the acceptance, it's about finding real figures to improve that." Tom Donnellan, CEO of Bord na Móna has said these startups represent the next generation of Irish businesses, committed to driving climate solutions through innovation. "Accelerate Green START is designed to nurture budding entrepreneurs in the green sector, giving them the tools to validate and accelerate their growth at this crucial stage. "As we continue our own green transition, supporting these innovative ventures is essential," he says. The closing date for applications for the Accelerate Green GROW 2025 programme is 22 November. All Accelerate Green participants have access to networking, mentoring and business development opportunities.

Check out bordnamona.ie

Calving over 1,000 cows on a grass-based system in England

As part of the ASA travel bursaries series, UCD student Shane O'Brien from Co Leitrim talks about his time on dairy farms in Saskatchewan, Canada and Sansaw Dairy, Shrewsbury

In conversation with Sarah McIntosh

I am a third-year agricultural science student studying animal and crop production in University College Dublin. My keen interest in farming stems from my upbringing on our family farm in Aughavas, Co Leitrim. An important part of our degree programme is completing 30 weeks of professional work experience in the second semester of the third year.

"I began my dairy placement in January with Sansaw Dairy, outside Shrewsbury, in England. A beautiful estate, it is a modern dairy farm milking 1,600 cows on a grass-based, spring calving system, utilising a grazing platform of slightly over 500ha. Cork man Breiffni Daly is the farm manager.

"I worked on the farm with Breiffni and his team along with four other UCD students and one MTU student for the 10-week calving season. The farm runs a crossbred herd where cows are housed during the winter in three 15-bay cubicle sheds with access to outdoor self-feed silage pits. Due to the herd size, the cows are also wintered on fodder beet and baled silage.

About the enterprise

"Cows are calved in a large straw-bedded shed, monitored 24/7 due to the intensity of calving. Over 1,000 cows calved during February, with freshly calved cows turning out to grass immediately to join the milking herd.

"Replacement heifer calves are reared in a separate yard where they are penned in groups of 20. Dairy bull calves are reared in a third yard for six weeks until they are sold. Mortality rates are very low considering the number of stock on the farm.

"The cows are milked twice a day through a 70 bail Waikato rotary parlour built in 2012. The team at Sansaw strive to achieve optimum results through grass management, a compact breeding season and a strong emphasis on animal welfare.

"My next destination was the prairie land of Saskatchewan in Canada to work on an extensive beef and tillage farm owned by Dustin Hawkins. Dustin farms alongside his eldest son Boston and four other sib-



Shane O'Brien on placement at Sansaw Dairy in England; below, Dustin Hawkin's tillage and beef farm in Kincaid, Saskatchewan, Canada.



lings, two hired men and three of us UCD students.

"They farm a total of 29,000ac and have 750 suckler cows consisting of both Angus and Simmental cattle. From March through to April, 250 cows were calved down in the outdoor pens at the home yard. The remaining in-calf cows were hauled to pasture ground to calve out on grass from mid-April into May.

Tillage operation

"Dustin owns 40 breeding bulls, relatively easy calving Simmental, Angus and Hereford bulls. All steers are sold at nine months old and surplus heifers are sold at 11 months old to a large feedlot. Calves are tagged, vaccinated and branded 'DH' within the first month. Bull calves receive a growth hormone implant in their left ear and they are castrated using a rubber ring.

The ever-expanding tillage operation incorporates the use of large machinery equipped with state-of-the-art technology to maximise efficiency and output per acre.

"Wheat, lentils, oilseed rape and winter rye are the main crops seeded this year across 18,000ac of farm land"

"Crops are sown using the minimum tillage method. Wheat, lentils, oilseed rape and winter rye are the main crops seeded this year across 18,000ac of farm land. Dustin runs a fleet of John Deere equipment.

"Professional work experience is a great opportunity for any student interested in a career in agriculture to work abroad for a period of time. It really enhanced my understanding of farming practices in other areas.

"I thoroughly enjoyed my time working in England and Canada, returning home with great memories and a broader knowledge of the dairy, beef and tillage sectors."

NEXT WEEK IN CAREERS & BUSINESS – SARAH MCINTOSH HIGHLIGHTS THE NEW INDUSTRY APPOINTMENTS IN OUR MONTHLY SERIES OF MOVERS AND SHAKERS



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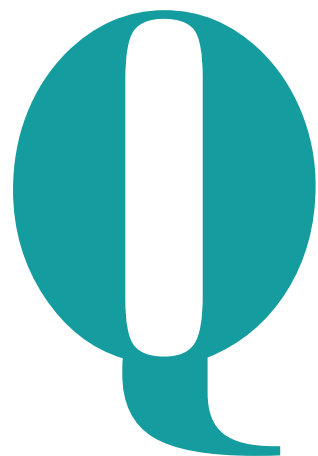
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Scan me to find out more

Margaret Barrett
Consumer Advice



Issues to factor in before taking out an equity release mortgage



We've been living in our farmhouse for 15 years and, while we did some work initially, as it's over 100 years old, we really need to invest and future-proof our home. We are working with a builder on a small extension and overall, it looks like it will cost about €150,000. We have about €40,000 in savings, but we'll need to re-mortgage to cover the rest. Some of the works will involve doing upgrade works on our heating system and insulation, and I hear there is a new government-subsidy home energy upgrade loan scheme. Can I remortgage for some of the works and apply for the loan scheme with the rest?



If you have a finance or legal query for our experts, scan the QR code and input your question



To apply for the equity release mortgage, you need detailed costings of the works. \iStock

Can we remortgage to future proof our home?

ANSWER: There are a couple of things here to consider. So the good news is, yes, you can secure a loan against this property for the works to be completed. This is called an equity release mortgage, and lenders will provide 90% of the current value of your farmhouse, or 90% of its future value, assuming that the works will increase the value of the property, on completion. You should budget for valuation fees of around €150, and must use the same valuer when the builder finishes, to confirm works are complete. As this property is over 100 years old, the lenders would also request a structural engineers report, the cost here will range from €500-800. To apply for the equity release, you need detailed costings of the works. With the upgrade work costing €150,000, it would be expected that there will be some structural works, and, if this is the case, a full costings report would need to be completed by an engineer. The engineer oversees the works, as well as approving the plans and costings. These costs can be included in the initial mortgage application, and can run to around €3,000 but shop around

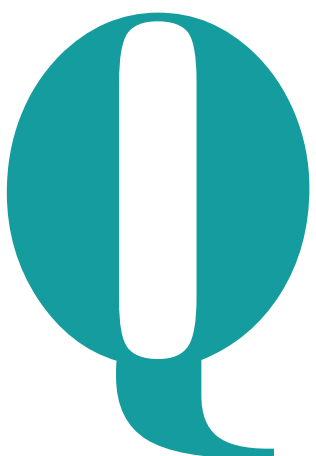
and get quotes from local service providers. Your equity release may entail stage payments, whereby monies for the renovation are released at intervals, or are not released until the works are done, and your engineer signs off on the project. So, you may need to fund your upgrade in advance, or ask your builder to wait for the money to be released by your lender. You get the money back from the lender, once works are complete, and are confirmed by the engineer and valuer. **Planning permission** If planning permission is required for your extension, this needs to be in place, or the lender needs to know that you will be applying for it. There will be a portion of money held back on the final drawdown until the engineer submits a certificate of compliance, this confirms that all works were completed in line with the planning permission approval. With regards to the grants, SEAI, the national sustainable energy authority, details the criteria and process on their website seai.ie. Your contractor may also be familiar with the scheme, but

do check directly with the SEAI too, as there are eligibility criteria. Also, most of these grants are not payable until works are fully complete. So, if you are using an equity release mortgage to fund this, you will need to demonstrate that full funding is available to complete the works at the outset. So, while you may be eligible for the grant, the use of an equity release mortgage and the upgrade loan scheme in conjunction with each other is not a viable option where upfront funding is needed. What can be done, however, is to split your equity mortgage, keeping a proportion on a low fixed interest rate, and the reminder on a variable interest rate. The latter can then be paid off immediately, on receipt of the grant payment, when all upgrade work is complete. Margaret Barrett is managing director at Mortgage Navigators, a specialist mortgage broker service with offices in Cork and Dublin. Margaret is an experienced mortgage adviser and Qualified Financial Advisor (QFA). See mortgagenavigators.ie

Martin Glennon
Financial Advice



Tips for investing and making the most out of a lump sum of money



We've just received a significant sum of money through inheritance. While this is a good problem to have, we're feeling overwhelmed trying to decide what to do with it. There are so many options out there and it's hard to know where to start. Our overall goal is to make the most of the money, but we're also keen to maintain some access to the funds in case of emergency expenses. The flip side is that if we don't put it away, inflation could just eat into its value. Is there a way to balance security and easy access on one side with growth on the other? We don't want to make any hasty decisions so we would appreciate some guidance on how to divide it wisely.



If you have a finance or legal query for our experts, scan the QR code and input your question

Expert advice to make the most of an inheritance



It is important to get the correct balance between the return you want and the level of risk you're comfortable taking. \iStock

ANSWER: Figuring out what to do with a large sum of money might be a good problem, but it's also a big deal. Step back and ask yourself this question: 'What is my money for and when do I expect to need it?' The answer will give you guidance as to the type of accounts that are best suited to you. Here's a game plan that might help. **Don't rush:** You want to avoid making emotional or impulsive choices – give yourself time. You might consider speaking with a financial advisor – they can take a look at your broader financial situation and give you clear advice. **Weigh up your options:** When you see the level of interest that's on offer from deposit providers, it's no surprise that you're asking what you should do. Inflation in Ireland has calmed to a current rate of 1.7%, but it was as high as 9.2% in October 2022. If your new money isn't keeping pace with inflation, then you're losing buying power in real terms. You want to avoid that if you can. People generally seek the 'perfect account' which offers: • full access to your money • 100% security • a guaranteed growth rate of 6% per annum. Unfortunately, this is a unicorn account – it simply doesn't exist. There's always a trade-off between the key goals of access, security and growth. Because no one account can give you the perfect trinity, it makes sense to divide your money and look to achieve

these goals through different accounts. You can think of it as putting your money into different pots and giving each pot a different job. **Four different pots** **Pot 1: Clear credit cards and short-term debt** If you have any debt on your credit card, clear this first. This is a no-brainer, as interest rates can be as high as 22.9% (no, that's not a typo). Any short-term debt should be considered within this first pot also. Check the interest rate you're paying, as this will be the amount saved by clearing the debt now. **Pot 2: Prepare for unexpected events (Demand & Notice Accounts)** The next thing is to ensure you can access money for any future unplanned or unexpected events. This is your 'rainy day' or 'emergency' pot. How much you put into it depends on personal preference. Ask yourself what figure would give you peace of mind? As a guideline, I'd recommend a minimum of three to six months' net income. As this pot will give you easy access to your funds, don't expect much growth on this money. The current rates available for demand deposit accounts range from 0.01% to 0.75% AER, which is available via the An Post Deposit Account. **Pot 3: Prepare for expected events (Fixed Term or Notice Accounts)** Next, you should sort your short-term access for planned events. Exam-

ples include changing your car, home improvements, a wedding or college fees. Essentially, these are expenditures that you know are coming down the line over the next two to three years. Typically, fixed term or notice accounts would be used to ensure that the funds are available when needed and that you achieve some (but not a lot of) growth on your money. The current rates available on a 12-month fixed-term deposit account range from 2.5% to 2.75% AER. **Pot 4: Grows your funds** It's only when you've set aside funds for the expected and unexpected that you should consider looking for real growth. This is for money that you don't plan on spending in the short/medium term. Or, as one client put it to me: "This is the money I don't want to spend!" A minimum term of five years is required, with a recommended time frame of seven years plus. This portion of your money now has the time it needs to invest in assets that provide the potential for growth, such as business and property. It's important to get the correct balance between the return you want and the level of risk you're comfortable taking. Always talk to an advisor to get expert advice. Martin Glennon is head of financial planning at ifac which is the professional services firm for farming, food and agribusiness.

Property Plus

Compiled by Paul Mooney pmooney@farmersjournal.ie



The three-bedroom house is 1,130 sq ft in area.



A farm with charm near Tullamore for €1.1m

OFFALY

A fine 91ac farm and the house will appeal and spark a lot of interest to plenty of potential buyers in an area of good farming

This year has seen a high number of stately, period homes come up for sale, with farmland. Here's a property that's different but which could appeal to even more viewers: a comfortable, three-bedroom home, with plenty of style, on c91ac. Adding to its charms, the farm is in a pleasant location, about 5km from the centre of busy Tullamore town in Co Offaly – and it's within the price range of a lot of potential buyers. The farm is called Castle Lawn and it's located at Ballinamere, out the west side of Tullamore in the direction of Rahan. It

will be offered at auction by GVM in a few weeks, and the guide price is €1.1m. This is an area of good farming, mostly in livestock with some tillage. The farm for sale is in one block, all in grass and is laid out in 10 main fields. It's good quality land. At one end the farm has frontage on to the public road. At the rear it is bounded by the Tullamore River. There are good hedge boundaries around the farm. **Well-equipped kitchen** The house and yard are together, quite central on the land and set back about 100m from the road. Access is via a tarmacadam avenue, nicely flanked by tall trees.

The bungalow measuring 1,130 sq ft, is in nice condition and tastefully decorated. There is a well-equipped kitchen which opens to a spacious living/dining room with wood ceiling and a large stove. Beside this is the sitting room which has an ornate fireplace – a large window ensures this is a bright room in the daytime. Down the hall there are three bedrooms and these are bright and roomy. The bathroom is beside them and is modern. Outside there is a paved area, screened off with nice hedging for privacy. Beside the house there is a small garden area and a number of outbuildings, all tastefully maintained. The farmyard is to the side of the house.

TARA STUD

Top facilities to enjoy at the impressive Tara Stud in Meath



RUNWAY

Big money sought for land that is close to Dublin airport



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Grass farm comes with slatted shed

WESTMEATH

A c28ac agricultural farm with a slatted cattle shed is for sale in Mullingar, Co Westmeath. The property is about 1km from Rathconrath village, which is ideal for modern amenities, and the convenience of nearby towns. The property is to be sold by Murtagh Bros at auction. The land is in one block and laid out as a large field with a number of smaller divisions behind. All are in grass and of good quality. The property has frontage on to the L5342 public

road on the outskirts of Rathconrath village. From Rathconrath head west on the R392 for 500m, turn left onto the L5342, Continue for c.500m. The cattle shed is sited towards the rear of the holding and is accessed by a hardcore farm laneway. The building is three bays long and has a feed rail with overhead canopy. It is in good working condition. The auction takes place on Friday, 1 November at 3pm and the guide price is €275,000.

- PAUL MOONEY



The farm sheds are large.



The land is in one block; below, the kitchen.



It has a large number of round roofed sheds under which there is slatted accommodation. There is also a silage slab. The sheds require repainting but are in good working condition. The auction will take place on Friday, 8 November at 3pm at the Tullamore Court Hotel. It will also run online on the LSL platform. Please register your interest with GVM Auctioneers if you wish to bid online. A bidding deposit will be required at least three days prior to the auction for online bidders. The location of the lands are shown for identification purposes only, outlined in red on the main image.



The block is all in one; below, the cattle shed.



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AUCTION
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CO. WESTMEATH.
THURSDAY 31ST OCTOBER AT 3PM



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VIEWING HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.
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AUCTION
RATHCONRATH,
MULLINGAR, CO. WESTMEATH.
FRIDAY 1ST NOVEMBER AT 3PM



EXCELLENT C. 28 ACRE NON-RES.
FARM WITH 3 BAY SLATTED HOUSE
AND YARD. GOOD ROAD FRONTAGE.
REGISTER WITH MURTAGH BROS TO BID
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Higher offers sought for ready-to-go

CORK

A c47.8ac holding is on the market near Killeagh in Co Cork. The property is at Kilcounty and is being sold by CCM by private treaty.

The land is in one block and includes c34.5ac of pasture with the balance of c13.3ac under forestry. This holding was run as an outfarm to a dairy farm, and was used for silage



Most of the c47.8ac is under grass with c13.3ac under forestry.

and grazing young stock. The owner is now scaling back operations. The pasture was re-seeded earlier this autumn and, according to auctioneer Eamonn O'Brien, it now has "a lovely coat of grass". The forestry was planted in two tranches. One block was planted in 1998 and has Noble Fir with a mix of broadleaves. The second block was planted in 2008 and is predominantly Sitka Spruce which is a large, coniferous, evergreen tree. The land comes with a cattle holding pen and a crush, a well with a pump-house, and an electricity connection. There are entitlements to the EU Basic Payment Scheme and the land has qualified each year for ANC – the annual payments under both schemes total approximately €3,200. The guide price is €460,000 – this has been offered and the auctioneer is now inviting final, higher offers. The land is located approximately 8.2km from Killeagh, 7.4km from Dungourney, and 16.7km from Middleton. - PAUL MOONEY



For Sale by Online Auction
55 Acres of Prime Land
Vicarstown, Co. Laois

Online Auction Thursday 14th November 2024 at 3pm via the LSL Platform



- This land is laid out in one division and can be accessed via 2 separate roads
- The land is best described as mixed by nature. There is 15.5 acres of arable land and currently in tillage. The remaining 39.5 acres is old permanent pasture requiring some drainage, reclamation and reseedling.
- To be offered for sale as 3 separate lots:
 - Circa 15.5 acres access onto the Vicarstown/Emo road
 - Circa 39.5 acres access onto the Vicarstown/Stradbally road
 - The Entire

The Property will be sold by online auction on the LSL Auction Platform. All intending bidders must register with Hennessy Auctioneers by 1pm on Tuesday 12th November 2024 and a bidding deposit will need to be paid prior to the sale.

Solicitor for the carriage of the sale: H.G. Donnelly & Son Solicitors c/o Ross Phillips, 5 Duke Street, Atty, Co. Kildare (Telephone 059 86 31284)

For Sale by Online Auction
32 Acres with Disused Cottage
Morette, Emo, Co. Laois

Online Auction Friday 15th November 2024 at 3pm via the LSL Platform



- This top quality arable land is laid out in one division and has extensive road frontage
- The property comes with an old derelict cottage which is approached by a long avenue on one side of the lands
- To be offered for sale as 3 separate lots:
 - Circa 31.2 acres arable land
 - Old disused cottage on circa 1.15 acres
 - The Entire

The Property will be sold by online auction on the LSL Auction Platform. All intending bidders must register with Hennessy Auctioneers by 1pm on Wednesday 13th November 2024 and a bidding deposit will need to be paid prior to the sale.

Solicitor for the carriage of the sale: Rolleston McElwee Solicitors c/o Deborah Holland, Wesley Terrace, 4 Railway St, Portlaoise, Co. Laois (Telephone 057 86 21329)

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For Sale
C.34 ACRES OF
GOOD FARM LAND
At Boyle, Co. Roscommon



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- Located Close to Lough Gara
- Together with Farm House and Farm Buildings Needing Renovation
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- House and Land can be sold separately

€210,000

Contact Bernard Cregg on 086-8237548

farmersmarket.ie

Farmland cleared for sale will takeoff

DUBLIN

A 129ac block of north Co Dublin farmland is for sale, near St. Margaret's village. The land at Dunsoghly is top quality and currently used for tillage and grass. However, its location means that it is likely to attract the attention of developers and business

people – and it is also contributing to a guide price of almost €35,000/ac. The land lies between the M2 motorway and Dublin Airport. It is approximately 1km from the grounds of Dublin Airport and 6.5km from the terminals. The land is zoned objective Green Belt under the Fingal Development Plan 2023 to 2029. However, the auctioneers say that the land is ideally located to benefit from a potential re-zoning in future years, to allow for industrial use. The land lies in seven main fields and has good hedge boundaries. The guide price is €4.5m and this is a private treaty sale. - PAUL MOONEY



The land is good quality and mostly under tillage.

€20,000/ac asking price for good land

MEATH

A 78ac holding of good farmland is for sale in east Co Meath. The holding is on the market from CBRE and is for sale by private treaty.

The land is accessed from the Minnistown Road which branches off the R150 regional road connecting Laytown and Julianstown. There is convenient access to the M1 motorway at Junction 7.

This is an area of very productive land and intensive farming with a lot of tillage and crop production. The land for sale is in one block and laid out in seven fields. It, too, is good quality ground, suited for all farming uses. It has been farmed in a mix of grass and tillage.

The holding is close to Bettystown and its popular beach.

It's a 15-minute drive from Drogheda and a short spin from many of the attractions on the Boyne Valley drive.

The guide price for this property is excess of €1.56m which is €20,000/ac.

- PAUL MOONEY



The 78ac is in one large block; below, Bettystown beach.



CLASSIFIEDS

FORESTRY FOR SALE

ARBOR
FOREST MANAGEMENT
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Planted & bare land required. Thinning & clearfell harvesting services available.
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WANTED 30-50 ACRES OF GOOD LAND South Laois Area. 3 to 7 year lease. Genuine callers only please. 0872445273 LAOS

LAND FOR SALE

DREAMER I am a dreamer living in Dublin. With a long held desire to buy an old watermill or stone cottage building on a small to medium sized river, in Leinster or Ulster. Cash buyer 0864465705 / maurice-hayes191@gmail.com DUBLIN

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Prime piece of heritage up for sale



The main house has five bedrooms; below, the stud has over 100 stables, the dining room.

MEATH

There is Irish and international interest in the 595ac Tara Stud which is for sale in Co Meath. The stud has operated as a top bloodstock nursery for 80 years. It also has a substantial agricultural side, finishing over 1,000 cattle and up to 1,000 lambs each year and growing over 1,000t of grain. It has been home to many successful stallions and this year stood Estidhkaar and homebred Grade 1 winner River Boyne. Managed by Derek Icton for the past 40 years, Tara Stud was established in 1906. He told *The Irish Field* earlier this month that his bloodstock opera-

tion is being transferred to the adjoining Skryne Castle Farm, which runs to well in excess of 350ac. The stud has a fine residence and an impressive list of yards. The main house is a five-bedroom Georgian residence. In addition, there is a three-bedroom Queen Anne gate lodge, four other houses and three apartments. The stud has three yards with a total of 103 traditional stables. There is a French style open barn with accommodation for 20 horses. The many facilities include separate foaling and stallion boxes and an all-weather paddock. The land is in one unit laid and the holding has 6km of road frontage and 3km of internal roads. There is a feedlot shed to hold 550 cattle, other livestock sheds, silage pits, straw sheds, cattle handling facilities and machinery sheds. It is now for sale by private treaty from joint agents Raymond Potterton and Goffs Property. The agents have not issued a guide price. However, prime agricultural land in this area has sold for up to €25,000/ac recently. Given the facilities on offer, this property could match or exceed that, meaning a possible sale price of over €14m.

- PAUL MOONEY



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BALLYLOUGHNANE, RIVERSTOWN, BIRR, CO. TIPPERARY.
Delightful C.24 acre Farm Holding with Derelict Residence and 1.93 acre plot of bog at Ballagh.



Once part of the Barroncourt Estate and situated a "stones throw" from the picturesque village of Riverstown, this property with its undulating pastures, mature hedgerows and old farmhouse, is like stepping back in time to a bygone era evoking images of horse and cart transport, salted pig in a barrel preservation, open hearth turf fire under a blackened pot, long hot summers, really cold winters and the telling of atmospherically charged ghost stories by the flickering light of a paraffin tilly lamp!

The land in the main is very good running to circa 4ac of mature wood at the lower end, and while the single storied house will challenge your trade skills, the derelict home reinstatement grant would go a long way into breathing new life into its tired state.

JOHN RYAN, RYAN AUCTIONEERS,
ROCK LANE, BIRR, CO. OFFALY, EIRCODE R42EE35
TEL: (057) 9121666 | (087) 9786210 | LICENCE NO: 001837



046 9027666

DERVOTSTOWN CLONMELLON, CO. MEATH



Auction - Tuesday 19th November at 3pm

64 ACRES (26 HA)

An excellent opportunity to acquire a substantial agricultural holding with farm buildings on the Meath/Westmeath border.

Currently utilized for tillage purposes, the lands are of high quality and would be suitable for any agricultural use, including dairy and tillage.

This top-quality farm is also equipped with a concrete yard, cattle handling facilities, 3 bay hay shed with lean to and a 3 bay cattle shed.

The land has valuable frontage to the Ballinlough/Athboy road on its northern boundary. Conveniently close to major road networks, with the N52 located less than 3 km to the west and the N51 approximately 5 km to the south.

Ideally located, Dervotstown is approximately 5.5km from Clonmellon, 6km from Athboy and 8km from Delvin.

Auction will be at our Navan Auction Room at 3pm and Online. Pre registration for online bidding by 18th Nov. Solicitors: Derek Williams & Co., Dundalk, Co. Louth

LANDS FOR LEASING

GRAIGUE UPPER, NENAGH, CO. TIPPERARY
98.52 HECTARES (243 ACRES)

- 6 Year Lease with or without Entitlements
- Excellent land under high quality permanent pasture
- Modern Slatted Shed, Hay Shed, Silage Pit, Handling Facilities and Well Water.
- All divisions are well fenced & serviced by piped water
- Located 4km from Nenagh, with easy access to the N52.

KILREGANE, LORRHA, NENAGH, CO. TIPPERARY
96.46 HECTARES (238 ACRES)

- 6 Year Lease with or without Entitlements
- Premium land in excellent condition
- All under high quality pasture & well fenced
- Large modern slatted shed, hay shed, silage pit and well water to every division
- Located 11.5 km from Nenagh, near the N65 and N52.

VIEWING BY APPOINTMENT

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EXCELLENT LOCATION ADJACENT TO RATHOE VILLAGE FOR SALE IN 3 LOTS

- Excellent quality arable lands adjacent to Rathoe village
- Part of the lands zoned and have development potential SPP.
- River frontage excellent quality agricultural lands currently in tillage
- Full details of maps from selling agent

Solicitors PJ Byrne & Company Athy Road Carlow.

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CO. TIPPERARY
COOLDERRY, ARDCRONEY, NENAGH
Online Auction 21st November 2024 11.30am - 12.00pm



13.90 HA (34.35 ACRES) OF PRIME AGRICULTURAL LANDS

- Slatted shed, Cattle crush, Silage slab
- Derelict farm house
- Extensive road frontage
- Private well and electricity connection

Solicitors - Liadhan Hassett James O'Brien & Co



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TILLAGE DAY '24
7 NOVEMBER Registration and trade stands from 8.30am
Conference from 9.30am - 4.30pm

KILLASHEE HOTEL, NAAS, CO. KILDARE. W91 DC98

Registration and trade stands from 8.30am
Conference from 9.30am - 4.30pm
[including two refreshment breaks and a two-course hot lunch]

What to expect: this positive conference will feature farmers, agronomists, grain market analysts, policy makers and industry and focus on achievements on tillage farms in 2024, find solutions to the problems encountered, examine how policy can be changed to grow the sector and look to the future of the industry.

Who will attend: tillage farmers and industry stakeholders.
Tickets: €49.99
Tickets available at www.ifj.ie/tillageday

Confirmed stands on the day include:

- Irish Seed Trade Association
- BASF
- Bayer
- Deeside Agri
- Drummonds
- GlobeWeigh
- Goldcrop
- Gouldings
- Grassland Agro
- IFA
- IFAC
- Kellys of Borris
- Livefarm
- New Gen Agri
- Quinns of Baltinglass
- Seedtech
- Syngenta
- TAMA Ireland
- Terrachem
- TFM
- TP Whelehan
- Vantage Ireland



Scan Me



This event is brought to you by the Irish Farmers Journal and is supported by the Irish Seed Trade Association.

Dear Miriam: ‘My best friend left me out of her 70th birthday party celebrations’



Dear Miriam
Agony Aunt

I am writing to you as I feel thrown under the bus. I don't want to sound dramatic, but I am very hurt. Last month, one of my best friends had a 70th birthday party bash and I wasn't invited to it. I've been feeling quite down ever since.

I wouldn't mind if it was a family affair, but other friends in our group were there and I only found out about this (secret) party by accident from one of my friends who was invited.

Prior to this, myself and the friend whose birthday it was, would go on day trips every month whether it would be shopping, a walk on the beach or exploring our local greenway. We have always had a great friendship, so I don't understand why she left me out.

I have known this woman for the past 15 years and have supported her through thick and thin. I don't want to lose our friendship over something so simple as not being invited to a party.

However, I am upset and hurt by her actions, and I can't seem to let it go. I know at my age I probably shouldn't care about these things but I do. Should I confront her about it? Or should I just let it slide?

Leinster lady

Dear Leinster lady,
I am sorry to hear your feelings have been hurt by not being invited to your friend's party; feelings that are totally understandable given the duration of your friendship. There are many possible reasons for

your omission from the guest list. There may have been a limit on the numbers due to the party venue, or it may come down to the fact that your friend didn't organise the celebration and whoever did was not familiar with your friendship.

You ask if you should let it slide. It seems difficult to know how to do this when, by your own admission, you are very hurt by the incident and feel you have been a good friend to this lady.

However, you also say that you both enjoy monthly outings, which you would most likely miss if you were to broach the subject with your friend and it wasn't well received.

Nonetheless, if you feel you could raise the matter with your friend in a healthy and respectful manner, where you could explain your feelings and clear the air, it might help to eliminate any tension that may be lingering between you both.

Hopefully, then you can put it behind you and continue to enjoy each other's company for many more years to come in the future.

Reader writes,
I'm wondering if the lady featured in a recent edition of *Irish Country Living* on your 2 October issue, 'My daughter is freezing me out of her life' has considered that maybe her daughter had post-natal depression following the birth of either of her children? They're only four and six years old.

I say this because I suffered with post-natal depression after our daughter was born and I was inclined to be distant with my husband and mother – those who are the closest to me.

Maybe this is a reason for this girl's behaviour, but for now I wonder if her mum should step back and give her daughter some breathing space.

Kildare reader

Do you have a problem you would like to share? If so, write in confidence to our Dear Miriam Agony Aunt, Irish Country Living, Irish Farmers Journal, Irish Farm Centre, Bluebell, Dublin 12, or email miriam@farmersjournal.ie

AGRIWORD 1285

COMPILED BY FINÉAGAS

Some clues are cryptic, some more straightforward and some have an agricultural theme

ACROSS

- Sever. (3)
- Largish tech is involved in providing outdoor, directed illumination. (11)
- 8 & 20a. Disney's greatest creation may make Mike's emu coy. (6,5)
- Grieving, lamenting. (8)
- Perform a role at altitude and misbehave. (3,2)
- Faced back into providing a variety of coffee. (5)
- Is it really high land, or is it just pretending? (5)
- Refer to. (7)
- Fall precipitously. (7)
- See 8 across.
- It's the one right that belongs to them. (5)
- Vestibule; foyer. (5)
- One gave beer, perhaps, as a drink. (8)
- Display the silence of the Mafia, or meat will be chopped up. (6)
- A decommissioning of weapons. (11)
- The sweet potato may return. (3)

DOWN

- One of the ten rules given to Moses in the Bible. (11)
- It's understood the container is disinclined to speak. (8)
- Slumber. (5)
- He founded the Eternal City by redeveloping our slum. (7)
- Sensational in a melodramatic way. (5)
- Minor foul-up. (6)
- Label. (3)
- Does such an intensive agricultural unit specialise in an industrial, rather than food, plant? (7,4)
- As grows in a witch's garden? (5)
- Untrue. (5)
- 17 & 19d. The traditional diet of the silkworm. (8,6)
- It shines out of the same bun. (7)
- See 17 down.
- Less common. (5)
- Restriction. (5)
- One's offer at an auction. (3)

ANSWERS: AGRIWORD 1283

ACROSS: 1. Rot 3. Gran Canaria 8. French toast 9. Pandemic 10. Imago 11. Round steak 15. Reredos 16. Beer mug 20. Seals 23. Human 24. Boutique 25. Cantal 26. Garden party 27. Hid

DOWN: 1. Refrigerant 2. Teenager 3. Gecko 4. Nappies 5. Nadir 6. Rumour 7. Arc 12. Disgruntled 13. Sloes 14. Keeps 17. Mismatch 18. Candela 19. Jaguar 22. Twine 23. Heady 24. Bug

The next Agriword winner will be announced at the beginning of January. All entries received up until then will be entered into the draw for a €250 voucher.

SOLUTIONS: We will publish the solutions two weeks after the crossword publication to facilitate a closing date for entries. Entries for each issue will be closed off after one week and those entries will be included in our quarterly draw. Closing date for agriword 1285 is Saturday, 2 November 2024. **Don't forget to put the agriword number on your envelope.**

HOW TO ENTER

Send completed puzzles to Agriword, Irish Farmers Journal, Irish Farm Centre, Bluebell, Dublin 12.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Contact no: _____

Farm enterprise: _____

☐ Tick here if you agree to being contacted by email with news and offers from *Irish Farmers Journal*.

☐ Tick here if you agree to being contacted by phone with news and offers from *Irish Farmers Journal*.

Getting in Touch

The Irish Country Living Personal Pages

MUNSTER

FUN GENUINE GENTLEMAN. Looking for a Fun Genuine Lady for Friendship and possibly a relationship. Likes Walking, going for dinner/occasional drink. **BOX NO. M0556**

CORK MAN. Late 50's. Farming background. Kind, honest & supportive. Non-smoker, S/D. Loves all kinds of animals & the country life. Like foreign holidays & weekends away. WLTm an honest & caring lady with similar interests for a relationship, mid 40's - late 50's. **BOX NO. M0553**

CO. CLARE. Single Lady. 44 years old from farming background. Never married, no kids, dog lover. Enjoys walking, gardening, TV/movies, music, reading. I like the country life & animals. Looking to meet a man 35-47 for relationship, possibly long-term. Phone number and photos please. **BOX NO. M0549**

COUNTY CORK Lady 60's. Not from a farming background but love country living. Youthful, attractive, good personality, kind, caring and honest. G.S.O.H. No ties. NS, SD. Likes eating out, sit down concerts (shows). Country, Western & Comedy. Love dogs, walking & day trips. WLTm a kind caring, genuine gentle man with similar interests to share life with and be there for one another. **BOX NO. M0548**

MUNSTER MAN. Late fifties, own home, Protestant. Very honest, kind and a loving person. Single. Would love to meet a caring lady for social outings. Meals and other social activities and possible relationship. Phone no, please. **BOX NO. M0543**

COUNTRY MAN. Never married, early to mid-40s, who doesn't take life to serious. N/S, N/D, with kind heart, GSOH. Interests include sport, animals, long drives, eating out, socialising, reading and TV documentaries. Would like to meet woman with similar interests, 30s 40s. **BOX NO. M0545**

CORK LADY. Mid 40s. Never married, no children. Great personality, kind caring and honest. Love dogs, horse riding, eating out, horse racing, nights in and out, cooking, gardening, travelling and weekends away. No stranger to helping outdoors o/yts good for the soul. Non smoker. Social drinker. Would like to meet a gentleman from Cork or surrounding area. Must have a good sense of humour and love animals. **BOX NO. M0542**

KERRY LADY. Retired Professional, divorced, N/S, S/D, fit, elegant, good sense of humour, kind and caring. Would like to meet gentleman aged 60-70 for companionship and possible relationship. Interests include walking, gardening, travel, cooking, music and current affairs. Confidentially assured and expected. **BOX NO. M0539**

MUNSTER MALE. 60, farmer, semi-retired, N/S, S/D, 6ft, tall, kind, honest, good sense of humour and caring. Likes country life. WLTm lady 40 to 62. All nationality's welcome, for friendship, relationship. From Munster, Leinster or Galway. Discretion given and expected. **BOX NO. M0540**

WATERFORD MALE. In my mid-60s, widower, good personality and genuine person. Positive outlook, likes social dancing, walking and cycling. Would like to meet a kind lady, with a good sense of humour, for a relationship. Late 50s. Southern Counties. **BOX NO. M0541**

SINGLE ENERGETIC Lady. I am intelligent, genuine, loyal, caring and fun-loving. I love walks in nature, by the sea, dancing, go jogging regularly, like hiking and reading. I enjoy culture, foreign travel, dining in/out. I WLTm an energetic man who is genuine and open-hearted and actively engages in an outdoor pursuit for long-term relationship. N/S. No ties. 40 - early 50's. Munster area. **BOX NO. M0534**

KERRY MALE. Age 54. Fit and Healthy. N/S. No ties. WLTm lady for friendship. **BOX NO. M0535**

CORK MAN. 47, single, no ties, genuine and kind, caring, GSOH, n/s. My interest are the following: like country style music festival, nights in and out, reading and walking, camp weekends away and holidays. Have an interest in farming, sheep and cattle. WLTm a girl with similar interests. 36-45, from Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Waterford, Clare. Genuine replies. **BOX NO. M0526**

E. CORK WIDOW. (Ex Farm) (70's). WLTm one kind, consecrate, well educated, agreeable, multi-faceted, outgoing, honourable man with his own house and car and assets. Good looks too, if possible. **BOX NO. M0529**

CORK FARMER. 51 y.o. WLTm a nice genuine, sincere lady for a relationship. I'm honest, caring, great personality and funny. I love animals and enjoy the outdoors, Non-smoker, social drinker. I like music and eating out. **BOX NO. M0531**

TIPPERARY LADY. 55, smart, intelligent, caring, confident, has a good sense of humour, kind, independent and supportive, seeks gentleman for a relationship. **BOX NO. M0522**

CORK GENTLEMAN. I'm young 75 year old, single male, calm and gentle. Non-smoker, social drinker. Loves driving and travel. My friends would say that I'm good looking, good humoured with plenty of chat. Can also play a few tunes on the guitar and sing along as well. WLTm a like-minded lady. Loves adventure and dining out. Welcome to my world! Cork-based but distance no object. **BOX NO. M0523**

TIPPERARY MAN. In Late 40s. 6ft N/S, S/D, no ties. Farming, genuine, caring, GSOH. Likes sport, swimming, walking, dining out and weekends away. WLTm a lady of similar interests, 35-45 to share like and possible relationship. **BOX NO. M0524**

RESTLESS HEART. Cork Lady, early 60's, single/no ties. Kind and sincere with GSOH, NS, SD. WLTm kind-hearted gentleman for companionship to share life's adventures. Interests include foreign travel, day trips, all genres of music, dining out and current affairs. I also enjoy the simple things in life like reading, walks in nature and the seaside. Everything seems better when shared. **BOX NO. M0525**

WEST CORK LADY. 68yr old West Cork, semi-retired businessman, widower, honest, G.S.O.H. WLTm 50/60 yr old, active, bubbly lady for friendship. I'm a triathlon participant, love music, travel, nature, current affairs, N.S, S.D. All replies appreciated and replied to. **BOX NO. M0511**

MID-WEST LADY. 60's, good sense of humour, neat appearance, good conversationalist, retired, widowed. Interests include dancing, music of all genres, walking, reading and travel. WLTm a nice sincere genuine gentleman, from Clare, Limerick, Tipperary area for friendship with similar interests, and a zest for life. **BOX NO. M0513**

KERRY MALE. Single, mid-forties, 5'10", brown hair. WLTm tall athletic woman. Between 25 and 35. Casual and fun. Must be willing to travel. Any nationality. Please send photo and phone number, confidentiality assured. **BOX NO. M0514**

SINGLE, FIT, REFINED LADY. Residing in Cork area, who is genuine, caring, intelligent and cultured; enjoys fitness, jogging, cycling, hiking, fine dining and nature wltm n/s gentleman who is fit, warm hearted and self-aware for serious relationship. No ties. Late 30's early 50's Munster/Leinster. **BOX NO. M0507**

TIPP MAN 50. 5'10. Genuine and easy going with good appearance. Farm owner with no ties. WLTm lady 35-45 as I live in rural Ireland. Hobbies include cycling, travel and weekends away. **BOX NO. M0506**

CORK MALE. 71 years old. N/S S/D. WLTm a lady, I like music, current affairs, sports etc. I am easy going, a good listener with GSOH. It would be nice to have someone to share things with like dining out and weekends away, easy to please. **BOX NO. M0500**

REBEL CO. CORK Dairy Farmer. Male 44, single with no ties. N/S N/D. Genuine, caring, GSOH. I like country life, animals, dogs, nights out dancing, country music festivals, dining out and cosy nights in by the fire. Tv, reading, days out at agn shows, walks in the country side and sun holidays WLTm a girl with similar interests 27-45 to share and enjoy life with. Relationship with view to marriage. Genuine replies. **BOX NO. M0501**

MALE 59 YEARS OLD. Tipperary. WLTm a lady 58-70 from surrounding counties for a relationship. **BOX NO. M0504**

CONNACHT

NORTH WEST Man. 54 years, separated, N/S, S/D. Part-time farmer, works full-time. Seeking to meet female who likes country life. **BOX NO. C0551**

SINGLE CONNACHT Gay Man. Late 60's, from a farming background. No ties. WLTm like-minded man for friendship. 70+. Phone no. please. Confidentially assured and expected. **BOX NO. C0552**

GALWAY GIRL. Enjoys nature, animals, farming and life. Looking for a kind man with a good heart who enjoys the same. NS, ND, 47. **BOX NO. C0546**

WILD ATLANTIC WAY GENT. Single refined professional gentleman. Almost retired. Is respectable, secure, has varied interests, like sports, cycling, travel, nature, cultures, current affairs, etc. Would like to share friendship happiness with compatible warm-hearted lady. Who is bright and cheerful. Replies welcome from Galway or western areas. **BOX NO. C0533**

ROSCOMMON SINGLE Lady. Mid-60s, seeks single male, same age group, no ties. G.S.O.H, honest, likes c/w music, dining out, social drinker, country background. All replies answered. **BOX NO. C0527**

CONNACHT MAN. Mayo man seeking to meet female from Mayo or Connacht area. Seeking someone who likes dancing, outdoor activities, country music and farming. 25-45 years. **BOX NO. C0537**

GALWAY MAN. Separated man, 57 years old, from a farming background. Own car and house living in Galway city. WLTm Lady 40 to 57 for relationship. **BOX NO. C0521**

SINGLE MALE. 41 years old. In midlands with no ties. Seeking relationship with likeminded lady, country living lifestyle, outdoor activities, walking, music, travel. GSOH necessary. **BOX NO. C0502**

GALWAY MAN. Retired director. Widower. Seeks a genuine, warm active lady for companion friend and possible long term relationship. Interests include keeping fit, walks, gardening etc. The arts, music, social outings. N/S. Enjoys S/D. Please reply. **BOX NO. C0505**

LEINSTER

SINGLE LADY in early forties from a farming background, with a good job in business sector and a great interest in farming. I enjoy all outdoor activities which include walking, cycling, swimming, gardening and socialising, dancing and going to the cinema at the weekends. Would like to meet a full-time farmer from the South East age 40-55. **BOX NO. L0554**

LADY IN Leinster would like to meet a respectable sincere gentleman, for companionship. Interests include music, dancing and the outdoors. 66 to 76 years. **BOX NO. L0547**

LEINSTER LADY. 52. Now is my time, with two grown up teenagers going to college. I have a good sense of humour, social drinker and ns. My interest includes Country walks, coffee out and an interest in horses WLTm a genuine, respectable man in his early 50 with a good sense of humour and similar interests. **BOX NO. L0550**

LEINSTER MAN. WLTHF a lady of any age who likes horse riding. I like animals and have general interests. **BOX NO. L0538**

RESPONSE PACKAGES AVAILABLE

BRONZE SINGLE REPLY	€15	SINGLE REPLY – RAPID RESPONSE
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Getting In Touch, Irish Farmers Journal, Irish Farm Centre, Bluebell, Dublin 12
For any queries call us on Fridays 10am to 4pm – 01 4199 555
or email gettingintouch@farmersjournal.ie

MID LEINSTER MALE 70 years old. Slim build. N/S S/D. No ties. Independent, self-employed, comfortable. WLTm lady for socialising friendship and take it from there. I have my own car, house etc. **BOX NO. L0503**

LADIES. Are you a woman like me, who loves going to race meetings, concerts, maybe dance classes, but struggles to get friends to go with? WLTHF ladies, 40+, any county, to get together for social outings & a bit of craic. **BOX NO. L0557**

CORK LADY. Mid 30s, very genuine, kind and sincere. Professional job and from a farming background. Love hiking, travelling, fashion and cooking. NS, SD and no ties. WLTm kind gentleman with a great sense of humour for friendship / relationship. **BOX NO. L0497**

ATTRACTIVE LAOIS LADY Mid 60s honest and trustworthy. Looking for a nice and kind man. I have lots of interests including reading, walking and cooking. We can have nice times together. **BOX NO. L0498**

LEINSTER - 62 years old, single male from Midlands area. N.S. S.D with a GSOH. Self employed. Interests include sport, music and animals. WLTm a lady 55-70 years. **BOX NO. L0489**

KIND AND CARING 60s. 5-10 with average build. With GSOH. No ties S.D N.S. Likes sports, dancing, CW music, concerts, swimming, dining out and current affairs. WLTm a kind and caring lady with a GSOH. N.S. to share the simple things in life. From Meath or surrounding Counties. Confidentiality assured. **BOX NO. L0462**

ULSTER

ATTRACTIVE PROFESSIONAL lady. Midlands Galway area. Single lady age 36. WLTm genuine gentleman, GSOH, n/s ready for commitment and children. I enjoy many things, keeping fit, gym, travel. Photo please. **BOX NO. U0516**

WEST OF IRELAND single retired gentleman. Early 70's, from a farming background. Kind and sincere. Seeks similar gentleman, 45yrs upwards for friendship and to share varied interests. Very discreet and same expected. **BOX NO. C0518**

NORTH WEST PROFESSIONAL LADY. Would like to meet a refined gentleman who is in early 60s, unattached, someone to share holidays trips etc. Professional lady, still working, planning retirement. Outgoing, sociable, would like that "special someone" in her life to enjoy, travel, walks, meals etc. Social drinker, non-smoker, genuine replies only. **BOX NO. U0519**

PROFESSIONAL LADY NW region. Independent, secure professional lady close to retirement would like to meet active, interesting professional gentleman for lasting friendship/relationship. Would be nice to have someone special to share travel socialising etc. I am aged 61yrs, interests include travel, reading, walking, trips to the coast and the countryside. Sincere person with warm personality. Good communicator and very sociable. **BOX NO. U0555**

REGISTER

To send a reply, or place an ad you must register with your contact details: Name, Address & Contact Number.
You can send replies and ads to the Getting in Touch team by post to Getting In Touch, Irish Farmers Journal, Irish Farm Centre, Bluebell, Dublin 12

REPLYING TO AN AD

To reply, please send your reply, details of the box number you're replying to, your contact details (to register) and payment to the Getting In Touch Team by post.

COST: A single reply to one advert costs €15, alternatively we have additional response packages listed at the top of the page, to register for one of these options please contact a member of the team.

GET IN TOUCH: Your reply will then be forwarded to the individual who placed the original advert. The Irish Farmers Journal does not take any responsibility for the advertiser to respond to the replies he/she receives from the advertisement.

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'Like everything else in farming through the years, change is always gradual'

Katherine O'Leary Country Life



Tim and I attended the Climate Adaptation conference in Moorepark last week. Our focus is always on what take home actions are applicable to our own farm. I will never tire of the Teagasc scientists laying out their research before us. Sometimes, we're expecting big decisions but like everything else in farming through the years; it's a gradual change.

Adaptation is the name of the game now and farmers are good at it. Dr Frank O'Meara, director of Teagasc acknowl-

edged that climate adaptation is making farming more challenging but it is part of our future.

Weather research

According to research data, it seems to be a given that we will have more rainfall during the spring months and again in October. Europe will warm more quickly than we will. Down these parts of the country, we are destined to continue having drought spells in summer. Regional rainfall levels may change too.

So, more adaptation is required. We need to plan to make more silage to add flexibility to the system. If the weather is dire, animals will have to be fed inside to protect the grass.

Again and again, the point was made that the more profitable systems are those that are pasture based. It is good grass that makes the difference to profitability on farms. Since the bad year in 2018, figures show that lots of dairy farmers have got bad habits and the meal button is being pushed too often. It is wise to keep in mind that if that meal has to go in

sometimes, it must come out at the earliest possible opportunity.

Dr Michael O'Donovan highlighted three areas where adaptation is crucial: farm cover, fertiliser usage and weather management. Examining pasture base figures from past years, he illustrated that days at grass had increased by 12. Grazing in spring is starting 10 days earlier with magic day (when grass growth rate matches herd demand) falling five days earlier. He also observed that opening covers have risen by 100kg. He said "this was probably not enough". More grass may also grow over the winter period.

Alan Stewart, New Zealand, acknowledged that the rest period for animals and pasture in Ireland is a good thing, allowing for grazing ground to recover, while Dr Joe Patton said that adaptation of systems will go deeper to labour, slurry storage, nutrient management, infrastructure and crucially, access to grass. These things will dictate the economic outcome on farms.

Clover is as big as ever in the story. Increasing the level of clover in our grass swards will allow us to reduce our

chemical nitrogen use. We must learn to score and measure the clover during the growing season. Red clover does not last and I think it will have reduced use going forward which is a pity when it is such a lovely plant with that deep tap root. Things like mitigation for bloat means that cows will need more management so that impacts labour on farms. Quantification of all the connotations involved will take time to model and figure out.

Talented scientists

Dr Deirdre Hennessy, UCC did a brilliant sum up advising farmers to know the data for their own farms along with the bigger picture. During drought spells she warned that the feed deficit must be filled with pasture-based forage. Targets may not now be correct for spring and autumn grazing, considering that the growing pattern of grass was changing in response to climatic conditions.

We are fortunate to have such talented scientists continually questioning and mapping the adaptations ahead for us to continue farming.

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