



**AGRI AWARE  
ANNUAL  
REPORT**

**2020**

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# ABOUT AGRI AWARE

## MISSION

To create a national awareness of the value of modern agriculture and farming, the stewardship of the rural environment, animal welfare and the benefits of nutritious, Irish food.

## OUR OBJECTIVES

- To improve the image of agriculture, farming and food
- To promote greater awareness among the non-farming community of modern agriculture, the rural environment, animal welfare, food quality and safety
- To heighten farmer awareness of the importance of best practices in the protection of the environment, animal welfare and food safety
- To provide information about agriculture and food in schools nationwide to inform the non-farming community about the crucial role that the farming and agri-food industry play in the Irish economy

## OUR PROJECTS AND INITIATIVE TARGETS

- The General Public
  - Through initiatives to enhance their understanding of the vital economic, environmental and cultural importance of the Irish farming and agri-food industries.
- Students
  - To enhance their understanding of agriculture and the link between farming and the food that they eat each day.
- The Agri-Business & Farming Sector
  - By informing them about the important role that they play in maintaining the positive image and understanding of the industry.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**CHAIRMAN**  
Alan Jagoe



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Marcus O'Halloran



**VICE CHAIRMAN**  
Teddy Cashman  
IFAC - Dairy Farmer



**SECRETARY**  
James Kelly  
Irish Farmers Association



**TREASURER**  
Amii McKeever  
Irish Country Living



Mike Neary  
Bord Bia



Jeanne Kelly  
Orna



John McCullen  
FBD

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Dr. Patrick Wall  
UCD



Tim O'Mahony  
Origin Enterprises



Maxine Hyde  
Ballymaloe Foods



Cormac Healy  
IBEC



Síne Friel  
INTO



Charles Smith  
ABP & Kepak



Brian Rushe  
Irish Farmers Association



Joe Parlon  
Irish Farmers Association

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S STATEMENT

Despite challenges, Agri Aware continued to enhance its education and communication programmes throughout 2020 in innovative and creative ways in order to create a national awareness of the value of Irish agriculture. Through the support of our patrons, Agri Aware has been able to deliver high impact and engaging campaigns aimed at primary and secondary school students, Irish families and the general public.

Agri Aware developed engaging social media campaigns such as #FeedingtheFrontline, #AgCredible and #FamilyFarms to highlight to the public the work farmers do in providing safe, high quality food, produced to the highest animal welfare standards. In 2020, Agri Aware was delighted to redevelop and update its **Dig In!** resource, first published in 2013, in an effort to reconnect Irish primary school children with how their food is produced, from farm to fork. We would like to thank the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine for making this relaunch of **Dig In!** possible through their sponsorship.

Agri Aware continues to work closely with the Irish Farmers Journal and the Irish Agricultural Science Teachers Association to deliver curriculum linked study guides for secondary school agricultural science students during the school year. Accompanying resources including, online tools, videos from farmers and revision aids are also developed with these partners and made available to Agricultural Science students.

It was an honour for me to become a member of the Agri Aware team in 2020. I would like to thank our chairman, Alan Jagoe, for his continued support and dedication to Agri Aware, as well as our board member's' unwavering commitment to Agri Aware. I would like to acknowledge my colleagues in Agri Aware for their hard work, passion and enthusiasm over the last year.

I would also like to extend thanks to our five founding patrons – Irish Farmers Journal, Irish Farmers Association, FBD, Bord Bia and Ornuia – as well as our over 70 patrons who make the important work Agri Aware carries out possible. I look forward to working closely with you all in 2021 in continuing to deliver Irish agriculture's strong message.



**Marcus O'Halloran**



# CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

As a result of the global Covid-19 pandemic, 2020 will be remembered as one of the most challenging years for the Irish agri-food industry. However, it will also go down in history as a year where the industry came together, mobilised and found creative ways of reaching consumers, doing business and communicating our positive message to the general public.

In 2020, Agri Aware continued to successfully build on its mission of creating a national awareness of the value of modern agriculture, stewardship of the rural environment, animal welfare and the benefits of eating nutritious, Irish food.

One of Agri Aware's greatest undertakings in 2020 was the launch of our updated **Dig In!** resource, which took place in November and was supported by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The resource was sent to all of Ireland's 3,240 primary schools and contains innovative modules that cover all aspects of Irish farming and food origin, from biodiversity friendly farming methods and animal welfare to healthy eating guidelines.

In early March, Agri Aware held five Farm Walk and Talk events which welcomed over 1,600 5th and 6th Year students to Teagasc farms nationwide. While Covid-19 restrictions led to the cancellation of the remaining events, thanks to the co-operation of UCD staff and Traction Media, Agri Aware filmed a virtual Farm Walk and Talk experience at UCD Lyons Farm to aid students gain key study advice for their Leaving Certificate and a practical insight into sustainable, Irish farming. Over 1,000 schools signed up and took part in the Incredible Edibles healthy eating and growing project in 2020. Due to school closures in March, Agri Aware made the project fully available online and created Incredible Edibles Family Challenge which opened the programme up to over 4,000 children nationwide. 2021 is set to be even bigger with 1,600 primary schools signed up to the programme.

In response to the new virtual world we found ourselves living in 2020, Agri Aware launched a number of social media campaigns such as #FeedingtheFrontline, #AgCredible and #FestiveFoodHeroes. These campaigns contributed to the incredible growth of Agri Aware's social media channels following and media coverage including RTE, Newstalk, The Irish Farmers Journal and The Irish Examiner, to name but a few.

Agri Aware is indebted to its over 70 patrons and its founding members – FBD, Bord Bia, Irish Farmers Association, Irish Farmers Journal and Ornuá. I would also like to acknowledge the board members for their continued support of Agri Aware. It has been an honour for me as a farmer to represent Agri Aware as chairman in 2020. I was also delighted to welcome Marcus O'Halloran to the team as the new Executive Director of Agri Aware in 2020 and would like to thank him for his dedicated leadership and innovative management style which has contributed to Agri Aware building on its education message in 2020. Agri Aware's small team also should be acknowledged for the excellent work they do in communicating and delivering the Agri Aware message.

We would like to thank you again for your support of Agri Aware and look forward to working with you all in communicating Irish agriculture's message in 2021.



Alan Jagoe



# 2020 PATRONS

## Founding Members:



## Current Patrons:



# 2020 PATRONS



# INCREDIBLE EDIBLES PROGRAMME PATRONS



AGRI AWARE



## BORD BIA IRISH FOOD BOARD



An Roinn Sláinte  
Department of Health



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Scileanna  
Department of  
Education and Skills



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine



# IFA



AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



School of  
Public Health

# STUDY GUIDE PATRONS



# DIG IN RELAUNCH

Agri Aware, supported by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine relaunched its revitalised ***Dig In! Learning About Life on the Countryside*** resource aimed at primary school students in 2020.

The resource, which was sent to all of Ireland's 3,240 primary schools in November, contains innovative modules that cover all aspects of Irish farming and food origin, from biodiversity friendly farming methods and animal welfare to healthy eating guidelines.

***Dig In!***, which also comes as a digital resource, is divided into four modules according to levels of ability for Junior and Senior Infants; 1st&2nd class; 3rd&4th class and 5th&6th class. Each module contains 20 ready-to-go lesson plans and corresponding activities. Furthermore, each lesson plan is linked to strands of the English, Maths, Art, Drama, Science, Geography and SPHE curriculum.

The revitalised resource also contains a first of its kind **Irish Organic Farming Pull-Out Poster** which highlights the growing involvement of Irish farmers in the sector in recent years.

You can watch the ***Dig In!*** launch video which featured Minister for State Pippa Hackett, INTO president, Mary Magner and Agri Aware chairman, Alan Jagoe [here](#)



# INCREDIBLE EDIBLES

Agri Aware's Incredible Edibles healthy eating and growing project entered its 12th year in primary schools in 2020. Over **1,000 schools** took part in the 2020 programme.

The aim of this curriculum linked project is to educate students about growing fruit and vegetables and increase awareness of food origin and quality. The project also highlights the important role that fresh, Irish produce plays in a healthy balanced diet.

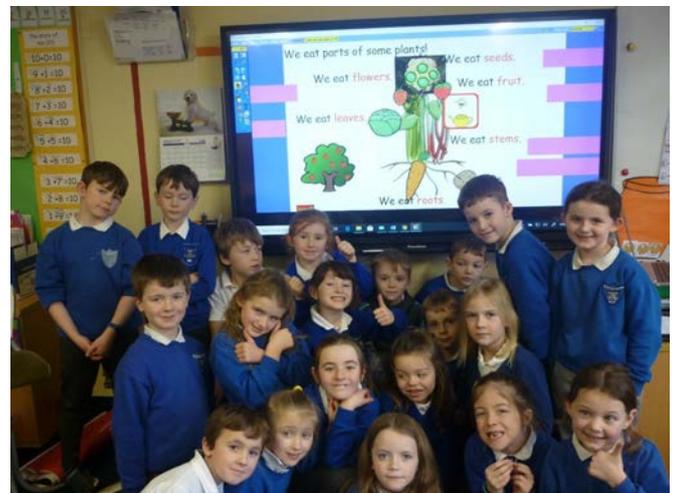
Despite school closures in March, teachers continued to take part in the project by sending their students videos of their vegetable and herb plants progress, as well as students cooking and eating their 7-a-day from home.

Ms Helena Hyland's 3rd class from **Boys National School, Athenry, Co Galway** were crowned first place winners of the project and received a prize of a growing sun-bubble dome for the whole school.

Mr Jarlath Conboy's 1st and 2nd class from **St Patrick's Boys and Girls Primary School, Galway City** took home second prize, claiming a double win for the county. They received a greenhouse for their school.

Finally, Ms Mary Kehoe's 1st class, **St Anne's National School Co Wexford** won the third place prize of a growing table-top garden for her class.

With almost one-third of all Irish primary schools taking part in the project, these top schools showed great resilience and creativity throughout the challenging period of school closures. They successfully continued to grow, cook and eat the healthy vegetables provided within the school seed pack, facilitated by Agri Aware.



# INCREDIBLE EDIBLES FAMILY CHALLENGE

In 2020, as a result of Covid-19 school closures Agri Aware redesigned its Incredible Edibles project and opened it to the Irish public in the form of **Incredible Edibles Family Challenge**.

For a period of five weeks Agri Aware's Incredible Edibles Family Challenge encouraged families to learn all about where food comes from and the importance of eating Irish fruit and vegetables, for a healthy, balanced diet. Over **1,500 families** and **4,000 children** nationwide took part in the at-home project.

**Sienna (6) and Lexi (9) Bais from Killarney, Co Kerry** were named the overall winners in the Beginners Category and received a €175 One4all voucher sponsored by Country Crest. **Dylan Copeland from Gorey, Co Wexford** was named the overall winner in the Advanced Category and received a €175 One4all voucher sponsored by Country Crest.

In the Special Education Category, **Fionn Jones (9) from Garristown, Co Dublin** was the overall winner and was awarded a gardening hamper worth €100.

From planting and reusing materials at home to learning facts and getting creative, Incredible Edibles Family Challenge educated and entertained families of all ages.



# AG-SCIENCE STUDY GUIDES

Agri Aware, in conjunction with IASTA and the Irish Farmers' Journal, delivered the Agricultural Science Study Guides in the Irish Farmers' Journal for 28 weeks of the academic year along with several key resources, including: Pastures New (an Ag-science textbook for Leaving Certificate students), Dictionary of Agricultural Science Terms, Agricultural Science Practical Assessment and Revision Aid book, a 'Plant/Animal ID book and a new Agricultural Science Experiments book.

Agri Aware chairman, Alan Jagoe, along with farmers from four other sectors are taking part in Ag Science Farmer Case Study Videos which are being offered to teachers and students under this partnership online.



**AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE STUDY GUIDES 2020-2021**

CASE STUDY VIDEOS:

Alan Jagoe: Dairy Sector, Video 1

# MOBILE FARM

Agri Aware's mobile farm ran by farmer Pat Hennessy visited a number of primary schools in January and February 2020. In February, the Mobile Farm partnered with the National Dairy Council, which saw the Mobile Farm travel to 11 pre-schools in 12 days to educate children all about Irish farming and food, in a child-friendly way.

Agri Aware has not been able to offer the Mobile Farm service since the introduction of Covid-19 restrictions in March, but it looks forward to the service returning when it is safer to do so.



# FARM WALK AND TALK

Agri Aware welcomed 1,600 5th and 6th year students to its Farm Walk and Talk events in early March. Sustainability of Irish agriculture was the theme of the events.

Thanks to the co-operation of UCD staff and Traction Media, Agri Aware filmed a virtual Farm Walk and Talk experience at UCD Lyons Farm to aid students gain key study advice for their Leaving Certificate and a practical insight into sustainable, Irish farming.



# FACES OF FARM SAFETY

Agri Aware ran its **Faces of Farm Safety Campaign to mark Farm Safety Week 2020**. Over the course of the week, farmers and well-known agri-business sector figures featured on Agri Aware's social media platforms, where they shared best farm safety practices and advice on how to avoid potential farm accidents.

The campaign was in support of National Farm Safety Week, which is ran by the Irish Farmers' Association and the Farm Safety Foundation - Yellow Wellies and which focused on the theme : '**It's Time to Take Safety Seriously**'.

In 2020 Agri Aware partnered with the Irish Farmers Journal/Irish Country Living and ESB Networks to run a **Safe Family Farms Competition**, which encouraged members of the public to submit their innovative farm safety ideas and inventions. Kilkenny boy, Jack Culleton, was crowned the winner of the competition for his farm safety idea 'Know Your Zones' which used different colours to highlight areas of risk around his family's farm in Piltown.

# FEEDING THE FRONTLINE

Agri Aware launched a social media campaign called #FeedingtheFrontline in March 2020.

The campaign highlighted to consumers the important work Irish farmers and food producers are doing to produce safe and sustainable food every day. Videos of Irish farmers from a range of sectors were published on Agri Aware's social media.

The videos received over 65,000 views on Agri Aware's social media platforms.

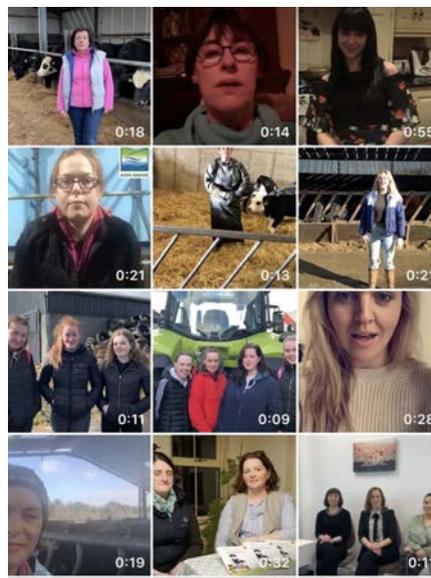
The campaign featured on RTE News which has a reach of over 1 million people.



# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

To mark International Women's Day on March 8th, Agri Aware ran a social media campaign where it encouraged women in the agri-food industry to send in videos where they explained why they are proud to be women in agriculture. Agri Aware then posted these videos on their own platforms over a 12-hour period.

You can watch a montage of some of the videos featured in the campaign [here](#)



# AGCREDIBLE ACADEMY

Agri Aware set the up the AgCredible Academy in February 2020 to encourage farmers to tell their credible stories to consumers and the general public on social media.

A series of AgCredible Social Media Masterclasses were held via Zoom to equip farmers with the social media skills needed to tell their everyday farming stories online. PR consultant Gemma Smyth and farmers Edward Dudley and Amanda Owens were some of the guests that featured on this popular series that had over 300 viewers tune in over three sessions.

In the summer, the AgCredible Academy hosted five 'Shed Talks' which featured key experts hosting talks on areas such as the environment, the economy health and sustainability. Speakers at the event included: Professor Alice Stanton, Professor Thia Hennessy and Dr Donagh Berry.

In September to coincide with what would have been the National Ploughing Championships, farmers took to social media to post videos explaining why they were proud to farm and accompanied the posts with #AgCredible. Agri Aware chairman Alan Jagoe and Leitrim suckler farmer Karen McCabe were interviewed on Pat Kenny's Newstalk FM programme regarding the initiative.

The campaign had a media reach of 600,000.



# MY FARM, OUR WORLD

In an effort to highlight the care farmers give their land, animals and the environment, Agri Aware ran a 'My Farm, Our World' photo competition to encourage farmers to take photos of scenery on their farm and post it on social media, tag Agri Aware and use #MyFarmOurWorld to accompany the post. The winner won a bucket of Irish Farmers Journal merchandise.



## OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

On May 15th Agri Aware celebrated World Family Day by posting videos of Irish family farmers and their families explaining why they are proud to be family farmers.

Agri Aware posted facts and videos to celebrate World Milk Day in June and to showcase the important work that Irish dairy farmers do to provide top quality, healthy milk to consumers.

Agri Aware posted videos of farmers from a range of sectors highlighting what they are doing on their farm to further enhance its environmental sustainability.

Agri Aware ran a #FestiveFoodHeroes campaign in December which highlighted the different farmers and food producers integral to the Christmas dinner experience in December.

## THIRD LEVEL

Three students from UCD's Third Year Food and Agribusiness degree interned with Agri Aware in 2020 - Sarah McIntosh, Ciara Langton and Lucy Reid. The girls showed great enthusiasm and diligence and were a pleasure to work with.

## STAFFING

Alan Jagoe continued his term as Agri Aware chairman in 2020. Tipperary man and former IFA regional Executive, Marcus O'Halloran was appointed as Agri Aware Executive Director in 2020.

