



Agri Aware



Annual Report 2023



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Agri Aware Founding Members



Agri Aware Patrons



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Irish Potato Marketing



2022



Agri Aware



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Agri Aware



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Executive Director Marcus O'Halloran Statement

A chairde,

2023 has been another year of change and growth at Agri Aware.

Change has come in the form of new faces to our board and staff and growth in the form of our programmes, engagement at events and our presence being felt and heard nationally.

2023 was a year of heartfelt goodbyes with Chairman Alan Jagoe bringing a close to his four-year term and a hearty welcome to newly elected chairman Shay Galvin.

A number of new appointments to the board including Anne-Marie Butler, Joe Tobin, Karina Pierce, Jim Mulhall, Karen Brosnan, Thomas O'Connor, Lawrence McNamee and Diarmuid Creedon have brought brilliant expertise, energy and ideas to an existing experienced board.

Agri Aware continued to have a large impact across schools programmes, campaigns, social media, and events in 2023.

Our direct audience is one of the biggest in the sector, having grown to more than 43,000 followers across our social media platforms during 2023 and is steadily growing. Furthermore, in 2023 our media reach broke 24 million for the first time.

This continued growth is just the beginning of where Agri Aware is going in relation to enhancing agricultural literacy be it through increased participation in our schools programmes, our presence at in-person events and on social media.



Executive Director Marcus O'Halloran Statement

To put our growth in 2023 into perspective, 140,000 students enrolled in our school programmes across both primary and secondary schools. 90,000 students engaged with Agri Aware's education officers through virtual learning.

Two of our flagship in person events Farm Walk & Talk and Open Farm saw 5,500 come on to working farms.

Our team grew in 2023 with the recruitment of Robert Corroon coming on board as an Events and Education Officer and Michael Geary joining as Communications and Education Officer.

This growth and development would not have been possible without the support of our patrons.

Thank you to every one of them for their continued to support Agri Aware. I would also like to extend thanks to our five founding patrons – Irish Farmers Journal, Irish Farmers Association, FBD, Bord Bia and Ornua.

Thank you to our chairman, Shay Galvin, for his continued support and dedication to Agri Aware, as well as our board members' unwavering commitment to Agri Aware.

I look forward to working closely with you all in 2024 in continuing to deliver on Agri Aware's core mission objective of enhancing agricultural literacy.

Sincerely,

Marcus O'Halloran
Executive Director



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As the first year of my term as Chairman comes to a conclusion, I look back fondly on a successful year across the organisation.

Being entrusted with the responsibility of Chairman of Agri Aware was a huge honour and privilege and one that I have taken on with great pride.

I would first like to thank the board for their support in awarding me this honour and look forward to building on the good work from my predecessor Alan Jagoe.

The first year of my term has come and gone in a flash and the success of Agri Aware is measured using a number of parameters, two critically being our bread and butter, the programmes we run and the events we attend.

Both grew in 2023 in participation and engagement on the previous year and with that so did our presence where we

Agri Aware remains grateful for the continued support of our patrons and founding members – FBD, Bord Bia, Irish Farmers Association, Irish Farmers Journal and Ornua.

I would also like to acknowledge the board members for the time they put in and their continued support of Agri Aware in 2023.

I would sincerely like to thank the Marcus and the Agri Aware team for the excellent work they do in growing the organisation and delivering on its mission goals.

Lastly, I would like to thank you, our patrons again for your continued support of Agri Aware and for trusting us to deliver the message on your behalf for the Irish agriculture industry.

Is mise le means

Shay Galvin,
Agri Aware Chairman

Primary School Programmes





Incredible Edibles

Agri Aware's most popular and long-standing project, Incredible Edibles is a national healthy eating and growing project for primary schools, which ran for the 15th year in 2023.

The horticultural project is available to all class groups in primary schools with relevant materials for all age groups. Participating schools are sent a free grow pack.

The grow pack contains seeds and other growing materials to help them get started sowing, growing, and eating their own array of healthy Irish fruit and vegetables!

Over 80,000 pupils from 1,600 schools took part in the Incredible Edibles: healthy eating and horticultural growing project in 2023.

The programme also had its highest ever project submission rate and has had over half a million (500,000) schoolchildren take part since its inception.

Participating students learned all about food origin, how to identify Irish food, growing, cooking and healthy eating through five engaging tasks.

The national winners of the 2023 programme were St. Joseph's National School in Kinvara Co. Galway.





Farming Through the Seasons

Farming Through the Seasons is our interactive programme for primary school pupils.

Farming Through the Seasons allows Agri Aware to bring farmers into the classroom virtually. The webinars aim to increase primary school children's knowledge and understanding of what happens on our farms.

Over the past three decades or so, there have been concerns about society's disconnect between people and their food. This knowledge gap impacts human health, respect for food producers, willingness to pay for food and awareness of animal welfare standards.

For many young children, their experience of the origin of their food is the supermarket shelf.

There is a current and growing concern for the consumers of the future and how little they may know about or appreciate the origin of their food.

There are so many agricultural enterprises that are important for a balanced diet and play a crucial role in Ireland's heritage and economy. Farming Through the Seasons allows these stories to be brought into the classroom.

Farming Through the Seasons launched with its Autumn webinar series, connecting classrooms directly with farmers around the country, showing them the changes on a farm at that time of year.

Across 2023, 44,649 students were impacted by the webinar series, from listening and engaging with farmers across various livestock enterprises including beef and dairy.

2023 saw the addition of sheep and pig farmers to the series that have been received very well and have proven very popular among teachers and students alike.

Thanks once again to our sponsors of this webinar series, ABP, Dawn Meats, Kerry Group and Tirlan.

Secondary School Programmes





Environmental Innovators

The Agri Aware and BiOrbic Environmental Innovators programme launched once again in 2023 for Transition Year students.

The programme presents various challenges that our global food system faces and invites students to investigate innovative solutions.

In 2023, participation in the programme grew on the pilot year of the, with over 9,000 pupils from 170 schools signed up for the 2023 programme, which is 25% of all schools offering Transition Year.

At the end of the programme, participating students were tasked with devising their own solution to a problem they had identified, at home, in school, or in their local area.

We received numerous submissions and the eight best ones were invited to the Bord Bia Global Hub in Ballsbridge, Co. Dublin to showcase their ideas for Agri-food stakeholders and to be in with a chance of being crowned the National Winner of the programme for 2023.

The National Winner of the programme was awarded to St. Tiernan's College, Crossmolina, Co. Mayo. Students Rían Reilly, James Carson, Heidi Verry and Migeal Azanza came out on top with their project titled 'Binformation'.

Judges were impressed by the simplicity and relevance of the student's communication campaign style project. The students raised an important question: do we truly understand how to recycle items properly? Through a survey, they discovered that people were not entirely confident that they were disposing of their waste in the correct bin.



Environmental Innovators Peer Day



Students engaging in educational activities that allowed them to mix and meet students from other schools and share ideas and come together to solve problems that the programme presents

Students display their projects for judges to learn about and mark



Judges make their way through to all of the students representing the eight schools who made it to the final and talk with them through their projects



Agri Aware



From Foal to Race

2023 saw the return of the Agri Aware and equip equine programme From Foal to Race.

The programme offers Transition Year students a comprehensive overview of the horse racing industry with a strong focus on increasing awareness of the careers that feature throughout the foal to race story.

Some of the featured career case studies include jockeys, digital marketing and nominations.

Throughout this 12-week programme, both teachers and students gain insight into the horse racing industry "From Foal to Race", including the role of stud farms, animal welfare and other regulations of the industry.

From Foal to Race saw an increase in participation on its pilot year, with 5,334 students from 134 schools registered to the programme

The 2023 national winner of the programme was Ruth Shanley with her poem titled 'From Foal To Race'.

Ruth and her classmates won a VIP trip to Punchestown racecourse and got to meet industry experts and jockeys.

Ruth also won

On the same day, the 2024 programme was launched.



**2023 From Foal to Race winner
Ruth Shanley with her mother also
named Ruth**



From Foal to Race

From Foal to Race – a poem by Ruth Shanley

A foal so young and small
In my arms, I held it all
With love and care, I raised it tall
Hoping one day it would win them all.

Training day by day, we worked hard,
Every hurdle we faced, we played our card
I watched it grow, strong and fast
Hoping it would become a champion at last.

And now we stand at the race track,
Nervous but excited, we won't look back
The gates wide open, we hear the sound
We race to the finish, feet on the ground.

And then we see, we've won the race
The joy in our hearts, we can't replace
Our foal now a horse, has made us proud
Our hard work and love, finally allowed.



AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE

STUDY GUIDES 2023-2024

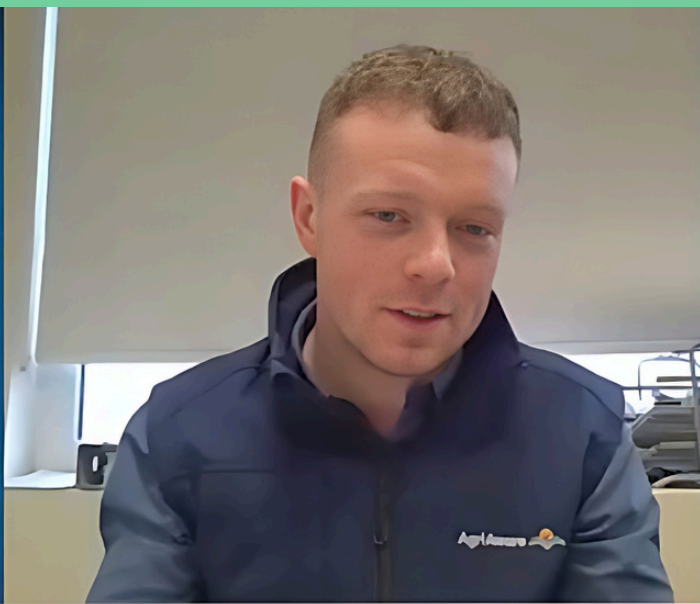


Ag Science Study Guides

In collaboration with the Irish Farmers Journal and IASTA, Agri Aware provide an Ag. Science resource for leaving cert. students within the Farmers Journal for 30 weeks of the academic year.

The Study Guides provide students with insight and increased coverage on a topic relevant to their course material with additional activities and resources provided through the IFJ schools hub such as video material to which Agri Aware collaborated with IFJ.

7 videos were produced by IFJ in 2023 with 3,359 students buying the paper every week for the academic year.



Campaigns

Rambling with the Irish Rare Breeds



Savour Local Flavour



Rambling with the Irish Rare Breeds

2023 saw Agri Aware secure funding from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) to highlight, raise awareness and promote the benefits of Ireland native rare breeds.

This project saw Agri Aware film nine videos on native rare breeds recognised by the DAFM including: The Galway Sheep, the Old Irish Goat, the Kerry Bog Pony, the Connemara Pony, the Irish Draught, the Dexter, Kerry cattle, Irish Moiled and the the Droimeann.

Across nine different locations on nine different farms, Agri Aware with the help of the Irish Native Rare Breed Socety and the DAFM brought awareness to these native rare animals whilst also educating and highlighting the benefits of these animals both from a production and sustainability point of view in order to increase their presence on Irish farms.

**Old Irish Goat herd in Howth
Co. Dublin**



**Filming about the Irish
Moiled cattle off the coast of
Co. Donegal**



Agri Aware



Savour Local Flavour

In December, Agri Aware launched its festive social media video campaign 'Savour Local Flavour this Christmas' which was rolled out to recognise and support the work Irish farmers do to produce food 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year.

There is no time like Christmas, when families come together to enjoy local fresh Irish produce and Agri Aware went about showcasing the faces that produce the food we savour at Christmas during the festive season.

Led by Agri Aware this campaign was farmer driven with the ask being for farmers in 30 seconds to introduce themselves and proudly showcase the food they produce, and the important role agriculture plays in putting food on the tables of a nation. Furthermore, to spread the word of this campaign, the ask was to tag @agriaware on all social media platforms and using the hashtag #savourlocal when posting their video on social media.

The campaign ran from Monday, December 11 until Sunday, December 24 and saw farmers across various production get involved and proudly showcase the food they produce.



Beef farmer Aoibhin
Coady



Dairy farmer Katie Gleeson



Dairy farmer Joe Healy

2023 Events



Farm Walk & Talk

Healthy Eating Week



Bloom in the Phoenix Park

Flavours of Fingal



Open Farm

National Ploughing Championships



La Fheile Baine



Farm Walk & Talk

In collaboration with Teagasc, IASTA, UCD, and IFJ, Agri Aware successfully brought close to 4,000 students onto 10 research/educational farms across the country in 13 events.

Leaving Cert students got firsthand experience of a working farm and got the opportunity to link their classroom lessons with the practicalities of a working farm.

As in previous years, the event achieved massive interaction on all media channels reaching 3.3 million of a media presence.



Salesian Agricultural College

Gurteen Agricultural College



Kildaton Agricultural College



Agri Aware



Healthy Eating Week

As part of our Incredible Edibles program, Agri Aware attended schools in the North-East in conjunction with Incredible Edibles patrons to promote Healthy Eating Week.

Students interacted with dietitians, sports stars, and Agri Aware staff to learn the importance of a healthy diet, while our patron Dole Ireland joined us and supported our educational workshops with free fruit and veg for each of the schools that received a visit.

The Agri Aware team visited schools in counties Dublin, Louth, Meath and Kildare alongside Dietician Niamh Arthurs and Galway GAA star Shane Walsh.

Overall, 200 pupils were actively involved in person during these school visits which were positively received by the schools.

Those we couldn't visit in person that were part of the programme were able to join us for a National Healthy Eating Week webinar which saw over 200 schools join us online.

The week itself attracted a lot of media attention and created a media reach of 1 million people for the week.

Meath School visit
with Dietitian Niamh
Arthurs



First school visit of
Healthy Eating Week in
Dublin



Louth School visit
with Galway GAA star
Shane Walsh



Bloom

The first weekend in June saw the return of the Agri Aware's Big Red Shed at the Bloom farmyard in conjunction with Bord Bia.

Over 1,100 pupils from primary schools involved in the Incredible Edibles programme from all over the country attended the farmyard to learn more about Irish agriculture and food production.

Agri Aware staff also engaged with members of the public, demonstrating important practices carried out on Irish farms and dispelling the myths around agriculture and food production.

Educational games related to Irish agriculture were available for kids to engage with and learn about.

Highlights over the five days included shearing and milking demonstrations which drew huge crowds to the farmyard.

Media coverage for Bloom reached an astonishing 1.7 million along with the many thousands that entered the gates of Bloom over the 5 days.

Large crowds descended on the 'Big Red Shed' during the shearing demos

A young visitor to Bloom learning about milk production during one of the milking demonstrations



Celebrating World Milk Day with Minister McConalogue and Minister Heydon



Agri Aware



Flavours of Fingal

In conjunction with IFA, Agri Aware brought the our Big Red Shed and the farmyard to the grounds of Newbridge House in Donabate.

With over 67,000 attendees eager to visit the show and soak in the good weather, Agri Aware were on hand to demonstrate real farming practices and educate members of the public on where their food is produced.

Visitors got to experience shearing, milking, wool weaving and hear about the importance of farm safety and beef production in Ireland.



The Agri Aware farmyard at Flavours of Fingal mirrors that of Bloom



Sheep shearing demos always attract a huge crowd to the Big Red Shed at shows



A dairy cow and beef cattle were at the show, with demos and talks based around each sector



Agri Aware



Open Farm

Having previously been one of the more significant events within our calendar, Agri Aware was delighted to announce the return of Open Farm, which was kindly hosted on the Fitzgerald's family farm in Co. Waterford.

With the help of different industry organisations and patrons, we saw 1,000 members of the public walk through the farm gate to learn what really happens on an Irish family farm.

Open Farm provided a unique opportunity for Agri Aware to:

- Engage with consumers of all ages from across Ireland.
- Bridge the gap between rural and urban Ireland.
- Promote greater awareness among the non-farming community of modern agriculture, the rural environment, animal welfare, food quality and safety.
- Inform the non-farming community about the crucial role that the farming and agri-food industry play in the Irish economy.

Media presence for Open Farm reached an incredible 3.8 million and has further highlighted the desire from consumers for these on-farm events.



The Fitzgeralds and Agri Aware Chairman Shay Galvin

Cows coming in for evening milking



Self guided farm tour



Panel Discussions



Agri Aware



National Ploughing Championships

In 2023, Agri Aware changed focus for the National Ploughing Championships, with patron engagement and discussions being the priority for the three days.

The Agri Aware visited both patrons and non-patrons to showcase the work it is doing on behalf of the Irish agricultural industry and to build on existing relationships and forge new ones with companies playing a key role in the agri-food industry.

With the help of The UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science, Agri Aware had a presence on their stand to facilitate any teacher and student queries on our programmes.

Overall our media presence reached 2.9 million aided by interesting panel discussions and the launch of the 2023-2024 Farming Through the Seasons programme which we had in one of sponsors of the programmes tent at the NPC Tirlan.



Launching Farming Through the Seasons with sponsor patrons

Panel discussions with industry stakeholders

History of Agri Aware since 1996



Agri Aware



Lá Fhéile Báinne

Agri Aware was delighted to come together with the NDC to promote World School Milk Day, on the Walsh family farm in Oranmore, Co. Galway to tell the story of glass to grass.

Six local schools were invited to bring a class of 30 students along on the day to learn about Irish Dairy farming.

This celebration of Irish Dairy was not just limited to schools local to Oranmore. The Agri Aware and NDC teams were also delighted to welcome nearly 25,000 primary schoolchildren from all over Ireland who logged on from the comfort of their classrooms to experience this live farm event.

Our overall media presence reached a total of 2.7 million with national, regional and broadcast pick up across the country.



The Walsh Family

A joint
initiative
between Agri
Aware and the
National Dairy
Council



Students
learned about
the grass to
glass journey
on the day

2023 Event Highlights



Educational Services

Mobile Farm



Lidl Farm



Mobile Farm

Agri Aware's Mobile Farm service attended 64 Schools, Crèches, Nursing Homes, Shows & festivals in 2023.

- 46 in the Leinster region
- 18 in the Connacht region

Through the use of smaller farm animals, the mobile farm discusses the practicalities of working farms and gives the urban audience a far better understanding of food production.

The Leinster Mobile Farm at the IHFA Open Day in Laois



The Agri Aware mobile farm was present at the Open Farm Day at the Fitzgerald farm



The Agri Aware Mobile Farm service is popular among schools, shows/festivals



Agri Aware



The Lidl Farm to Fork Experience

The Lidl Farm to Fork Experience is a collaboration between Lidl and AgriAware. It provides the opportunity for primary school students to visit a model farm which has been set up on the site of the Lidl Regional Distribution Centre in Newbridge, Co. Kildare. The tours run from March to June and then in September and October.

The students are brought on a tour of the farm by an AgriAware Education Officer where they are shown a variety of crops which are grown both in the field and in onsite polytunnels. The students are given an opportunity to pick and taste crops that are in season, while learning about the processes involved in growing food from cultivation and sowing, through to crop management and harvest.

The farm also has a cow and calf onsite so children to learn about dairy and beef production. In some cases, this is the first opportunity a child has had to be close to a cow, which enforces their understanding of where our dairy and beef products come from.

As part of the tour, students are brought on a train ride inside the Lidl Distribution Centre, where they see first hand the logistics involved in storing and distributing food on a large scale.

Feedback from teachers has been overwhelming positive with 100% of teachers recommending the experience to a colleague.

The Lidl Farm to Fork Experience is in its second year. Tours are run seasonally according to the school calendar. In 2023, 3,300 students attended the farm, along with nearly 400 teachers. The 2024 tour season has begun and we aim to increase attendance, with a target of 5,000 students. The farm is also expanding, with the introduction of more polytunnels and a wider variety of animals.



Agri Aware



PR and Communications

2023 was a record year for Agri Aware's media reach, totalling 24 million, which was up on the previous year's reach of 21 million.

This increase in media reach was achieved through new and the re-introduction of previous initiatives rolled out by the team.

In May, the addition of a schools roadshow as for Healthy Eating Week as part of Agri Aware's largest programme Incredible Edibles programme brought about national, regional and broadcast coverage that wouldn't have been achieved previously.

2023 saw the return of Agri Aware's flagship event in enhancing agricultural literacy in Open Farm return for the first time since 2019. This event, similar to Healthy Eating Week but to a larger scale gained traction across national, regional and broadcast media.

Over 1,000 visitors descend upon Agri Aware's Open Farm Day

OVER 1,000 visitors descended upon Agri Aware's Open Farm Day on the Fitzgerald's dairy farm in Kilsnamogogue, Poreile, Co. Waterford. Despite a worrying heavy cloud in the morning at 11.00 a.m. when gates opened for the one-day event, the sun began to shine and remained throughout the course of the day. Visitors both young and old arrived to Kilsnamogogue with smiles and an eagerness to learn all there is to know about producing quality milk in a sustainable fashion. Visitors on the day were given a map upon arrival of the event, with visitors arriving at the main yard before making their way down the biodiversity trail.



Visitors set off on the livestock and biodiversity trail at Agri Aware's Open Farm Day.

Shay Galvin announced as new Agri Aware chair

Limerick beef and tillage farmer Shay Galvin has been elected chair of Agri Aware. The former Limerick IFA county chair replaces Cork dairy farmer Alan Jagoe as chair of the independent farming and agri-food educational body. The incoming chair said his main aim is to continue to build on the work of communicating the vital links between agriculture, food and our economy to non-farmers.

"Increasing awareness of the relationship between our standard of excellence in farming, and the payoff in terms of excellence in the food we produce to eat and export is a key goal," Galvin said. Marcus O'Halloran, executive director of Agri Aware, congratulated Galvin on his appointment and thanked Jagoe for his dedication over his four-year tenure.

-SARAH MCINTOSH

Football star Walsh talks healthy eating

GALWAY GAA star Shane Walsh has been speaking to students about the benefits of a healthy balanced diet as part of the Incredible Edibles Healthy Eating Week, which was promoted by Agri Aware and Dole Ireland last week. Over the week, pupils from around the country took part in the Agri Aware Incredible Edibles healthy food programme, where they learned to grow their own fruit and vegetables. The challenge for the week was to eat seven a day for seven days - which is the recommended amount for those aged five and over from

Healthy Ireland and the HSE. Schools also filled out a food diary available on the Incredible Edibles website. By taking to the classroom, the hope was that it would encourage pupils to bring ideas and healthy eating learnings back to their family. The fruit and vegetables supplied throughout the week were kindly donated by Dole Ireland, a leading premier fresh produce provider. Dole Ireland was one of 15 sponsors of the Agri Aware Incredible Edibles programme, which hopes to reach almost 80,000 primary children this year alone.



Social Media

2023 was a steady year in terms of growth in Agri Aware's social media channels.

The most engaged platforms were Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) that saw the greatest increases in following on the year previous.

2023 saw Agri Aware delve into the farmer takeover space that received praise from many within the industry. Takeovers were held on both the Agri Aware Instagram and X accounts.

These takeovers provided regular and relevant content for our followers and aligned with the mission goals of Agri Aware in conveying the importance of the agri-food industry amongst the general public.

Small social competitions revolving around show tickets and merchandise giveaways led to further growth in followers and engagement on the social media platforms.

Digital media campaigns Rambling with the Irish Rare Breeds and Savour Local Flavour were additional activities alongside our programmes and events coverage that made up the rest of our social media activity for 2023.

At the end of 2023, Agri Aware's combined social media following across Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn was 42,500.

Social Media Activity

AgriAware

Instagram takeover with Amie Coonan



This Monday, November 27



Agri Aware

