Agri Aware



Annual Report 2024







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Executive Director Statement

A chairde,

2024 has been a year of massive growth for Agri Aware in more ways than one and the busiest year I have had since joining.

Growth has come in the form of new staff, programmes, events and campaigns, all of which have contributed to a record media reach of 48 million in 2024 - doubling that of the 2023 figure.

Agri Aware was seen and heard more of in 2024 and the result of this has been a direct result of the above factors.

The organisations staff grew from five to 10. This allowed Agri Aware to expand its programme portfolio across primary and schools from three to six.

Agri Aware's presence at shows in 2024 grew substantially in the form of farm safety demonstrations that increased the organisations in-person impact on the ground.

On the campaigns front Agri Aware ran two successful digital media campaigns that brought attention in the areas of farm safety and physical & mental health in the community.

All in all, as mentioned, Agri Aware's presence was felt strongly back up by the media reach and increased engagement across our social media channels.

The launch of of the new website in September brought a greater focus on the Agri Aware's target audience, the general public, primary and secondary schools and the patrons who make what we do everyday possible. The new website has allowed for Agri Aware to deliver on its mission of enhancing agricultural literacy more effectively and be foundation of the organsiation's work going forward.

I would like to thank our board and patrons for their continued support and look forward to an even greater and more successful 2025.





Message from the Chairman

As my second year as Chairman draws to a close, I look back with great pride on what has been another successful year for Agri Aware.It has been an immense honour and privilege to serve as Chairman of Agri Aware, a responsibility I have taken on with deep pride and commitment.

As we moved through 2024, it became clear that the success of Agri Aware continues to be reflected in several key areas – most notably, the programmes we deliver and the events we take part in, which are at the very heart of what we do.

Both areas saw increased participation and engagement in 2024 compared to the previous year, strengthening our presence and impact across the sector. Agri Aware is sincerely grateful for the ongoing support of our valued patrons and founding members – FBD, Bord Bia, the Irish Farmers' Association, the Irish Farmers Journal, and Ornua.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the board members for the time and dedication they continue to give to Agri Aware as we move into 2025.

A special word of appreciation must go to Marcus and the entire Agri Aware team, whose hard work and commitment to the organisation's mission are at the core of its continued growth and success.

Finally, I would like to thank you, our patrons, once again for your unwavering support. We are truly grateful for your trust in Agri Aware to represent and promote the message of Irish agriculture on your behalf.

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Shay Galvin, Agri Aware Chairman



Primary School Programmes







Incredible Edibles

The 2023/2024 programme is the 17th year of the Incredible Edibles programme. It serves as the foundation for students to develop essential horticultural skills while fostering a deeper appreciation for high-quality, Irish produce.

In the 2023/2024 cycle, the programme successfully engaged 62,000 students, marking a significant increase in participation. This year, the initiative followed a structured five-task format, culminating in seven prestigious final prizes, including exclusive farm trips and grow kits for school gardens.

Additionally, Agri Aware's national Healthy Eating Week, in collaboration with Dole Ireland, was a standout event. During this week, students had the opportunity to learn about the importance of healthy eating, further enhancing their knowledge of sustainable food practices. Chef Eoin Sheehan was on hand to demonstrate how healthy foods can be incorporated in to our diets.

The winners of the 2023/2024 programme was Scoil Mhuire Latton, Castleblayney, Co.Monaghan.

The Agri Aware team returned to Scoil Mhuire in October to launch the 2024/2025 Incredible Edibles programme, where they cooked a dish using Country Crest potatoes, and played a game of GAA with Monaghan county footballer Darren Hughes. By engaging yioung people in hands on learning, this programme is nurturing the future agri-food experts, and we remain committed to expanding the programme's reach and impact.





Safe Farm Futures

Agri Aware with the support of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine was delighted to announce its new farm safety initiative for primary schools called 'Safe Farm Futures'.

This programme impacted 23,500 primary school students across the country with the aim to educate and raise awareness of the importance of keeping safe on farms.

This farm safety programme aims to deliver a rounded guide to farm safety, ensuring that the work we do on farms is safe by recognising and increasing awareness around the dangers on farms so that we can all farm sustainably and in a safe environment for all.

The programme saw 400+ schools across 16 counties registered in its pilot year with The Agri Aware team completed 60 workshops in primary schools nationally.

A competition was held to raise awareness of farm safety. The winners were St. Patrick's National School, Kyle Park, Co. Tipperary who were presented with a cheque of €2000 that can be used to enhance students learning by minister Martin Heydon.





Farming Through the Seasons

Farming Through the Seasons was our interactive programme for primary school pupils in 2024.

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.

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 eneterprises including beef and dairy.

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





Come Farm With Me

The Come Farm With Me webinar series was launched in September 2024 with a goal of educating primary school students on both Irish agriculture and food production, and the importance that each sector plays in producing quality sustainable food. It brings the farmer into the classroom virtually.

This season it has showcased a range of farming enterprises across the country, running from Autumn 2024 to Spring 2025.Students got to see an overview of the farming practices and received detailed explanations from the farmers on all tasks and responsibilities associated with producing food. After viewing the video, the relevant farmer is invited to come on and answer any further questions the students have.

In the event that classes miss the opportunity to join in, all webinars are recorded and available to view on YouTube at a time that best suits the class. The first three webinars too place in 2024 and covered Horticulture, Beef and Pigs respectively.

Horticulture: Paul Brophy of Brophy Produce - 10,881 students Beef: Michael McGuigan - 7,795 students Pigs: Christopher Brady - 3,514 students

The series will wrap up in March 2025 where there will be three webinars; Shay Galvin: Tillage, Gearoid Maher: Dairy farming and Aoife Coyle: Sheep farming



Secondary School Programmes







Intro to Ag

Intro to Ag was created in collaboration with the Laois Offaly Education Training Board (LOETB). The programme was officially launched at Tullamore Show in August 2024. Intro to Ag is a TY programme designed to raise awareness of agricultural science and to highlight the career opportunities available in the agri-food sector. The programme is extremely flexible to mirror the nature of Transition Year in Schools.

Intro to Ag is currently being piloted in seven LOETB schools. Agri Awares Agricultural Science Coordinator has facilitated 2 sets of workshops so far with each pilot school, focusing on ruminants and soil. The workshops compliment the Intro to Ag programme engaging with 204 students. A final block of workshop sessions are being facilitated towards the end of April 2025.

The programme has been very well received. There have been several enquires for resources from schools outside LOETB. Teachers and students completing the programme are providing feedback regularly which has been invaluable for improving Intro to Ag. There will be a prize giving/project presentation event to judge the winners. The programme will be available to schools nationally for the next school year 2025-2026. Registrations are now open for the next school year, with an advertisement for the programme appearing





Farm Safety First

Farm Safety First is a Transition Year programme which was launched in September 2024.

Agri Aware and the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine teamed up to bring farm safety to Transition Year students in secondary schools nationwide.

The agricultural industry is the most dangerous workplace in Ireland. Increasing the understanding of the dangers on farms, educating safe farm practices and offering guidance to those working on farms can help to create a safer working culture within the agricultural industry.

The programme is designed to get students thinking about farm safety, understanding their responsibility while on a farm and also give them the knowledge to perform safe practices while on farm.

The programme was facilitated between September and December 2024 with 6,434 students registered, reaching 22% of secondary schools.

As part of the programme, the Agri Aware team produced two farm safety videos in collaboration with UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science along with workshops nationwide reaching over 1,000 students in November.

At the end of the programme, students are invited to submit a concept which they have developed which they feel would improve farm safety. The group winners of the programme from St. Michael's College in Listowel Co. Kerry were Eoin Quilter, Gavin Joy, and Eoghan O'Regan.





Environmental Innovators

The Agri Aware and BiOrbic Environmental Innovators programme launched once again in 2024 for Transition Year students.

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

This year, the programme extended it's run time to Term 2 of the school calender. This change was incoprorated to facilitate the structure of the Transition Year programme, based on feedback from teachers in previous years who were unable to deliver the programme to new student groups in Term 2.

The programme has increased year on year, with 9,811 students registered from a total of 214 schools for 2024/25 The programme has reached 29% of secondary schools.

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.

The National Winner of the 2023 programme was awarded to St. Tiernan's College, Crossmolina, Co. Mayo. Students Ríán Reilly, James Carson, Heidi Verry and Migeal Azanza came out on top with their project titled 'Binformation'.





From Foal to Race

2024 saw the return of the Agri Aware and equuip 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 nstable managers.

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.

4,636 students participated in the programme in 2024, reaching 17% of secondary schools.

The 2024 national winner of the programme was Martina Agulló González, with her artwork titled 'That Long awaited race'. Martina and her classmates won a VIP trip to Roscommon racecourse and got to meet industry experts and jockeys. The prize included a €1,000 for the school.



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.



Campaigns



SEARCH

BEEF DAIRY SHEEP AGRIBUSINESS MACHINERY TILLAGE PEDIGREE BUILDINGS PROPE

Agri Aware to collaborate with farmers ahead of Farm Safety Week

Agri Aware is to team up with farmers to offer tips and advice on how to stay safe on farms ahead of Farm Safety Week 2024, which takes place next week.









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Sowing wellbeing every field

"Take a bea

If you're feeling tired, you're more likely to make a mistake."

- Kerrie Leonard

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





Farm Safety Week

This year, Agri Aware was proud to launch the "Safety in Every Field" campaign, an initiative dedicated to promoting farm safety through social media channels. Two videos were released daily across the week featuring expert insights, tips, and personal stories from farmers, veterinarians, and industry leaders. The videos were exclusively available on our social media platforms: Instagram, X, and TikTok.

The campaign's goal was to highlight the importance of safety in farming and encourage farmers and their families to proactively address hazards on the farm. Each video offered practical advice on different aspects of farm safety, from equipment handling to livestock management.

During the "Safety in Every Field" campaign, Agri Aware was joined by a range of experts who shared valuable insights on farm safety. The campaign covered essential topics including tractor safety, quad bike precautions, slurry safety, and more, promoting safer practices across the farming community.





Sowing wellbeing in every field

Sowing Wellbeing in Every Field launched in October 2024 with support from the Department of Health, Food and the Marine, focuses in enhancing awareness of physical health, mental health and farm safety.

The three-week initiative featured personal stories from individuals in the agricultural sector:

Nicholas King, a beef and sheep farmer from Co.Tipperary, shared his journey toward improved physical health.

Kerrie Leonard, a drystock farmer and thoroughbred horse breeder from Co.Meath, recounted her experience with a farm accident.

Andrew Bonham, who is a from a sheep farm in Co.Westmeath and sales specialist at Meath Farm Machinery, he discuseed his mental health challenges and strategy he employed to enhance his well-being.



2024 Events

Farm Walk & Talk





Healthy Eating Week

Bloom in the Phoenix Park





Flavours of Fingal

Open Farm





National Ploughing Championships





Farm Walk & Talk

In collaboration with Teagasc, UCD, and IFJ, Agri Aware successfully brought close to 3,800 students onto 11 research/educational and commercial farms across the country in 14 events. This year included a visit to a commercial tillage and beef farm in Co.Donegal. This farm was very well attended with students travelling to the event from the Sligo, Mayo and Donegal

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

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





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 which kicked of on Monday 29th April .

Students interacted with dieticians, 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 Dublin and Louth alongside Chef Eoin Sheehan. Eoin discussed the benefits of a healthy diet and made some delicious smoothies.

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.





Bloom at the Phoenix Park

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.

Focus for the 2024 Bloom Farmyard revolved around environmental sustainability of our farms with displays showcasing hedgerows, multispecies swards, clover inclusion, low emission slurry spreading and water recycling.

Specific highlights from the five days included both shearing and milking demos, but also panel discussions with industry experts from multiple sectors and stakeholders.

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.





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 80,000 attendees eager to visit the show rain or shine, Agri Aware were on hand to demonstrate real farming practices and educate members of the public on where their food is produced with the use of live milking and shearing demonstrations and panel discussions from industry.

Emphasis for this years attendance at Flavours of Fingal was on farm safety, with visitors given the opportunity to see first-hand the blind spots associated with machinery and learn about the correct methods of handling livestock.





National Ploughing Championships

In 2024, Agri Aware changed focus for the National Ploughing Championships, with patron engagement and discussions being the priority for the three days. Agri Aware collaborate with Lidl on their stand, raising awareness of Agri Aware and the Lidl Farm.

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 2024-2025 Come Farm with Me which we had in one of sponsors of the programmes tent at the NPC Tirlan.





Farm Safety Demonstrations

With the support of DAFM, Agri Aware attended numerous agricultural shows across the country to showcase the importance of farm safety through live demonstrations with the use of farm machinery, livestock and quads. Specific attention was given to the correct use of PPE and the awareness of blind-spots when both using farm machinery and when being in the vicinity of them.

The shows Agri Aware attended:

- Flavours of Fingal 80,000 attendees
- Bannow Rathangan 12,000 attendees
- Virginia 10,000 attendees
- Dualla 8,000 attendees





Open Farm

Open Farm was hosted this year by the Byrne Family on their dairy farm in Monasterevin Co Kildare. This year Open Farm ran across two days with school tours being run on the Friday and the farm open to members of the public on Saturday. Over 3,000 visitors attended Agri Aware's Open Farm.

With the help of different industry organisations and patrons, 450 primary school students attended in the Friday and 2,550 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:

- 90 % of all attendees were not from a farming background 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 X and has further highlighted the desire from consumers for these on-farm events.



Educational Services

Mobile Farm





Lidl Farm





Mobile Farm

Agri Aware's Mobile Farm service attended 73 Schools, Créches, Nursing Homes, Shows & festivals in 2024.

- 61 in the Leinster region
- 12 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 launch of our new website has included a new booking system for mobile farm, this has made booking the service far easier and more accessible and has resulted in an increase in bookings overall on last year.





The Lidl Farm to Fork Experience

The Lidl Farm to Fork Experience, a collaborative initiative between Lidl and Agri Aware, is based at the Lidl Regaional Distribution Centre in Newbridge, County Kildare.

The farm is an excellent opportunity for children to learn and appreciate all the hard work that goes into producing the food that they buy in the shop.

Tours operate for 6 months of the year. The Spring-Summer tours run from early March to the end of June and the Autumn tours take place in September and October. Each tour last two hours with two slots available each day; one at 9:30 and another at 12 noon.

The tour, led by an Agri Aware education officer, begins on the farm where students can explore several polytunnels, observe fruits and vegetables at various stages of growth, and even pick and taste seasonal crops. Additionally, there is a designated outdoor area where they can see crops growing in the open field.

The farm also features sheep and calves, giving children the opportunity to learn about sheep, beef, and dairy production. For many children, this may be their first time being in such close proximity to these animals.

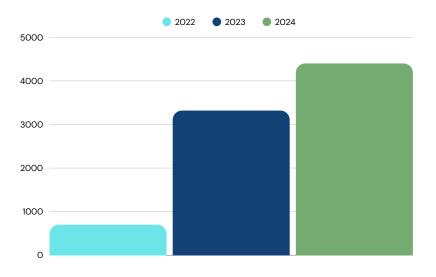




The Lidl Farm to Fork Experience

The final part of the visit, students enjoy a train ride through the Lidl Distribution Centre, where they gain firsthand insight into the logistics of storing and distributing food on a large scale.

The autumn 2024 tours celebrated the third anniversary of the Lidl Farm to Fork Experience, which has been steadily growing in popularity with participant numbers increasing consistently over the past two years.



The chart on the left illustrates a significant rise in attendance over the past few years:

- 2022: 700 students
- 2023: 3,319 students
- 2024: 4,400 students

The projected attendance for **2025** is 5,500 students.



PR and Communications

2024 was a record-breaking year for Agri Aware's media reach, which soared to a total of 48 million, marking a substantial increase from the previous year's reach of 24 million. This impressive growth in media visibility can be attributed to both the introduction of new initiatives and the re-launch of successful campaigns from previous years.

A key driver of this increase was the significant rise in the number of press releases produced by our team. These press releases served to provide regular updates and highlight the various projects Agri Aware undertook throughout the year. To further amplify our media presence, dedicated efforts were made to engage with local and regional radio stations, fostering valuable relationships to expand our on-air coverage.

In addition to traditional media outreach, Agri Aware enhanced its communication strategy by launching a monthly newsletter and a new website. These platforms provided the public and our patrons with easy access to essential information, ensuring that our key messages reached a broader audience.

Events such as Open Farm and the announcement of new programmes like Intro to Ag also contributed to our increased media reach. These events, along with other initiatives, gained substantial traction in national, regional, and broadcast media, further boosting Agri Aware's visibility and reinforcing our commitment to promoting the agri-food sector.





Social Media

2024 marked steady growth for Agri Aware across its social media channels, reflecting a continued commitment to connecting with our audience and promoting the vital role of the agri-food industry.

Instagram and TikTok emerged as the standout platforms, demonstrating the most significant increase in followers compared to the previous year. This growth was driven by engaging and dynamic content that resonated with our audience.

A key highlight of the year was the continuation of the Farmer Takeovers, which was held on both the Agri Aware Instagram and X accounts. These takeovers provided our followers with authentic, real-time content directly from farmers, aligning with Agri Aware's mission to raise awareness about the agri-food industry and its importance to the general public.

In addition to the takeovers, Agri Aware also hosted small-scale social media competitions, featuring agricultural show tickets, teacher giveaways, and branded merchandise. These initiatives further fueled engagement and contributed to a steady rise in our follower base across various platforms.

Our active presence at events, combined with regular, relevant posts, played a crucial role in sustaining and increasing engagement. These efforts ensured that Agri Aware's social media remained a key touchpoint for audiences interested in the agricultural sector.

Significant digital media campaigns also complemented our social media strategy in 2024. Notable campaigns such as Farm Safety Week, Science Week, and Sowing Wellbeing in Every Field not only supported our broader programmes but also contributed to the overall content shared on our platforms, reinforcing our commitment to educating and engaging the public.

By the end of 2024, Agri Aware's combined social media following across Instagram, X, TikTok, Facebook, and LinkedIn had reached a total of 46,000 followers.



