

What's happened
in Agri Aware:

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Agri Aware Newsletter



Soon the cows and sheep will be hanging out with the elephants and the tigers at the new Zoo Farm

We've been hinting at something big for a while now! Well the cat is finally out of the bag! In a joint partnership with Dublin Zoo, Agri Aware, is to create a new and exciting interactive and interpretive farm in Dublin Zoo. The 1.5 acre site will sit on the grounds of the currently existing 'City Farm' in the zoo. The aim of the project is to "immerse" almost 900,000 annual visitors in the science and practices of everyday farming life. The site, currently under construction, will also achieve the important objective of educating families on where their food comes from and the role of the farmer in ensuring its quality and traceability.

Speaking recently about the project, Dublin Zoo director Leo Oosterweghel said "Children will soon become mini-farmers at Dublin Zoo. A state-of-the-art site will mean that our younger audience, from tots to teens, will learn about the wonders of the farm

and its inhabitants. We believe that this site will deliver a truly fun and unforgettable experience."

Zoo market research shows that of the 900,000 annual visitors, the vast majority are children under 11 years of age accompanied by their parents. The activities on the site will cater for these two audiences. A traditionally styled farmhouse will also facilitate a strong

annual primary school tour subscription by doubling-up as an onsite classroom.

Speaking about the role of the project, Agri Aware Chairman, Mairead Lavery said "As one of Ireland's most popular visitor attractions, the site will prove to be pivotal in highlighting the interdependence of the farmer and the consumer."

The site, which will also host
(continued pg.2)

Plans on Schedule: At a recent visit to the site and discussing the plans were, (l to r) Seumas O'Brien, IFAC Chairman, Leo Oosterweghel, Director Dublin Zoo, John Bryan, President IFA, Mairead Lavery, Chairman Agri Aware, and Aidan Cotter, Chief Executive Agri Aware.



(continued from pg.1) seasonal events throughout the year, is working towards a late May opening. The ten-year partnership is the first in Dublin Zoo's 180 year history and is also being funded by Bord Bia, IFA and IFAC Accountants. At a recent 'sneak and peek event', Chief Executive of Bord Bia, Aidan Cotter commented "The new Zoo Farm will allow us to highlight the importance of the sector and its significant accomplishments, while also educating and engaging with our next generation farmers."

IFA President, John Bryan, declared "People will see the work of Irish farmers. They will now be able to witness

firsthand the time and care spent in ensuring quality for consumers."

IFAC Accountants, Chairman, Seumas O'Brien believes the site will be a valuable medium in communicating the industry's economic importance. "This site will accurately and positively portray the future role of the industry in maintaining our economy in the future."

Details of what the site will contain are due to be released closer to the opening. Agri Aware would like to thank these three sponsors for their invaluable support and commitment.

Green Dragon National Final Winner: Reeling in the Cash

They say innovation is key to a smart economy – well if this is the case it looks like our economy is getting smarter and smarter with students leading the way. Paul Bowden from Thurles CBS Co. Tipperary, with his ground-breaking concept that could potentially reduce farm accidents involving livestock, demonstrated just how entrepreneurial some Irish students are.

As national winner of Agri Aware's Green Dragon Innovation Challenge, supported by AIB and Bord Bia, 16 year old Paul emerged triumphant after presenting his concept to a panel of renowned business gurus. For his efforts, he has won a €10,000 product mentoring and development prize to bring his concept to reality.

Many farmers are burdened with the onerous and difficult task of herding cattle alone. Paul's concept, the 'One-hand Reel', allows the user to clip a hook onto an electric fence and create a moveable and temporary electric boundary,

while the other hand remains free to keep the cattle at bay. Much like a retractable dog leash, it self winds and is held in one hand.

Agri Aware Chairman, Mairead Lavery commented at the final "It is amazing how students so young have such an innovative mind and honed business acumen. The future holds massive potential for the innovation of the agriculture and food industry when you see young rising stars like Paul today."

With thousands of innovative students in schools nationwide, Agri Aware's Green Dragon innovation Challenge asked them to hone and develop their potentially ground-breaking ideas for products or services in the areas of food, the environment and agriculture. Ireland has a wealth of readily available natural resources; their utilisation and marketability was the cornerstone of their ideas.

A Reel Winner: Paul Bowden from Thurles CBS Co. Tipperary, is the national winner of Agri Aware's Green Dragon Innovation Challenge with Agri Aware Chairman, Mairead Lavery using his ground-breaking concept, the 'One-hand Reel'.





Simon Pratt, Director of Food at Avoca; Ruth O'Dowd, Ruth O'Dowd Marketing Solutions; Gerard Cleary, Financial Controller Glenisk; Jenny Young, Owner/Manager Castlesfarm Shop & Farm; Terry Clune, Chief Executive of Taxback.com.

Judges Praise a Nation of Student Innovation

Twelve groups attended the final in Dublin to receive a total of €5,000 in prizes. Their ideas, which ranged from soup to surfboards, had one common theme – the use of local and natural resources. The Category winners were:

Junior Food Winner : Clever Cookies

Glenamaddy Community School, Co. Galway
Cookies by U

An Irish premium biscuit to counter imported competitors. This team is proposing a range of products, including an organic cookie, which will use Bord Bia Quality Assured fruit and vegetables in the mix.

Junior Non Food Winner : Poppyseed

St. Finian's College, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
Bio-bag

The only group of first year students to make it through to the finals, their idea is efficient and green on a potentially global scale. The idea is a range of bio-degradable lawnmower bags which will fit onto your current lawnmower using a special clip and base platform and will bio-degrade in less than 6 months.

Junior Service Winner : The Boggers

St. Anne's Secondary School, Tipperary Town
Bogger Barter

Reflecting on the recessionary times, these young innovators from Tipperary town wish to set up a trading network online, where no cash changes hand, but instead people barter. The team proposed to fund the site through advertising for agri-businesses.

Senior Food Winner : Friendly Foods

Presentation Secondary School, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
Soup Made Easy

A simple traditional recipe for the busy life of your average consumer. 'Soup Made Easy' is the very nearest thing to homemade soup, providing you with all the required quality assured ingredients to make a wholesome and tasty bowl – all you need is a pot and a blender!

Senior Non-Food Winner/Overall Winner: Thurles CBS Reel

Thurles CBS, Co. Tipperary
One-Hand Reel

An avid inventor and farm worker, Paul Bowden has identified the need for a tool to help with managing large numbers of cattle on your own. With safety in mind, he has proposed a self-winding reel which can carry current from an electric fence when moving cattle, rounding up, or even when strip grazing and moving fences.

Senior Service Winner : Bia Blasta

St Anne's Secondary School, Tipperary
Meat Traceability & Information Website

Bia Blasta has been working on this project for some time. They hope to set up an independent website to promote the traceability of Quality Assured meat to the general public. The site will focus on providing profiles of



A Salute to Connor Keppel



In the summer of 2007, fresh out of a PR degree in the Institute of Carlow, Connor Keppel joined Agri Aware, filling the shoes of Gemma Gilligan as the Public Relations Executive of the Organisation. Three years later, Connor moves onto the IFA but leaves with a portfolio packed full of projects.

Six months into the job and Connor had been integral in the development of 'Meet the Spuds.' Celebrating the International Year of the Potato, the initiative was deemed

Agri Aware's biggest project to date with over 2,000 primary schools taking part. The success of this project expanded to the 'Incredible Edibles' in 2009, which Connor was also involved in. The development of Agri Aware's new website, the co-ordination of Green Dragon, the running of Business Buzz in 2008, and the development of CAP submissions were also all under Connor's remit during his time in Agri Aware. The development of the new City Farm in Dublin Zoo was the biggest project that Connor put his stamp on and he has been working on that over the last year.

Most famously known for his quirky one-liners in press releases, Connor will be missed by both the staff and the Board. We wish him the best of luck in the future.

Take an Incredible Edibles Adventure at Airfield

Some children taking part in the Incredible Edibles have been taking the challenge one step further with educational days at Airfield farm. Agri Aware and the Airfield educational team have designed an exciting experience for children to become growers for the day. The young farmers learn about the whole cycle of food production and understand how their food gets from the farm to the fork! This hands-on experience re-enforces the learning aims of the Incredible Edibles.

The programme focuses on the importance of getting five-a-day, healthy eating and the food pyramid. From growing their own in the classroom to practical work in the farm

each child has the opportunity to immerse themselves in a farming experience. Through activities like digging in the vegetable plots to caring for animals the pupils explore the diverse work of Irish farmers. The unique resource as a farm in the city provides many school children with the chance to clean out chicken coups, prepare bedding for animals and learn about the use of manure. As part of the day pupils have the opportunity to meet Airfield's farmer and head granter to get hints and tips on sowing and growing. The final activity of the day is something every farmer enjoys – eating! This varies on the growing season and the children may gather leaves for a salad or fruit for smoothies.

Check out on www.incredibleedibles.ie our new Incredible Edibles Quiz. There's hours of fun learning for young and old.

Every Monday from now until June schools are taking tours to Airfield for Incredible Edibles tours. If you want to take a trip to Airfield farm check out www.airfield.ie

Upcoming Events

Springtime on the Farm

You've been wondering if Springtime on the Farm will go ahead in 2010. You will not be disappointed to know that a very special Springtime 10 Year Anniversary competition will be launched within the coming weeks. FBD has kindly sponsored this initiative again and will be in schools by mid April.

Incredible Edibles Mini Schools Competition - Keep an eye out two new mini incredible edible competitions taking place during April. Check out the website for more info.

Bloom 2010 - Agri Aware will be visiting Bloom again this year with a host of learning activities and special guests. Make sure and visit us if your around.