



**AgriAware**

EDUCATE • ADVOCATE • ENGAGE



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2022



**AgriAware**

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## Agri Aware Patrons





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Alan Jagoe



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Marcus O'Halloran



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**SECRETARY**  
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Dr. Patrick Wall  
UCD

**2022**

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John McCullen  
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Amii McKeever  
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# 2022

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



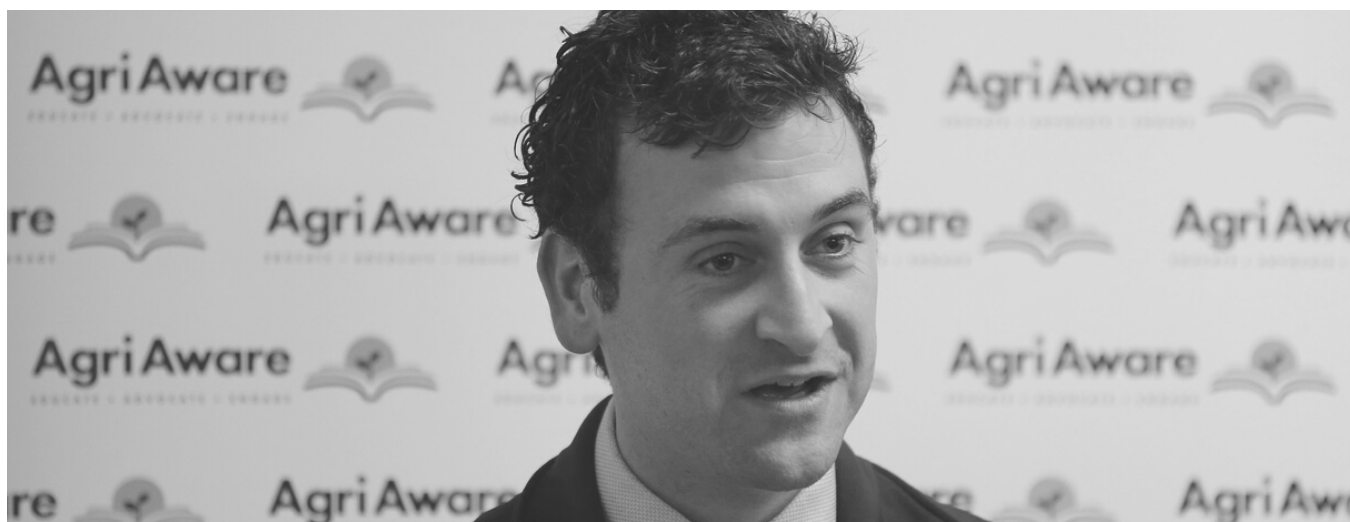
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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STATEMENT

A Chairde,

2022 was once again a milestone year for Agri Aware. With the Covid-19 pandemic still prevalent in the world, we cautiously entered into 2022, with hopes of engaging with the public face to face at events.

The pandemic had cast a long shadow over the previous two years but with the easing of restrictions and a return to some normality, we returned to in person events with more energy and passion than ever.

Agri Aware continued to have a large impact across schools programmes, campaigns, social media, and events in 2022. Our direct audience is one of the biggest in the sector, having grown to more than 40,000 followers across our social media platforms during 2022 and is steadily growing. Furthermore, in 2022 our media reach broke 21 million for the first time.

Our primary schools' programmes had their biggest ever aggregate intake of participating pupils across Incredible Edibles, Dig In!, Farm Safe Schools and Farming Through the Seasons.

In 2022, we expanded our secondary school offerings. Our From Foal to Race programme, in association with Equip was successfully piloted in 2022 with 2,000 students from 68 schools participating and our pilot Environmental Innovators programme, impacted over 25% of schools doing TY.





Over 131,000 schoolchildren were impacted this year by our free educational programmes, Mobile Farm service and Farm Walk and Talk event series.

Over 570,000 attended our engaging exhibits at events, and our multimedia campaign received a reach of over 4 million views.

Our relationship with IASTA and the Irish Farmers Journal continued as the Study Guides became available in both print and online forms.

Our team grew in 2022 with the recruitment of Roisin Byrne as part of our partnership with Lidl on the new Agri Aware Farm to Fork Experience at Lidl Farm.

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 support of 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, Alan Jagoe, 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 2023 in continuing to deliver for Irish Agriculture.

Sincerely,  
Marcus O'Halloran  
Executive Director





## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

A Chairde,

2022 was a memorable year for Agri Aware as the many issues the world faced during the Covid-19 pandemic began to ease and life started to return to normal.

Although Agri Aware and its staff tackled the challenges faced in the pandemic head-on, it was wonderful to return to in person events and engage with the public face-to-face once again.

All of our schools' programmes once again grew throughout 2022, giving Agri Aware its highest ever intake of students on programmes, including expanding our second level offerings to include two new Transition Year programmes, From Foal to Race and Environmental Innovators.

Agri Aware's mission to create national awareness of the value of agriculture went from strength to strength this year with having grown our social media following to over 40,000 in 2022. Our flagship schools programme, Incredible Edibles, continued to grow as it has its highest-ever school participation with 76,000 pupils taking part nationwide.

This has all been possible with huge thanks to our board and our patrons for their support and the team at Agri Aware that overcame the challenges posed by the pandemic.

2022 allowed us to return in person to our events, starting off with Farm Walk and Talk which benefitted over 3,000 Leaving Certificate Agricultural Science students across Ireland. For many students this was not only their first time on a farm but also their first time going on an educational trip in over two years!





**This was a wonderful start to a year of events as we also returned to Bord Bia's Bloom in the Phoenix Park, Flavours of Fingal, and The National Ploughing Championships, with footfall at events equating to over 570,000 in total.**

**Agri Aware remains grateful for the continued support of our patrons and founding members – FBD, Bord Bia, Irish Farmers Association, Irish Farmers Journal and Ornu. I would also like to acknowledge the board members for the time they put in and their continued support of Agri Aware in 2022.**

**It has been an honour to represent Agri Aware as chairman over the past four years and to see the huge progress in terms of reach, programs delivered and impact that we have achieved.**

**I would sincerely like to thank the Agri Aware team under Marcus's leadership for the excellent work they do in growing the organisation and delivering the Agri Aware message.**

**We would like to thank you again for your support of Agri Aware.**

**Is mise le meas,**

**Alan Jagoe  
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 14th year in 2022.

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 and logbook.

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!

The pandemic led to an increased digitalisation of the project with huge online submissions and schools sharing their progress online and on social media, while webinars and significant video have been incorporated into the lesson plans.

Over 76,000 pupils from 1800 schools took part in the Incredible Edibles: healthy eating and horticultural growing project in 2022.

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.

Schools also had the opportunity to take part in a "Meet the Farmer" webinar, which saw 551 school classes/14,000 students directly communicating with sponsor farmers, as well as over 700 students from 28 schools across the country attending Bord Bia's Bloom in the Phoenix Park!

Incredible Edibles 2023 started this January and is fully available in both English and Irish.



# INCREDIBLE EDIBLES

Additional highlights:

## Healthy Eating Week

As part of Incredible Edibles, schools were encouraged to take part in Healthy Eating Week! We joined forces with Dole Ireland and went to Réalt na Mara in Dundalk to make some healthy smoothies and celebrate Healthy Eating Week 2022!

## Bord Bia's Bloom in the Phoenix Park

Over 700 schoolchildren partaking in the Incredible Edibles programme across the country enjoyed a day away from the classroom as they toured the Agri Aware Farmyard, the Eat Well Kitchen and Gardens at Bord Bia's Bloom in the Phoenix Park.

## Incredible Edibles 2023 Launch

We launched Incredible Edibles for 2023 in November with the help of the All-Ireland Champions - the Meath Ladies Football team!







# INCREDIBLE EDIBLES

The standard of submissions was incredibly high, in 2022, with more submissions than ever! Here is the full List of 2022 winners:

**1st PLACE OVERALL** – Ms. Catherine Conneely’s 3rd class, Creevy National School, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal

**2nd PLACE OVERALL** – Michaela Doyle Murphy’s 4th and 5th Class, Bunscoil Ris Edmund Rice School, New Ross, Co. Wexford

**3rd PLACE OVERALL** - Ms. Stephanie Kearns’ Junior and Senior Infants, St. Joseph’s NS, Mulhussey, Kilcock, Co. Meath

**HOMESCHOOL CATEGORY** – Michael Jolly, 3rd Class, Ballina, Co. Mayo.

**GAELSCOIL CATEGORY** – Ms. Maire De Bhruin’s 2nd Class, Gaelscoi Liatroma, Liatroma  
**SPECIAL CATEGORY** – Ms. Annelies Verniest’s ASD Class, Berrings National Schools, Co. Cork

**ONLINE CATEGORY** - Mr. Jerry Kelleher’s 6th Class, Banteer National School, Co. Cork.

**\*NEW\* JUNIOR CATEGORY**- Ms. Hazel O’Dwyer’s Senior Infants, Portlaoise Educate Together National School, Co. Laois.





# FARMING THROUGH THE SEASONS

Farming Through the Seasons is a new, 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.

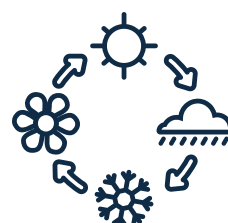
For many young children, their experience of the origin of their food is the supermarket shelf.

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.

Starting in late 2022, 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.

Over 5,000 primary school pupils were impacted by the Autumn and Winter webinars in 2022! While over 19,000 are signed up for the 2023 series!







# FARM SAFE SCHOOLS

Agri Aware, The Irish Farmers Association and AgriKids, supported by The Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine once again ran the Farm Safe Schools programme in 2022, following its successful pilot in 2021.

Over 20,000 students from 450+ schools participated in 2022, impacting a total of 40,000 pupils in the last two years.

The programme teaches students about the three most important areas of farm safety: on the farm, animals, and machinery safety.

Schools from across the country took part, more notably in rural areas, and had the opportunity to engage in online webinars and reach out to local farmers.

Schools really engaged with the project, with many schools incorporating their learnings from the programme into the wider community.

There were two winners for Farm Safe Schools in 2022, Winning Class and Winning School.

Fifth and Sixth Class pupils in Athlacca National School, Kilmallock, Co. Limerick were named the National Winners in the Class category programme.

While St Joseph's National School, Killennummery, Co Leitrim were crowned the National Champions in the School category of the programme.





# DIG IN!

In 2022 Dig In! was activated in classrooms through pre-existing primary programmes - Incredible Edibles, Farming Through the Seasons, Farm Safe Schools and The Lidl Farm.

Dig In! is a primary school resource filled with over 20 curriculum linked lesson plans. The topics covered are relevant for Irish farming and life in the countryside.

Farm safety, livestock farming, healthy eating and many more are amongst the topics covered.

Following the success of the "Fun Fridays" webinar series in 2021, a suite of educational videos called 'The Story Of' have been widely accessed by classrooms around the country during which pupils learn about 10 topics such as the story of milk, beef, flour, pumpkins and more in 2022.

New lesson plans are in the works and will be made available to pupils and teachers alike in 2023.







## THE LIDL FARM: THE FARM TO FORK EXPERIENCE

In 2022, Agri Aware came together with Lidl to create the Farm to Fork Experience using land at their Regional Distribution Centre in Newbridge, County Kildare.

The 8 acres farm now hosts free educational farm tours, which primary school children from 2nd to 6th Class can enjoy and explore.

The on-site education delivery is guided by the SESE curriculum to deliver an outdoor classroom experience. Pupils will learn through a combination of hands-on activities and discussions led by Agri Aware's Education Officers.

Over 500 students have visited the farm since its launch in 2022.

The Farm to Fork Experience was officially opened by former Irish President Mrs Mary Robinson.

Agri Aware was also delighted to welcome RTE and James Patrice to film a segment for the afternoon show on RTE 1 after the launch of the farm.

Tours on the farm will be starting again in April 2023.





# SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAMMES







## FROM FOAL TO RACE

In 2022, Agri Aware and equip teamed up to create From Foal to Race. From Foal to Race 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.

This programme is not just relevant for those living within horse racing communities but also opens conversations for those who do not.

From Foal to Race was successfully piloted in 2022 with 2,000 students from 68 schools participating.

Following this success, the programme has now launched for 2023. Participating students learn all about the horse racing industry and the varied career opportunities within it.

The winning group in 2022 received a VIP trip to Punchestown racecourse and got to meet industry experts including Rachael Blackmore.





# ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATORS

Environmental Innovators is our new programme for Transition Year students that presents the various challenges that our global food system faces and invites students to investigate innovative solutions.

The Environmental Innovators programme encourages innovative thinking, problem-solving and global citizenship through sustainable food systems education.

Over 7,000 pupils from 170 schools signed up for the 2022 pilot programme, which is 25% of all schools offering Transition Year.

The programme is a great foundation for those considering a career in the agri-food industry or for students considering taking Biology, Agricultural Science, Geography, Home Economics, Technology or Politics and Society at Leaving Certificate level.

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 five best ones were invited to the Biorbic Centre in UCD to showcase their ideas for Agri-food stakeholders, including Minister Pippa Hackett and Minister Martin Heydon.

The winning group from Scoil Mhuire, Trim, Co. Meath came up with a very innovative way to recycle used bale wrap as insulation.







# FARM WALK AND TALK

Agri Aware welcomed 3,000 Leaving Certificate students to its Farm Walk and Talk events across the country in March 2022.

The series of events were hosted across 10 educational, research and working farm venues provided by partners; Teagasc, UCD and the Irish Farmers Journal and were supported by IASTA.

The demand for the interactive talks was incredibly high after the Covid-19 lockdowns.

These engaging and informative talks allowed students to get out from behind their screens and get practical, hands-on experience on working farms for the first time in two years.

From live lambing's, to engaging and interactive talks and demonstrations across the venues, both students and teachers alike were delighted to be learning in person at live events again!





# THE AG SCIENCE STUDY GUIDES

Each school year, Agri Aware; The Irish Farmers Journal (IFJ); and IASTA (Irish Agriculture Science Teachers Association) produce 30 Study Guides for Leaving Certificate Agricultural Science students.

Over the years, the guides have benefitted over 15,000 students and are of increased importance going forward given the newly revised curriculum specification.

The study guides are another example of the increased digitalisation of the Agri Aware educational offerings.

Teachers can sign their students up to 30 weeks of guides that are released on a weekly basis during the school term. The guides can be purchased in either a physical or digital package.

There is also a suite of additional resources hosted on the IFJ's Schools Hub such as the Farmer Case Study videos and webinars with IFJ specialists.

The interactive guides now feature QR codes that can be scanned to access relevant articles or videos online.

At this year's National Ploughing Championships, Agri Aware held a number of educational talks and panel conversations on stage in our Big Green Shed in relation to the Study Guides for any Leaving Certificate students attending.





# EVENTS







# BLOOM IN THE PHOENIX PARK

In 2022, there was a welcome return to National Shows across the country after the Covid-19 pandemic.

From the 2nd-6th of June, Agri Aware returned to the Phoenix Park with the Big Green Shed and an assortment of educational entertainment for the public.

Daily sheep shearing and milking demonstrations were held at the Agri Aware Farmyard, not to mention an array of games and fun for all ages! There were also spinning & weaving and planting & potting demonstrations, and some Q & A's with food producers from the Food Village on the stage.

On Thursday and Friday, over 700 primary school students from 30 different schools across the country, that are taking part in the Incredible Edibles programme, attended to join in on the fun!

With a footfall of over 110,000 for the long weekend, it was a great way to engage the public and kick-off a summer of shows!







# NATIONAL PLOUGHING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Agri Aware turned the "Big Red Shed" green for the National Ploughing Championships in Ratheniska for 2022.

The event was returning for the first time since 2019 and the absence clearly made very many hearts grow even fonder.

Over 277,000 people turned up over the three days with rain only falling on the final day.

Wednesday was an incredible turnout in the beautiful autumn sunshine with over 115,000 people enjoying the huge range of activities.

Agri Aware hosted a series of discussion panels over the three days with a range of topics covered.

Our partnership with the Irish Farmers Journal on the Study Guides for Leaving Cert Agricultural Science was the first discussion each day. This was followed by a careers chat where various contributors shared their experiences and career stories to date.

The third chat of each day of the National Ploughing Championships focused on sustainability in agriculture and the Sustaining Ireland campaign. Guests from across policy, education, and practice aired their thoughts on where Irish Agriculture is currently and what opportunities exist in the future.





## OTHER SHOWS

### Tullamore Show:

The Tullamore Show made a triumphant return, with over 60,000 people attending the one-day event. After a two-year hiatus due to Covid-19, crowds packed the Butterfield Estate near Blueball, Co. Offaly for the day.

A jam-packed schedule, ranging from fashion shows, cooking demonstrations, and livestock competitions, meant that there was something for everyone to enjoy.

Agri Aware attended the Tullamore Show with our Mobile Farm service. It was wonderful to see so many families and children interact with the animals.

### Flavours of Fingal:

Flavours of Fingal returned for its 10th year in 2022. The show is now the largest two day County Show in the country.

Attracting over 100,000 people, the two day show located within the historic walled garden of Newbridge House and Farm, Donabate, allows both urban and rural communities get to see the best of Irish Agriculture and Food and learn all about where their food comes from.

Agri Aware attended Flavours of Fingal with our full farmyard set-up, and were delighted to see the huge turn out for the weekend.





# SHOW HIGHLIGHTS







## MOBILE FARM

The Mobile Farm is a unique outdoor classroom that is used to educate children and adults via a hands-on learning experience. The Mobile Farm unit safely transports animals to any school, company or event.

The aim of Agri Aware's Mobile Farm is to educate young and old about the different farm animals on Irish farms and their role in producing quality food that is safe and affordable for consumers. Agri Aware's Mobile Farm is accompanied by trained farmers.

Agri Aware's Mobile Farm returned in 2022 after 2 years of Covid restrictions and visited 23 primary schools - 4,600 pupils - nationally.

Keeping the geography, science and social, personal and health education (SPHE) curricula in mind, visitors learn about each animal, from their natural habitat to their role in food production.





# SUSTAINING IRELAND

Sustaining Ireland started 2022 strongly as Agri Aware looked to build on the huge success of the campaign in 2021.

In January of 2022 there was a national radio campaign run into February that gained a very positive response from IFA members in particular.

The campaign ran across RTE and local radio stations for four weeks.

The Sustaining Ireland posters became mainstays at various shows and events nationwide during the summer.

The original posters were reproduced as ads at events where Agri Aware were present.

The digital aspect to the campaign was also maintained with a view to future expansion.

The five videos were featured alternatively across Agri aware social media channels with paid support throughout the year.

For the National Ploughing Championships in Ratheniska the Sustaining Ireland posters were redesigned and erected along the access roads to the site.

Given the enormous footfall at the returning event this was viewed as a very cost effective tactic with over 40 posters on the roadsides.





# PR & COMMUNICATIONS

## 21M

Media Reach

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## 400+

Press Articles

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## 100%+

Coverage Growth

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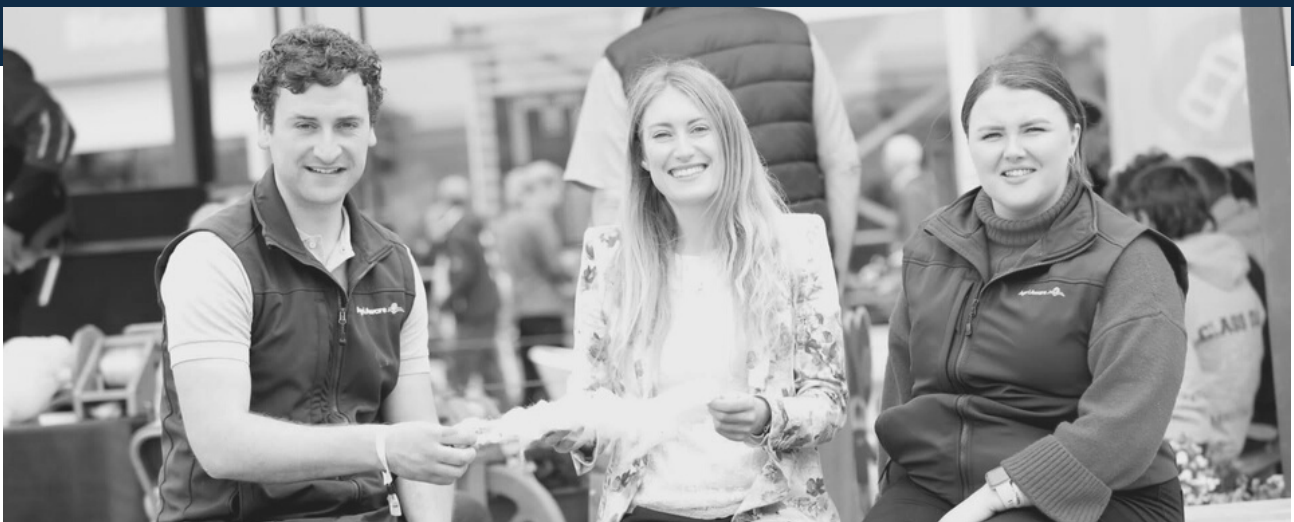
The return of the Agri Aware Farm Walk and Talk series as an in-person event for students heralded a very strong start to the year from a PR perspective. There were daily local press dispatches as well as a launch that landed very well with 77 total media pieces covered.

Overall, the return of in-person events through the year helped the Agri Aware profile massively throughout the year. National media coverage was secured at both Bloom and the National Ploughing Championships, despite the crowded nature of the media landscape at both events.

Our survey on Agriculture and women in farming also gained media traction.

Coverage of Schools programmes was strong again this year with Incredible Edibles and Farm Safe Schools once again landing consistently. The message of the Farm safe Schools programme was strong, combined with Farm Safety week in June. Over 100 articles with more than a 6m media reach were secured by the programme in 2022.

While launches for the many new programmes helped keep the coverage ticking, the Meath Ladies fronted the Incredible Edibles 2023 launch in November, securing national coverage. Overall it was a record year for Agri Aware media coverage, far surpassing expectations.





# SOCIAL MEDIA

## 40K

Social Followers



Agri Aware started very strongly in 2022 with a huge boost to the social following due to an Instagram competition with a prize to the Europe Hotel. The competition had a big impact and drew in over 5000 new followers. While it was difficult to maintain all the new followers throughout the year, there was noticeable growth across all platforms.

## 18%

Social Growth in '22



40,000 was the goal overall for the year and across all platforms Agri Aware has achieved that with the future focus on audience maintenance with some obvious headwinds in the social sphere. E.g. the changing Instagram algorithm and move towards video content. There is still scope for growth in video especially TikTok and Youtube.

## 1.4%

Engagement rate



The return of events post pandemic saw the greatest impact on social engagement over the year with obvious spikes during Bloom and the Ploughing Championships. The social engagement rate of Agri Aware peaked at 1.4% (.04% is high for industry) during September and October.





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## SPECIAL THANKS: JOHN MCCULLEN

The curtain came down on an extraordinary reign in the Agri Aware boardroom in 2022 as one of the founding directors, John McCullen decided to step down.

The former FBD Trust director has been a member of the Agri Aware board since its inception in 1996 and as many other board members recalled, he was a steady hand and brilliant source of guidance in that time.

Agri Aware Chairman Alan Jagoe, Executive Director Marcus O'Halloran and outgoing Treasurer Amii McKeever presented John with a bog oak sculpture as a token of appreciation for his time, commitment and dedication during his tenure on the board of management.

Alan Jagoe paid tribute to McCullen and thanked him for his service to Agri Aware.

"John McCullen has always been a great help to me in my time as Chairman with Agri Aware. John is a fantastic leader who was always full of inspiring ideas.

"He has given an incredible service to Agri Aware over the entire life of the Trust and in that time he has always been very fair and constructive in his guidance.

"John has a passion for communicating our message effectively, especially to a non-farming audience and we are incredibly grateful to have had access to that passion for such a long time."

Thanks again, from all the team at Agri Aware.





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