



Gurteen Gazette

November 2021

Principal's Words

We were delighted to welcome a big cohort of new learners to Gurteen over the autumn period. Gurteen has again attracted strong numbers of both school leavers and adult learners. We are particularly pleased to have a large proportion of our first-year fulltime learners choose the residential option, our campus is alight with activity, and enriched with accents from Donegal to Wexford, and all places in between.

Adult courses also continue to attract very strong numbers of learners, we have part time 'green cert' evening classes running 4 nights per week, and distance education groups on campus every Friday and 2 Saturdays per month. In addition to our core student groups we have also welcomed many industry groups to the campus over the autumn term, with staff from the Credit Unions, Massey Fergusson dealerships and farmers completing a derogation course all adding to the vibrant atmosphere in our classrooms, yard and canteen.

Over the last few months' staff and governors have worked tirelessly to produce new strategic plan, setting out the core direction and key objectives for Gurteen over the next 5 years. The plan reinforces that education is the core of Gurteen's vision, and sets ambitious targets, focused on student recruitment, increasing the courses we offer and maintaining our high standards of learner outcomes. Sustainability features strongly throughout the plan recognising that in the future sustainable farming practice will be the key driver of profitable farms.

A new and exciting partnership has been formalised between Gurteen College and TUS – the Technological University of Shannon- with both organisations formally signing opening the opportunity for Gurteen students to progress directly into degree programmes. Partnership approaches are core the future success of Gurteen College, in addition to our longstanding partnership with Teagasc, Gurteen has recently been working closely with Laois & Offaly ETB and Tipperary ETB to deliver courses that meet local needs.

I hope you enjoy reading the gazette, please do share it with friends and neighbours – better still encourage them to share their contact details with us!

-Jon Parry, Principal



New students making the best of the autumn sunshine, along with college Chaplain Steven Foster.



Level 6 Dairy Herd Management students on a farm visit to David Clarke's farm in Westmeath- home to Cows.ie

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 www.gurteencollege.ie



Gurteen Gazette

November 2021

Sporting Success at Gurteen

This Autumn saw the return of some inter-college sports competitions! For the first time since COVID-19 prevented us, all 6 agricultural colleges competed in football.

It was great to see both our boys and girls team compete, and it was an amazingly fun day for all involved! Well done to all involved, including the competition.

Gurteen also competed in the inter-colleges hurling blitz competition, where we came 2nd overall! It's great to see so many talented sports people in our college, and fantastic to see these competitions start up again.



Our college hurling blitz team, which came 2nd at the inter-college's competition.



Gurteen College's Girls football team. Pictured at the Inter-Colleges competition.



Gurteen College's Boys football team. Pictured at the Inter-Colleges competition.

Dates for your Diary

-In January we hope to be having our graduation ceremony- when dates and times are confirmed we'll announce them on our social media, so make sure you're following us!

-2022 marks Gurteen College's 75th anniversary! Keep your eyes and ears peeled regarding the celebration we have planned to mark this incredible anniversary.

Governor Profile

Roy Kingston is the Chair of Governors for Gurteen college, and we're extremely lucky to have his guidance and wisdom. Read below about who Roy is, and what his background is!

"I have been a beef finisher and tillage farmer most of my career. When my son, Scott, came home to farm he started converting the farm gradually to a dairy farm, though we still farm some beef, tillage and forestry.

My formal education finished in Darrarra college Clonakilty, with a green cert, but since then I have occasionally done short courses in farm mechanization and soil management.

After travelling for a bit, I came home to farm with the purpose of helping to feed the world! So, there has always been a great interest in food production outside the farm gate.

Life in general, and farming in particular, has been very good to me. Eight years ago, Laurence Graham asked would I join the Board of Governors for Gurteen. It was a good opportunity to give back in a small way to Irish agriculture some of experience it blessed me with.

Gurteen was established 75 years ago as a centre of excellence of the education of agriculture and it continues to build, year by year, that great tradition of helping shape good, sound, young people who will be assets to the communities around them wherever they settle. A lot of students want level 7+level 8 these days so that is one of the next steps for Gurteen College, and there is now a much more significant interest in being serious about sustainability in all our actions- so this must be a core theme.

I see a great future for Gurteen College because of the good and sound respect that is in the college. Respect for all people the staff and students, the outside stakeholders and the respect held for the beautiful natural environment where it is situated."

-Roy Kingston, Chair of Governors



Gurteen Gazette

November 2021



Student Profile- Damien Mc Loughlin

“Being from a small farming background while working as an Engineer, full time study was never an option. Studying part time in Gurteen Agricultural College through Laois & Offaly ETB in conjunction with Bord Na Mona was the perfect solution.

Gurteen college and its staff have made this course extremely easy to follow providing extensive help ensuring everyone on the course are progressing with their studies. The lecturers are equipped with extensive knowledge of all aspects of farming from all livestock enterprises to machinery, quads, and sprayers, and most importantly farm safety & assurance. They help students develop IT skills and farm management and business planning skills, this involves developing detailed farm plans and discussions on topics such as succession and inheritance. The lecturers in Gurteen are very approachable and supportive- checking in with students on a weekly basis and understanding that learners have other work commitments outside of the course.

Damien Mc Loughlin- recent graduate of Gurteen who completed his Level 5 and Level 6 in conjunction with Bord Na Mona.

For anyone looking at a future in either full or part time farming I would highly recommend this course. The agriculture industry is ever changing, it’s always a good idea to acquire new knowledge and skills and to stay abreast with new research and technologies available to modern day farmers. And doing it all while still in full time employment is a massive advantage.”

Open Day Success, and Applications Open!

On October 27th we hosted an Open day to potential students and their families! It was a fantastic day, where people got tours of our campus and farm, with the opportunity to talk to some of our fantastic current students.

A big thank you to all the staff and students who took the time to meet with people and show them around- the day was a huge success, and we had a wonderful turnout! Thank you to all who travelled to see Gurteen too- we hope you found the day as fun and informative as we did, and we hope to see some of you next September.

As well as this, we’re excited to announce that **applications for the full-time level 5 course, starting September 2022, are open!** You can apply online right now, via the Teagasc website. If you’d like more information on how to apply, or just have a question about studying at Gurteen please contact us today! Our number is (067) 21282, and our email is info@gurteencollege.ie

Here’s how...

APPLY NOW!

Teagasc Website

Education

Going to College

Apply Online

Agriculture Courses

Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture

Gurteen College





Gurteen Gazette

November 2021

Student Profile- Tilly Doyle, Fulltime Level 5

“Hi, my name is Tilly Doyle and I always wanted to be a farmer, despite the fact that my parents are from Dublin, and we have no farming tradition in the family. I was born and live in Laois, and I have been helping on a local dairy farm for the last few years in preparation for my first novice year at Gurteen College studying a level 5 course in Agriculture.



Tilly Doyle, working on a local dairy farm.

I found Gurteen through word of mouth and on the internet. My first open day visit was fantastic, and the facilities, people and atmosphere were even more impressive than the on-line prospect of the college.

So, what do I think after two months? I honestly believe I have never been happier! I am making great friends. The teaching and admin staff treat me like an adult and are exceptionally generous with their time and experience.

Regardless of the weather or the work, I am up and out early. I am learning an incredible new way of living and working.”



Gurteen Clothing and Merchandise from O'Neills

Want to show your College pride while out and about? Now you can! If you want to own some Gurteen branded clothing, you can buy it online and have it delivered straight to your door.

You can get hoodies, jackets, gilets, and bags all with the Gurteen Crest on. Go to **oneills.com** and search up **Gurteen College** in their search bar.



Dunlaoghaire Further Education Institution: Animal care Students in Gurteen College

Every year we are delighted to welcome the students of Dunlaoghaire Further Education Institution to Gurteen- read below for their Gurteen experience:

“We at DFEI have been using Gurteen agriculture college as our go to location for the teaching of large animal husbandry skills for the past eight years. Our animal care students are studying modules of both equine and farm animal content. For us Gurteen has been the most wonderful learning environment. Our students get to spend time working with a wide variety of large animals and equines. Our demographic of students are urban dwellers and the total immersion experience on Gurteen is second to none. The students love the learning opportunities presented. The staff couldn't be more helpful, knowledgeable or accommodating and they are a huge asset in our experience.

The facilities are excellent with a state-of-the-art equine facility and the most progressive and modern cattle handling facilities and dairy.

It would not be possible for us to offer this teaching at DFEI without the collaboration of Gurteen college, and the partnership has been flourishing since we first went to Gurteen. As far as Gurteen goes our experience gets better and better every year.”



Gurteen Gazette

November 2021

Course Update

Students and staff are delighted to have recommenced a new academic year with a return to more traditional style teaching methods while still maintaining a smaller amount of online learning. Combined with a satisfying 16% increase in the number of students recruited onto the fulltime level 5 course, the atmosphere around Gurteen campus feels very much how it has always been with student chatter, jokes and laughs echoed in all corridors.

Fulltime level 5 students have just completed their first 4-week farm placement period while level 6 students are enjoying the experience of attending weekly farm visits to external farms and within the wider agricultural industry.

Part-time and distance education course are at various stages of completion. Some courses are currently undergoing external verification process which upon completion will bring these courses to a finish and students will be issued with their certificates. Meanwhile, other students have just enrolled and commenced their learning experience of obtaining their green cert on new part time and distance course options. We're delighted to be continuing our collaboration with Tipperary ETD and are now able to provide two new part-time courses starting in late November. As well as this, several our fulltime students are currently participating in additional curricular activities such as night-time welding courses, AI courses and hoof pairing courses.

-Peter Grogan, Assistant Principal



A class of Level 5 students during Enrollment week.



Lecturer Kevin Ward with a student, discussing tractor skills.



Staff and students joining together for a mile walk to raise awareness during #AgMentalHealthWeek

#AgMentalHealthWeek 2021

10th-16th of October was #AgMentalHealthWeek, a week dedicated to reducing stigma around mental health and suicide while highlighting the importance of prioritizing mental wellbeing in the agricultural sector.

As part of this week, staff and students took an hour out their day on Wednesday 13th to have a walk around campus together- to emphasize the importance of taking time to relax while enjoying nature. Alongside this, our Mental Health Ambassadors ran a number of fundraisers throughout the week- raising an amazing €150 for our local charity CARMHA of which is based in Nenagh.

It's important to talk about mental health- and we're proud of our Gurteen family for supporting this year's #AgMentalHealthWeek.



Gurteen Gazette

November 2021

Alumni Profile: Shaun Diver

"I chose to attend Gurteen in 2013, and study the FETAC Level 6 in Drystock Management, after doing some research on the courses they offered, and I was amazed to find the college had such a large scale fully operational farm that with so many different enterprises being demonstrated. I felt that by attending Gurteen I would be exposed to Dairy, Sucklers, Sheep and Tillage which meant a lot to me as I came from an area in Co. Donegal where Tillage and Dairy are not practiced on a scale seen in Gurteen and its surrounding area. My fondest memories of Gurteen are meeting so many people from every corner of the country, people who would become friends for life. Also, I have great memories of being involved in the day-to-day farming in Gurteen, everyone was encouraged to get involved and it didn't matter how much experience you had everyone was given equal opportunity. After leaving Gurteen I worked on a suckler and sheep farm not far from the college, but in spring of 2018 I got the job of Farm Manager on Tullamore Farm- the Irish Farmers Journal Beef and Sheep demonstration farm. We run a 100-spring calving Suckler herd, and 250 mid-season lambing ewe flock- making us the only mixed grazing demo farm in Ireland. Had I not made the decision to attend Gurteen back in 2013 I feel that I would not be in the position I am today."



Shaun Diver- Studied at Gurteen in 2013 and is now Farm Manager of Tullamore Farm. Find Shaun on twitter- @diver_shaun



Our weanlings grazing happily up at top moor.



Level 6 Crops and Machinery students recently ploughed and sowed Winter barley on our Farm.

Gurteen Farm Update

As the farming year is drawing to an end, we can reflect on a successful year with good output from all enterprises on the farm; coupled to good prices and mostly kind weather. Dairy cows are starting to be dried off now and cattle are coming in for the winter, our thoughts are turning to planning for Spring. 2022 will bring many challenges, but also great opportunities. Among the challenges we face is the dramatic rise in fertiliser prices, however the silver lining is that we will bolster our plans to increase the clover content of our grass swards and to introduce mixed species swards. Both of which will help in our battle to reduce our dependence on chemical nitrogen.

Gurteen has been selected as a Signpost Farm, this will help us to showcase the good work being done on the farm but will also help us in our goals of being more environmentally friendly, to farm sustainably and to reduce carbon, all while maintain our high production levels.

-Ken Flynn, Farm Manager