



Gurteen Gazette

May 2022



Principal's Welcome- May'22

I am blessed to be the Principal of Gurteen College. The role affords me so many superb opportunities, so I thought I would take the opportunity to share just a few of those recent experiences.

At our recent graduation ceremony, I had the pleasure of talking to families of the graduates, no matter if it was the proud father whose daughter had just completed a full-time course or a wife whose husband had just completed the adult part time course the theme was the same. Gurteen had changed their life, the College staff offered superb support, the farm and facilities were first class, and they had made a connection with fellow graduates that will last for life.

Just a few days later I was meeting Prof. Frank OMara the director of Teagasc and we discussed the important scientific research that aims to measure and understand the flows of carbon in and out of agricultural soils. Data is being collected at Gurteen part of a national research project using "eddy flux towers" we hope the research will provide some important guidance how farmers can best manage soil carbon

Last week a combination of staff leave, and illness, resulted in the Gurteen farm requiring a relief milker - I was delighted by the news as it gave me a legitimate opportunity to relive some memories of my early career and don a milking apron. Thanks must be recorded to the very patient farm staff who expertly coached me.

Throughout spring our focus has been on student recruitment. Gurteen is actively visiting schools, hosting class visits to our campus and running course information days. At the last course information day I spoke to two families with quite different backgrounds - a farming family from Donegal who are hoping their daughter would be the third generation to study at Gurteen when she joins the course in September, and a family from Limerick who had no real connection to agriculture - but their son wants to work with cows and they have been told Gurteen will 'look after their son and give him real hands on experience' It is such a delight to meet so many talented and enthusiastic young people who want to forge a career in agriculture.

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.

-Principal Jon Parry



Want more frequent updates?
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pages!

@GurteenCollege



Applications Open!

We know leaving-cert exams are fast approaching, but it's always worth mentioning that we're still accepting applications for our full time Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture course. This course is perfect for leaving-cert students with a passion for farming- so check out our website for all the information on how to apply!

We're also currently recruiting students for our adult courses- with a part time, and distance course expected to start in June. Places on this course are filled on a first-come-first-served basis, so if you're interested apply soon! Call us on (067)21282 or email info@gurteencollege.ie for all the information needed about any of our courses- we'd be delighted to chat!



Gurteen Gazette

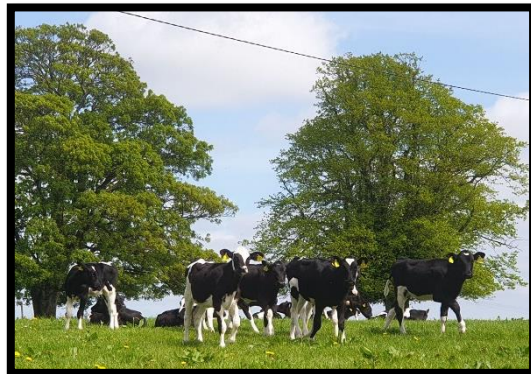


Farm Update

It has been a very busy spring on the farm in Gurteen. Calving and lambing are now over, and both went very successfully. Our farm team worked very hard and their efforts are reflected in the results. Our tillage students have finished sowing the spring crops. In March we harvested the willow that heats the college, and our yields were up on last year. Grass growth was slow in the early season, but the milder weather has brought growth. Input prices are very high but hopefully the current high milk price will continue, and it will do much to balance out the rising costs. Our thoughts are now focused on the current breeding season as well as silage making and reseedling.

Researchers for TUS (Technical University Shannon) are conducting a butterfly population monitoring program as well as a broader habitat survey, and Gurteen is taking part in a nation pollinator survey, these should yield some interesting data and hopefully we will be able to improve our habitats on the farm as we learn more.

-Farm Manager, Ken Flynn



Course Update

Fulltime Level 5 students returned to college on Monday 28th of March after completing their second 4-week farm placement period. Our Level 6 students are still on placement and have a further 4 weeks to complete of their 16 week's placement.

Before placement commenced, Level 5 students participated in various fun activities organised by themselves as part of their Personal Effectiveness module. Events such as Tug of War, Welding and Stock Judging all occurred on the day with all money raised being donated to local charity. A very fun day was had by all including staff and it was great to see students enjoy such an eventful day, highlighting the importance of fun activities as part of their curriculum.

In recent weeks, teaching staff have been involved in delivering a range of practical skills to veterinary nurse students from Dun Laoghaire and TUS (Athlone Campus). Skills were delivered across a range of areas including, dairy, cattle, sheep, calves, and equine.

We are now accepting applications for our new intake of part - time and distance education students with our next course expected to commence in early June. Meanwhile, we are also accepting applications for our next intake of fulltime Level 5 and Level 6 students wishing to commence a course in September. You can find all the information on our website today.

-Peter Grogan, Assistant Principal.



Gurteen Gazette

Success at the European Stock Judging Competition

In early March we wished Bon Voyage and good luck to two of our fantastic full time Level 6 students as they headed off to Paris to compete in this year's European Stock Judging Competition!

Adam Watson (L6 Advanced Dairy) and Daniel Bugler (L6 Advanced Drystock) represented Gurteen, and Ireland as the only Irish competitors, at the event showing off their stock judging skills alongside the best in Europe. Accompanied by lecturers Melissa White and Kevin Ward, we hear they had fantastic fun!

More than celebrating the incredible opportunity Adam and Daniel were given, we're ecstatic to say that the lads came 4th out of 35, with other competitors from fourteen different countries. An incredible achievement, and we couldn't be prouder! Congratulations again to Adam and Daniel!



Graduation Ceremony

Recently we welcomed back the graduates from 2020, and 2021 to finally have the onsite celebration they've been waiting for!

It was a truly wonderful day, and we were delighted to see so many familiar faces take their moment on stage. To all our graduates that came, we hope you enjoyed the day as much as we did! To those that sadly couldn't be with us, know we are insanely proud of all you have, and all you will achieve.

We also must give a huge thank you to all our friends, who kindly sponsored a number of student prizes, including Arabawn, Liffey Mills, IHFA, and ABP- your continued support in celebrating student success is always appreciated!





Gurteen Gazette



Maialen- Erasmus 2022

For the past few months, we've been delighted to welcome Maialen to our team. We've loved having her here with us and wanted to share how she's found her time with us.

"I'm Maialen, I'm 25 and I come from the Basque country, which is just southwest of France. I have just finished my veterinary studies in Spain in December, and I chose to do an Erasmus internship at Gurteen to get a new experience and the opportunity to get some experience about farming and large animals.

I've enjoyed my time at Gurteen, though it's true that English is more difficult for me than expected and the culture and habits are really different from what I am used to- but it's been really interesting to get out of my comfort zone.

While here at Gurteen I've been involved with a number of different jobs on the farm. In February I worked with the dairy cows, and in March I worked mostly with the sheep. Working with both areas let me appreciate the differences between these two species. I've been feeding calves, cleaning pens, lambing- all the stuff farmers are used to doing but I'm not!

I don't really know what I'd say my favourite thing I've gotten to do is while here at Gurteen. I would say maybe to take care of lambs and to help with lambing, but the whole experience in general has been really interesting for me.

After Gurteen, I would like to take time to review my lessons and what I've learnt. After that I will start working in a vet clinic near Poitiers in the west of France. These are my plans for the moment, but I already know that I won't be in the same place for a long time, because there are too many places and too many things for me to discover in this world!"



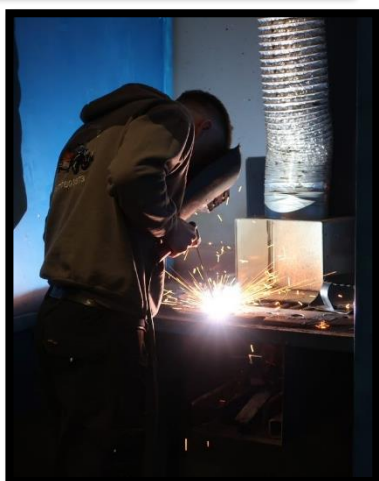
Macra Na Feirme Inter-Colleges Day 2022

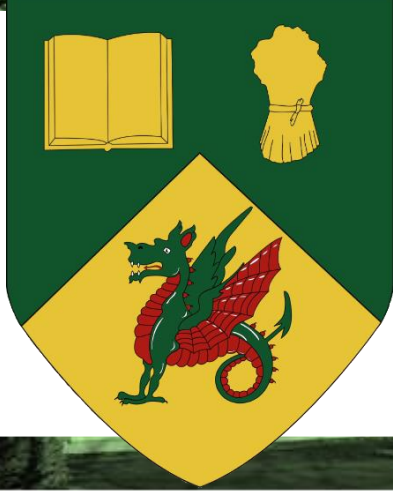
At the end of April we were delighted to hold this year's Macra Na Feirme inter-college's event! A fantastic day which sees teams of students from all Teagasc colleges group up and compete across a variety of events!

This year's events included soccer, welding, tractor driving, stock judging, business presentations, and teamworking challenges! It was a super fun day, and we were blessed with some fantastic sunshine- a huge thank you to all the Gurteen Staff who made the event run as smoothly as it did.

From this event, Gurteen are SUPER PROUD to have walked away with second prize overall- having come first place in welding, tractor driving, and 4-man teamworking- plus we came second in stock judging!

Our congratulations go out to all the competing colleges and students- with a special mention to the Kildalton Team for coming first overall. We'll get you next year though, watch out!





TUS

Gurteen in partnership with TUS are extremely excited to announce that they're launching a **new honours degree programme Agricultural Science & Sustainability in September 2022!**

The aim of this course is to produce graduates with knowledge and skills in agriculture with a focus on sustainability. While the course provides the students with a sound theoretical basis for understanding complex agricultural and environmental phenomena within a sustainable development context, its focus is on the practical application of knowledge and skills including agri-business and on-farm settings

This development means that a student can enrol at Gurteen on a level 5 agriculture course and graduate from the College with an honour's degree. Many previous forms of The Technological University of the Shannon have been a trusted partners of Gurteen, so as AIT and LIT merged to form TUS the timing felt correct to work with colleagues from the Thurles campus of the new university and develop a bespoke new degree programme building on the heritage and strong foundations of both Gurteen and TUS.



Key features of the degree programme are :

- Full level 8 Honours degree, **4 year programme**, with options for second year entry if you have a level 6 in ag, and options to leave after year 3 with an ordinary degree.
- Approx. ½ of the curriculum is focused on agricultural production and ½ on sustainability, all employers tell us sustainability is where the future jobs exist, we know that water quality/methane/carbon/biodiversity will be key topics in farming for the next 10-15 years.
- Expect graduates will be in demand and could secure jobs in roles such agricultural advisors, farm auditors, environmental officers/scientists with agribusinesses, the public sector and NGOs, or as researchers, consultants. and of course as farmers.
- TUS have vast experience and are highly respected in the sustainability sector, complimenting the heritage and strength of Gurteen.
- Gurteen will deliver the agricultural topics - **the degree will give the graduates 'young trained farmer status' otherwise called "the green cert"**
- Two full semesters will be taught entirely at Gurteen, one semester is a work placement for the remaining five semesters the students will be based at Thurles.
- Approx. 42% of the total teaching will be delivered by Gurteen staff
- Gurteen farm will be used extensively as an outdoor laboratory /classroom - and by farm I mean everything - the cows, crops, sheep but also the lough, bog, woodland, hedgerows etc.

[Interested and want to learn more?](#)

Email: Brigid.Doyle@tus.ie

Web: www.lit.ie/Courses/LC465



Gurteen Gazette

Gurteen College- Diamond Anniversary

Gurteen is planning some 75th celebrations - the academic year 2022/23 will mark 75 years of education at Gurteen College.

In 1947 Gurteen welcomed its first ever group of students - and the college has gone from strength to strength, the foresight of the farmers and ministers who founded Gurteen was amazing. Speeches and prayers were delivered by Methodist ministers, Patrick Smith the minister of agriculture, presented a gift from Taoiseach Mr Eamonn de Valera - a clock that today still holds pride of place in the Principal's office.

The ethos of Gurteen has remained true to the ideals of 1947, today as in 1947 technical skills, knowledge and wellbeing are viewed as three equal strands of good education. Thanks to the generosity and commitment of our Methodist founders thousands of students have passed through Gurteen, and every one of the college alumni has a personal story to tell. If you would like to share memories or photos of Gurteen please do - we would love to hear from you! Email mparry@gurteencollege.ie if you have any memories to share.

We're fortunate to have such a rich archive of information - and plan to share more photos and snippets over the full year, so keep your eyes peeled on our social media pages for these flashbacks!

On **Saturday 3rd September 2022** Gurteen will host a celebration marking the start of our 75th year. Please mark the date on your calendar and watch out for future details. Gurteen will mark the year by planting 75 trees and creating a new 'diamond wood' on the farm.

AgriAware 2022

In March we welcomed 350 students from fourteen different schools from across Ireland onsite for a day of learning. We had 12 stands set up across our farm for students to learn about a variety of topics- including, but not limited to soil science, cattle genetics, biodiversity, etc.

It was great fun, and a fantastic day to meet and talk to so many passionate students- we hope everyone who came to visit us had as much fun as we did!



Gurteen Clothing and Merchandise

We're very excited to announce that we now have an **online shop**, hosted by O'Neills! If you would like 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](https://www.oneills.com) and click on **Clubs & Education** and search up **Gurteen College**.