



Gurteen Gazette

February 2023

Principal's Welcome- Feb '23

Spring is a joyous time of year, especially at Gurteen. As the days lengthen we are treated to so many beautiful sights and sounds, the murmuration's of starlings in the evening, the snowdrops brightening the verges of our driveway, January born lambs gambolling in the fields, calves lowing as feeding time approaches, tractors working in the fields but perhaps most importantly the confident chatter of our students as they share their daily experiences of Gurteen life.

In January we were thrilled to welcome the first group of students on the level 8 honours degree in Agricultural Science and Sustainability to our campus, the course provides an additional route for students to develop a career in agriculture.

Student recruitment is a vital part of the work we do - encouraging young people to choose agriculture as their career, and guiding them through the various courses available. Recently we have been visiting local schools such as St Brendan's in Birr or the CBS in Nenagh but we have also travelled further afield to schools such as Villiers in Limerick and the Royal & Prior in Raphoe, the enthusiasm and knowledge of the school students offers me great encouragement. We have a number of new short videos highlighting student life at Gurteen you will find them on our social media and you tube channel.

I am thrilled that in 2023 our students are once again getting the opportunity to travel and broaden their horizons, we have level 6 students on placement in 5 countries outside Ireland, with two students completing their work experience on large farms in Germany. Additionally, we are welcoming foreign students to Gurteen with 6 students from a French College near the town of Besançon in the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté region completing part of their work experience at Gurteen.

I can't finish my piece without a short mention of tractors - as on the January 1st 2023 the Gurteen tractor fleet changed colour - we are now a 'Green' farm, few changes have provoked more debate amongst the students, further details of our new John Deere fleet can be found inside this Gazette

-Jon Parry, Principal of Gurteen College



Level 5 students completing ATV training with Lecturer Mike Cogavin before their placements.



Twin lambs born in January.



Lousie Tissot and Mathys Pobelle- students from Besanocon, France completing their work placement here.



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PPD Events:

As part of their Personal and Professional Development module, each year students are asked to raise money for charities of their choosing. This year our L6 students all chose to donate to Jigsaw, a charity dedicated to providing Mental Health support for young people. Together our students managed to raise over €600, a fantastic achievement!

To raise this amazing money, we had students hosting a general knowledge quiz, braving the cold to complete a bogathon run at Lisduff adventure farm, and climbing up Moylussa Mountain! We're incredibly proud of our students for doing this, and for raising the money for such an important cause.



Level 6 Students looking cold and muddy after finishing their bogathon run at Lisduff adventure farm!



Level 6 Students completing their Moylussa Mountain Climb in aid of Charity.



Our Agricultural Science and Sustainability degree students at Schoaboy Bog in Cloughjordan

Degree students at Gurteen!

Semester 2 of the Agricultural Science and Sustainability Degree Programme began on 9th January. This semester sees the 1st year group based at the Gurteen College campus since the degrees founding. They are doing lots of practical skills on modules like Animal Production as well as new modules to Gurteen such as Biology and Botany, and Forestry Systems. They are also learning about soils and peatlands for the first time and the area of forestry and how it can complement a farm and have a real lasting impact on its sustainability.



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Course Update

We are almost half way through the academic year. As we enter the Spring season, there is a definite sense of a change in the air. The birds are starting to sing a little louder, the days are getting a little longer and students on our full-time courses are beginning to see the end in sight. In the halls, you can hear the excitement building as they anticipate what work placement will be like. This change in pace can also be sensed by teachers who are anticipating the opportunity to catch up on tasks that were left aside while they put all their efforts into giving the students the best possible learning experience during the Autumn term.

The Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture course is progressing very well with all students preparing to go out on placement in March. This placement will last 8 weeks and is an invaluable opportunity to put many of the skills learned and practiced into use in a different farm setting. Students must complete a weekly diary while on placement. The diary helps them identify the key performance indicators for the host farm, track their working weeks and helps massively with the on-farm learning experience. Theory and skills assessments as well as assignment work have been ongoing since their return after Christmas. Students continue to be part of the farm work each week including lambing duty and milking duty. However, it's not all about academic work in Gurteen. Students have been busy playing sports like hurling, football and rugby, doing dancing lessons and representing the college in the annual colleges Macra Challenges day.

The next Distance Learning course will begin in Spring 2023 with induction beginning in April. The exact date has not been confirmed yet but keep a close eye on our website and social media for a start date announcement.

The full-time courses on offer at Level 6 are Dairy Herd Management, Drystock Herd Management and Crops and Machinery Management. The three groups have all departed for a 16-week placement on a host farm sources by our college placement officer. This year we have 12 students who have requested to do their placement abroad. Students are travelling to Wales, Scotland, England, Germany and New Zealand.



Level 5 students completing a safety session on slurry handling ahead of their placements.



Level 6 Dairy Herd Management students Colin Grennan and Ellen Feery at the airport before heading out to New Zealand for their placements!

-Dr. Stephanie Scully, Assistant Principal



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Online Content

Recently we've been busy filming some new content for our social media platforms, including a virtual tour of our teaching facilities, accommodation and farm! The stars of these videos are Rosie and Martin, two of our fantastic level 5 Certificate in Agriculture students! Read on to learn a bit more about each of them!

You can watch the full video now on our social media pages- find it on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and our YouTube!



Hi I'm **Rosie O'Brien**, and I'm from Riverstown in Tipperary! I went to St Brendan's Community School in Birr before coming to Gurteen College. I decided to study at Gurteen because in my opinion it's the best agricultural college in Ireland. It has a great reputation, and I'd always heard good stories about it. One thing I love about studying at Gurteen is that you learn something new every day, plus you can always have the craic with the staff and other students! After I'm finished at Gurteen I'm planning on travelling to New Zealand and working on a dairy farm there. I'd really recommend Gurteen College because there's always a good atmosphere, and you make friends for life while getting a really good education!

I'm **Martin Lawlor**, and I'm from Kinnitty in County Offaly. Before coming to Gurteen, I went to St Brendan's Community School in Birr. One of my favourite things about being here at Gurteen is meeting so many different personalities- there's always good craic! Once I've finished at Gurteen I'm not sure what I want to do, either travel and work for a few years or maybe continue college and pursue a Level 7 qualification. I'd absolutely recommend Gurteen College to potential students! It's an easy-going environment and the study isn't too strenuous.



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Farm Update

Spring is just around the corner and all the signs of it on the farm are showing. The early season sheep lambed in January and went nice and smoothly. The dairy cows and suckler cows have started calving with all the signs of a busy February and March ahead. The mid-season sheep flock are in the shed and in good order for lambing in March. Fertiliser was forward bought and is in the yard ready to go with a new Amazone fertiliser spreader is on its way to Gurteen to ensure accurate efficient spreading. Our winter oats and winter barley are growing very nicely but our winter wheat has taken some serious crow damage, we will assess the damage more clearly in the next few weeks and develop a plan. Slurry is being applied to grassland as I write this. We hosted a Signpost meeting where the 12 step-plan to reduce emissions on farms was discussed and debated, I am happy to report Gurteen have engaged in all 12 steps.

For the machinery fans out there; the big news is that our new fleet of 6 John Deere tractors have arrived, we are looking forward to getting to grips with the new machines and with the GPS, guidance, and field mapping technology they bring. We have already used them for auto-steer training with our level 6 machinery and crops students, as well taking those same students to the Templetohy Farm Machinery depot for training in combine harvesters and forage harvesters. We look forward to building a relationship with John Deere and TFM.

-Ken Flynn, Farm Manager



One of our suckler cows with her new-born calf.



New-born dairy calves from our pedigree Holstein Friesian herd



Principal Jon Parry, with Sales Specialist David Murray, along with Ken Flynn next to a brand new 6110M.



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Gurteen Alumni



Gurteen Alumni Adam Watson, who studied here from 2020-2022.

My name is Adam Watson, I'm a dairy farmer from Ballymore County Westmeath. I studied in Gurteen from 2020 until 2022. Now that I've left Gurteen, I'm currently going into a partnership at home with my father farming and also working for another farmer.

I completed the level 5 certificate in agriculture in my first year and then went on to do the Level 6 Dairy herd management course. I choose to study at Gurteen because of the interest in breeding and grassland management. I think they are the most important aspects of farming and in Gurteen they put a big emphasis on these two subjects. My favourite thing about studying in Gurteen was while you were learning you were also having great fun while doing so. You make friends with people who have much the same interests as you and makes it all more enjoyable.

I suppose one memory I'll always have would be attending the grass walks as they were always good fun with the lads having a laugh. Attending the on-farm walks in second year, learning from farmers around the country about how they run their farms and what ways work for them were very enjoyable also. I would recommend Gurteen for anyone interested in Agriculture because the craic is always good there whether it's with your friends or lecturers it was always good sport. The facilities in the yard are also state of the art and makes it easy to work and learn in good facilities. A lot of the course is practical also which is a great help!

-Adam Watson, Gurteen Graduate

Dates for the Diary:

It's looking like a busy few months ahead for Gurteen College, and we can't wait! See below though for a few key dates which you won't want to miss!

March 8th - Gurteen College Open Day, between 10:30am-12:30pm

June 17th- Sheep '23 @ Gurteen College

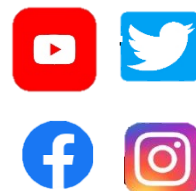
July 20th- Energy and Farm Diversification Show @ Gurteen College

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@GurteenCollege





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Governor Spotlight- Margaret Berry

Margaret Berry is one of the governors here at Gurteen College. She joined our board back in June 2018, but since September 2022 she has taken on the role as chair of the Sustainability Committee. We think it's important to highlight some of the amazing people who work behind the scenes at Gurteen College- so read on to learn more about Margaret, and her relationship with Gurteen!

Who are you outside of Gurteen? I am a proud mum to Julia who is 7 and wife to Hugh. We live on a farm near Gurteen College with horses, beef cattle, sheep, a dog and cats. As a proud Dublin girl, I'm often asked how I came to live in Tipperary. Like so many people in Ireland we are only one generation away from a farm. My mum grew up on a dairy farm and I believe she has had a huge impact on my interest in the agricultural industry including a love of food, cooking, food and agri business in Ireland and overseas. Outside of family life I work with Kepak Food Group as Head of Sustainability.

What is something that Gurteen does/is that makes you proud? I am very proud to be part of such a progressive college. Gurteen is always striving to look to and plan for the future and ensure a sustainable future for the largest agricultural college in Ireland. The supply chain of Ireland's largest indigenous industry starts with farms and agriculture. Gurteen has a critical role to play in the education of students for this industry today and the future.

What's your aspirations and hopes for the college's future? I hope Gurteen will continue to be the sustainable agriculture college of choice for students across Ireland. In the future, I hope this reputation will be recognised further afield and as a centre of excellence for best practice in sustainable agricultural education.

Valtra @ Gurteen:

In January we welcomed Valtra onsite for two days for an event where they showcased some of the latest tractor models on offer- including their new Q Series machines!

It's always great to have companies like Valtra onsite for events like this, allowing our students a chance to see some of the best upcoming farming machinery first-hand!



Valtra showing off their new models in the Q series





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Applications & Open Day:

Applications for our full-time Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture course are open now, and you can **apply via the Teagasc website** today! For all the information, and more insight into Gurteen you can also check out our website for more details on how to apply. Equally though, why not come along to our next onsite Open Day- **Wednesday 8th March**, from 10:30am-12:30pm.

We'll be giving guided tours of our teaching facilities, onsite accommodation, and our mixed-enterprise farm! Plus, you can meet with our staff and ask any questions you might have.



Wayne Smith receiving his award for first place in the presentation competition.

Macra na Feirme Inter-Colleges Day

In February we took a team of 12 Level 5 students down to Salesian Agricultural College for the annual Inter-Colleges day, run by Macra na Feirme.

The day saw students compete in a variety of events; including tug-o-war, simulated tractor driving, stock judging, fencing and problem solving! Throughout the day our students competed against students from every other agricultural college and we're proud to say that by the end Gurteen had achieved a very honourable third place! A huge congratulations to the winners of Mountbellew Agricultural college.

We'd be remiss without also giving a particular congratulations to our student Wayne Smith, who came first overall in the Presentation Competition, sponsored by FRS Network!

The full Gurteen team consisted of; Wayne Smith, Luisne Delaney, Patrick Kenny, Kalum Falknier, Rosie O'Brien, Ger Sweeney, Ruben Wright, Edward Hiney, Conor Walsh, Martin Lawlor, Jack O'Donnell and Andrew Long. Well done to all our students who took part!



The Gurteen College team at the Macra na Feirme Inter-Colleges Day at Salesian Agricultural College.



Our Tug-O-War team pulling hard, and eventually winning the bronze medal!