



Gurteen Gazette

October 2024



Level 5 Agriculture students getting to know each other through some friendly tug-o-war contests!



Level 6 Drystock students attending the Newford suckler demonstration farm open day.

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@GurteenCollege

Principals Welcome

The first few weeks of Autumn term are always a joy, this year we enjoyed good weather, and our new students took advantage of the long evenings, playing sport on the pitches, swimming in the pool and just taking time to enjoy the campus and each other's company. As that new group of students arrive and then settle into Gurteen life we notice the personalities change and develop over the first few weeks of term. The quite timid students who arrived in September start to find their voice and develop their confidence, the proud and bold students who confidently cracked jokes on the first day of term start to recognise they still have much to learn.

As autumn moves on we start to experience the now familiar sequence of named storms - Met Eireann decreed the 2024/5 storms will be called Ashley, Bert, Conall, Darragh, Éowyn, Floris, Gerben, Hugo, Izzy, James, this could easily be the roll call for a class of students at Gurteen! The stormy weather coincides with a period of buffeting and jostling as the new students get to know each other and start to understand that every individual student has unique experiences and perspectives to contribute to the group.

My experience of 34 years in education has taught me that each of those individual students are to be treasured, no matter their family background, their previous school attainment or their physical ability. All students are welcome at Gurteen. Whilst Gurteen will help each student navigate their own journey through towards finely honed skills and deeper understanding of farming and horses, those students in turn will contribute to the growth of our Gurteen College community.

Autumn 2024 brought record numbers of full-time students to Gurteen with the Level 8 Agricultural Science and Sustainability degree and Level 5 Equine course continuing to grow, our student residences are full and we have recruited additional teachers, you find more details on this and much more over the next few pages.

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



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Tom Duffy- College Lecturer and Competitive Ploughing!

Alongside being one of our fantastic lecturers for the agricultural courses, Tom Duffy has a passion away from the classroom that's absolutely worth sharing and celebrating. Especially after his success at this year's Ploughing show.

Tom competed in the two-furrow conventional junior A competition representing North Tipperary. However, not only was Tom competing; he was bringing home trophies! During the competition Tom used a Ford 6610 FWN tractor and a Kverneland 2 furrow match, with a lot of hours of self-made modifications.

A huge congratulations to Tom for achieving the Silver Medal in his category; coming 2nd out of 32 competitors.

Chatting to Tom about the sport, he tells us that it's a family tradition for him, and that he's now the third generation to be involved with competitive ploughing.

He first started when he was 11, competing in a range of different classes- including horse ploughing!

The fourth generation of Duffy's competing in competitive ploughing has already started as well, with Tom's son Robert competing this year in the All-Ireland competition at Novice-Intermediate level. Not only has Robert started though, he's already brought home some prizes as he also came second in the category!

(L to R) The North Tipp team, comprised of Joe Slattery, Ray Clancy, Robert Duffy, Tom Duffy after a very successful competition!



Tom focusing hard during the competition driving his Ford 6610 FWN tractor.





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Equine Course Updates

On to year number two, what a quick year that has been. All our horses are back after their well-deserved break for the summer, and we have some new recruits that have joined the team for a fun filled year ahead. We've welcomed 16 new Level 5 Equine students to Gurteen in September, ready to beginning their equine journey with us. Our Level 6 Equine students are now officially beginning their final year here in Gurteen before taking on the Equine industry.

To start off the academic year, we had a wonderful visit from Ellie and Cathy Rogan and their wonderful Connemara Pony Tullaree Fear Bui also known as Patrick in their preparation for HOYS (Horse of the year Show) in the UK. During this demonstration the Equine students got to ask some very insightful questions regarding the designated show piece that was used in the showing ring, turnout of both the horse and rider, the preparation in the run up to the big day including feeding, transport and even exercise regimes. We want to send a massive thank you to Cathy and Ellie for giving our students a brilliant educational demonstration and insight into the world of showing.

Looking ahead we have some more educational trips and speakers planned for our Equine students to explore and broaden their knowledge as the year goes on. Time is going by so quick already! In a few weeks all our students will be getting their placement locations sorted for the new year, whether that be in stud yards, riding schools, sales yards, trekking centres or showjumping yards we're determined to get our students onto placements they're truly passionate about!

- Naomi Ruane, Course Co-Ordinator and Lecturer



Ellie and Cathy Rogan talking to students about their HOYS preparations.



The equine classes of 24/25- it's great to see this course grow and grow!

Level 5 Equine student Katie Ryan, from Co. Tipp practicing her jumping skills.





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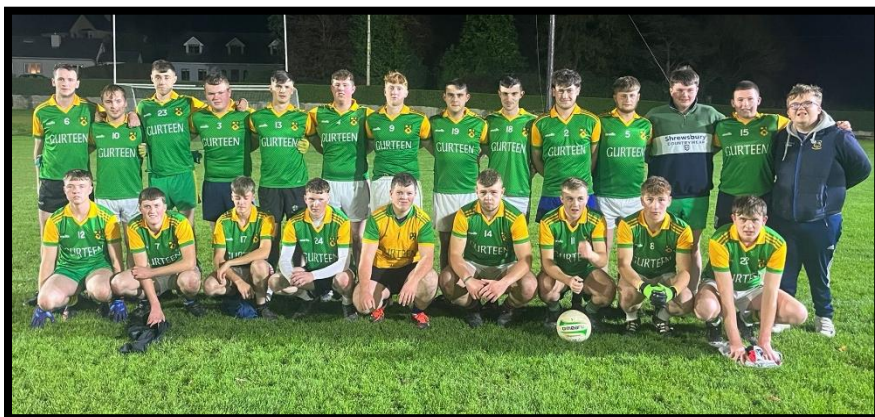
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Men's Hurling team for 2024/25



Our shield winning men's 7 aside football team!



Gurteen College men's football team 2024/2025

Sporting Successes at every turn!

Alongside getting into the swing of classes and settling into life at Gurteen, this first term of the college year always sees a flurry of sporting events for our students to compete in- and this year has been no different!

This year we've had strong teams in hurling, camogie and football competing in inter-college competitions! All our teams have fared extremely well, and had some pretty stellar successes!

A special congratulations has to be given to our men's 7 aside football team (Captained by Ciaran Heneghan, Level 6 Drystock student) and women's 7-aside football teams (Captained by Shauna Corrigan, Level 5 Agriculture student). Both teams won their shield competitions and brought home some trophies!

On top of that Shauna Corrigan also won an individual trophy in the ladies' long kick competition- well done Shauna!

A huge congratulations, and well done, to all our students who play on our sporting teams.



Our shield winning women's 7 aside football team!



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Agriculture Course Updates

September marked the start of another academic year for Gurteen, and with it comes a brand-new cohort of students to get to know! This year welcomes students from all over Ireland, with many different backgrounds, who have come to the college to gain an invaluable education. The education team are always excited to meet the new faces and get to know the students. In general, it's a time where we are all getting to know each other. It takes time for personalities to show, and so students can be slow to get to know each other. However, by Christmas there are some firm friendships made that will last a lifetime.

-Stephanie Scully, Assistant Principal



Level 5 Agriculture students practicing their tractor driving skills in our yard.

Level 5 Agriculture:

The first week of the Level 5 course is filled with induction. Students are introduced to the staff and the academic expectations are outlined. The college student handbook is brought to their attention, the timetable is explained, and each student begins to get stuck in with their classes. As well as this, they've had the opportunity to do an AI course with Dovea Genetics- something we'd delighted to offer to those who are interested.

The student's week is made up of a mixture of practical skills outside and classroom-based activity each day. We find this mix to really appeal to the students. They hear about it in the classroom, but then get to see it out in the farm which is the best way to learn.

Level 6 Agriculture:

The last 8 weeks has seen these students really start to focus in as their placements will soon be upon them! Alongside their usual classes they've been busy attending farm visits and doing analysis on their home farms if they choose to do so through the Farm Business and Planning Module.

As the year continues to progress, the Level 6 students will also have the opportunity to apply to join the 2nd year of the Agriculture Science and Sustainability degree programme. Progression from Level 6 to higher education, further education courses and indeed getting placed into the workplace is high on the agenda for the Level 6 cohort as they begin to plan for life past Gurteen. To help with this, we do have dedicated time being allocated to helping them fill out application forms, prep for interviews and generally prepare for the "next step".



Level 6 Dairy students took a trip out to Mervyn Stanley's farm in Shinrone.



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Degree Course Updates

September saw us welcome back our Agricultural Science and Sustainability degree second year students to Gurteen, with a few extras this year as we had 8 Gurteen Level 6 students transfer to year 2. It's fabulous to see Gurteen offering this progression to these students, and we're delighted to see them continue to grow and blossom into the talented people we know they'll be!

We are thrilled to see 30 first years join the degree programme, and they're settling in well in Thurles for this semester. Although they won't be stationed at Gurteen till the new year, we loved meeting them and showing them around in late Oct!

Our third years returned to Thurles and are busy doing interviews for their upcoming Professional work placement after Christmas.

It's exciting to see our first cohort of student entering Industry placement, I am sure they will do us proud. During their time on our degree these students get lots of opportunity to see farms, industry and research on field trips as well as once a week they all participate in farm work duties on the Gurteen Farm. Our aim is to have graduates that talk the talk and walk the walk!

-Anne Marie Doheny, Degree lecturer



First Year degree students on a tour of the Gurteen farm in preparation of their Semester here after Christmas.



Apply now for September 2025!

Applications for all our full-time level 5, are now open! You can apply via the Teagasc website directly, or through our own website, ready for September 2025.

Our next college Open Day will be March 7th 2025, and we'd love to see you there! Come get a guided tour of the college campus, and our farm and equine facilities to see whether we're the college for you.

Would you like more information? Check out our website or give us a call- we'd love to chat!

Call (067)21282

Email: info@gurteencollege.ie

Website: www.gurteencollege.ie



Third Year degree students at Moorepark research centre as part of their module on Grassland Management and nutrient management planning.



Scan me to learn about our upcoming Open Day, and how to book your place!

We can't wait to see you there!



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Students getting stuck in and assisting with ploughing.



Level 6 Students completing one of their weekly grass walks, where they monitor the quantity of grass in our paddocks.



Unfortunate news regarding our annual bTB test, but we stay optimistic for the future.

Farm Update

After a wet and challenging spring and early summer the back end of the year has been much kinder than we expected. Milk production and price are both in a better place than last year, and our very strong scanning results hinted at a positive 2025. Lamb sales have gone very well, and the rams have worked hard during October. The harvest went much better than expected for the year that's in it, with the yield of spring barley being especially pleasing, our students have experienced near ideal ground conditions whilst cultivating and sowing winter crops. The kinder autumn has allowed us to keep stock later than we did last year which is giving us more confidence around relatively tight fodder stocks, we are certainly grateful to have both maize and beet to complement our grass silage. With our growing equine course our horse numbers have also grown with 20 horses back onsite.

Our greenhouse gas emissions profile for 2023 showed that overall emissions from Gurteen farm reduced by 12% compared to the previous year, our milks carbon footprint was 8.94 kg CO₂e per kg FPCM* and our beef carbon footprint was 8.94 CO₂e/kg live weight gain. Our use of protected urea, increased clover content across all our paddocks and improvement management of our slurry have all contributed to these reductions. We anticipate the 2024 emissions profile will show further improvement.

In the second half of October we had our annual bTB test, which we unfortunately did not pass. We went down with a total of 7 reactors. All staff and students were informed by email, with a reminder of bio-security measures. It is very disappointing and sad news for Gurteen, we have to remind ourselves that we are only one of many farms who are going through the exact same process due to bTB. We will be following all requirements and advice from the department of agriculture and we will be hoping for clear upcoming tests. We will keep staff and students informed of the outcome of the follow-up tests and our status

-Ken Flynn, Farm Manager



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At the start of term, the second-year degree students took fascinating a trip out to Dovea Genetics.



Equine students completing some ice-breaker games at the start of term



We completed our harvest of our Winter Barely in late July, once all the rain had stopped!

Words from Steven, our College Chaplain

I always look forward to September and the arrival of new students at Gurteen at the start of the academic year. It is a privilege to speak about the ethos of the college to each team. I am excited in doing so, because this is not something I have to do because the Trustees or others expect it. I really believe in our ethos. It motivates us because we see the good in its outworking for the students and all in the college community.

For now, I'll mention the first two parts of the ethos:

- 1. The College exists first and foremost to serve the needs of its students.*
- 2. The education of each student will be considered to be of equal value, and each student will, therefore, be treated equitably in terms of the resources applied to his or her education irrespective of class, race, creed, gender or sexual orientation.*

Equality is a wonderful thing. But equity requires us to stop and consider each individual in the system. Gurteen appreciates each student for who they are. Their individuality will mean that students will need different things to help them thrive here. And so, it's a very special thing to see the care, support and encouragement that staff and other students give to enable all to thrive.

-Steven Foster, College Chaplain



Gurteen staff photo for 2024.



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Staff Updates

Over the summer we welcomed a number of talented, new members of staff into the Gurteen team! As time goes on we'll introduce you to them all- but in this edition, we'd love to introduce Debbie Sheerin and Niamh Barry!

Debbie Sheerin:

I'm Debbie Sheerin! I'm from Croghan, Co. Offaly and come from a suckler farm which my brother and father run mainly; but I help from time to time with paperwork and standing in a gap if needed.

In 2016 I started my level 8 in Agricultural Science in the Institute of Technology in Tralee (now MTU). I absolutely enjoyed every minute of it and learned so much while there. After I finished, I worked with Liffey Mills in their Edenderry branch for 2 years, helping them get the branch up and running. I left there in 2022 to go and do a Teagasc funded Masters in Agricultural Extension and Innovation with UCD.

My first few months at Gurteen have been absolutely amazing! I tell everyone that I have fallen on my feet here. One of my favourite things is the food from the canteen! So good, at times you end up in a food coma! Overall though, the campus is lovely, staff are so friendly and supportive, the students are amazing too, and just the overall atmosphere here is fantastic.



Debbie has joined the teaching team to deliver modules on Farm Business and Technology, Farm Safety, and Farm Management and Planning to our Level 5's and 6's

Niamh Barry

I'm Niamh Barry, originally from Cork! I have always had a keen interest in agriculture, I worked in many different areas in the sector over the years. My previous role as an agricultural consultant in Scotland allowed me to work directly with farmers and research colleagues. More recently I was working on an EU project for Teagasc as a Climate Smart Advisors Project Advisor, this focused on training advisors to build their capacity to give climate smart advice.

Back in 2018, I qualified with a BSc (Hons) in Land Management in Agriculture in WIT and I continued on to complete an MSc in Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security in NUIG. I'm also currently studying a part-time research MSc in "GrassToGas; Strategies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions in pasture-based sheep production systems" with MTU.

So far, I have really enjoyed my time in Gurteen, especially getting to have discussions with students and to try to see things from their perspective while also trying to provide them with the knowledge and skills they need.



Niamh Barry joined our teaching team over the summer to teach our Level 5's, 6's and degree students about everything grass!



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Produced and Published by Molly Parry- Promotions and Social Media Officer

(Below) Adult learners on a Part-Time course doing hands-on learning during a grass walk.



(Below) A fantastic turn out at the show this year- always wonderful to see!



Another great Energy and Farm Diversification Show!

We were delighted to welcome everyone to Gurteen for the 2024 Energy and Farm Diversification Show this year- and Wow what a great turn out!

Audiences were spoilt for choice when it came to panels and talks to listen too, with the likes of Charlie McConalouge, Francie Gorman, Oisín Coghlan and Eimear Cotter headlining the main keynote panel.

A huge thank you to everyone who organised and ran the successful event, and of course to everyone who joined us on the day!

Distance Education Green Cert returns!

We're delighted to announce the triumphant return of the Distance Green Cert course after a few years' hiatus.

This course is targeted at adults who already have a Level 6 or higher award and are now seeking the green cert qualification.

This course is conducted through a mix of in person and online study, with students only having to be in college a total of 20 days throughout the 16 months.

The next start date for this distance course will be in January 2025- and you can put your name down on our waiting list to be first in line to apply!

Email info@gurteencollege.ie or call (067)21282 to be added to that list today.

Scan me to visit our website and learn all about the distance course- and how to apply today!



High profile names on this year's keynote panel at the Energy and Farm Diversification show!