



# Gurteen Gazette

## July 2024



Level 5 students completed sheep-shearing training with George Graham this term.

### Principals Welcome

The Irish women's 4 by 400 metre relay team is truly inspiring – 4 amazingly talented young women from different backgrounds proudly representing Ireland, together they have simultaneously challenged the perceived hierarchy of world athletics, and united the people of Ireland as we cheer on their remarkable efforts. Relay races feel like a good metaphor for the work of Gurteen during the summer period – let me explain...

The students are 'quick out of the blocks' racing towards the end of term completing their exams and submitting the last pieces of course work. As they leave campus for the final time the baton is passed to the teaching team who 'race down the back straight' to complete all the corrections and calculate the final grades. As external verification and exam boards are concluded the teachers pass the baton to our events and catering teams who 'power through the final bend' building momentum as Gurteen prepares to host numerous high-profile events and many residential youth groups over the summer. The 'anchor leg' of this particular relay team are the farm staff as they limber up and make the final preparations for harvest, and of course we are aiming for gold!

Exams, corrections, events, harvest!

Each leg of the 4x 400m relay race is completed by experienced professionals who have trained for their specialist role – but it is when those individuals work together that they really achieve great things, just as all our talented colleagues at Gurteen come together to deliver extraordinary results for our students and the wider farming community.

Congratulations to all the students who completed their courses in 2024, we are very proud to welcome you into the Gurteen alumni. We wish every student well as they leave Gurteen and start the next chapter of their story, do keep in touch – you may be leaving Gurteen but you will always be part of our community.

-Principal Jon Parry



Enda Shanahan representing Gurteen at the Teagasc 'Student of the Year Awards' alongside Stephanie Scully

**Want more frequent updates? Follow us on all our social media pages!**

@GurteenCollege





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### Raising money for charity with PPD Events

As part of their courses, our Agriculture students complete a module called 'Personal and Professional Development', and within this module students are asked to organise and complete some fundraising for a charity of their choice!

This term our Level 6 Agriculture students all took part in a Bogathon at Lisduff Adventure Farm- with all of them truly getting stuck in with the mud!

Our Level 5 students completed a number of events; including volleyball, tyre-pulling and soccer.

The students had a great time and made some memories for sure- all while supporting Embrace Farm. A huge well done to all involved.



*Level 5 Agriculture students competing in a tyre-pulling race!*



*Level 6 Agriculture students getting well and truly 'stuck in' during their bogathon at Lisduff Adventure Farm.*

**We're looking for loan riding horses for this September.** We're seeking horses which are over 14.2HH and between 5-15yrs old.



The horses need to be **jumping at least 90cm to 1m** and capable of doing a **dressage test** at prelim/novice level, plus have some **cross-country experience.**



If you have a horse which may be suitable, please email us a description of them; including it's age, experience and temperament. Please also include some videos and photos!

**Emails can be sent to Naomi Ruane at [nruane@gurteencollege.ie](mailto:nruane@gurteencollege.ie)**

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At Gurteen we're incredibly proud of the environment and atmosphere we offer our students, in the hopes that it creates the perfect place for our students to grow and flourish while completing their courses. Which is why poems like this one, wrote by talented Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture student Aoife Jones mean so much to us!

We'd love for you to take a read too:

"The black sheep  
never felt right  
The black sheep had struggles  
That no one understood  
Not quite perfect  
The black sheep knew  
He was different  
The black sheep  
Had a shepherd  
Who said  
"You can be anything"  
The black sheep  
Listened to the wise shepherd  
Wherever the shepherd went  
The black sheep followed  
Endlessly  
Carrying a bucket  
Sitting in the tractor  
The black sheep  
Was weaker than the rest  
Knowing that  
The sheep still tried it's best  
When it came to college  
The black sheep knew  
The others might treat me differently  
But what can I do?"

The black sheep went in smiling  
To its surprise  
The black sheep found friends  
from all over,  
Connemara, Wicklow, Meath, Laois  
Tipperary and Longford  
Through games of pool  
And having good chats  
The black sheep felt happy  
The sheep gained confidence  
And better speech  
And was well looked after  
By its friends  
"Do you need help?"  
"You did great on that tractor"  
"You're well able to take care of  
yourself"  
"I'm always here for a chat"  
While on placement the black sheep  
Grew stronger feeding and bedding  
calves  
As the end drew near  
The sheep felt a tinge of sadness  
It loved its friends and helping them  
As it went through the year  
One thing was clear,  
it had never felt more white"

**-Aoife Jones; Level 5 Certificate in  
Agriculture**



*Aoife Jones competing  
in Tug-O-War with some  
of her classmates.*



*Aoife enjoying her farm  
placement.*



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### Equine Course Updates

And that's a wrap!

What a quick year that has been. Our level 5 Equitation students are officially finished their course and are now off for the Summer.

On our last check-in the students were heading out on their 8 weeks of work placement. Since then, all the students have come back and their work placements were a success.

They all enjoyed their time on the yards and learned so many new skills whilst adding to their knowledge of various different aspects of the industry. It was so nice to get the different perspectives from different parts of the Equine industry and how much things differ.

Placement was an invaluable experience and it allowed all the students to get a real-life view on what the industry actually entails on a day-to-day basis.

We would like to extend a massive thank you to all the host yards for their time and hospitality towards our students and hope to be in touch again in September/October time for next year's placements.

Before the students finished for the summer, we took a trip to Ballypatrick Stables, home of Irish showjumper Greg Broderick. There we got to have a fantastic tour of the yard and got to meet all the wonderful staff, the horses and of course Greg himself. It was lovely to see how the yard runs and how everything is managed.

For now, we will all take a well-deserved break once the interviews have concluded before the next academic year begins.

Here's to another successful academic year for 2024/2025.

-Naomi Ruane, Equine Course Coordinator



*Level 5 Equine students completing their dressage exams.*



*Equine students also completed their jumping exams this term- succeeding with flying colours!*



*The equine staff and students at Ballypatrick Stables.*



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## July 2024



### Agriculture Course Updates

We are at the end of the academic year and all teachers are very busy completing corrections and offering repeat exams. The teachers on these courses are looking forward to the pace slowing down and an opportunity to take some time off work. There are a number of part time and distance courses that do not take any breaks over the summer and so these courses and the co-ordination of them is on-going. In general, the academic year has been very successful with many students who first came to Gurteen, very unsure of themselves now walking away with a lot more confidence in their own abilities and having some additional friends who they met along the way.

-Stephanie Scully, Assistant Principal

#### Level 5 Agriculture:

Our Level 5 Agriculture groups returned from placement on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, with the students having had 8 weeks of hands-on practice on farms across Ireland. A month later and after some hard work and exams we bid farewell to the students for the summer! Since that time the teachers have been working hard to ensure that all exams, skills and assignments are marked.

For the next couple of months, we hope the Level 5's enjoy their summer; but come September we cannot wait to welcome them back and get started once again!

#### Level 6 Agriculture

The Level 6 Advanced Agriculture students returned from 16 weeks of placement at the end of May. The placement period went very well with students returning from placement having had a very worthwhile experience witnessing a system of farming that they otherwise would not have had a chance to see.

Upon their return, students took part in a lot of project-based classes where any outstanding assignments were completed along with some outstanding theory classes and exams. It's very important to us that the Level 6 students are supported in their ambitions to progress on to further education or go into the workforce and so all students are given to opportunity to meet with a career's guidance counsellor and/or their course tutor should they wish to do so. We're sad to see them go, with them now having completed their two years with us- but we're so excited to see what they go on to achieve now! And although they may no longer be students of Gurteen, they'll always be part of the Gurteen community!



*In Level 5, students can choose to do training with George Graham in sheep shearing- a valuable skill!*



*Agriculture students taking part in a vital lesson on the dangers of slurry mixing.*



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### Degree Course Updates

The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years students of the Ag. Science and Sustainability Degree have completed their studies with us. Both year groups had a very enjoyable year- and we've loved getting to have them onsite and in class!

In September when the 2<sup>nd</sup> years are back, we're hoping to see some past Level 6 Advanced Certificate Graduates joining the group. This is hugely positive as it demonstrates our ambition to provide a clear route to higher education for all learners joining our level 5 Certificate in Agriculture. The second year of the courses sees students spending all of Semester 1 on the Gurteen campus with all subjects being delivered by Gurteen staff and lecturers. Each semester will see the group carry out a Problem Based Learning exercise whereby they will gain marks for a number of modules in the Semester through having completed one "problem-based project".



*(left) Our second year degree students attended a fascinating talk at Tirlán regarding the structures of the Co op and the sustainability procedures they follow.*

*(below) Equine students out enjoying the good weather while on a cross-country hack around our farm and willow fields!*

### Apply now for September 2024!

Applications for all our full-time level 5, and 6 courses are still open! You can apply via the Teagasc website directly, or through our own website.

However, places are filling fast so we'd recommend completing your application sooner rather than later.

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](mailto:info@gurteencollege.ie)

Website: [www.gurteencollege.ie](http://www.gurteencollege.ie)





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*When the weather allows it, we've been out making silage.*



*Our Dairy herd back outside after a long winter, now happily grazing*



*Our winter barley, looking good despite dark skies above!*

### Farm Update

This year has felt very tough, it was a long, wet Winter and Spring felt like it would never come. The weather has produced poor grass growth and things are very tight around the farm, the dairy cows are getting fed some silage bales to try slow them down and allow grass a chance to grow.

Besides lack of grass, and the awful weather the farm has been achieving many goals. Our calving and calf rearing were hard work but went very well. Lambing also went very well, and lambs are going to the factory every week now. We did our first cut pit silage about 2 weeks late and the returns were slightly lower than I would have liked but it's in the pit now and safe, ready for feeding in the winter. We made some very good quality baled silage earmarked for the sheep flock and we have made some haylage that will be fed to the horses when they arrive back on site.

Despite the weather, our winter barley is looking very good, spring barley is finding the weather a challenge and it looks like we will not have a bumper harvest for that crop. The maize and fodder beet we sowed was slow to get going with the cold temperatures but is now moving and growing strong. We're all hopeful of some kinder weather and a flush of growth. Second cut silage is not far away, and we won't feel it until winter barley harvest starts

**-Ken Flynn, Farm Manager**



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## July 2024

### Words from Steven, our College Chaplain

Recently I found myself running around a lot on numerous days in an effort to help someone. There were various factors at play that meant nothing was straightforward and it took up a lot of time. I was tempted to feel frustrated as I thought about the other things that I could be doing. But it was important - crucial for the person concerned.

We know that in everyday life. One thing related to our work can seem to take up all our time and energy and may seem to take away focus from other responsibilities that we may have. That's true when you're dealing with animals or machinery but its most real when dealing with people.

Jesus told a story of a shepherd who had 100 sheep but searched everywhere for one that was missing, and when found, made a celebration of it. Such attention to the one is at the heart of God's attention to us. Often the majority thinks that so long as that majority is OK, the one won't matter.

In Gurteen the One matters. The One who might be struggling. The One who might feel like life has gone against them. The One who made a mistake. The One that appears to everyone else to be doing fine - but isn't. I love the tangible ways in which our staff care for the One. Our College moves on from another academic year and things will continue to develop as the summer passes. But in all our activity at Gurteen and in wider life, we are alert to ensure that each One knows that they matter.

-Steven Foster, College Chaplain







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### Staff Updates- Hellos and Goodbyes!

The spring of 2024 has seen a number of staffing changes at Gurteen. Those that left us include Anna Camon and Tony Parker, they both recently retired having between them worked at Gurteen for 45 years! Anna first joined as a member of the equine teaching team and latterly worked as the access officer. Tony was our gardener and perhaps best known for his love of lunchtime swimming in the Gurteen pool no matter what the weather. Both were wished 'fond farewell' and happy retirement in the Gurteen tradition that includes a cream cake baked by Rita and poem penned by Lorraine.

Gurteen continues to grow with more courses on offer and more students attending the College there is a need for additional staff, over the next few issues of the Gazette we will introduce many of the new colleagues -

On the farm we welcomed Francis Larkin and Fintan Buckley, they bring a wealth of experience and wisdom having previously worked on local farms, of course they work hard and demonstrate great machinery and livestock skills - but they also exhibit the most important value of all - being a kind and considerate colleague.

There are a number of new faces joining our teaching team, with the Agricultural Science & Sustainability degree going from strength to strength and our Equine course proving very popular, more teachers is a very natural and positive reflection of the Colleges growth.

Rachel Dolan is a good example of the new teachers joining Gurteen, Rachel has taken on the role of access officer and agriculture teacher. Rachel, from Loughrea, completed a degree in accounting - but decided her future lay in agriculture so she joined the fulltime level 5 & Level 6 drystock course at Gurteen and then completed her education by getting a second degree in Agriculture! She has now returned to Gurteen with new found purpose and passion to offer additional support to any Gurteen students who may need a little extra help.



*Fintan; the newest member of our farm's drystock team*



*The dairy team added Francis to their roster.*



*Rachel has stepped into the role of Access officer.*



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## June 2024

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



## ENERGY & FARM DIVERSIFICATION SHOW 2024

July 18th Gurteen College, Co. Tipperary

### Panel Discussions

E&FDS Prides itself on delivering indepth panel discussions on topics such as solar, AD, biomass, climate change, farm diversification and much more. With 44 specially selected panels you will be sure to explore the topics that affect you and your farm.

15

### Meet the Experts

With 80 trade stands in attendance E&FDS is Irelands biggest energy & farm diversification show allowing you access to Irelands best companies in the sector.

80

### Demonstrations

This year E&FDS will have more demos than ever. solar, AD, hydro, forestry, organics and farm diversification. These practical sessions will allow attendees to can gain a better understanding of what will work for them.

6

### Free Event

If you are a forward-thinking farmer or an agri-professional E&FDS is the place for you. With over 3000 attendees expected, this show promises to bring Ireland's most progressive farmers together for a fantastic free educational event.

3000

## Energy and Farm Diversification Show 2024!

We are delighted to announce that the Energy and Farm Diversification Show is returning **Thursday, July 18th 2024** to Gurteen College, for a day filled with innovation, inspiration, and invaluable insights into the future of farming and energy diversification.

### What to Expect:

1. Diversification Opportunities: Explore new avenues in energy, leisure, hospitality, food and tourism industries.
2. Renewable Energy Solutions: Learn how to reduce energy consumption and increase renewable energy production on your farm and land.

Don't miss out on this must-see event for forward-thinking farmers and landowners! For more information

visit [www.energyandfarmdiversificationshow.com](http://www.energyandfarmdiversificationshow.com) to stay up to date on all the latest developments. See you there!

[info@energyandfarmdiversificationshow.com](mailto:info@energyandfarmdiversificationshow.com)

[www.energyandfarmdiversificationshow.com](http://www.energyandfarmdiversificationshow.com)



## Arrabawn Open Day Success!

We were ecstatic to welcome a great crowd to Gurteen on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June for Arrabawn's Open Day!

With over 65 stalls spread across the farmyard, and an incredibly interesting Q&A Session with Eddie Burgess (Teagasc ACP Programme), Ted Massey (Senior Inspector DAFM), Conor Mulvihill (Dairy Industry Ireland) and Edward Carr (Arrabawn Chairman and ICOS)

It was a fantastic day, with so much information available- we hope you guys ad as much fun as we did!

