

**Livestock For Sale**

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Weanlings & Yeanlings AA X Simmental. 7 Females & 2 Males. Gander for sale, €30.00. Contact Maureen Kelleher - Mc Nally. 071 96 41031

Organic Black Galloway pedigree cattle. "Bulls, Heifers, Cows for sale" from Organic Farm (Full Symbol IOFGA Licence No. 418), Galloways of Lecarrow, Spencer Harbour, Drumkeeran, Co. Leitrim. Contact Joachim Schaefer 071-9648960 or [gallowaysoflecarrow@gmail.com](mailto:gallowaysoflecarrow@gmail.com)

10 Charolais Cross cows for sale. In-calf to Aberdeen Angus bull. Longford area. Contact John 086 6073214.

**Produce For Sale**

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Organic Galloway Beef from Organic Farm, Galloways of Lecarrow, Spencer Harbour, Drumkeeran, Co. Leitrim. Contact Joachim Schaefer 071-9648960 or [gallowaysoflecarrow@gmail.com](mailto:gallowaysoflecarrow@gmail.com)

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House and 2 acres of Organic Certified Land available in the midlands area, located on the side of a busy main road, may suit market gardening type business. Number of sheds and out offices on site. Contact 087 4168988



Autumn 2010

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The Organic Producer is produced by the Leitrim Organic Farmers Co-op, in co-operation with the Western Organic Network and is distributed to all registered organic farmers in North West Ireland, to subscribers nationwide and to agricultural agencies in the Republic and Northern Ireland. If you have information you would like included in the next issue, please send it to: The Editor, Organic Producer, Leitrim Organic Farmers Co-op, The Enterprise Centre, Hill Road, Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim. Phone: 071 9640868, Fax: 071 9640869, Email: [leitrimorganic@eircom.net](mailto:leitrimorganic@eircom.net). (Download at [www.leitrimorganic.com](http://www.leitrimorganic.com))

## Drumshanbo Harvest Feast Says Thank You

The annual Drumshanbo Harvest Feast took place during the last weekend of August. It was glorious weather and the crowds came in their droves. The hugely popular event, which specialises in all that is great about regional food, heritage, eco-tourism and the environment, drew families, children of all ages, dogs and assorted animals and all manner of events and produce.

The Chairman and the organising committee of the Festival would like to thank all the visitors who came to Drumshanbo and added so much to the atmosphere and enjoyment of the weekend. The committee would

like to give thanks all those who gave of their time so freely; the local restaurants who gave cookery demonstrations; the chefs who prepared enormous quantities of free food for visitors; the craftspeople who demonstrated a variety of skills including wood turning, basket weaving and bee-keeping; the stall holders who presented and sold the best of local produce including meat, bread, jams and honey, cakes, cheese, flowers and organic wine. Thanks also to those who entertained visitors, whether it was through traditional music, the children's puppet show, the ice rink or the range of historic and biodiversity walks. The committee would also to thank their sponsors, including Fáilte Ireland, Bord Bia and a range of cross-border funding, without whose help the event would not be possible. This year the coop was

the lead group for the event with Tommy Early, Martin Reading and John Brennan representing the coop. The event is an important part of the coop's role in promoting small food producers and highlighting organic food and farming in the region.

Finally, the committee would like to apologise to any shopkeepers or residents who might have in any way been inconvenienced during the Festival through either parking restrictions or the volumes of traffic. We hope you will appreciate that any inconvenience was entirely unintended.

## Mohill Storytelling Festival

*Diversification is a way of life for farmers and those in the organic sector.*

Western Organic Network member Tony Cuckson has branched out and will be a featured storyteller at the 12 Annual Mohill Storytelling Festival on the October Bank Holiday Weekend, 22 - 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2010. Storyteller/musician Cuckson will be on stage at the Gala Concert at the Lough Rynn Castle Hotel in Mohill on 23rd October. He will be joined by fellow storytellers Danielle Allison, Fiona Dowling, Susie Minto,

Mattu and singer/harpist Fionnuala Gill. Tickets can be purchased on the night for €15. The Festival is launched Friday night at the Canon Donohue Hall on Main Street of the Leitrim village of Mohill, with all the storytellers being joined by winners of the local story competition for school children. Children from primary to secondary age range are

eligible for prizes for an illustrated story on the theme of "Awakening."

Other events over the weekend are free or by donation and include children's storytelling at Mohill Library on Saturday morning, 23<sup>rd</sup> October.

For the full festival programme please visit [www.mohillstorytelling.com](http://www.mohillstorytelling.com) or contact Bee Smith on 071 964 3936

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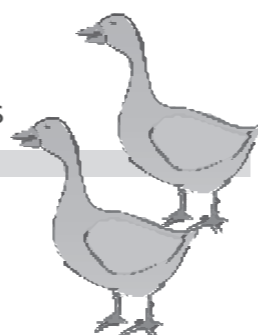
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# Guidelines for Finished cattle

As we are now in the busy time of the cattle year it is important to remember that you will need the following before selling cattle:

1. Your cattle may be out of test so it is important to check that you have had a herd test within the last calendar year
2. For cattle to qualify for premium prices they must be under 30 months and your herd must be in the Bord Bia Quality Assurance Scheme
3. Cattle must be in your herd for 70 days to be considered as quality assured cattle
4. All cattle going to a processor must be accompanied with a cattle intake form. This now applies whether you are certified by IOFGA or Organic Trust. (also available from coop office)
5. All cattle must be accompanied by a Food Chain Information or FCI (form available from the coop) or can be downloaded from [www.agriculture.gov](http://www.agriculture.gov)
6. Cattle over 30 months of age are generally not wanted and only receiving a 5% premium, as they are ineligible for the supermarket trade.
7. It is important as far as is possible to have cattle finished well before of 30 months at this time of year, as there can be a delay in moving cattle to the factory. If you are still having problems with this you will need to review your breeding/feeding policy.

## Organic feed for sale

### Wheat Oats Ration

Ph. Pat Lalor 087 2557679

Ballard Organic Farm

Kilbeggan, Co Westmeath

## IOFGA AGM

The IOFGA AGM takes place on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> of October at 2.30pm. This year the AGM will be held in the Nano Nagle Centre, in Mallow, Co Cork.

If anyone wants an entire version of the Annual Report, please email [grace.maher@iofga.org](mailto:grace.maher@iofga.org) or the office at [iofga@eircom.net](mailto:iofga@eircom.net) and we will post a full version out to you. It will also be possible to get a full version on the day.

We look forward to seeing members on the day.

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- Can attend general meetings and contribute to discussions
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- Are eligible for co-option onto the management committee.

An Associate Member does not hold a shareholding and receives no dividends.

The cost of Associate Membership in 2010 is €50.00 per year.

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Please request a standing order form from the office.

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County: .....

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Email: .....

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## SCENES FROM THE HARVEST FEAST 2010



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  - Plan your garden now 9<sup>th</sup> October
- **Seaweeds in season** – an introduction with Prannie Rhatigan 9<sup>th</sup> October
  - Growing in polytunnels 16<sup>th</sup> October
  - Wheatgrass, sprouts and juices 16 October
- **Get your garden in shape for next year** 23<sup>rd</sup> October
  - Wine making 23<sup>rd</sup> October
- **Discovering and planting new hedgerows** 13<sup>th</sup> November
  - Growing fruit – Winter workshop 27<sup>th</sup> November

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# I was wrong about veganism.

## Let them eat meat – but farm it properly

This will not be an easy column to write. I am about to put down 1,200 words in support of a book that starts by attacking me and often returns to this sport. But it has persuaded me that I was wrong. More to the point, it has opened my eyes to some fascinating complexities in what seemed to be a black and white case.

In the Guardian in 2002 I discussed the sharp rise in the number of the world's livestock, and the connection between their consumption of grain and human malnutrition. After reviewing the figures, I concluded that veganism "is the only ethical response to what is arguably the world's most urgent social justice issue". I still believe that the diversion of ever wider tracts of arable land from feeding people to feeding livestock is iniquitous and grotesque. So does the book I'm about to discuss. I no longer believe that the only ethical response is to stop eating meat.

In Meat: A Benign Extravagance, Simon Fairlie pays handsome tribute to vegans for opening up the debate. He then subjects their case to the first treatment I've read that is both objective and forensic. His book is an abattoir for misleading claims and dodgy figures, on both sides of the argument.

There's no doubt that the livestock system has gone horribly wrong. Fairlie describes the feedlot beef industry (in which animals are kept in pens) in the US as "one of the biggest ecological cock-ups in modern history". It pumps grain and forage from irrigated pastures into the farm animal species least able to process them efficiently, to produce beef fatty enough for hamburger

production. Cattle are excellent converters of grass but terrible converters of concentrated feed. The feed would have been much better used to make pork.

Pigs, in the meantime, have been forbidden in many parts of the rich world from doing what they do best: converting waste into meat. Until the early 1990s, only 33% of compound pig feed in the UK consisted of grains fit for human consumption: the rest was made up of crop residues and food waste. Since then the proportion of sound grain in pig feed has doubled. There are several reasons: the rules set by supermarkets; the domination of the feed industry by large corporations, which can't handle waste from many different sources; but most important the panicked over-reaction to the BSE and foot-and-mouth crises.

Feeding meat and bone meal to cows was insane. Feeding it to pigs, whose natural diet incorporates a fair bit of meat, makes sense, as long as it is rendered properly. The same goes for swill. Giving sterilised scraps to pigs solves two problems at once: waste disposal and the diversion of grain. Instead we now dump or incinerate millions of tonnes of possible pig food and replace it with soya whose production trashes the Amazon. Waste food in the UK, Fairlie calculates, could make 800,000 tonnes of pork, or one sixth of our total meat consumption.

But these idiocies, Fairlie shows, are not arguments against all meat eating, but arguments against the current farming model. He demonstrates that we've been using the wrong comparison to judge the

efficiency of meat production. Instead of citing a simple conversion rate of feed into meat, we should be comparing the amount of land required to grow meat with the land needed to grow plant products of the same nutritional value to humans. The results are radically different.

If pigs are fed on residues and waste, and cattle on straw, stovers and grass from fallows and rangelands – food for which humans don't compete – meat becomes a very efficient means of food production. Even though it is tilted by the profligate use of grain in rich countries, the global average conversion ratio of useful plant food to useful meat is not the 5:1 or 10:1 cited by almost everyone, but less than 2:1. If we stopped feeding edible grain to animals, we could still produce around half the current global meat supply with no loss to human nutrition: in fact it's a significant net gain.

It's the second half – the stuffing of animals with grain to boost meat and milk consumption, mostly in the rich world – which reduces the total food supply. Cut this portion out and you would create an increase in available food which could support 1.3 billion people. Fairlie argues we could afford to use a small amount of grain for feeding livestock, allowing animals to mop up grain surpluses in good years and slaughtering them in lean ones. This would allow us to consume a bit more than half the world's current volume of animal products, which means a good deal less than in the average western diet.

He goes on to butcher a herd of sacred cows. Like many greens I have thoughtlessly repeated the claim that it requires 100,000 litres of water to produce every kilogram of beef. Fairlie shows that this figure is wrong by around three orders of magnitude. It arose from the absurd assumption that every drop of water that falls on a pasture disappears into the animals that graze it, never to re-emerge. A ridiculous amount of fossil water is used to feed cattle on irrigated crops in California, but this is a stark exception.

Similarly daft assumptions underlie the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's famous claim that livestock are responsible for 18% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, a higher proportion than transport. Fairlie shows that it made a number of basic mistakes. It attributes all deforestation that culminates in cattle ranching in the Amazon to cattle: in reality it is mostly driven by land speculation and logging. It muddles up one-off emissions from deforestation with ongoing pollution. It makes similar boos in its nitrous oxide and methane accounts, confusing gross and net production. (Conversely, the organisation greatly underestimates fossil fuel consumption by intensive farming: its report seems to have been informed by a powerful bias against extensive livestock keeping.)

Overall, Fairlie estimates that farmed animals produce about 10% of the world's emissions: still too much, but a good deal less than transport. He also shows that many vegetable oils have a bigger footprint than animal fats, and reminds us that even vegan farming necessitates the large-scale killing or ecological exclusion of animals:

in this case pests. On the other hand, he slaughters the claims made by some livestock farmers about the soil carbon they can lock away.

The meat-producing system Fairlie advocates differs sharply from the one now practised in the rich world: low energy, low waste, just, diverse, small-scale. But if we were to adopt it, we could eat meat, milk

and eggs (albeit much less) with a clean conscience. By keeping out of the debate over how livestock should be kept, those of us who have advocated veganism have allowed the champions of cruel, destructive, famine-inducing meat farming to prevail. It's time we got stuck in.

**George Monbiot**  
*Courtesy: The Guardian*

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# Organic Sheep Trade Steady

2010 has seen an improvement in demand for organic lamb and it looks like demand will remain strong into next year. Overall there has been a remarkable improvement in the conventional price. Based on a study I carried out in 2009 the average price for conventional lamb was €3.80 in 2007. Currently the price at what is peak season stands at €4.40. It is possible to get a premium of 15% to 25% over this price depending on the outlet you choose.

Despite the recession and reduced incomes there has been an increase in consumption of organic lamb in the home market. This goes against the general trend of slightly downward sales been the speciality and organic areas. This trend has seen noted by Goodherdsmen who are more positive towards organic lamb at present. John Purcell said he does not understand where this is coming from and he also

points to good demand from non traditional customers such as Denmark and Germany.


One theory is that people have returned to making food from scratch, and have become more aware of provenance of food. Organic lamb seems to be a beneficiary of this trend. Although no lambs have been exported to Northern Ireland this year the home market has been able to absorb domestic production to date as well taking in lamb from Northern Ireland. It would seem that production has dropped in Northern Ireland as a result of lack of markets in recent years. Many sheep producers have downsized their flocks also, and this has resulted in a greater equilibrium in the market between supply and demand. The market this year sees Irish Country Meats continue to process lambs in Camolin, but in

smaller numbers.

Goodherdsmen are processing 100/week in Hacketstown and Athleague. This move back to Athleague is providing a valuable outlet for the many producers in Roscommon, Galway and Westmeath. Quality of lamb coming out of this area is excellent, and producers here have the capacity to increase production if the market demand is there.

I recently made a presentation to The National Organic Steering Group where I highlighted the issues of seasonality, and loss of lamb to the conventional sector. The Department and Teagasc both agree that is vital to address this seasonality if we are to realise the potential of Irish Organic Lamb.

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## DRUMSHANBO MART 2010

The remaining Organic sale's that will take place this year are as follows:

- **Saturday October 23rd**  
Cattle & Sheep
- **Saturday November 20th**  
Cattle & Sheep

## STRONG DEMAND AT DRUMSHANBO MART

There was a strong demand for both cattle and sheep at the recent September sale. 135 cattle were offered and 230 sheep. This was the largest entry of sheep ever, and prices were very strong with store lambs making €74 to €89 with ewe lambs to €91. A small selection of quality Suffolk hoggets made from €150 to €165

The cattle sale was small by the previous year and there were some outstanding prices. Most of the cattle were born in 2009 and there were relatively few weanlings.

BREED	SEX	WEIGHT kgs	PRICE €
LMX	M	270	700
AA	M	225	630
CHX	M	295	675
AAX	M	530	940
CHX	M	455	910
SIX	F	415	675
CHX	F	265	560
SHX	F	405	745

### Community Internet Facility

available for those in the organic sector and others who need it, i.e. students and the unemployed (for projects and research).

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## Comment & Opinion

### Is Agriculture part of the “Smart Economy”?

This is a question that I have been pondering over recent weeks. What is the smart economy?. Is the one that allowed the banks to self regulate leading the nation to the verge of bankruptcy?. It seems that the smart economy should be one that looks to its natural resources as a way to recovery. Taking the case of Iceland where it seemed the only road to recovery was to join the EU and to get the money from the European Central Bank. But then they stood back and thought about their strengths and what this would mean. Firstly it would mean having to open up Icelandic waters to EU fishing boats and we know what that has done to our Irish Fishing grounds. Secondly it would open up Icelandic agricultural production to competition from Europe. So joining the EU was going to decimate the most important sectors of the economy.

Now we are in the EU so we are not in exactly the same boat but we have advantages in terms of our natural resources similar to Iceland. So I contend that proper harnessing of our natural resources is a “smart” thing to do. Dependency on Foreign Direct investment into Ireland is not the basis for putting the

economy on a sound footing. With harmonising of tax laws throughout the EU we will not have the 12% corporation tax as a carrot to potential investors. Many EU countries competing with us have far better infrastructures both from a will logistics and broadband standpoint. Added to this will be the inevitable brain drain that our cyclical recessions bring, and surely if we want to have the “smartest” economy then we should avoid “live exports” especially when it comes to our people.

Now that discussion about property is no longer part of dinner party discussions, and bankers are putting their money on low risk deposit ,what is left that is tangible?, only land. In order for us to add value to this resource we will need to become smarter as food producers, and look to diversifying our farming away from commodity driven products. “Smart Agriculture” will require the ability to increase the value of the produce whilst sustaining the environment. This will have spin off’s in terms of increasing the opportunities for eco tourism which is the only hope of attracting high value European discerning tourists to our shores, often sampling a range of food and

experiences that cannot be found elsewhere. Our ability to foster this form of tourism could revitalise our rural areas and curb the brain drain. This will only happen when there is a plan that all relevant agencies of the state have signed up. It will also require a form of interpretation of European directives that do not heap a burden of red tape on farmers. It will require agencies to have people with solid business experience to assist those that wish to make our rural economies thrive and prosper. Finally it will require functioning financial institutions with an understanding of the needs of small rural businesses. Without these conditions The “Smart Economy” will remain a distant echo is the mind of the PR agency executive who dreamed up the term.

#### Geese For Sale

7 four month old goslings,  
3 grey goslings (female),  
4 white goslings (male),  
1 two year old grey goose (female).

Aclare, Co. Sligo.

Contact Rosie Hynes on  
087 9014211.

### November Sale for Irish Moiled Cattle


As part of its work on biodiversity Leitrim Organic Farmers continues its work to encourage rare breeds through the Irish Moiled Cattle Programme. Jim Gannon and John Brennan are members of the board of the society and represent the broader interest of the breed south of the border. The society has appointed a new secretary for the Society, Gillian Steele from Glenavy in Co. Antrim. This will help to relieve the hard pressed registrar Mark Logan and allow for increased membership to the society. Rare breeds continue to attract interest and their support under REPS 4 assisted greatly with the take up from Organic farming. There is still

support under the AEOS scheme but at a reduced rate. The Irish Moiled has many traits that make them ideal for organic farmers. The animals are a polled which is an asset from an animal welfare point of view. They also have traits such as hardiness and the ability to graze particularly rough pasture and rushes. The cattle also finish at low carcass weight similar to Aberdeen Angus making them suitable for many organic farms. The coop is working to place additional bulls with AI in the hope of increasing the potential of the breed. A sale of Moiled cattle will take place at the organic Mart in Drumshanbo on November 20<sup>th</sup>.

This will help to increase awareness of the breed among organic farmers and the wider farming community.



**A meeting of Irish Moiled Cattle Breeders will take place at the offices of Leitrim Organic Farmers Coop, Drumshanbo on November 20<sup>th</sup> at 11am preceding the special Moiled sale at Drumshanbo Mart.**

This meeting is being held to discuss how best to promote and support the breed in the south of Ireland and is being organised by Jim Gannon and John Brennan supported by the coop.



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