

National Organic Food Conference

The National Organic Food Conference is taking place on **Tuesday the 14th June at the Limerick Institute of Technology**. If you are interested in learning more about the Irish organic food sector this conference is the organic event of the year. Speakers at the conference include Adrian Dolby from Barrington Farm Estates one of the largest commercial organic farms in the UK and from Organic Dairy brand Glenisk.

A wealth of information will be provided in

themed breakout sessions such as; accessing consumers directly, export case studies, available supports to the organic sector and developments in the Irish foodservice sector. Lunch will be prepared by Peter Ward from Country Choice and Aramark and all of the food will be sourced from local organic producers. An understanding of The Irish consumer from the Futures Company and a panel discussion will form the basis of the afternoon session.

According to Kantar figures (52 weeks 17th

April 2011) the organic market is valued at approx **€97m and shows an increase on the previous 12 months**. Key Performance Indicators show that more people are shopping for organic but they are buying less than previously. Categories showing growth include yogurts, vegetables and snacks while fruit is down.

For more detailed information or to register to attend this conference please visit www.bordbia.ie/NationalOrganicConference



Sligo AI

Brendan McCrann

087 900 8830

Organic Opportunities

Livestock For Sale

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

Two Purebred Registered Aberdeen Angus Bulls for sale. Also 2 purebred registered maiden heifers. Full Symbol. Corduff Organic Farm. Ballinagh, Co. Cavan. To arrange to view, contact Philip Moynagh 087 7998633/049 4337465.

2 fully organic sim cross first calvers with calves at foot. 7 (Lim/Char/Angus Cross) 5th Calvers with calves at foot. Based in the midlands. Can deliver as required. Contact Paddy 057 9331509.

Produce For Sale

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

For Sale

Small square bales of June hay saved without rain for sale. Contact 089 4213822 (Roscommon area).

Two 3 year old hereford cows with aberdeen angus calves at foot due June/July. Limerick area. Contact 086 7738383 (Limerick).

Fertile goose eggs for sale. Leitrim area. Contact 071 96 36265

100 texel store lambs. Roscommon area. Contact 086 8542309.

Wanted

WOOFERS required for horticulture unit in North Sligo from May onwards, accommodation provided on site. In scenic location, close to the sea. Contact Aidan 086 1575623.

Belted galloway heifers halfbreeds (Limerick area) Contact John at 087-6555260, email johnjhassett@eircom.net

Store bullocks and heifers wanted. Contact John Quinn, 086 2556883. Tipperary area.

Wanted, one ton organic barley and half ton of organic oats. Also 300 square bales of organic hay delivered to West Mayo. Contact Christophe, 087.2621832 or christophe@ecofarm.ie

2 Aberdeen Angus weanlings wanted, Roscommon and surrounding areas. Contact 086 8741189.

25 acre organic farm fully registered organic since 1999. Many enterprises available - to work, share, lease, rent or for sale as going concern or W.H.Y. Enquiries to John Brennan at 071 9640868 or email johnb@leitrimorganic.com

Services

To keep up to date with stock listings go to www.leitrimorganic.com

Colour photocopying service available at reasonable rates. Why not give us a call at 071 9640868.

Fencing Contractor Available

Fencing Contractor available in Leitrim & Surrounding counties specialising in fencing for REPS, Commercial Forestry, Deer and Amenity fencing Free Range and Organic enterprises a speciality, Contact Michael at 087 6248589 or 07196 41324



Summer 2011

ISSUE 35

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. (Download at www.leitrimorganic.com)

New Season Organic Lamb at Roscommon Lamb Festival

Leitrim Organic Farmers Coop organised a spit roast to open the 2011 Roscommon Lamb Festival. The event now in its 3rd year ran over 5 days and the coop cooked 4 organic hoggets supplied by member Sean Butler of Tavanagh Organic Farm in Brideswell near Athlone. The lamb took 3 hours

to cook over charcoal. The hoggets were butchered by Troy Meats in Tyrellspass Co Westmeath and hung for 14 days who is long associated with the organic sector. Tavanagh Farm is now taking orders for organic Spring lamb and Aberdeen Angus Beef See www.hillsidefarm.ie or call

Sean on 09096 83708 The coop also cooked spit roasts at many other events to showcase the quality of Roscommon Organic Lamb.

Picture below shows John Brennan and Andrew Chilton with the cooked lamb ready to serve.



Sell your Stock Online

As part of increasing its overall service to members, Leitrim Organic Farmers Coop is listing stock for sale with photos where available on its website. This provides opportunities for farmers to sell their stock all year round. It also provides an opportunity for members who are not near marts to sell their stock. Each ad can have multiple photos attached and this gives potential buyers an

opportunity to see stock before they undertake (in some cases) a long journey to the seller. Farmers can also advertise machinery, fodder and other items. This service is in addition to the 6 organic sales run in conjunction with Drumshanbo Mart where record prices were achieved this spring. To place your ad contact Amanda at the office and simply email with photos to

leitrimorganic@eircom.net or txt them to 087 2703603, see www.leitrimorganic.com

The stock will be listed for 30 days unless otherwise advised. Coop members can use this service as often as they wish throughout the year. If you are not already a member fill in the form on page 11 and return with the fee of €50.

ORGANIC FOOD REALLY IS BETTER FOR YOU!

A study by the University of Newcastle School of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development reports that fruit and vegetables grown without artificial fertilisers have significantly more key nutrients, including vitamin C.

The results of this study are welcomed by the organic sector in Ireland. "Nutrition is one of the reasons that people buy organic said Grace Maher Development Officer with IOFGA, however other key reasons include the fact that organic food is free from pesticides and gm ingredients, it has higher animal welfare standards and its

production methods are more environmentally friendly."

This research challenges the Food Standards Agency in the UK who have in the past dismissed the nutritional benefits of organic food.

The Newcastle scientists found that organic fruit and vegetables are up to 12% richer in substances called secondary metabolites, these are said to boost the immune system and protect the body from cell damaging free radicals. Organic fruit and vegetables were also recorded to have 6% higher levels of vitamin C. The study also

suggests that eating organic food is likely to improve your overall general health as it also contains higher levels of compounds which encourage the body to burn fat.

The Newcastle study will be published in the next issue of the journal Critical Reviews in Plant Sciences.

For more information please contact:

Grace Maher,
Development Officer
IOFGA,

tel 087 6125989.

Organic feed for Sale

Organic Whole Oats
Organic Wheat Rolled
17% Unistock Ration
18% Dairy Nuts

Further discounts for
bulk purchases.

For a quote

Contact

Pat Lalor
at 087 2557679 or
pat@ballardorganicfarm.ie

Would you like to have a stall at

Enniskillen's first
weekly farmers'
market?

Markets will operate
10am-2pm Saturday
Central Enniskillen Location

If interested in taking a stall & would like
more information please contact Corrie at:
coriandermarket@gmail.com or
+44 (0)7788561124

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- Seaquim

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Agri Supplies,
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Co. Roscommon.

Tel: 071 96 39040
Fax: 071 96 39071
Mob: 086 8918883



Application for Associate Membership

- Associate Members have access to all Co-op services.
- Receive free quarterly Newsletter (Organic Producer)
- Can advertise Small Ads free in the newsletter or website
- Can sell organic beef, lamb & other produce to the Co-op
- Can attend general meetings and contribute to discussions
- Can participate in all Co-op activities and training sessions
- 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 2011 is €50.00 per year.

Payment can be made annually by standing order with your bank.

Please request a standing order form from the office.

Membership Application Form

I wish to become a Member of LOFC and enclose €50 please send me a standing order form

Name:

Address:

County:

Telephone:

Email:

Organic Status

Producer of

Please make cheques payable to:

Leitrim Organic Farmers Co-op,

The Enterprise Centre,

Hill Road,

Drumshanbo,

Co. Leitrim.

071 9640868

Rural Social Scheme

It is not just the income from Farm Assist that is helping families across the country. Being eligible for Farm Assist, even if it is only €1, allows you to be eligible for the Rural Social Scheme. This allows farmers to work 19.5 hours a week within the community in a role that fits around their farm schedule.

This could range from the upkeep of the local community centre, cleaning walkways for tourists or contributing to a community organisation such as a crèche. Not only does it give farmers additional income, it helps them develop a new skillset and allows for more social interaction which can help combat

some of the isolation that surrounds farming. Income derived from the Rural Social Scheme can amount to a maximum of €208 a week. However, many are irritated by the fact that there has been a freeze on people being accepted onto the Rural Social Scheme in the past year. Gerry Gunning says.

“There are 2,400 Rural Social Scheme places currently available. The IFA are calling for an additional 1,600 places resulting in 4,000 places overall across the country. Work is needed in communities across Ireland and there are farmers eager to get involved.”

NUMBER OF FARM ASSIST RECIPIENTS PER COUNTY

Carlow	95
Cavan	387
Clare	615
Cork	942
Donegal	1,418
Dublin	34
Galway	1,103
Kerry	801
Kildare	47
Kilkenny	146
Laois	160
Leitrim	360
Limerick	248
Longford	238
Louth	73
Mayo	1,840
Meath	70
Monaghan	528
North-Tipperary	215
Offaly	127
Roscommon	415
Sligo	313
South-Tipperary	172
Waterford	99
Westmeath	177
Wexford	230
Wicklow	73

Farmers Market for 2011

Roscommon
Friday 10am - 2pm

Sligo
Saturday 9am - 1pm

Carrick-on-Shannon
Thursday 10am - 2pm

Bundoran
Friday 10am - 2pm

Cavan Town
Friday 10am - 2pm

Boyle (King House)
Saturday 10am - 2pm

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).

This is a low cost service and is based at

Leitrim Organic Farmer's
Enterprise Centre,
Hill Road, Drumshanbo,
Co Leitrim

If interested, please contact the office on 071 9640868.

RE-LAUNCH OF CAVAN FARMERS MARKET

Cavan Farmers Market has moved to the old Egg Market in the town from the car park by the Town Hall. As part of the move Neven Maguire will re-launch the market in Friday June 24th. The market takes place from 10-2 and carries a full range of organic produce, artisan foods and Fish. For more information contact Paraic McBreen on 049 4331029 or 086 4057600

Set up Organic Farm/Garden

Have you always wanted to have your own organic farm business but don't have the land or the money? Now is your chance!

Looking for someone interested in setting up an organic smallholding on a profit share basis. We provide the land and any investment in poly tunnels, plants etc. you provide your passion and labour. After costs including labour are taken out, any profit is shared.

We have 12 acres of land and run a busy B&B and outdoor adventure centre on the main road from Kesh to Belleek. We have lots of passing trade during the summer season as we are on main road to Bundoran. Any produce to be sold at farmers markets or to be established farm/garden/coffee shop on the premises.

Accommodation provided free of charge in mobile home on site, opportunity to earn money cutting grass, hedges etc as well as doing odd jobs around the farm and house until such time as the organic farm/garden centre is established.

If interested call Anne on 0044 7976374665

Prices from Drumshanbo Organic Sale May 2011

Av. Wt.	Breed	Sex	Price
185	AAX	M	420.00
270	AA	M	710.00
445	LMX	M	1,100.00
240	SI	M	630.00
405	CHX	F	1,075.00
370	LM	F	980.00
440	BBX	F	1,120.00
280	SIX	F	770.00

Drumshanbo Mart Autumn Sales

Both cattle & sheep sales

Saturday 17th September

Saturday 22nd October

Saturday 19th November

Organic Farming Open Days 2011

June - September

BEEF

OFFALY

Thursday, 23 June

Sean & Orla Clancy, Tonelmore, Cloghan

MONAGHAN

Thursday, 30 June

Mark Duffy, Bellview, Clogher, Ballybay

LAOIS

Wednesday, 6 July

Eamonn Holohan, Barney, Grogan, Rathdowney

SLIGO

Friday, 8 July

Danny Kilcullen, Seaview House, Enniscrone

CORK

Wednesday, 20 July

Pat O'Connor, Mullinroe, Clondrohid, Macroom

GALWAY

Thursday, 21 July

Teagasc, Mellows Centre, Athenry

MEATH

Thursday, 18 Aug

John McLoughlin, Moneymore, Trim

LONGFORD

Monday, 12 Sept

Gerry Fitzsimons, Mullahoran, Kilcogy, Cavan Via Longford

DAIRY

LIMERICK

Thursday, 8 Sept

Sean Condon, Fanningstown, Crecora

TIPPERARY

Tuesday, 13 Sept

Fintan Rice, Everardgrange, Fethard

All walks will commence at 2pm sharp

Contacts:

Pat Barry Moorepark Mob: 087-2138331 email: patrick.barry@teagasc.ie

James McDonnell Oak Park Mob: 087-3293820 email: james.mcdonnell@teagasc.ie

Daniel Clavin Athenry Mob: 087-9368506 email: dan.clavin@teagasc.ie

Elaine Leavy Grange Mob: 087-9853285 email: elaine.leavy@teagasc.ie

HORTICULTURE

KILDARE

Monday, 27 June

Liam Ryan, Spratstown, Ballytore

CORK

Tuesday, 28 June

Colm O'Regan, Ballyregan, Dunderrow, Kinsale

WEXFORD

Thursday, 14 July

Desmond & Olivia Thorpe, Knockroe House, New Ross

GALWAY

Thursday, 28 July

Gerard & Sylvia Langan, Ballisnahyna, Ower, Headford

GALWAY

Wednesday, 7 Sept

Padraig Fahy & Una Ní Bhroin, Beechlawn, Ballinasloe

CEREAL

KILDARE

Wednesday, 29 June

Alan Mooney, Portgloriam, Kilcock

KILKENNY

Tuesday, 5 July

Patrick J Tobin, Main Street, Johnstown

WESTMEATH

Tuesday, 19 July

Pat Lalor, Ballard Farm, Kilbeggan

PIGS & HORTICULTURE

WICKLOW

Wednesday, 27 July

Gold River Farm Ltd., Alan T. Pierce & Mark Winterbotham, Ballehall, Aughrim

National Organic Training Skillnet Courses 2011

A list of upcoming courses planned are as follows:

National Organic Training Skillnet will have an information stand at the National Organic Conference on June 14th in Limerick Institute of Technology see www.bordbia.ie/eventsnews/events for further details.

Horticulture Training

Orchard Establishment: The 1 day course covers planning an orchard, soil types, aspect, variety selection, planting and harvesting. Duration 1 day, €50, Organic Centre Leitrim and Seedavers Co Clare dates to be decided.

Orchard Management: The 1 day course covers planning an orchard, pruning and management. Duration 1 day, €50, Organic Centre Leitrim and Seedavers Co Clare dates to be decided.

Soil Biology: 2 day course covering, soil chemistry, compost management and compost tea making. Dates and venues to be decided. This course also relevant to the Livestock Sector Cost €100.

Livestock Training

Homeopathy for Animals: This course is an introduction to basic remedies, the essential principles of homeopathy, how to select and apply remedies according to the problems animals present. Duration 1 day Nano Nagle Centre, Mallow Cork & Kilbeggan Co Westmeath dates to be advised €50

DIY AI Training: 5 day course on training to enable farmers to carry out their own AI on their home farm. Dates and training options available on request, Cost €400

Organic Egg Production: This course teaches the theory behind organic egg production and the challenges and opportunities of small scale production including understanding of breeds, housing and equipment. Duration 1 day. Nano Nagle Centre Mallow Co Cork date to be advised €50.

Organic Pig Production: This course instructs on the differences between organic and conventional pig production, processing techniques and

impact on land management. Also breeds, stock management as well as the practicalities of costs and potential income. Duration 2 days Dundrum Co Tipperary 21st May & 11th June Cost €100.

Organic Cereal Production 1 day course on organic cereal production covering all aspects from sowing to harvesting. Cost €50 Venue Kilbeggan Co Westmeath, 1st and 8th July

Introduction to Organic Broiler Production: 1 day course on starting a small scale Organic Broiler Production on the farm; in Nano Nagle Centre; Mallow Co Cork and Co Galway Cost €50 dates to be advised

Processing or Adding Value Training

Cheese, Butter and Yoghurt Making: This practical course guides the trainees as to how they can produce both hard and soft cheese, yoghurt and butter; it also provides the ingredients for the participants to make their own and evaluates their produced items. Duration 3 days: 5th-7th September Tipperary Cost €200;

Meat Butchery Training; 2 day course covering demonstration on how livestock is butchered and packaging and labelling cost €225 in Ashtown Research Centre, Co Dublin (date tbc)

Pig Butchery and Sausage Making Course: This course will provide demonstration on how to cut up a pig in a day focussing on the different cuts. The 2nd half of the day will provide a practical understanding of sausage making, the methods used to add value to meat products, which cuts of meat and what ratio of meat can be used and what equipment options are available. 1 day cost €80; trainees will make their own sausages dates to be advised.

Pig Curing and Smoking: 1 day course on wet and dry curing and smoking. Cost €80; 18th June Dundrum, Co Tipperary

Food Hygiene Training; 1 Day or 2 half days including exam and certification, covering 8 modules. Cost: €70

Distance Learning Training

Certificate in Organics (Distance Learning): This FETAC level 5 courses offers a distance learning option to obtain a Certificate in Organic Horticulture through the completion a choice of modules. In addition to the online training there are also two practical experience days per module. Duration 1 year commencing September 2011;

MSc PG Dip in Organic Farming: This is a part time on-line distance learning course in which there are 8 taught modules over two years and a subsequent MSc project in a topic related to organic farming. Commences in September 2011; Duration 3 years; Requires a full application process;

Other Training

Intensive Restaurant Cookery course: 12 week (60 days) training course covering area of organic cookery, restaurant and menu planning, commencing September 2011 Cork

Train the Trainer: This course is FETAC level 6 and it provides the practical knowledge and skills to enable participants to use a systematic approach to training, assessing, evaluating and mentoring trainees. Duration 3 days Boyle, Co Roscommon and Galway dates to be advised Cost €190

To book or discuss a training option, Please contact National Organic Training Skillnet (NOTS) on 0719640688 or 086 1728442 or email info@nots.ie or check out www.nots.ie for further details

New Test of Tail Hair Can Reveal Cattle's Diet

In a development that may prove valuable in marketing high-quality Irish beef, scientists have found tail hair can show if cattle are grass-fed.

The researchers at University College Dublin and Teagasc, the agriculture and food development authority, have shown that by chemically analysing the tail hair, it is also possible to tell if and when a grass diet has been substituted for other types of feed over the previous 12 months.

Most Irish cattle are grass-fed.

The collaborative study between UCD and Teagasc research centres at Ashtown and Grange used micro-analytical techniques, micro-

array analysis and chemometric techniques to identify biomarkers that reflect dietary and geographical differences in beef.

The techniques used will form the basis of a traceability system to authenticate Irish grass-fed beef.

This feeding system is more acceptable to the consumer from an environmental and animal welfare perspective than the more intensive, grain-based feedlot systems used in continental Europe and elsewhere.

“We can no longer depend on paper work alone to trace production methods or feeds given to farm animals,” said

Prof Frank Monahan from UCD, the lead author of the study. “A tail hair of approximately 30cm in length contains over a year’s information on the animal’s diet, with the hair closest to the skin holding clues to the most recent diet.”

Scientists can identify, almost to the day, when a grass diet was substituted for cereal or concentrate.

The findings, published in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, show a clear scientific traceability and verification of grassland production.

Athlone Agriculture Show 2011 - Sunday June 26th from 10-6pm

Made in the Midlands - Local Food Producers Village

- Made in the Midlands Food Village & Cookery demos.
- Foraging Walk
- Quirky Cake Competition for visitors / black pudding competition for butchers.

The Athlone Agri Show committee are delighted to announce a new addition to their line up this year. The “Made in the Midlands” Food Village. There has been much demand from visitors and local producers alike to include a foodie element to the extremely popular annual show. In response to this demand the committee are erecting a Food Village which will house stalls displaying produce from all over the Midlands as well as produce from local eateries. There will also be a wide range of cookery demos covering everything from fast food on a budget to healthy kids meals given by local and professional chefs.

In addition to the Food Village and in keeping with the food theme, the organisers were keen to add some fun and interaction to this year’s show in the form of a Foraging Walk or wander through the weeds which might describe it better. This will highlight the abundance of free food growing under our noses

which have amazing health benefits. Nettles, dandelions, elderflowers, wild garlic and cleavers are just a few. The Foraging Walk given by Lisa Brooks through Moydrum woods will point these out to participants and a cookery demo illustrating how easily they can be used and enjoyed in everyday meals will follow back at the food village tent.

The final element of the Made in the Midlands food part of the show asks visitors to partake in two competitions – one for everyone and one for the butchers – we’ve all heard of brown bread and apple pie competitions at such shows; well the organisers of the Agri show were keen to do something different this year to mark the first year of Made in the Midlands so the public have been asked to create “Quirky Cakes” – the requirements being that the cake must taste delicious but also be innovative: think Pear and Ginger, Lemon and Summer Berries, Carrot and Walnut, Courgette and Lemon Curd (this one has been tried


and tested and is a definite contender!). Bring your “Quirky Cake” along on the day and the Made in the Midlands judging panel will decide who wins.

For local butchers there will be a black pudding competition; simply bring yours along made from your own secret recipe and let the judging panel decide who wins.

If you are a local food producer producing a high quality product please contact Lynda on 087 7927471 or e-mail info@lyndamcfarland.com.



If you are keen to participate in the Foraging Walk, meet Lisa at the Food Village tent at 2pm on the day.

If you would like to participate in the “Quirky Cakes” competition, just come along to the “Quirky Cakes stand in the food village at 3pm on the day or for butchers participating in the black pudding competition, come along to the black pudding stand at 4pm on the day.



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Greenhouses on display at Highbank Organic Farm,
Cuffesgrange, Co. Kilkenny

Comment & Opinion

Annual Grains Feed the World but they create Perennial problems

Humans made an unwitting but fateful choice 10,000 years ago as we started cultivating wild plants. We chose annuals. All the grains that feed billions of people today wheat, rice, corn, and so on-come from annual plants which sprout from seeds, produce new seeds, and die every year. "The whole world is mostly perennials" says USDA geneticist Edward Buckler who studies corn at Cornell University. "So why did we domesticate annuals?". Not because annuals were better he says but because Neolithic farmers rapidly them better-enlarging their seeds for instance, replanting the ones from thriving plants years after year. Perennials don't benefit from that kind of selective breeding because they don't have to be replanted.

Their natural advantage became a handicap. They became the road, the road not taken. Today an enthusiastic band of scientists has gone back to that fork in the road. They are trying to breed perennial wheat, rice and other grains. Wes Jackson co-founder and President of the Land Institute in Salina, Kansas, has promoted the idea for decades. It has never had much money behind it. But plant breeders in Salina and elsewhere are now crossing modern grains with wild perennial relatives. They are also trying to domesticate the wild plants directly.

Either way the goal is plants that would tap the main advantages of perennials-the deep dense root systems that fuel the plants, rebirth each Spring and makes them so resilient and esource efficient-without sacrificing too

much of the grain yield, that millennia of selection have bred into annuals. We pay a steep price for our reliance on high yields and shallow roots, says soil scientist and National Geographic explorer Jerry Glover of the Land Institute. Because annual root crops mostly only tap into the top foot or so of soil, that layer gets depleted, forcing farmers to rely on large amounts of fertilisers to maintain high yields. Often only half the fertilisers in the Midwest gets taken up by the crops, much of washes into the Gulf of Mexico where it fertilises algae blooms that cause a vast dead zone around the mouth of the Mississippi. Annuals also promote heavy use of pesticides on tillage because they leave the ground bare much of the year.

That allows weeds to invade. Above all leaving the ground bare after harvest, and ploughing it in planting season erodes the soil. No-till farming and other conservation measures have reduced the rate of soil loss in the US by 40% since the 1980's, but it's still around 1.7 billion tons per year. "Unless this disease is checked the human race will wilt like any other crop" Jackson wrote 30 years ago. As growing populations force farmers in poor countries on to steeper erodible slopes the "disease" threatens to get worse. Perennial grains would help with all these problems.

They would keep the ground covered, reducing erosion and the need for pesticides, and their deep roots would stabilise the soil and make the grains more suitable for marginal lands. "Perennials capture water and

nutrients 10 or 12 feet down in the soil, 11 months of the year" Glover says. The deep roots and ground cover would also hold onto the fertiliser-reducing the cost to the environment as well as the farmer. The perennial wheat-wheatgrass now growing at the Land Institute can already be made into flour. Yields are too low to compete with annual wheat in Kansas, but maybe not in Nepal, which has steeper slopes and a harsher climate, and where a researcher is now testing perennial wheat in small plots.

Amber waves of perennial grain may be decades away, but the emergence of cheap DNA sequencing is allowing plant breeders to work much faster than they used to. Buckler thinks that for a tiny fraction of the billions spent annually on corn research, one could create field testable perennial corn in as little as 10 years. "I think we should take a shot at revolutionising agriculture" he says.

(Courtesy National Geographic)



PHYSIOLITH Natural soil conditioner and Litho Physalg specialist P and PK, calcified seaweed fertilisers. Full range of mineral licks available in stock. Suitable for Certified Organic farmers and growers. Local agent for Roscommon/Leitrim area. Contact Pat Towey. Mob: 087 9831614. www.timac.com

Castlerea Agriculture Show Bank Holiday Monday 1st August

Castlerea are hoping to bring a Farmers Market theme to the front area of the show ground. This is a very good area to show in because it is the main entrance to the show by foot. The cost per stall can be discussed with each individual stall but it will probably in the region of €20.

Below are the contact detail for those interested in taken part.

Anne 086-3913434 e-mail apconnaughton@hotmail.com

Edmund 086-3816898 e-mail demense58@gmail.com

Over 100,000 objections to green genetic engineering

More than 100,000 people in Germany have signed the public petition organized by the German Federation of the Organic Food Industry (BÖLW). "The petition is a great success for a powerful movement and a clear signal to the German government.

It must finally advocate an immediate stop to issuing licences for genetically modified plants at EU level to effectively prevent growing them," says the President of BÖLW and petitioner Felix Prinz zu Löwenstein. Of the approx.

19,000 petitions submitted in a year, an average of only two exceed the threshold of 50,000 supporters necessary for a public hearing by the Petitions Committee. This makes the BÖLW petition one of the most successful petitions ever submitted.

Taste of the Erne Food Festival

Enniskillen
Castle Museums
is hosting
A Taste of the Erne Food Festival
on **Saturday 25th**
& **Sunday 26th June 2011**
between 12pm
and 5pm on each day. For stall
bookings contact Bronagh Cleary
048 6632 5000 or email
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