

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 www.galloways.ie

10 Hereford X and AAX bullocks
Also 10 Hereford X and AAX heifers
400-450kgs, Kikenny area
Contact 051 647325 / 087 7846543.

25 in-lamb hoggets all scanned with singles, all either fully organic or will be fully organic in June 2013, will sell from €120-€150 each depending on the lamb quality. Contact 086 8384426

1 SIMX in-calf heifer calving mid march to AI Angus bull. Mayo area. Contact 087 6747256

9 AAX heifers for sale, 330-345 kg. Galway area
Contact 087 6349421

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 www.galloways.ie

80 round bales of fully organic silage for sale €25 per bale collected. East Cavan area Contact 087 2579052

For Sale

Hay, (8x3x3) 10 bales, each bale equivalent to a round bale and a 1/2), 2011 hay, great quality, can deliver if needed. Monaghan (086 8384426).

Sheep scales, good condition, surplus to requirements will sell for €250, good value. Monaghan (086 8384426).

Wanted

Lands suitable for forestry in all locations. Sizes from c.15 acres plus Cash client waiting!! Also growing plantations sought immediately – all areas. Min. 80% Sitka Spruce. Filling large order just received at present. Contact 087 2613617 / 094 96 55313.

Services

Leitrim Organic Farmers Coop offers a low cost accounts service. For more information or a quote contact our office on 071 9640868 Also offer photocopying service. Available at reasonable rates.

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

Livestock Marts

Upcoming Organic Sales 2013

Roscommon April 6th

Drumshanbo April 20th

Drumshanbo May 18th

Property For Sale



CHARMING 3 BEDROOM STONE COTTAGE PRICED TO SELL!!!

This week Cathal O Brien Auctioneer is offering for sale a 3 bedroom cottage located at Knockglass, Ballinameen, Co Roscommon. Priced to Sell at €70,000 or nearest offer!

This original stone built cottage is presented for sale in excellent condition throughout, having been completely renovated in recent years, the property boasts generous site area with option to purchase additional lands. Located in a quiet cul-de-sac roadway in a peaceful countryside setting.. Viewing is a Must!!

For Viewing etc..

Contact Cathal O Brien Auctioneer on 087 2613617 or 094 96 55313 or e-mail: info@cathalobrien.ie or visit our website at www.cathalobrien.ie



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Pictured at the Organic Producers Conference in Birmingham, theme was "Making Producer Led Innovation a Reality" were; From left: Bill Hester Croghan Organic Garden, Gavin Lynch Organic Trust, Paraic Fahy, Beechlawn Organic Farm and Sean McGloin National Organic Training Skillnet.

COVENEY RE-OPENS ORGANIC FARMING SCHEME

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney TD, today announced that applications are now being accepted for the 2013 Organic Farming Scheme.

The Organic Farming Scheme is an agri-environment measure under the Department's Rural Development Programme 2007-13. Farmers may enter into a contract for a minimum of five years and could qualify for yearly payments of up to €283 per hectare during the conversion period and up to €142 per hectare when they have achieved full organic status. Applicants are required to

submit a business plan with their OFS application and, if they have not previously taken part in the Organic Supplementary Measure in REPS, to undertake an approved training course.

On announcing the re-opening of the Scheme in 2013, Minister Coveney emphasised that "the Organic Farming Scheme is of vital importance to the development of the Organic Sector as it encourages farmers to consider the organic option and avail of the potential market opportunities that clearly exist".

In conclusion, the Minister said that the closing date for

applications will be 15 May 2013 and that decisions would be made at that stage on the level of funding and on the number of applicants that will be accepted into the scheme.

Copies of the revised Organic Farming Scheme terms and conditions, together with application forms, are available on the Department's organics page at

<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/farmingsectors/organicfarming/organicsscheme/organicfarmingscheme2007-2013>

Coop Vey Active in Fracking Campaign

Leitrim Organic Farmers Coop remains very active in the Anti Fracking campaign through its involvement with the Leitrim Farmers Network, a broad alliance of farmers in Leitrim who are seeking a complete ban on Gas Shale Fracking.

The coop hosted a meeting on Monday Feb 4th in Drumshanbo where distinguished German Geoscientist Helmut Fehr spoke about the progress in Germany where a moratorium on Fracking is now in place across all states. The meeting heard how rather than banning Fracking, the German authorities were able to

demonstrate scientifically how Fracking was already negatively impacting the areas where it had been established and the moratorium it is now in place in 16 states.

The coop is now one of 20 groups are that are very active and meet regularly to continue to push to prevent Gas Shale Fracking coming to the North West. It is important for readers away from the area to understand that should Gas Shale Fracking become a reality in Leitrim then the area will be transformed into an industrial zone, with the inevitable destruction to the Natural environment which

underpins farming and tourism here.


Potential pollution of the river Shannon will be experienced by all who depend on the Shannon; including people in Dublin should they commence using water from there in future years.

Given what has happened already to the food chain here in recent weeks, we must ensure that we do not further damage our image as the "Clean Green Food Island" by allowing Gas Shale Fracking to commence in Ireland for more information follow us on www.leitrimorganic.com/latest-news-2/

A review of the European Policy on Organic Agriculture - Public Consultation

Organic farming and production play a significant economic role in the EU's agricultural landscape. They can provide a market-oriented alternative for agricultural producers wishing to respond to the increasing demand for high-quality, eco-friendly products. Under the Common Agricultural Policy, organic production is supported by European financial support, policies and laws. This approach is designed to bolster consumer confidence while creating the conditions for fair competition among organic producers in the 27 EU countries. Organic farming covers a relatively limited part of the EU's utilised agricultural area - around 5% - but the sector is driven by ever-increasing consumer demand. In the current economic downturn, will consumers continue to turn towards a more sustainable lifestyle and higher consumption of organic products.? For more information see

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/consultations/organic/2013_en.htm



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Or www.cathalobrien.ie

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Following on from recent successful sales, we have a number of disappointed under bidders actively seeking land in all locations, both residential and non-residential holdings. Contact the Auctioneer to-day in confidence for FREE market appraisal, **Cathal O'Brien Estate Agent MIPAV. Cleaboy, Ballintubber, Co. Roscommon. 094/96 55313 or 087/2613617. Or www.cathalobrien.ie**

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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 2013 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

An open Letter to the IFA National Executive on Single Farm Payment

It is with regret that we feel compelled to write this open letter on the need for a fairer distribution of the single farm payment (SFP). This requirement to go public comes as a result of the IFA's continued insistence on minimising any redistribution of the SEP.

In doing so, they have portrayed the image of a united farming organisation, fighting the cause of farmers. This is not the case. Many farmers inside the organisation have become totally disillusioned with where the national executive is going on this. By writing this letter we hope that it will give courage to the majority of other farmers, to come out and call the stance taken by the IFA national executive for what it is - a very bad deal for the majority of Irish Farmers. The mantra that we have heard over the last few months is that Pillar 1 is about supporting active and productive farmers. This we agree with, but these farmers need to be active and productive now, not 10 years ago. Indeed, when one looks at the document the IFA executive put to defend their position it is very obvious how desperate they have become. The farmer they always refer to is the 30 suckler cow farmer. They claim that he would see his payments drop from over €16,500 to €12,011 under the latest proposals. However, when you consider the premium paid on suckler cows during the reference years of 2000 to 2002, the most this man could expect to get in premium was €10,000. Yet under these proposals that the IFA executive is so against, he will get €12,000. This is also true on the examples giving on the dairy farms, and what about the other 30 suckler cow farmer with a payment of €3,900 who would see his payment rise to €5,880? Why

do they begrudge him an increase while at the same time complaining about the other farmers reduction, who is still getting twice the payment? Basic reasoning would suggest that these to farmers who are doing exactly the same work should get paid the same. In Pillar II, we have heard several times that this is about supporting incomes in vulnerable areas. The first problem with this is that Pillar II has seen reduced funding and will see a drastic reduction in co-financing requirement of national governments - so where is the funding to protect incomes to come from?

What has been clear for the last few years is that any future CAP deal would see a move to a fairer and more equitable payment system. Instead of accepting this and preparing farmers especially those on very high payment for the cuts that are coming down the line, what we have seen from the IFA at national level is a circling of the wagons. What we want is real change. The French proposal where we front load payments on a set number of hectares would support family farms, as would the proposal of a minimum payment. By doing this we would also put more money into rural Ireland and protect hobs and services. The IFA national executive seems to have a different view of the future. Their future seems to be one of big ranchers and a lot less farmers. There are consequences to going down this road. The Highlands in Scotland, where you could drive 50 miles without seeing a house, is a good example. This is not the future we want for rural Ireland. To end on a positive note, we do support the stand taken by IFA to oppose regionalisation. However, there have been suggestions regarding a minimum payment on

marginal land. This is also regionalisation and has to be opposed. We hope it is not too late for the IFA national executive to see reason and secure an adequate living for the maximum number of families living on the land, as outlined in Article 3b of the IFA constitution. Many other IFA officers agree with the sentiments outlined in this letter but are waiting until after Tuesday's IFA regional meeting in Claremorris before deciding what action to take. This letter has been agreed and endorsed by the following IFA branch and county officers:

Frankie McKiernan and Thomas Lavin (chairman and secretary Arigna IFA), Sean O'Hara (chairman Ardcarne IFA), Vincent Roddy (secretary Ballaghaderreen IFA), Patrick McManus and Michael McManus (chairman and secretary Blacklion IFA), Paddy Coen (chairman Bunninadden IFA), Ollie O'Boyle and Dennis Neary (chairman and secretary Bangor Erris IFA), Dominic Neela and Frankie Cormack (chairman and secretary Ballycroy IFA), Edward Johnston (chairman Cloonacool IFA), Kevin Reynolds and Ray Gilmartin (chairman and secretary Drumshanbo IFA), Michael Allen (chairman Muff IFA), Tadhg Gunning and Pauric Keane (Kilclare IFA), Michael McPartland (chairman Dowra IFA), Des Corrigan (chairman Glangevlin/Corlough IFA), Sinead Branley (secretary North Sligo IFA), Benedict Gallagher (Sligo sheep chairman), John Joe Dolan (Leitrim sheep chairman), Shane McKeon (Leitrim hill chairman).

(Courtesy Ray Gilmartin Organic farmer and secretary of Drumshanbo IFA)



Pictured at the Food Sovereignty meeting in the Market Yard Carrick-on-Shannon on Thursday 14th March. Left-right, John Brennan (Leitrim Organic Farmers), José Antonio Gutiérrez (Latin American Solidarity Centre (LASC) and Aidan Gillan (Tattie Hoaker Farm).

2013 events at The Organic Centre for Organic Producer

The Organic Centre has a few very exciting courses lined up that are of interest to farmers and growers:

April 6th Saturday: Growing in Polytunnels – an introduction - revised with Hans Wieland €75

April 7th Sunday: Organic Gardening for beginners –Grow your own food with Ingrid Foley €75

April 7th Sunday: Fermented and cultured foods – new with Hans and Gaby Wieland

April 13th Saturday Complete Organic Garden Course Day 3: Growing in polytunnels with Ingrid Foley €75

April 13th: Wonderful Woodlands with Steven Meyen €35

April 14th Sunday (GFL1): Grow your own Fruit – Spring Workshop with Cormac Griffith €75

April 20th Saturday: Growing unusual vegetables - new with Klaus Laitenberger €75

April 20th Saturday and 21st Sunday: Cheese Making -revised with Hans and Gaby Wieland €150 (plus €10 for materials)

April 21st Sunday: Living off Grid – water, wind and sun with Rob Doyle €75

April 28th Saturday: Reedbed systems - ecological and cost effective by Ollan Herr €75

For more information please contact

The Organic Centre
telephone: (071) 985 4338

email: info@theorganiccentre.ie

Website: www.theorganiccentre.ie



National Organic Training Skillnet (NOTS)



NOTS will be providing a range of training courses throughout the country in 2013. The NOTS training programme is available to farmers, growers, processors, food businesses, and consultants working in the area of the food. New entrants, farmers considering the organic option and commercial producers interested in developing their enterprise into an organic business are also eligible. NOTS are managed through a steering group which has representation from Western Organic Network, and organic certification bodies IOFGA and Organic Trust. The following training programmes are being offered to help support the sector; for further details and updates go to www.nots.ie. We would welcome any ideas that individuals have on training needs that would help their business develop.

Organic Horticulture Grower School: Facilitated training programme in organic Horticulture where participants carry out some classroom training central location (4 days) and then a day on each other's farm, the format is designed that participants will learn from themselves through managed discussion on all horticulture topics. Course length approx 12-14 days training and facilitation depending on number of participants. Requires minimum 8 participants. Course will run from March-November Cost €320: Lunch not included

Organic Horticulture Course for the Unemployed. Free training course for the unemployed. It involves 12 days training and 12 days work placement in a Horticulture setting. Aim of the programme is to train participants to a standard that they could get work in an horticulture unit. Participants must be on the live register and agree to attend both training and work placement. For exiting Horticulture units we are seeking interest from growers who may be planning to employ full or part time staff in the coming year and would prefer trained staff. It also offers growers the ability to assess

potential employees without commitment during the work placement. Starting April 2013.

Soil Sampling & Analysis for Horticulture Major & Minor Nutrient & Soil Matter Content) This is a new course where growers take soil samples on their own farm and have the results interpreted by an advisor. Different locations around the country: Costs and venue based on demand and no of soil samples. 23rd April (training fee plus cost of 2 samples €130 (additional samples cost €40). NOTS will organise for the sample testing, Growers will have to take their own samples and post to NOTS office: Lunch Included.

Plant Propagation & Protected Cropping 1 day course on Plant Propagation and growing in a polytunnell, aimed at beginners and new entrants, this course will be run in a number of different locations around the country, April 19th Roscommon, May 23rd Kildare, May 24th Wexford, May 25th Cork, May 26th Cork, May 27th Kerry. Cost €30, Lunch not provided

Polytunnell Erection Course: 1 day course on erecting a polytunnell. The course will provide detail and use a practical example on how to erect your own polytunnell. Date Location Co Leitrim on April 27th Cost €25. Lunch not included

Introduction to Agro Homeopathy & Radionics This new course will provide participants on the use of Radionics and Homeopathy in vegetable production. The course will be delivered by a trainer and commercial grower and will demonstrate how a radionics machine works. Location Co Kildare Cost €50: Lunch not included

Introduction to Organic Cereal Production (a farmers perspective); 1 day course on organic cereal production covering all aspects from sowing to harvesting. This session will be delivered by Irish organic cereal growers and will address crop

selection, fertility, seeding rates maximising rotation, ploughing & Harvesting, Venues & Dates will depend on the level of interest; Cost €50 lunch included.

Introduction to Organic Dairying 1 day course on Organic dairying, the course will focus on the Conversion process, Grassland management, breed selection, Market opportunities. The second half of the day will involve a walk on an organic dairy farm. Venue to be decided Midlands 18th July; Cost €50: Includes lunch

Introduction to Organic Beef Production, 1 day course on the basics of organic Beef production. Course will deal with optimum choices in terms of breed, grassland, market demands etc. Course involves theory and practical element on a farm. Cost €40. Venue based on demand September 11th: Includes lunch

Introduction to Organic Sheep Production, 1 day course on the basics of organic sheep production. Course will deal with optimum choices in terms of breed, grassland, market demands etc. Course involves theory and practical element on a farm. Cost €50. Venue based on demand October 16th Lunch Included

Outdoor Pig Production This 2 day course will focus on outdoor production of free range pigs and the importance of breed selection and feed and welfare and impact on land management. The course also covers the practicalities of costs and potential income venue Tipperary June 29th & July 13th Roscommon August 3rd & 24th Cost €100: Lunch not Included

Free Range Chicken Production This 2 day course will cover all aspects of free range chicken production all the way through to processing. The course will offer hands on practical skills and trainees will be able to see first hand the housing and equipment best suitable for chicken production and processing. Location Galway 25th April & 2nd May; Cost €80: Lunch not Included

DIY Ai Training 4 day course 3 days practical & 1 day theory on artificial Insemination. Runs every fortnight in Co Laois cost €400: Lunch not Included

Bovine Scanning 7 day course on pregnancy scanning for cows; Runs every fortnight in Co Laois cost €750: Lunch not Included

Soil Sampling & Analysis This is a new course where farmers take soil samples on their own farm and have the results interpreted by an organic advisor. Different locations around the country: Costs and venue based on demand and no of farm samples. 6th June Training fee plus cost of 2 samples €70 (additional samples cost €12). NOTS will organise for the sample testing, farmers will have to take their own samples and post to NOTS office: Lunch included

Green Manures and Composting: 2 day course on the uses of green manures and how to make high quality compost from waste products. Venues to be decided Date October 2013 Cost €80

Soft Cheese, and Yoghurt Making: This practical course guides the trainees as to how they can produce soft cheese, and yoghurt; the course will be run in a small commercial unit in Wicklow it also provides the ingredients for the participants to make their own and evaluates their produced items. Duration 2 days date and venue is Wicklow Cost €160. Lunch not included Date 15th-16th July

Ice Cream Production; 1 day practical course on artisan ice cream production; the course will offer participants to see the process from milk right through to production including required equipment and ingredients for ice cream production. Venue Clare May 20th; Cost €60 includes lunch

Pig Curing/and Sausage making Course: This course will provide

demonstration on how to cure and smoke pork. 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. Cost €80 Sat 16th August in Dundrum, Co Tipperary: lunch not Included

Meat Butchery Training; 5 day course on practical meat butchery skills course covering basic cuts for beef & lamb & pork including packaging and labelling. Cost €300 Ballinasloe Co Galway dates to be decided. Lunch not included.

Setting up an on Farm business: 2 day course on setting up an on-farm business. The course will provide trainee opportunities on business and financial planning and what supports are available, Day 2 will involve workshop based approaches where specific issues and ideas can be evaluated. Cost €80 Venue Roscommon 5th & 12th September; Lunch included.

Social Media Twitter 1 day course on utilising Twitter as a communication and promotion tool; Location Roscommon Cost €50 lunch included

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 2013.

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 2013; Duration 3 years; Requires a full application process.

MSc in Organic Horticulture: 1 year part time MSc in organic horticulture delivered over 2 semesters. Commences in September 2013; Duration 1 year; Requires a full application process and prior educational qualifications.

Conversion to Organic Training: 25 hour FETAC certified training course on converting to organic. The course is aimed at new entrants and the course needs to be completed in order to access organic farming payments Cost €220 the course will be run over weekends in May and early June to facilitate part time farmers.

NOTS are planning other courses throughout 2013 e.g. Flour Milling, HACCP planning & Food Hygiene & Mentoring; We would welcome feedback from farmers or growers whom have specific requests for training or mentoring:

To book or discuss a training or mentoring 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 There are a limited number of free places for the unemployed on specific courses (certain conditions apply eg PPS number and contact telephone number must be supplied)

Courses will only proceed subject to sufficient demand, Course will require minimum attendance hence may be cancelled due to insufficient demand. Courses can be booked or purchased online at www.nots.ie.

Postal Address: National Organic Training Skillnet, The Enterprise Centre, Hill Rd, Drumshanbo, Co Leitrim

NOTS is funded by member companies and the Training Networks Programme, an initiative of Skillnets Ltd, funded from the National Training Fund through the Department of Education and Skills.

Tide Turns on GM Agriculture

A vote of no confidence in GM technology came last week from a surprising source, US farmers. After increased pest resistance and crop failures in GM crops, resulting in smaller yields than their non-GM counterparts, farmers are considering a return to conventional seed. Reverting back to conventional production has its own problems as the vast majority of seed available in the US is GM and owned predominately by a few companies.

It's all about cost benefit analysis," said economist Dan Basse, president of American agricultural research company AgResource. "Farmers are paying extra for the technology but have seen yields which are no better than 10 years ago. They're starting to wonder why they're spending extra money on the technology." The top performing countries by crop yield last year were in Asia, in

particular China, where farmers do not use GM seed. This comes on the back of BASF announcing their withdrawal from the EU licence approval process for three GM potato varieties. Kitty Scully from no2gm stated, 'in light of these significant developments, this begs the question why Teagasc are wasting resources by continuing to trial a technology which is obviously failing in the field and in the market place'.

no2gm is a non-political, voluntary, not-for-profit organization made up of citizens and organizations (IOFGA, OT, Leitrim Organic Farmers Co-op, IDEA) who wish to protect our environment and keep Ireland free from genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

For more information contact:

Kitty Scully
no2gm National Co-ordinator
info@no2gm.com
087 670 5338

Additional Information also available on:

<http://www.fwi.co.uk/articles/06/02/2013/137518/us-farmers-may-stop-planting-gms-after-poor-global-yields.htm>

<http://m.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-21294487>

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

BVD Eradication Scheme Programme Requirements

Farmers have been written to this recently regarding this scheme. Last year the scheme was voluntary but this year it is compulsory for all farmers to carry out testing for the disease. The Programme requirements are set put below.

1. Tag Calves born on or after 01/01/13 using the

modified official ID Tag (if you were not in the Voluntary BVD Scheme for the tags you will need to order a taggers along with the tags).

2. Submit the Tissues to a designated lab (costs vary between €3.50 and €4.50/sample depending on lab (see list below).

3. Await the results and act on any further instructions you may receive

4. Don't sell any animal born before 01/01/13 unless you have a negative BVD Result

For more information see www.animalhealthireland.ie

Name of laboratory	Address	Website	Contact
Advanced Micro Services (Laboratories) Ltd.	Carrigeen Business Park, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. Unit 2, South Ring West Business Park, Tramore Rd, Cork	www.amslabs.ie	James Sugrue 021 431 7982 jsugrue@esglabs.ie
Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute	Stoney Road, Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3SD	www.afbini.gov.uk	Maria Guelbenzu +44 (0) 28 905 25749
Animal Health Laboratories	Shinagh House, Bandon, Co. Cork	www.animalhealthlabs.ie	Nicola White 023 8854100 nwhite@ahli.ie
Biobest Laboratories	6 Charles Darwin House, The Edinburgh Technopole, Milton Bridge, Nr Penicuik, EH26 0PY	www.biobest.co.uk	Susan Duthie Tel: +44 (0)131 440 2628 Susan.Duthie@biobest.co.uk
Enfer Labs	Unit T, M7 Business Park, Newhall, Naas, Co. Kildare.	www.enfergroup.com	Michael Kennedy 045 983 800 michaelkennedy@enfergroup.com
FBA Laboratories Ltd	Industrial Estate, Cappoquin, Co. Waterford.	www.fba-labs.com	Conor Butler 058 52861 conor@fba-labs.com
Irish Equine Centre	Johnstown, Naas, Co. Kildare.	www.irish-equine-centre.ie	Prof. Ann Cullinane 045 866 266 acullinane@equine-centre.ie
National Milk Laboratories Ltd.	c/o iML, Bailieborough, Co. Cavan	www.imlabs.ie	Seamus Marron 042 969 4340 seamusm@imlabs.ie
Oldcastle Laboratories	Cogan Street, Oldcastle, Co. Meath	www.oldcastlelabs.ie	Dr. Robert Burns 049 854 1160 robert@oldcastlelabs.ie
Southern Scientific	Dunrinc, Killarney, Co. Kerry	www.southernscientificireland.com	Dr. Susan Mills 064 6633922 susan@southernscientificireland.com

Comment & Opinion

As the Horse Meat Scandal Shows, Thuggish Supermarkets are Endangering our Food Supply

The sigh of relief from Britain's supermarket industry on Friday afternoon, after only the [seven processed beef products already known about out of the 2,500 tested](#) came up positive for horsemeat, was almost audible. The big food retailers had been preparing themselves for truly appalling news, for the discovery that hundreds of items contained the wrong kind of hoofed animal. Even allowing for the many more test results to come, this was very good news.

After days of silence from the retailers (with the exception of [Morrisons](#)), it was time for the supermarket bosses to break cover; for [Justin King](#), the chief executive of Sainsbury's, to insist those first adulterated dishes were not the tip of some gruesome iceberg; for [Philip Clarke](#), his opposite number at Tesco, to promise to "open up our supply chain".

They could take further comfort from the fact that attention will now shift to the horsemeat found in the offensively cheap food served in state-funded institutions, such as schools and hospitals.

Indeed, that news may be one of the few positives to come out of this story. Campaigners have long insisted there is something truly criminal about the foul quality of food served up to patients and pupils; the discovery that some of it is actively illegal may help to spur the seemingly endless campaign to get something done about it.

But if supermarket bosses think this really is the beginning of the end of their troubles then they are

very much mistaken. They would like us to think of the [horsemeat scandal](#) as an isolated incident, caused by a change in European Union law last year that barred the use of cheap "desinewed meat" from ruminants, building costs into production and opening the way to fraud. And it may well have had a part to play in this specific set of events.

But that doesn't change the fact. The horsemeat scandal is not some isolated incident. It is a symptom of a much bigger disease affecting mass food retailing in Britain. (Last year's row over [falling payments to dairy farmers](#) was another.) It is about the way British [supermarkets](#) have singularly failed to react to the vast changes to the global food market that they assumed was theirs to plunder by right.

They assumed they would always be able to buy what they needed at a price that suited them, from all points of the globe. As a result, they did not care that the bad deals they were giving to British farmers were forcing them out of business and destroying the country's agricultural self-sufficiency. Nor, it should be said, did successive governments, which just let them get on with it. The long-fought-for groceries ombudsman, promised in the 2010 election manifestos, will not be in place until 2014 at the earliest and who knows how much power they will wield.

Meanwhile, there has been a seismic shift in the economics of world food. Expanding middle classes in China, Brazil, Indonesia, India and elsewhere have made

producers realise they no longer need to deal with British supermarkets and their thuggish approach to doing a deal. Citrus growers in South Africa are refusing to have anything to do with UK plc. Many New Zealand apple growers would rather sell to China, which will pay as much for ungraded, unpacked fruit as the British will pay for graded and packed. It's the same story across meat, dairy and grains.

The price pressures on the supermarkets, desperate not to lose market share, are huge. Morrisons and Asda have started to get rid of the middle men in their supply chain and go direct to the farm gate to reduce costs, but that will only be a stopgap. They have to start paying British farmers more so they can invest in homegrown agriculture, so, in turn, our self-sufficiency will improve markedly. The supermarkets will have to take smaller profits, a fact of life investors will have to get used to. And yes, consumers will have to accept a further increase in the price of food, perhaps from the current 10% of income to 13% or 14%. Otherwise, we will be left at the mercy of the international producers who have no incentive to trade with us and who can charge what they like. Many food staples could double or triple in price.

And scandals such as that around horsemeat in beef products will no longer seem like isolated incidents. They will simply be a fact of life of our increasingly deformed retail food market.

(Courtesy - The Guardian)

Investigating Rushes as a Biofuel

Leitrim Organic Farmers Co-op has just completed a study in conjunction with GMIT looking at the possibility of using rushes as a biofuel. As there is a plentiful supply of raw material available after so many wet years, the idea was to see if this perennial nuisance on Leitrim farms could have a value as a fuel. The work carried out by Scientist Ian O'Connor has produced some interesting results. The following is a summary of his findings to date.

- High moisture content but relatively easy to dry

- Obviously don't have to get moisture to zero
- Very low ash content on combustion
- Very low density when dry
- Energy content comparable to currently available products

Perhaps consider them as an addition

To view the full presentation go to <http://www.leitrimorganic.com/latest-news-2/>

The coop is now applying to Leitrim Development Company for a feasibility study to see if the research

can be transferred into a commercial reality.



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*

Letter to the editor - recently published in the Farmers Journal

Organic beef is a vital cog in the system

Richard Moeran, Farren-Connell, Mount Nugent, Co Cavan

Dear Sir

I was shocked and dismayed to hear the future editor of the Irish Farmers Journal, Justin McCarthy, at a livestock meeting in Cavan last week accuse the organic beef sector of being a less carbon friendly form of beef production. I am not sure where the science behind this statement came from, but as a suckler and beef finisher in Cavan producing for

this added-value export market to Germany and Britain, I have some real concerns. Bill Coe of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) briefed some of the countries leading food companies recently about adding earning potential by moving up the quality chain and avoiding the trap of being recognised as commodity suppliers. Organic beef is currently recognised on the

quality chain, enjoying a strong foothold in the export market to Britain and Germany and is another small cog contributing to our overall economy. With the possibility of future growth for this added value product, it seems incredulous that someone in Justin McCarthy's capacity should be undermining any part of the beef sector by calling into question carbon emissions.

Changes in Rules for Non Organic Stock at an Organic Sale

For the foreseeable future non-organic stock namely in calf cows or dry cows that have no organic status and referred to as ASBP (Animals Suitable for Breeding Purposes) may not be presented for sale at an organic mart. This will, apply to all sales held in 2013 until further notice. If you have an ASBP

cow with a calf at foot or a stock bull these are not included in the restriction. The new rules do not apply to farm to farm sales and coop members have the use of our website if they wish to sell these animals. I would suggest that anyone with an ASBP cow in calf either wait until the cow

calves before being presented for sale or else we advertise them in the coop magazine and website. It is not clear whether this new ruling is on animal health or tractability grounds but it is now operational and the organic inspector will refuse entry of these animals on a sale day.