people **farming**

Award for Castlemine Farm

Castlemine Farm, Fourmilehouse has been shortlisted for the Pigsback.com Irish Enterprise Award 2010.

The shortlist was announced this week and the overall winner will be announced at the Pigsback.com Irish Enterprise Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, 28th April in Dublin.

To celebrate their 10th birthday, Pigsback.com are once again offering one Irish brand the opportunity to win a free online campaign valued at over €25,000, including one month's competition, newsletter sponsorship, and a featured article in Checkout.

Entries were received from a wide range of Irish businesses in a number of different sectors and were shortlisted to six finalists. They are: Castlemine Farm, Fourmilehouse, family based producers of home-reared beef, lamb free-range pigs and poultry; Dublin-based Itsa … (formerly known as Itsa Bagel), a Bagel bar and catering company; FITT Ladies Bootcamp, Dublin based ladies only bootcamp and personal trainers; The Initial Boutique, an Irish website specialising in personalised bags, baby and seasonal gifts; MrCrumb: speciality food producers whose products include stuffings, breadcrumbs, dessert puddings and party food and Griffins Bakery, Galway's oldest family business, Griffin's Bakery and Tea Rooms, Shop St., Galway.

Commenting on the award, Clíodhna Byrne, Brand Manager of Pigsback.com said "We were overwhelmed with the huge response to this year's Pigsback.com Irish Enterprise Award and encouraged to see the huge diversity and creativity that exists in Irish businesses and the ongoing drive, determination and energy of the people behind them."

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Grassland sheep scheme launched

A new €54 million grassland sheep scheme was launched by the Agriculture Minister Brendan Smith yesterday (Wednesday).

Funding for the scheme, which comes from unused Single Payment funds will provide a timely boost to sheep farmers' incomes over the next three years.

The rate payable per hectare will be based on the number of 2010 SPS eligible hectares declared or area deemed eligible for payment, whichever is the lower, using two stocking densities as follows: 2.5 ewes per hectare for Mountain Type Grazing Land (as defined under the Less Favoured Areas Scheme); 7 ewes per hectare for all other lands (including Most Severely, Less Severely Disadvantaged Area and non-Disadvantaged Areas).

The ewe numbers eligible for inclusion in the 2010 Scheme will be based on the numbers as declared in the 2009 Sheep Census. The ewe numbers eligible for inclusion in the 2011 Scheme will be based on the average of the ewe numbers as declared in the 2009 and 2010 Sheep Census and the numbers eligible for inclusion in the 2011 Scheme will be based on the average of the ewe numbers as declared in the 2010 and 2011 Sheep Census.

The applicants must maintain sheep on an ongoing basis to retain eligibility for the 2011 and 2012 Schemes, i.e. he or she has to have sheep to declare in their 2011 and 2012 Sheep Census Sheep Returns.

The maximum area payable is 84 hectares in respect of Mountain Type Grazing and 30 hectares for all other lands. The farmer must submit an SPS application each year to be eligible for the Scheme.

The indicative rates of aid for the Grassland Sheep Scheme are as follows: Mountain Areas - 0 to 20 hectares €30 per hectare; 20 to 84 hectares €25 per hectare. The additional payment (total payable €100) is in recognition of the difficulties facing hill sheep farming. Lowland Areas €70 per hectare.

For a farmer with 210 ewes, this is equivalent to a payment of €10.48 per ewe in the mountain areas and €10 per ewe elsewhere. For a farmer with 100 ewes, this is equivalent to a payment of €11 per ewe in the mountain areas and €10 per ewe elsewhere. For a farmer with 50 ewes, this is equivalent to a payment of €12 per ewe in the mountain areas and €10 per ewe elsewhere.

Minister Smith said, "During the CAP Health Check negotiations, I had as one of my high priorities getting access to these CAP funds. From the time it became clear this had been achieved, I identified the sheep sector as one that was vulnerable and in need of specific supports. I am confident that this Scheme, which focuses on those flocks with breeding ewes, will maintain the breeding flock and will act as a real incentive to farmers anxious to maintain their production levels, which are essential for the future of a viable sheep industry in this country."

"Today's announcement is further evidence of my commitment to this important sector and follows some €7 million which I allocated last year from the Single Payment National Reserve to approximately 13,000 hill sheep farmers under an Upland Sheep Payment Scheme. The Scheme being announced today applies to both hill and lowland sheep farmers".

Minister Smith also said that the sector would benefit from a further €8 million, under the Rural Development Programme, for sheep fencing and mobile handling facilities to help sheep farmers in reducing labour input while Bord Bia will also spend up to €1 million this year on the promotion of sheep and lamb at home and abroad and Teagasc has allocated almost €1.5 million for sheep research.

The Minister said that "administrative simplicity" was a priority in the design of the Scheme and expressed his confidence that the Scheme being announced has major advantages in that regard from both the sheep farmers and the Department's points of view. In the case of the Department, all of the data relating to ewe numbers, required for administering the Scheme, will be held electronically while the area data is available through the Single Payment Scheme. This will facilitate the Department making payments very shortly after the commencement date of 1 December 2010.

Farmers will also find the Scheme easy and their only requirements are to: maintain sheep; complete the Sheep Census return; and submit the SPS application form by the closing date of 17th May 2010.

Minister Smith concluded by acknowledging that "Irish sheep farmers are facing significant production and demand pressures at present, though Ireland is not alone in this regard. To maintain a viable industry, we must arrest the decline in reducing flock numbers, income pressures and producers leaving the sector. I believe that this Grassland Sheep Scheme will achieve these aims and will provide a much needed and very valuable income support to an important and vulnerable sector."

Carol Ann Wilson Bennett of Tarmonbarry Macra pictured receiving the Best Actress Award from John Kenny, North West Vice President for her role as Doreen, in 'A Night Out' at the Macra na Feirme Regional Drama Finals in Tuam recently.

Tarmon in drama finals this weekend

Tarmonbarry Macra club have made it to the finals of the 2010 Macra National Drama competition.

Six productions have made it to this year's national final, which will be held on Saturday and Sunday, April 10th and 11th in Cappoquin Community Centre, Co. Waterford. Prizes will be awarded on the night for Best Actor, Best Actress, an Adjudicator's Prize, Best Producer and for the winning production.

The three plays that will feature on Saturday night are 'Til we meet again' by Fethard Macra, South Tipperary; 'Babysitting Calvin', by Kilcloon Macra, Co. Meath; 'The Harpy and the Slob' by Ballinascarthy Macra, Carbery. On Sunday night Tarmonbarry Macra will take to the stage with 'A night out'. Also on stage on Sunday night are Carrigaline Macra with 'Mirror, Mirror' and Ballycoog Macra, Co. Wicklow with 'The Spinsters'.

Tickets can be purchased on the night, or by calling Anita Meagher, Waterford Macra on (087) 6722643, the start time for both nights is 8 pm.

New committee at Kilkerrin IFA

Roy O'Brien, IFA Regional Development Officer, was guest speaker at the AGM of Kilkerrin Branch IFA which was held recently. Topics discussed included deer culling and control, Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS) maps, Quality Payment System (QPS) for beef and the new Agri-Environment Options Scheme (AEOS) which will replace REPS.

Election of officers was as follows: President: Roger Fahy. Chairman: Tommy Fleming. Assistant Chairman: Padraig Divilly. Secretary: Padraig Hughes
Assistant Secretary: PJ McDermott. Registrar: Sean Moran. Fourth Delegate: Tina Fahy. Treasurers: Willie O'Brien, Gerard McMahon. PRO: Tina Fahy
Livestock: David Naughton, Gerry O' Donnell. Dairy: Steve Lee. Sheep: PJ Monaghan. Rural Development: Padraic Divilly. Chairman, Tommy Fleming made presentations to Michael Coleman, John Lohan (on behalf of his father Tom Lohan RIP) and Sean Moran for their distinguished service to the branch over the years.

mart round-up

Castlerea

There were 550 cattle on offer at the sale on April 1st and despite the recent inclement weather conditions, stock were an improved trade on previous weeks with a good attendance of customers present. Heifers: Ch 490 kgs €960; Ch 440 kgs €835; B. Lim 540 kgs €920; B. Her 470 kgs €687; AA 480 kgs €820; R. Lim 385 kgs €717; B. Lim 400 kgs €705. Dry Cows: Ch 615 kgs €910; R. Lim 590 kgs €920; AA 560 kgs €665; AA 835 kgs €1,130; Ch 640 kgs €835; Sim 560 kgs €715. Cows with calves at foot made from €800 to €1,530 per head. Springer cows made from €680 to €1,240 per head. Calves: AA heifer €140; B. Blue bull €372; Fr. Bull €85; B. Blue heifer €300; Her heifer €245; AA heifer €230; Her bull €205. Weanling bulls: B. Blue 280 kgs €800; Lim 275 kgs €660; Ch 455 kgs €900; Ch 495 kgs €1,000; Lim 400 kgs €925. Weanling heifers: Ch 295 kgs €595; B. Blue 270 kgs €725; Lim 330 kgs €740; Ch 280 kgs €555; AA 445 kgs €690; R. Lim 255 kgs €480. At the bullock sale on March 29th, there were 180 bullocks on offer with the forward store bullocks and improved trade on previous weeks. Sample prices: Ch 490 kgs €910; Ch 440 kgs €860; Lim 545 kgs €1,055; Lim 520 kgs €945; Ch 645 kgs €1,200.

Mountbellew

There was a smaller number of sheep on offer to previous week, similar trade to previous week. Good demand for stag ewes and ewes with lambs at foot. Hoggets: Nine ewe hoggets at 44 kgs €102.50; ten ewe hoggets at 40 kgs €94; nine hoggets at 50 kgs €108; five hoggets at 51 kgs €113; two hoggets at 46 kgs €97. Stag ewes: Similar trade to previous week with good demand especially for heavier lots. Prices ranged from €59 to €117. Ewes with lambs at foot: Six first and second crop ewes with eight lambs at foot €162; ten hogget ewes running with ram due 10th April (not scanned) €112; one second crop ewe with two lambs at foot €150; two third crop ewes with four lambs at foot €145; two second crop ewes with four lambs at foot €176; six third and fourth crop ewes with nine lambs at foot €132.

Cattle sale every Friday at 11 am sharp. Large number of cattle required weekly. Bookings or enquiries to (090) 96 79660.