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| **Connecting Communities**growing our future  |

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| **July 2016** |

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| **Welcome to the fifth issue of the NRN's monthly newsletter. The goal of the National Rural Network (NRN) is to inform the broader public and potential beneficiaries about rural development policy and funding opportunities. In this issue we explore a number of key issues for rural communities. For more see** [www.nationalruralnetwork.ie](http://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=6600&d=t82G11bAEIbkFeYv7NO84ugWq3gipTiOnkOKKZtyHQ&s=613&u=http%3a%2f%2fnationalruralnetwork%2eus12%2elist-manage%2ecom%2ftrack%2fclick%3fu%3d6807eec8219f97a99e885a529%26id%3de139b43e82%26e%3df2d7b99d53)  |

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| Connect with the National Rural Network  |

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| **Minister signs LEADER Funding Agreements to allow funding to flow into rural Ireland** **Rural Development Programme 2014-2020** |

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| Rural Affairs Minister Heather Humphreys (front right) pictured at the launch of the 2014-2020 LEADER programme in the Virginia Show Centre, The Showgrounds, Virginia, County Cavan, with Dr Maura Farrell (NUI Galway and NRN), Seamus Boland (back left) and James Claffey (Irish Rural Link and NRN).On Friday 8th July, the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Heather Humphreys TD, signed the first batch of Funding Agreements under the LEADER Programme 2020. The Minister said the €250 million programme will support hundreds of jobs across rural Ireland.The agreements were signed with Local Action Groups from around the country at an event in the Virginia Show Centre in Cavan, which previously benefitted from €500,000 in LEADER funding.Funding of €250 million will be distributed to entrepreneurs and community groups throughout Ireland by the Local Action Groups, which are made up of public and private representatives.The LEADER programme funds projects under a diverse range of themes that include enterprise development, rural tourism, social inclusion and the environment and is co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. At the launch, Minister Humphreys said: “The LEADER programme will deliver some €250 million into rural towns and villages right across the country over the next four years. By signing the funding agreements with the Local Action Groups today, we are unlocking this vital funding for rural Ireland.“LEADER is built on local people facilitated by Local Action Groups. The investment provided through LEADER at a national level can only make a meaningful impact with the vision and effort of community groups and entrepreneurs at a local level. I look forward to facilitating their work, and funding their investments, in the coming years.”For more information, visit [http://bit.ly/29HM76A](http://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=6600&d=t82G11bAEIbkFeYv7NO84ugWq3gipTiOnkXeKZx5Qg&s=613&u=http%3a%2f%2fnationalruralnetwork%2eus12%2elist-manage%2ecom%2ftrack%2fclick%3fu%3d6807eec8219f97a99e885a529%26id%3de9b5413c07%26e%3df2d7b99d53)   |

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| **Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme (TAMS II)****Improving sustainability and efficiency of farm holdings**Slurry tanker. Low emission slurry spreading is promoted under TAMS II.Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes were launched in May 2015 to support the sustainable development of Irish agriculture.  The grant- aid provided will enable farmers to meet the challenges of climate change and to increase efficiency on their holdings.During 2015, six new schemes were announced under (TAMS II). These schemes were launched under the new Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 and are co-funded under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).The financial allocation to each scheme for the full RDP period is as follows:•    Young Farmers Capital Investment Scheme €120m•    Dairy Equipment Scheme €50m•    Organic Capital Investment Scheme €8m•    Animal Welfare, Safety and Nutrient Storage Scheme €170m•    Low Emission Slurry Spreading €4m•    Pig and Poultry Investment Scheme €17m.Sheep fencing has recently been included in the list of eligible investment items in TAMS II.  For more information see [http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/farmerschemespayments/tams/](http://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=6600&d=t82G11bAEIbkFeYv7NO84ugWq3gipTiOnhCNJ8t4Sw&s=613&u=http%3a%2f%2fnationalruralnetwork%2eus12%2elist-manage%2ecom%2ftrack%2fclick%3fu%3d6807eec8219f97a99e885a529%26id%3d139fff476e%26e%3df2d7b99d53) |

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| **GLAS Farmland Bird Walks****Green Low-Carbon Agri- Environment Scheme**Grey partridge focus of GLAS farmland bird walksGLAS Farmland bird walks have taken place in Donegal, Mayo and Offaly. The walks were organised by the DAFM in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Birdwatch Ireland. The farm walks provided information to farmers on farmland birds including Twite, Grey Partridge, and Concrake. GLAS provides for the conservation of farmland birds by providing suitable habitats for nesting, foraging, and breeding. This is a busy time of year for the 38,437 GLAS participants of particular relevance at this time of year are the following GLAS actions: * **Low- input permanent pasture:** promotes a grassland management strategy that results in a diverse sward which benefits flora and fauna. A diverse sward is established by using appropriate grazing levels and restricting fertiliser, and pesticides. Parcels selected for Low- input permanent pasture can be topped from the 15th July. The sward must be maintained by grazing and cannot be used for hay or silage.
* **Protection of Watercourses from Bovines:** protects water quality by excluding bovines. The deadline for fencing off watercourses from bovines is the 31st July 2016. All watercourses must be fenced off a minimum of 1.5 m from the top of the bank of the watercourse to exclude bovines. The fence must be stockproof fit for purpose and be undertaken with permanent stakes and wire.
* **Riparian margins:** protects watercourses by creating linear buffer zones. A 3, 6, 10 or 30m riparian margin must be created by fencing the margin off.  An access point for machinery into the margin must be kept to manage the margin. Livestock are not permitted to graze the margin. Vegetation will develop naturally within the margin and will help to stabilise the river bank and intercept nutrients.

For more information on GLAS, see [http://bit.ly/25yrpxa](http://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=6600&d=t82G11bAEIbkFeYv7NO84ugWq3gipTiOnkOKep94Gg&s=613&u=http%3a%2f%2fnationalruralnetwork%2eus12%2elist-manage%2ecom%2ftrack%2fclick%3fu%3d6807eec8219f97a99e885a529%26id%3d558d53b5f6%26e%3df2d7b99d53)  |

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| **Public consultation on Horizon 2020 open until 28th August****Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, Marine and Maritime and Inland Water Research and the Bioeconomy Work Programme 2018-2020**Horizon 2020 LogoThe purpose of the open public online consultation is to collect the views and opinions on the what the strategy, scope, objectives, and expected impacts of the Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge 2 Work Programme 2018-2020 should be.  All citizens and organisations are welcome to contribute to this consultation. Contributions are particularly sought from civil society organisations, businesses, research institutions, policy makers, higher education institutions, local public authorities,  innovators and entrepreneurs.  Contributions to the present consultation will feed into preparation of the next Societal Challenge 2 Work Programme 2018-2020.  The Commission expects to develop the content of Work Programme 2018-2020 during the fourth quarter of 2016 and first semester 2017, with adoption and publication of calls for proposals in the autumn of 2017.For further information, visit [http://bit.ly/29uWGWC](http://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=6600&d=uM2G12Dyijc92vuGg1ojcx2t9dv6nSy4Orx4p8rLxw&s=613&u=http%3a%2f%2fnationalruralnetwork%2eus12%2elist-manage%2ecom%2ftrack%2fclick%3fu%3d6807eec8219f97a99e885a529%26id%3dadb1c30465%26e%3df2d7b99d53)   |

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| **Rural Development and the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs****Rural policy, programmes and funding**Post office, Ballycroy, Co. MayoThe newly configured Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs will become the central focus for rural policy, programmes and funding.  This newly constructed government department will be in charge of the following functions:  * Rural Development: LEADER
* Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA)
* Rural Recreation
* Western Development Commission
* Town and Village Regeneration Scheme
* Tidy Towns
* Dormant Accounts Fund - €8.8m in 2016
* Social Enterprise

Additionally, the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs will also have functions for the roll out of rural broadband and the development of the rural post office network. For more details, see: [http://bit.ly/29QoNVk](http://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=6600&d=uM2G12Dyijc92vuGg1ojcx2t9dv6nSy4OrkopsqQxQ&s=613&u=http%3a%2f%2fnationalruralnetwork%2eus12%2elist-manage2%2ecom%2ftrack%2fclick%3fu%3d6807eec8219f97a99e885a529%26id%3ddcc9982417%26e%3df2d7b99d53)   |

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| **European Technology Platform: Inputs Sought****Innovation in Organic Farming**TP Organics LogoTP Organics is one of 40 European Technology Platforms (ETP) officially recognized by the European Commission. Its main goal is to leverage the organic sector’s contribution to sustainable farming and food production.Innovation is at the heart of the organic sector. Organic farms food companies are laboratories of creativity and green innovation .The Organic Innovation Arena is meant to showcase the potential of the innovations developed by the many actors working in the organic sector and wider agro-ecological community. TP Organics is seeking innovations and projects to be submitted for inclusion in the organic Innovation Arena. The deadline for submissions is 22nd July.For more information on how to submit your project, visit [http://bit.ly/29tG1qU](http://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=6600&d=uM2G12Dyijc92vuGg1ojcx2t9dv6nSy4Or0qrJzOmg&s=613&u=http%3a%2f%2fnationalruralnetwork%2eus12%2elist-manage2%2ecom%2ftrack%2fclick%3fu%3d6807eec8219f97a99e885a529%26id%3dcbd27c9d9b%26e%3df2d7b99d53)  |

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| **Best Practice**MacGillycuddy Reeks Training and Upland Trail Repair ProjectView of MacGillyCuddy Reeks fron CarrauntoohilThe MacGillycuddy Reeks Training and Upland Trail Repair Project was funded under the REDZ (Rural Economic Development Zone) pilot project from CEDRA (Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas) through the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government.  The project was developed via the MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Forum and as a result of recommendations arising from the MacGillycuddy Reeks Path Audit in 2015.  The audit captured objective baseline data on the condition of all paths in the Reeks and recommended immediate commencement of repair and maintenance works.  In conjunction with Kerry County Council, South Kerry Development Partnership and the MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Forum, the project carried out an upland trail repair programme together with intensive training and capital works and in turn developed a skilled workforce, exclusive to the upland regions of Ireland.  All of the direct participants of the project were landowners or from the local area and their wealth of local knowledge was fundamental to the overall success of the project.  Three separate areas of the reeks were identified for regeneration and many physical improvements were made to stop mitigation of paths, redirect and rebuild drains and encourage more recreation in the area. As a result of the project, nine local participants were trained in upland path repair works and four individuals were trained in machine built paths.  In all, there were eighteen weeks of training and it is expected that over forty existing enterprises will be supported as a direct result of the works carried out on the reeks, which will include B&B’s, hostels, public houses, tour guides and restaurants. The project also resulted in the safeguarding of landscape, biodiversity and recreation and the creation of eight direct jobs for locals living within a five mile radius of the project.For further information see [www.macgillycuddyreekskerry.com](http://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=6600&d=uM2G12Dyijc92vuGg1ojcx2t9dv6nSy4Or8v8M7Jmw&s=613&u=http%3a%2f%2fnationalruralnetwork%2eus12%2elist-manage%2ecom%2ftrack%2fclick%3fu%3d6807eec8219f97a99e885a529%26id%3dc8035f3680%26e%3df2d7b99d53)    |

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| **Forthcoming Events**Calendar**SAVE THE DATE! NRN Annual Conference 14th October 2016, Athlone**The first annual NRN conference on the theme of European Innovation Partnerships (EIP-Agri) takes place in the Sheraton Athlone Hotel on 14th October from 9-1.30pm [www.nationalruralnetwork.ie](http://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=6600&d=uM2G12Dyijc92vuGg1ojcx2t9dv6nSy4Ou4irMuQxQ&s=613&u=http%3a%2f%2fnationalruralnetwork%2eus12%2elist-manage%2ecom%2ftrack%2fclick%3fu%3d6807eec8219f97a99e885a529%26id%3dfa17078118%26e%3df2d7b99d53) **Deadline to Register for Knowledge Transfer Groups 14th July**The Knowledge Transfer Groups are an important support for farmers in addressing a range of competitiveness and sustainability challenges facing the sector. For further details on how to register, visit [http://bit.ly/29A9dxU](http://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=6600&d=uM2G12Dyijc92vuGg1ojcx2t9dv6nSy4Ougro5uQxQ&s=613&u=http%3a%2f%2fnationalruralnetwork%2eus12%2elist-manage%2ecom%2ftrack%2fclick%3fu%3d6807eec8219f97a99e885a529%26id%3d3d3b0e091a%26e%3df2d7b99d53) **LIFE Funding for Environment Projects - September Deadlines**The EU Commission has published its 2016 CALL for proposals for LIFE Action Grants for its 2 sub-programmes: Environment and Climate Action. Various deadlines apply between 7th and 15th September 2016. For more information on how to apply, visit [http://bit.ly/29TivEE](http://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=6600&d=uM2G12Dyijc92vuGg1ojcx2t9dv6nSy4Ou9-85uekw&s=613&u=http%3a%2f%2fnationalruralnetwork%2eus12%2elist-manage2%2ecom%2ftrack%2fclick%3fu%3d6807eec8219f97a99e885a529%26id%3d64b9d23e05%26e%3df2d7b99d53)**High-level Conference FOOD 2030 at the Square in Brussels, 12-13 October**The theme of the conference is Research And Innovation For Tomorrow's Nutrition And Food Systems. For further details, visit [http://bit.ly/29K5PNR](http://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=6600&d=uM2G12Dyijc92vuGg1ojcx2t9dv6nSy4Or5-pJ3Oxw&s=613&u=http%3a%2f%2fnationalruralnetwork%2eus12%2elist-manage%2ecom%2ftrack%2fclick%3fu%3d6807eec8219f97a99e885a529%26id%3d499141ca77%26e%3df2d7b99d53)**First Irish Planning for Climate Change Conference, Limerick, 27 October 2016**This conference series is the ideal forum in which to discuss and debate the issues that face communities and economies when it comes to planning and adapting to the problems faced by growing global climate change.  Further details at [www.planforclimatechange.co.uk](http://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=6600&d=uM2G12Dyijc92vuGg1ojcx2t9dv6nSy4Ouku9p2fkg&s=613&u=http%3a%2f%2fnationalruralnetwork%2eus12%2elist-manage%2ecom%2ftrack%2fclick%3fu%3d6807eec8219f97a99e885a529%26id%3da6ba3db74c%26e%3df2d7b99d53)  |

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| Members of the NRN Team |
|  Meet the NRN TeamThe National Rural Network (NRN) Consortium Coordination Group (from left to right): Michael Kenny, Seamus Boland (Project Director), James Claffey, Billy Murphy, Deirdre Garvey, Philip Farrelly and Maria Pettit and (not pictured) Dr. Maura Farrell, Johnny Sheehan, Maria O’Gorman and Freda Salley. For more information visit [www.nationalruralnetwork.ie](http://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=6600&d=uM2G12Dyijc92vuGg1ojcx2t9dv6nSy4Ougvp87Oxw&s=613&u=http%3a%2f%2fnationalruralnetwork%2eus12%2elist-manage%2ecom%2ftrack%2fclick%3fu%3d6807eec8219f97a99e885a529%26id%3d3bc85148e8%26e%3df2d7b99d53) |

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 | http://gallery.mailchimp.com/27aac8a65e64c994c4416d6b8/images/bg_watercolor_right.png |