



# Kildalton



A CELEBRATION | 25<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2022



# Welcome



On behalf of Teagasc and Kildalton College, I would like to welcome you to the Kildalton 50-year celebration.

In 1971, Kildalton College opened its doors as a training college for young farmers with 29 students enrolled. The following year the Horticultural College opened with 18 students and the Equine college in 1986 with 4 students. Today, Kildalton College is the largest college in the Teagasc network providing education and training to over 1,300 students each year.

During this period the college has fostered strong collaborations and progression routes with higher education institutions. In 1979, courses commenced in conjunction with the Regional Technical College in Waterford which then became Waterford Institute of Technology and is now known as South Eastern Technological University. This, and later collaborations with UCD and TUD continue to flourish. Teagasc has invested in facilities and staff in the college throughout the 50 years. This is reflected in the continuous development of staff, the incorporation of best practice into training programmes and the ongoing development of our facilities.

## **Today's Event:**

Visitors will have the opportunity to travel through time in the Decade Rooms - rooms representing each of the past five decades displaying photos and articles from the college campus and enterprises showing how they have developed. These are accompanied by scheduled talks in the Conlon Theatre which reflect on the history of Bessborough House, from Cromwellian times through its period as an Oblate Seminary, and as a landbased college over the past fifty years.

The historic Bessborough House and estate grounds including the lake, gardens and historical woodlands are open to all visitors. Refreshments are available at the front and rear of Bessborough House. To further mark this significant occasion, a time capsule, designed and manufactured by our second-year agricultural students, will be buried on site, and visitors are invited to submit mementoes which they wish to have included in it.

A visit to the agriculture, horticulture and equine enterprises will be of interest to many visitors where you have the opportunity to see the current enterprises and reflect on some of the changes that have taken place over the past 50 years.

Demonstrations are scheduled throughout the day and staff will be on hand to discuss production systems and training programmes offered in Kildalton.

We hope that you enjoy the event, rediscover Kildalton and reconnect with old friends, classmates and staff.

A sincere thank you to FBD for their generous sponsorship of this event.

***Tim Ashmore, College Principal***

# WELCOME

FBD is delighted to be associated with this unique celebration to mark the 50th Anniversary of the founding of Kildalton College.

Over the past half-century Kildalton has made an enormous contribution to the progress of Irish farming, the food industry, horticulture and equine pursuits.

Agricultural education, which introduces modern science, technology and business knowledge, is the life blood of the modern and progressive industry we have in Ireland today. The combination of Teagasc research and knowledge-transfer and the practical skills included in the curriculum is the reason why Kildalton has been so successful and continues to attract such large numbers of students intending to embark on a career in agriculture.

Each generation of farmers are faced with different challenges and the long term sustainability of the Irish Agri-food industry requires a constant flow of well-educated young people onto family farms supported by ongoing research and new technologies.

The education requirements of modern sustainable agriculture are constantly changing. Kildalton is to the forefront in meeting the needs of present and future farmers through the wide range of courses it offers and its evolving teaching methods using the latest communication technology.

Kildalton graduates work throughout the industry, effectively contributing to the success of Irish agriculture as farmers, and in other branches of the Agri-food industry.

The Kildalton team, led by Principal Tim Ashmore, deserve great credit for their dedication and commitment to the ongoing success of the College and their extraordinary endeavours to mark this milestone 50th anniversary.

I would also like to acknowledge the enormous contribution of previous Principals and the dedicated staff, past and present, which have made Kildalton the highly esteemed institution it is today.

As the principle sponsor of KILDALTON50, FBD Insurance is proud to support this important educational facility for Irish farmers as we recognise and appreciate the vital role of Agricultural education in the continuing success of our Agri-Food industry.

Michael Berkery.  
Chairman, FBD Trust.



**FBD**  
TRUST

# Schedule of Events

<b>Historical Talks: Conlon Theatre</b>	<b>Time</b>
Terry Cunningham-Reflections on the history of Kildalton College	11.30
Mary O'Flaherty - The history of Kildalton College	13.30
Norman Storey- The history of Kildalton College	14.30

<b>Equine Unit Demonstrations: Arena 1</b>	<b>Time</b>
Dressage - Teagasc Staff & Emily Kate Robinson	11.00 - 12.00
Side Saddle – Faith Ponsonby	12.00 - 13.00
Irish Army Showjumping - ex Kildalton Students	13.30 - 14.30
Arena Eventing & Dressage – Teagasc Staff	14.30 - 15.30

<b>Tractor Driving Demonstrations: Driving Pad</b>	<b>Time</b>
Student tractor driving competition	11.30
Student tractor driving competition	13.30
Student tractor driving competition	15.30

<b>Sheep Unit Demonstrations: Sheep Shed</b>	<b>Time</b>
Sheep shearing demo - Kildalton Students	11.30
Sheep shearing demo - Kildalton Students	13.30
Sheep shearing demo - Kildalton Students	15.30

Fencing- Farm Structures Demo Area, every hour	12.00 - 15.00
Pollinators & Wildflowers Walk & Talk - Glasshouse	12.00 & 14.00
Childrens Scavenger Hunt - Information Stand	All Day
Childrens Colouring Competition- Beside Fountain	12.00 - 15.00

# Agriculture Unit & Todays Event

## **Farm Unit**

The Kildalton College Farm currently comprises of 178 hectares which carries dairy, tillage, suckler/dairy beef and sheep enterprises. These enterprises are a vital resource for student training and skills development, while they are also used as monitor farms, garnering important performance and financial data for various open days and farm walks. Teagasc has developed the farm at Kildalton since 1971, providing students with “real life” hands on farm experience for over 50 years. While the farm is operated as a commercial enterprise, it is also used to deliver practical skills and assessments on a daily basis to a wide range of full time, part-time and distance education agricultural students, ranging from Level 5 to Level 8.

Additionally, the college farm hosts in-service training, short courses, overseas visitors and various other events, making it probably the busiest and most visited farmyard in Ireland.

Kildalton College is proud to be a Signpost Programme Demonstration Farm. The Signpost programme is a multi-annual campaign to lead climate action by all Irish farmers, and achieve early progress in reducing gaseous emissions from Irish agriculture, while also improving water quality, maintaining and improving biodiversity, reducing costs and creating more profitable and sustainable farming enterprises.

## **Dairy Unit**

The Kildalton College dairy enterprise has been in existence since 1971. Since its establishment the herd has progressed through the years, with numbers increasing steadily from 40 British Friesian cows during the 1970s, to 45 cow pedigree Holstein herd in the late 1990s. Today the herd comprises of 120 crossbred New Zealand Jersey x Friesian cows and ranks in the top 2% for EBI (economic breeding index) nationally. The current state of the art 20 unit milking parlour and cubicle shed was constructed in 2006, to facilitate an increase in cow numbers.

The enterprise is led by a number of primary objectives:

- To develop and demonstrate best practice in sustainable dairy farm systems.
- Producing high yields of milk solids per cow and per hectare from a grass based system using efficient high EBI bred cows.
- Maximising sustainable profits while operating the dairy farm within the limits of the Nitrogen Directive and acceptable animal welfare targets.
- Operating an efficient and well organised business unit to benefit both farmers and Teagasc advisors/specialists and students.
- Demonstrating proven research practices for grassland dairy production.
- To remain a centre of excellence for the teaching and practical delivery of dairy modules to students.

To mark our 50th anniversary celebrations, the dairy herd is showcased during the day to allow visitors view the herd and take a tour of our dairy facilities to witness some of the changes that have taken place over the past 50 years. The exhibit will outline the progression of the herd to date through genetic gain, improvements in technology, facilities and a renewed focus on sustainability.

### **Tillage Enterprise**

Arable crops have been grown at Kildalton since its inception in 1971. The tillage enterprise on the college farm consists of 33 hectares of arable crops and includes forage maize, winter and spring cereals, spring beans and winter oilseed rape. Over the last 50 years, potatoes and sugar beet were some of the notable crops that were grown in the college. Many former students will have fond memories of picking potatoes by hand at the start of their college year! This crop is now grown in much smaller quantities as part of the horticultural unit. Sugar beet was grown until 2005 when the sugar factories closed.

Our longstanding relationship with the Crop Variety Evaluation section of Department of Agriculture Food and Marine (DAFM) has expanded since the 1970's with field trials carried out on cereal, grass, bean and oilseed rape varieties. During our Kildalton 50 celebrations, we are showcasing varieties of spring barley and spring oats that were grown during the 1970's and compare them to varieties grown today. We are also comparing a DAFM spring barley Recommended List from the 1970's to the most recent published recommended lists. There has been a significant increase in yields for arable crops in the last 50 years due to plant breeding and agronomy practices and these increases are displayed.

## Suckler/Dairy Calf to Beef Unit

The college beef herd has developed from an initial calf to beef enterprise in the 1970s to the current multiple production systems which the college uses for skills demonstrations and exhibiting sustainable quality beef production. The unit will showcase the various production systems, breeds and technologies currently used in this high performing herd, whilst also tracking the development of the college beef herd and associated facilities since 1971. Spread across three locations – the main suckler shed, the beef skills demonstration area plus some penning in paddocks near the yard, there will be livestock from each of the following systems on display:

- A selection of dairy cross bred calves and yearlings, bred from sires selected using the Dairy Breeding Index and sourced from the college dairy herd, which will be finished as steers at 24 months old.
- A range of the 55 suckler cows with their 2022 born calves.
- Examples of the 5-star Replacement Index retained 2021 born replacement heifers, bred using AI from high Maternal Index sires, to calf down at 24 months in spring 2023.
- A selection of continental cross beef heifers for slaughter off grass in October/November 2022 at 20 months old.
- Continental cross bullocks for slaughter in February/March 2023 at 24 months old.

We will also have examples of how tools and aids related to the management of the herd have evolved over the past 5 decades, showcasing technologies relating to grass measurement, silage analysis, heat detection, animal health and breeding, pregnancy scanning and assessing housing conditions.



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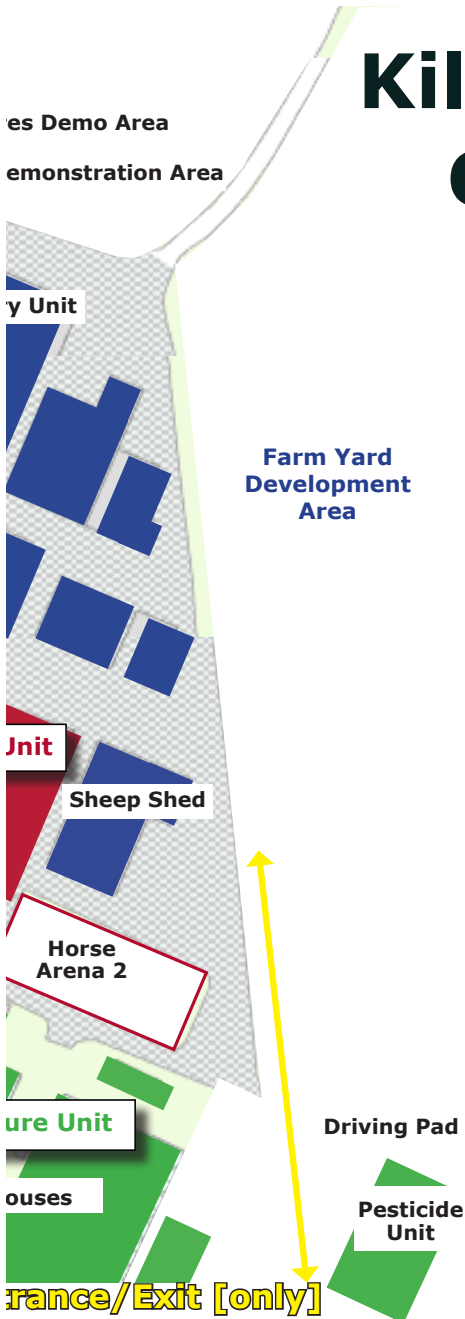


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# Campus Map

## Kildalton College Campus Map



*Historical Talks: Conlon Theatre*

*Decades Rooms: Library & Classrooms 1,2,4*

*Left hand entrance to Agri. Unit*

*Right hand entrance to Equine Unit*

*Right hand entrance to Horticulture Unit*

*Food*



*Toilets*



*First Aid*



*(At Lodge)*

*Missing Persons*



*(Info. Stand)*

*Information Stand*



*Baby Changing - Ground Floor*



*Seating Area*



*Kids Colouring*





## Sheep Unit

Sheep have been an integral part of life for students and staff at Kildalton College since the college opened. Kildalton has always been to the forefront in lamb production. The college developed one of the first slatted and straw bedded integrated sheep sheds with a sheep race and handling unit in the early 1980s. This shed forms part of the newly redeveloped college sheep shed and handling unit. Regardless of year of attendance, past students will hold abiding memories of long nights and lifelong friendships made whilst lambing the college ewes in this fantastic facility.

The current sheep flock is made up of 150 crossbred ewes. The main sire breeds of choice on the farm are Suffolk, Belclare, Charollais and Texel. The flock is consistently high performing, with a split early and mid-season lambing system employed to maximise facilities. All rams are purchased based on 5-star terminal and/or replacement index value, while they are also fertility tested and Geno mapped. These ram selection standards have led to top quality lambs consistently being produced year after year.

As part of Kildalton 50 celebrations, we will showcase the development of our sheep flock while also mapping the changes that have taken place within lowland sheep farming in Ireland over the past 50 years.

The following demonstrations will be on display:

- Sheep shearing demonstrations carried out by former students
- Display of rams and ewes
- Guess the weight of the lamb competition

## ***Farm Machinery***

Machinery and the evolution of agricultural mechanisation have been at the heart of many of the dramatic changes that farmers have witnessed over the past 50 years and the evolution of the Kildalton College machinery fleet has certainly mirrored these changes. As part of today's event, the full range of modern agricultural equipment operating in Kildalton College will be on show alongside models used on the farm over the past five decades. From canvas cabs to air-conditioned modular units, the tractors of today are the perfect illustration of how technology has evolved.

To celebrate a half century of machinery operations at Kildalton, the following demonstrations will take place:

- The current college fleet of over 25 tractors and utility vehicles, ranging in size from 35 horsepower to our flagship 200 horsepower auto steer John Deere will be on display alongside a range of older tractors and machinery used in the college since 1971.
- Kildalton College won the 2022 Agricultural Colleges Macra Challenges day. The winning team will demonstrate their tractor driving and loading skills. Demonstrations will take place on our driver training pad at 11am, 1.30pm and 3.30pm.

## ***Kildalton Pig Unit 1971–2002***

Pig farming was an integral part of Kildalton College life from its inception right up to the closure of the pig unit in March 2002. During the early 1970s, pigs were housed in the Coach House and in old stone barns just behind. Kildalton College invested in a state of the art, fully integrated modern pig unit facility in 1976. A large dry sow barn, farrowing houses and weaner/fattener house were constructed. The unit demonstrated the potential of pig farming at a larger scale. Herd size increased to 90 sows plus followers in 1980 and a state of the art feed mill was constructed.

The piggery was the starting ground for many agricultural teachers over the years, who spent a year or two overseeing the enterprise before moving on to more prestigious roles within the campus. College students were heavily involved in the running of the piggery, while farm apprentices also worked there. Farm staff members Jim Grant, Larry Stafford, Willie O'Dwyer, Declan Byrne and Mick McCormack all provided labour throughout its existence. New EU regulations around pig housing necessitated a complete modernisation of the unit that would have brought significant and unjustifiable cost.

As a result, the college piggery closed in March 2002.

## ***Kildalton College Deer Unit 1986–2010***

During the 1980's Teagasc were keen to examine the benefits of deer farming as an alternative farm enterprise in Ireland. As a result, a newly formed Teagasc deer research farm was based at Kildalton College in 1986. The original herd was started with the purchase of a herd of 20 sika and 40 red crossbred deer. The deer were farmed on 7ha of land, within the walled garden and rabbit burrows area of the college.

There was no student involvement in the college deer herd, due to safety concerns. The Teagasc national deer specialist, Marie Kelly, was the lead researcher at the unit for the duration of its existence. Marie had a huge passion for deer farming and the nature that surrounded it, she spent endless hours meticulously recording data and caring for the herd. Marie sadly passed away in January 2021. She was ably assisted by farm staff members, Mattie Talbot (until his retirement in 2000) and Billy Fraher (who worked on the unit until its closure). The deer unit was discontinued in 2010 due to changes in market demand for venison.



# Horticulture Unit & Todays Event

## **Horticulture Unit**

Kildalton College began delivering horticultural education in 1972 with 18 students. Today there are over 125 students at Kildalton College studying horticulture on a full or part time basis. Students at Kildalton gain valuable knowledge and experience through a unique blend of hands on learning in the modern horticultural unit, and classroom-based learning, all delivered by our experienced horticultural team on campus. With students studying on a full or part time basis across a wide range of courses from Level 5 to 7, we offer more ways than ever to gain a qualification in this diverse and exciting industry.

## ***Fruit and Vegetables***

Piltown has a strong tradition of apple production and Kildalton College is maintaining this tradition while also looking to the future. The college boasts the only state-owned orchard in the country, growing dessert, culinary and cider apples, many of which are new varieties on trial. We also produce other top fruit including pears, plums, damsons and cherries. Soft fruit produced at Kildalton includes strawberries and raspberries, red & black currants, gooseberries, loganberries and rhubarb. Students will also experience field production of vegetables including potatoes, cabbage, broccoli, brussels sprouts, onions, leeks, courgettes, pumpkins and asparagus.

## ***Amenity***

Kildalton College is situated on 16ha of established gardens and woodlands, which boasts an extensive collection of plants. Some of the trees on the grounds date back to the Ponsonby estate. These grounds provide horticulture students with a perfect backdrop to develop knowledge and practical skills for a career in the industry. These skills include plant identification, plant combinations, planting, maintenance and management techniques. Students are also involved in developing new gardens on the grounds of the college as part of some courses.

## ***Nursery***

In the 1970's the college nursery was the site of a commercial tomato production unit. The last crop of tomatoes was grown in 1992. The glasshouse was then used for cold crops before becoming part of the current nursery. The college's commercial nursery produces in excess of 35,000 plants a year. There is a wide range of stock produced in the nursery ranging from herbaceous plants and alpines to trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials, roses and grasses. The facilities include polytunnels, 2 x 200m<sup>2</sup> glasshouse and outdoor growing areas. Students see and gain hands on practical experience of plants being produced from start to finish on site.

## ***Protected Crops***

The protected crops unit currently has a glasshouse and polytunnel dedicated to the production of high value protected crops. Students are involved in the production of all of these crops from sowing to harvest. This glasshouse is also used to conduct student trials as part of third-year project completion which forms part of the Bachelor of Science in Horticulture in conjunction with South Eastern Technological University. Industry led trials are conducted on various crops, growing media and management techniques.

## ***Sportsturf***

The golf facility was opened in 2002. All students are allowed to use these facilities in their down time. The turf grass facilities allow students to gain hands on practical knowledge of maintaining golf greens, fairways, bunkers and sports field to an ideal standard. These sports turf amenities also offer students the opportunity to use a wide variety of machinery including specialised mowers, line marking equipment, aerators and fertiliser spreaders.

## ***Mushroom Unit***

In the early 1980's 3 mushroom tunnels were constructed in the horticulture unit to train students and growers in mushroom growing. Production ceased in 1990.

Visitors have the opportunity to view Kildalton's extensive horticultural facilities as well as the 16 hectares of landscaped grounds on campus. There are many trees of significance on the grounds of Kildalton College worth visiting and visitors can also avail of the opportunity to discover the many gardens on the grounds of the college, developed by students over the years.

Over the past 50 years, our horticultural education delivery has evolved with the industry and our units are managed in order to reflect this. We are holding demonstrations throughout the day to showcase Kildalton Horticulture and outline how the horticulture industry is producing food and developing amenity plants and trees in a sustainable manner. Produce from the college horticultural unit will also be available for sale at the artisan village at the front of Bessborough House during the event.

# Equine Unit & Todays Event

## Equine Unit

The Equine enterprise started in 1973 with two Irish Draughts mares, Kildalton Countess and Kildalton Lass. In 1984/85 the unit was expanded into a four mare breeding unit with the aid of funding from Board na gCapall. Students at this stage were studying a combined equine and agriculture course in Kildalton. During this period, Grennan College and Kildalton collaborated in the delivery of the National Certificate in Horse Production. The unit expanded in 1989 with four Arabian mares that had been gifted to the State and a purchased Connemara mare, bringing the total number of mares to 9 and their followers (anything up to 40/45 horses). A full time equine course started with 14 students in 1998 and now in 2022 we have approximately 80 students per year.

Students can leave Kildalton as qualified instructors as the college is a British Horse Society (BHS) training and exam centre and once students have passed Level 6 Equitation they are qualified to instruct in any Association of Irish Riding Establishments approved riding centres. This makes them employable as soon as they leave college. Past students have gone to careers in eventing, show jumping, stud management, running riding schools and setting up their own equestrian enterprises. Students have also gone on to more diverse careers such as the army, equine dentistry, farriery, veterinary nursing and physiotherapy.

Our equine unit consists of an indoor and two outdoor arenas, all weather cross country track, stables, tack rooms, riding simulator and solarium and a breeding enterprise. The college maintains broodmares – Irish Draughts, Sport Horses and Connemaras and has produced many successful stallions including Kildalton Gold, Gildawn Diamond and Kildalton King. Please feel free to come and walk around and speak to the staff. We are running demonstrations all day, including showjumping with Olympian Commandant Geoffrey Curran (please see Schedule of Events).

Visitors have the opportunity to try our state of the art horse riding Simulator - it is called Sammy and is very well behaved!

Visit our native breeds, Connemara, Draughts and Kerry Bog ponies and walk around the Equine Unit.



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