

rural dispatch



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The Official Magazine of the
Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster

Winter/Spring 2012



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HEATIME AIDS HEAT DETECTION on busy Family Farm

David & Hilary Wilson run a busy family farm of 150 pedigree Holsteins at Gravelhill, a few miles north of Belfast. Last year David took the decision to invest in an electronic heat detection system. Twelve months on David's decision has been more than justified with a huge drop in calving interval and less time required carrying out the tedious task of monitoring cows for heats.

After researching the market David opted for the Heatime system due to its reliability and widespread farmer satisfaction. He purchased 100 collars and the United Tankcare engineers fitted the control unit and readers in December 2010.

After fitting Heatime, David began to focus much more carefully on fertility and has seen a drop of 33 days in his

calving interval from December 2010. Considering many of the collars weren't fitted until January last year this is a remarkable achievement. Putting the difference into monetary terms and assuming a cost of £3 per day in terms of every extra day in calving interval that equates to a cost saving of almost £15,000 for the 150 cow herd.

David believes this improvement has been achieved by a combination of picking up more 'silent' heats and better timing of insemination, as Heatime shows when the cow started to show increased activity and how long the heat has lasted.

David attributes much of the herd's success to a dedicated team of staff, made up of, his son Jonathan, who is now at home full time, though attending a part-time NVQ course at Greenmount, his wife Hilary, three daughters, Carolyn, Rachael and Allison who all help out where possible with milking and other chores, and a full-time man.

To find out more about Heatime please contact Dairy Herd Management on 028 9037 2219 or call Gary Watson on 07771 706 423.



David Wilson checking on his dairy herd – something he can do a little less of now that the cows' activity is monitored by Heatime

WIN A BREAK TO SCOTLAND - WITH DALE FARM SPELGA & STENA LINE

Dale Farm Spelga has partnered with Stena Line to offer consumers the chance to win one of 35 Short Breaks to Scotland.

Made with real fruit pieces Dale Farm Spelga Low Fat Bio Yogurts have less than 2% fat per pot, making them ideal for those watching their waistline at the start of the New Year. And now Dale Farm Spelga yogurts also come with the added benefit of an opportunity to win a mini-break in Scotland. Each break includes a crossing between Belfast & Cairnryan for a car and two passengers and two night's B&B hotel accommodation

To be in with a change of winning, look out for the promotional Low Fat Bio Yogurt multipacks in store

throughout January and February, and enter your pack's unique promotional code on the competition website – www.steneline.co.uk/spelga

The deadline date for all entries is 18th March 2012.



PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD



I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year for 2012 and hope that it's as action packed as our previous year.

I fully encourage all members to get out there and take part in the wide range of competitions and activities that we offer to all of our members.

I would like to formally welcome Jane Kilpatrick to our staff team as our new Membership Development Coordinator. Jane's role includes developing a membership benefits scheme and also giving support to our clubs.

We recently launched our new Membership Benefits package which includes a range of great offers such as discounts on purchases from retailers, cinema, sports and food. Check out our new website www.yfcu.org for a full list of the offers available. I encourage all members to use their membership cards to avail of these great discounts.

Finally I would like to thank all members who attended the Big Comedy Night in Corick House. It was you, the members, that made it such a success and I would like to thank all who attended this very entertaining night.

Arts Festival 2012

The Arts Festival is taking place in venues throughout Northern Ireland 21st – 24th February 2012. Tickets are currently on sale for the Arts Festival Gala Evening, Saturday 31st March 2012 at Millennium Forum, Londonderry. To purchase your tickets for this prestigious event please contact the box office directly on 71 26 44 55.

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For all editorial and advertising queries please contact the editor.

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Front Cover: Ellen Woods, Annaclone & Magherally YFC – photo entry from last year's photographic competition.

Rugby Star Rory Best New Patron of YFCU

YFCU is delighted to announce that its new patron is Ulster and Irish rugby star, Rory Best.

Rory currently plays the position of hooker for Ulster rugby and made his international debut for Ireland against the All Blacks in 2005. He was a member of the Irish team that won the 2007 Triple Crown and was in the Irish squad for the 2007 and 2011 rugby world cups as well as the 2009 Six Nations championship which completed the Grand Slam.

Rory was raised on the family farm near Poyntzpass, Co Armagh and his father is well known cereal farmer John Best. Rory studied agriculture at Newcastle University and although best known as a top international sportsman, his future lies in farming and he is already building up a reputation locally for his growing herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle.

YFCU President, William Wilson said;

"We are honoured to announce that Rory Best is our new patron. His knowledge and interest in farming and rural matters, dedication to his sport and enthusiasm for life complements the ethos of our Association and we believe the 2,600 members of YFCU will be able to identify with him and we look forward to working with him."



New YFCU patron Rory Best

Check out the new YFCU website at www.yfcu.org

The new site, sponsored by Ulster Bank and NFU Mutual, will provide members and potential members with a central point to find out all the information they need and incorporates our facebook and you tube sites.

Please send any club diary dates for inclusion on the website to amy.mcguckian@yfcu.org



YFCU Club of the Year

The YFCU Club of the Year competition is entering its final stage. Stage two, which consisted of clubs detailing their achievements and progress during the period October 2010 to November 2011, is now complete. The panel will choose the top 4 clubs from this stage to make it through to the final which will involve a presentation at the Association's AGM and Conference on Saturday 21st April 2012 at Armagh City Hotel.

Sponsored by Ulster Farm, NI's leading fallen stock collector and established in memory of former YFCU General Secretary Arthur McAllister, the Club of the Year award was officially launched at last year's AGM and Conference.

Innovative in its concept, the award challenges clubs to consider the total contribution they are making to their local communities. They will be judged on a wide criteria, ranging from their growth and expansion in membership, proficiency in events and competitions, general progress and achievements, fundraising and finally for the strength of their management and leadership.

The winning club will be announced at the AGM and Conference.

Membership Benefit Scheme Launched!

YFCU has launched a new benefit scheme for members which will offer a series of discounts and incentives from partner organisations.

YFCU currently has in excess of 2,600 members in clubs throughout Northern Ireland and all members (including associate) can avail of the new benefit scheme by showing their valid 2011-2012 membership card at the participating businesses.

Partner organisations include Arco, Eddie Irvine Sports, Grand Opera House, Junction One, McDonalds, Movie House Cinemas, National Museums of Northern Ireland, SD Kells, The Outlet, Todd's Leap, Translink, Ulster Rugby, Belfast Bus Company and Wigwam Roller Rink.

An example of the great offers includes: Ulster Rugby – receive 1 complimentary adult ticket for every 10 tickets purchased and a half price child ticket for any children accompanying a group of 10 adults or more. Forthcoming games include

Ulster v Ospreys 24th February 7.05pm kick off

Ulster v Edinburgh 2nd March 7.05pm kick off

Ulster v Aironi 30th March 7.05pm kick off

Keep up to date with all the great offers at www.yfcu.org



Pictured at the launch of the YFCU membership benefits scheme are from front left Karen White (National Museums NI), Valerie McLernon (Junction One), Shirley O'Hanlon and Patricia Currie (Todd's Leap), Jane Kilpatrick (YFCU Membership Development Coordinator), Roberta Simmons (YFCU vice President), Colin Smith (YFCU vice President) and back left, Michael Reid (YFCU CEO), William Wilson (YFCU President), Thomas Fegan and Colin Patterson (Eddie Irvine Sports), Janette Sterling (YFCU Executive Committee).

YFCU members secure Finning Apprenticeship

Two YFCU members have each secured a prestigious apprenticeship with Finning, Caterpillar dealer for the UK and Ireland.

Aaron Rutledge from Cappagh YFC and Adam Harris from Glarryford YFC both applied for the apprenticeship programme and beat off stiff competition to be awarded a place. Up to 26 apprentices each year from throughout the UK and Ireland complete a tailored in-house programme with the goal of completing their advanced modern apprenticeship in plant maintenance.

Finning UK & Ireland is a division of Finning International Inc. the world's largest distributors of Caterpillar machines, complementary equipment and power systems.

Aaron and Adam started their three year training programme at the Finning Academy which has been recognised as an outstanding place to learn by Ofsted.

The Caterpillar designed curriculum combines classroom work with experiential learning. The technical education includes learning how to repair Caterpillar equipment using cutting-edge diagnostic and maintenance systems, advanced technologies and high tech tools. Graduates of the Finning Academy receive an advanced apprenticeship that is nationally recognised.

YFCU President William Wilson visited Aaron and Adam at the Finning Lisburn branch where they gave him an insight into their experience so far. William said;

"I am very impressed with how well Aaron and Adam have done to obtain their apprenticeships. This is a brilliant opportunity and the vocational course will stand them in good stead for the future."



Pictured at Finning Lisburn are from left, William Wilson, YFCU President, Adam Harris, Glarryford YFC, Aaron Rutledge, Cappagh YFC and Chris Stevenson, Customer Service Operations Manager, Finning.

Chris Stevenson, Customer Service Operations Manager at Finning said;

"Finning were delighted with the response from the Young Farmers' Clubs when the apprenticeships were advertised earlier in the year as over the years many of the successful candidates have had close links to agriculture.

"Aaron and Adam have settled well into the apprenticeship programme. They receive state of the art training at our purpose built apprenticeship training facility based at our UK headquarters in Cannock, Staffordshire and also here at our Lisburn branch. Adam is training to become a technician on construction and agricultural machinery, whilst Aaron is aiming to become more specialised in the Power Systems side of our business, working in sectors such as power and energy, oil and gas, marine and industrial."

For more information on the apprenticeship programme check out www.finning.co.uk



YFCU Work with Women's Aid

YFCU are working with Women's Aid to highlight issues that may affect young people and their friends and family. The purpose of Women's Aid is to provide a quality based holistic services to women and children affected by all forms of domestic violence; to educate, challenge and co-operate with external agencies and the wider community with a vision to eradicate domestic violence.

To promote the work of Women's Aid and the work they do throughout Northern Ireland we will be holding a "Healthy Relationships" workshop at the YFCU AGM and Conference 21st April 2012.

If your club would like a rep to come along to your club night and host a workshop / event then please contact Aoife at aoife@belfastwomensaid.org.uk for more details.

DARD Online Services

YFCU has joined forces with DARD in order to raise awareness of DARD online services among young farmers. A series of evenings and demonstrations have taken place across the 6 counties during the month of January.

The Aphis online team, Jonathan McFerran, Ian McMaw and Ronan Coll travelled the country highlighting the benefits of using DARD online services and the facilities it offers including; registering Cattle births, deaths and stillborns. Notifications of all cattle movements, to be able to view, print and download your herd list at the touch of a button. You can also view detailed information about your animal including comprehensive movement and calving history. View post and ante mortem information on slaughtered animals and Produce a report that counts and classifies your animals in accordance with the nitrate action programme. Apart from aphis online there are many other DARD online services which help farmers manage their business such as online maps, benchmarking, single farm payment online and the nitrate calculators. All these services are free, easy to use and secure.

Of the members who attended the demonstrations 81% found the information session extremely useful. 79% of the participants were practical farmers with only 43% of these currently using DARD online services stating that the benefits of using them was that it was Quick, easy to use, convenient, less mistakes made and less paperwork. For the remaining 57% of members present who are not currently using the online services said the main reasons for this included that they were not aware of the DARD online services, lack of internet access, found it confusing, were non farming and not computer literate, however after the demonstrations and information



Pictured are Trevor Wilson, YFCU vice President, Jonathan McFerran, Online Services Manager and Stephen Ferguson, YFCU Co Fermanagh chairman at a recent training session.

sessions 76% of participants say that they will now use the Online services in the future. With 39% of young farmers present hoping to get further training.

YFCU are starting a mentor scheme which allows members to receive in depth training on the online Services and then act as a point of contact for members within their own clubs and Counties who are keen to get started and need some assistance, if you would like more information about the mentor scheme or would like to join up then please contact Kerry in YFCU HQ on 028 90370713 or email kerry.megrath@yfcu.org

DARD offer a number of courses around the province, dates include:

VENUE	DAY	DATE	TIME
Ballymoney Community Resource centre	Monday	13th & 20th Feb	8-10pm
Comber Resource centre	Tuesday	14th & 21st Feb	7.30-9.30pm
Greenmount Campus	Tuesday	14th & 21st Feb	8-10pm
Limavady- North West Regional College	Wednesday	15th & 22nd Feb	7.30-9.30pm
Ballymoney, Community resource centre	Thursday	16th & 23rd Feb	8-10pm
Ballynahinch High School	Monday	27th & 5th Mar	7.30-9.30pm
Ballynahinch High School	Tuesday	28th Feb & 6th Mar	7.30-9.30pm
Greenmount Campus	Tuesday	28th Feb & 6th Mar	8-10pm
Loughry Campus	Wednesday	29th Feb & 7th Mar	8-10pm
Ballymoney Community Resource centre	Wednesday	29th Feb & 7th Mar	1.30-3.30pm
Greenmount Campus	Thursday	1st & 8th Mar	8-10pm
Enniskillen Campus	Tuesday	13th & 20th Mar	8-10pm
Ballymoney Community Resource centre	Tuesday	13th & 20th Mar	8-10pm
Loughry Campus Cookstown	Wednesday	26th Mar & 2nd Apr	8-10pm
Enniskillen Campus	Thursday	15th & 22nd Mar	8-10pm
Ballymoney Community Resource centre	Thursday	15th & 22nd Mar	1.30-3.30pm
Loughry Campus	Monday	26th Mar & 2nd Apr	8-10pm
Newry- Southern Regional College	Tuesday	27th mar & 3rd Apr	7.30-9.30pm
Greenmount Campus	Tuesday	27th Mar & 3rd Apr	8-10pm

To book a place on any of the above courses contact DARD online Services helpdesk 028 94426699 or email info@ruralni.gov

Join in the BIG Spring Clean!



YFCU is encouraging clubs to take part in Tidy NI's Big Spring Clean which the YFCU is holding on Saturday 24th March 2012.

Clubs from throughout Northern Ireland have the opportunity to pick a location nearby, maybe around your club hall, local village / community where you can spend an hour or two cleaning up the area and doing your bit for our beautiful countryside.

Local councils should be able to provide all the litter pickers, high vis vests and bin bags for your collection. They will also come and pick up all your filled bags!

If you are interested in taking part please contact Amy at YFCU HQ on 90 37 07 13 or email amy.mcguckian@yfcu.org to register your clean up.

Check out www.tidynorthernireland.org/big-spring-clean/ for more details.

Translink Urge YFCU Members to Drive, Farm and Walk Safely at crossings!

As one of the mildest winters in many years starts drawing to a close and daylight increases by a few minutes each evening, Translink NI Railways wants to remind all YFCU members who use level crossings, whether farmers, contractors, motorists or pedestrians, to keep vigilant and stay safe this Spring.

A user worked crossing is one where the user opens and shuts the gates rather than an automatic barrier being operated; they are sometimes known as 'accommodation or occupation crossings'. Some are fitted with a telephone and each time the user wants to cross with a vehicle or livestock, they must call their local signal cabin to ensure that it's safe to do so. There are currently 132 crossings situated along our railway on private land and are operated by the users. While the majority of crossing users are responsible and work closely with us to ensure that they operate their crossings correctly, a small number of users neglect to inform us when they intend to cross, or fail to close the crossing gates after use. A user might think a quick dash over a crossing won't do any harm, but the implications could be very serious. This is because as well as our scheduled services, testing of our new trains has been taking place on our railway network day and night since last year, so there's no way of 'guessing' whether it's safe to cross.

That 'quick dash' could cost a user their machinery, livestock and most likely, someone's life.

In the past 6 months there have been 3 prosecutions at user worked crossings. Two were for failure to observe warning systems and resulted in fines in the excess of £500, while the third was a prosecution for failing to close the crossing gates.

This represents a dramatic reduction in crossing misuse over the past 3 years; however we must not be complacent and continue to work closely with crossing users to further reduce misuse and improve safety.

Motorists will often encounter automatic crossings on their daily commute to work and school. Each year, many drivers try to 'beat the barriers' by attempting to drive across level crossings as the barriers are being lowered. This is a highly dangerous practice which could kill or seriously injure vehicle occupants or train passengers. Most crossings have full or half barriers and traffic light signals which will operate when a train is approaching. Drivers must stop behind the white line across the road when the lights come on. Please remember that it is only safe to cross when the lights go out and any barriers raise fully. The barriers are there to protect drivers and their passengers as well as those travelling on the train and waiting for a few minutes until the train has passed is surely a small price to pay for everyone's safety!

Finally, we want to remind readers/members that it is also highly dangerous to trespass on or near our tracks. Many young and not so young people are oblivious to the very real dangers of 'messing around' near railway tracks. They are putting themselves and the lives of other rail users at severe risk without thinking of the consequences of their actions. The rules are simple, Think Safe - Stay Safe. Never play on or near railway tracks, stay clear of the platform unless you are using the train, don't use the tracks as a shortcut and use all railway crossings safely. Translink will prosecute trespassers so if you're caught, this could lead to a large fine and/or a criminal record. CCTV is used on the outside of trains and we also have mobile CCTV camera in use across the network.

Translink is keen to work with YFCU on the safe use of level crossings and the role they can play in promoting their safe use. If you would like to arrange for Translink to come along to your club meeting please contact them on 90 355444





Crossing the track

STAY SAFE

The rules are clear; always stop, look and listen.

- At crossings with a telephone, check with the operator if it is safe to cross.
- Information is available on how to use crossings safely and how to make arrangements to have a crossing repaired or even closed.
- For more advice, call the NI Railways Level Crossing Risk Co-ordinator

Telephone: 028 9035 5444

Misuse can mean fines of up to £1000 and prosecution.



For copies of

'The Safe Use of User Worked Crossings'

visit www.translink.co.uk/privatecrossings or call 028 9035 5444

 **Translink
NI Railways**

Steven O’Kane, Garvagh YFCU, who won the YFCU 2011 Artic Challenge, in association with McCulla Ireland, has passed a very important test with flying colours.

Steven was trained and put through his HGV class 1 licence by Ken Irvine Training School and given 35 hours of CPC training (certificate of professional competence) at a cost of approx £3500.

He now begins his career at McCulla Ireland. Steven is really excited to start a new career and challenge at McCulla and has told his new bosses that he will not let them down.

Let’s hope he doesn’t considering he will be driving almost £150,000 of equipment – no pressure then Steven!

This year YFCU and McCulla will be running the Artic Challenge on Saturday 21st July 2012 at Nutts Corner. Up to 60 members will be able to take part on the day and the top placed competitors will get the chance to show off their driving skills at Truck Fest which is coming to the King’s Hall on 18th and 19th August 2012. Details of the competition will be sent out to clubs in due course.

YFCU Artic Challenge Update



Launch of KS3 Agri-Schools Competition

The Ulster Farmers’ Union and Food NI are calling all Key Stage 3 pupils to put their creative and technical skills to the test in the 2012 Agri Food Challenge.

The 2012 Agri Food Challenge, which is supported by Musgrave and Lantra, and the NI Regional Food Programme, is a province wide schools competition challenging students to either tackle the Home Economics challenge by creating a two course meal fit for Northern Ireland’s top athletes made from seasonal and home grown ingredients; or the Employability challenge by creating a radio advert aimed at encouraging young people to consider a career in the agri-food industry.

Pupils can submit an individual entry or a group entry and can enter one or both of the challenges. Winners of the Home Economics challenge will have the opportunity to actually cook their winning menu for their class with a professional chef from the award winning Academy Restaurant in Belfast, while winners of the Employability challenge will have the opportunity to meet Richard Wright, BBC Radio Ulster’s leading agriculture journalist, and to participate in his Farmgate programme. The radio advert may even be selected for broadcast on the BBC.



Every winning school will also receive a cash prize of £250. Every runner up school will receive hampers of local produce and a cash prize of £100. The closing date for entries is Friday 6th April 2012. For further information visit www.nigoodfood.com.

For more information, please contact Leanne Wilson at UFU on 028 90 370222 or Lindsay Lyttle at Food NI on 028 90 249 449



YFCU Create a Splash at Swimming Gala

The YFCU's annual swimming gala took place on Saturday 24th September 2011 at the Seven Towers Leisure Centre in Ballymena.

This popular competition is sponsored by new sponsor David Dunlop from Dunhill Cottage B&B, Hillsborough. Dunhill Cottage is in an ideal location just off the main Belfast to Dublin road which works well for both holidaymakers and business people and has panoramic views over five of the six counties.

Competitors took part in a series of heats with members divided into categories according to age and gender – under 16 male and female and over 16 male and female. The top six times in each category won a place in the finals.

Sponsor David Dunlop, a past member of Hillsborough YFC, and winner of numerous swimming gala medals himself, presented the winners with their prizes. David also presented the David Dunlop cup for best overall performance by a club to Moneymore YFC.



Moneymore YFC won both the team relay cup and overall best team performance cup at the gala. Pictured receiving the Flamingo Cup from William Wilson are Jade and Abbie Hunter while Kendal Hunter received the David Dunlop Cup from David himself.

The team relay was also won by members from Moneymore YFC who received the Flamingo cup for their impressive efforts.

YFCU President, William Wilson, said;

“All of the members who took part in this year’s swimming gala should be very proud of themselves as it has been a very closely contested event. I would like to take this opportunity to thank David Dunlop for sponsoring the competition and presenting the prizes, the Seven Towers Leisure Centre for the use of its facilities, Ballymena Amateur Swimming Club for all their assistance during the evening and the stewards and time-keepers for their assistance at the pool side”.

Results were as follows:

Under 16 female

- 1st Jade Hunter, Moneymore YFC
- 2nd Abbie Hunter, Moneymore YFC
- 3rd Kristin McGarel, Gleno Valley YFC

Under 16 male

- 1st David Hamilton, Holestone YFC
- 2nd Richard Johnston, Randalstown YFC
- 3rd Aaron Hill, Holestone YFC

Over 16 female

- 1st Zara Jones, Newtownards YFC
- 2nd Kendal Hunter, Moneymore YFC
- 3rd Nicola Clyde, Finvoy YFC

Over 16 male

- 1st Mark McBride, Lylehill YFC
- 2nd Ryan McCoy, Lylehill YFC
- 3rd John Porter, Annaclone & Magherally YFC



YFCU competitor at the swimming gala.

YFCU Fencing Event

YFCU's annual fencing competition took place at the Northern Ireland Ploughing Championships and Gleno Valley YFC took the top spot in the senior section for the second year in a row and Spa 2 YFC the top spot in the novice.

The competition was run in association with long term sponsor AH Ward and Boyd Limited who represent Betafence in Northern Ireland. Competition judges Crosby Cleland and Robert Morrison from Crosby Cleland Fencing gave their expertise and time to judge the finished fences.

Crosby Cleland Fencing has supported this competition throughout the years and judges have given expert guidance and training which has enabled many of the fencing teams to develop their fencing skills and to transfer these skills onto their farms and also as a career.

The novice section were asked to erect a 20 metre straight stock proof fence with each fence having the sheep wire and barbed wire joined by traditional methods at some point in the fence. Meanwhile in the senior section the participants completed a 27m stock proof fence with a corner/ bend at a predetermined point. Both the sheep wire and the barbed wire were joined at the centre of the smaller section using traditional methods. Both sections were given three hours to complete the task.

Colin Boyd from sponsor AH Ward and Boyd Limited presented the prizes. In the novice section Spa 2 YFC came first and received the perpetual plate, medals and a cheque courtesy of AH Ward and Boyd Limited. Moneyrea YFC came second and Spa 1 YFC came third.

In the senior section Gleno Valley YFC came first and received the 'Green Rylock Trophy', medals, a cheque and a visit to a Green Rylock factory in Sheffield. Straid YFC came second and City of Derry YFC came third.

Colin Boyd, managing director AH Ward and Boyd, commented on this year's competition.

"We have been involved with this competition for over fourteen years and once again we have been impressed with

the expertise, enthusiasm and dedication that the competitors showed. This competition provides YFCU members with work place skills that can be utilised now and in the future."

Novice Section

1st

Spa 2 YFC: Alex Hanna, David Young, David Dodd

2nd

Moneyrea YFC: William McMordie, James Gilpin, Robert McDowell

3rd

Spa 1 YFC: Alister Gordon, Blair Patterson, Laurence Annett

Senior Section

1st

Gleno Valley YFC: Robert Davidson, Andrew Davidson, Mark Paisley

2nd

Straid YFC: Andrew Boyd, William Clarke, Sam Agnew

3rd

City of Derry YFC: David Devine, Colin Devine, Ned Parke



Winners of the senior section Gleno Valley YFC, Robert Davidson, Andrew Davidson and Mark Paisley pictured with Colin Boyd (front left) and Paul Bennington (back left) from sponsor Ward & Boyd, Crosby Cleland (front right) and Robert Davidson (back right) from Crosby Cleland Fencing and Roberta Simmons, YFCU vice President.

YFCU Tug of War Draws a Good Crowd

YFCU held their popular tug of war competition at this year's Northern Ireland Ploughing Championships.

Milebush and Holestone YFC members teamed up and showed their strength and determination by winning the competition. Spa YFC came a close second.

Prizes were kindly sponsored by the Northern Ireland Ploughing Association and Hugh McFetridge was umpire for the competition.



Milebush & Holestone YFC members from left, John Ross McAuley, Ian Simms, Graham McAuley, Daniel McAuley, Johnny Walsh, John McAnally with Darren Walsh and YFCU vice president Roberta Simmons.

Soil Assessment Final

Killincy member, Robin McMullan, took the top spot in the final of the YFCU's soil assessment competition, sponsored by Asda, Newtownards store, at this year's Northern Ireland Ploughing Championships in Kearney.

The contest saw ten contestants assess a selected soil profile that tested their ability to distinguish important soil qualities such as texture and type. Competitors then had to present to the judges the expected performance of the soils regarding drainage, cultivation, cropping, and fertilization practice.

The soil profiles were selected by expert judges Robin Bolton and James Knox from CAFRE. In addition to overseeing the adjudication of the event, Robin and James also offered expert guidance to the competitors.

YFCU vice president Roberta Simmons announced the results of the competition and the top three competitors were presented with their prizes. Robin McMullan, Killinchy YFC took first place and was presented with the prestigious BP Trophy and a cheque from Roger Crosskerry, store manager

Asda Newtownards. In second place was Richard Kane from Spa YFC who received a cheque and in third place, Ryan McCoy from Lylehill YFC who also received a cheque prize.



Pictured from front left are Roberta Simmons, YFCU vice president, Roger Crosskerry, Asda, Robin McMullan (1st), back left James Knox, judge, Ryan McCoy (3rd), Richard Kane (2nd) and Robin Bolton, judge.

YFCU Public Speaking

Members of the YFCU displayed the talent that exists within the association during the final of the YFCU public speaking competition that took place on at Banbridge High School.

Over 90 finalists from throughout Northern Ireland took part in the final of the contest which has been supported for a number of years by the NFU Mutual Insurance Society.

Members had the opportunity to compete in two different categories: prepared and impromptu and impressed the judges with a range of varied and entertaining speeches.

After an intense competition, attendees gathered for the presentation of the public speaking cups. YFCU President William Wilson welcomed guest speaker Pauline Rooney Head of Food Delivery and Customer Services Unit at DARD to the stage.

Pauline congratulated the competitors on the high standard of their speeches and told the competitors that she was very impressed with the speeches that she saw.

At the close of the evening Trevor Wilson, delivered a note of thanks to guest speaker Pauline Rooney and to Mervyn Priestley Life Sales Manager from sponsor NFU Mutual Insurance Society for their support of the competition; to all

the chairpersons and stewards whose help was indispensable in ensuring the smooth running of the evening; to the judges whose input and expertise is invaluable; to Banbridge High School for providing the venue and to all the competitors who took part in the contest. Results from www.yfcu.org



Pictured are the winners of the 12-14 years from left Alan Fleming (Cappagh YFC), Alexander Martin (Ballywalter YFC), Thomas McNeill (Kilraughts YFC) and Joshua Park (Glarryford Jnr YFC) with guest speaker Pauline Rooney, Mervyn Priestly from sponsor NFU Mutual and William Wilson, YFCU President.

YFCU and Elanco Host Lameness Workshop

YFCU and Elanco hosted their Lameness Workshop on Tuesday 25th October in Walshes Hotel, Maghera.

15 YFCU members from all over Northern Ireland attended the workshop which took the form of a 2 hour theory session followed by a practical session at Crockett, Jamison & Young Veterinary Practice, Magherafelt.

Ger Cusack from Comeragh Veterinary Practice who is a ruminant lameness specialist ran the workshop and delivered a very informative presentation to the members on the different types of lameness, how to recognise it and best practices to follow to avoid animals becoming lame.

All participants received a lameness DVD, trimming knife and milking apron upon completion of the course which will all be put to use along with their newly-acquired knowledge.

YFCU and Elanco will be running additional courses during the year at venues throughout Northern Ireland.



Pictured receiving their course completion certificates from Ger Cusack and Michelle McCotter (Elanco) are Diane Halliday (Bleary YFC) and John Porter (Annaclone & Magherally YFC).

Shades Of Autumn At YFCU Floral Art

The heats of the YFCU's annual floral art competition took place in venues throughout Northern Ireland with over 300 members competing.

At each heat competitors were divided into two age groups, 12-16 years and 16-25 years. They were then given just one hour to complete a floral decoration depicting the theme "shades of autumn". Artificial, fresh or dried material could be used in the decoration and all arrangements had to be constructed on the evening. The arrangements were marked out of 100 in the following categories: choice of materials (30); presentation (30) and finally technical skills displayed (40).

The judges congratulated everyone on their imaginative and interesting interpretations of the theme. They had a difficult task marking the entries, allowing just the top two in each age group of each area through to the final, which will return once again to agriculture's premiere venue, Balmoral Show in May 2012.



The Association would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the judges, Alan Beatty, Barbara Megarry, Joan Magee, Anne Marie Grant and Sherry Suett for giving up their time to come along and judge the creations and also to all the schools for the use of their facilities.

Results:

Co Tyrone and Fermanagh

Fivemiletown High School – Judge: Alan Beatty

12-16

- 1st Katherine Hart, Cappagh YFC
- 2nd Chloe Ewing, Seskinore YFC

16-25

- 1st Rachel Gibson, Trillick YFC
- 2nd Kyra Crawford, Trillick YFC

Co Down and Armagh

Ballynahinch Community Centre – Judges: Barbara Megarry, Joan Magee

12-16

- 1st Rebecca Gourley, Ballywalter YFC
- 2nd Ellen Woods, Annaclone & Magherally YFC

16-25

- 1st Laura McCullough, Spa YFC
- 2nd Janet Lyons, Spa YFC

Co Antrim and Londonderry

Coleraine College – Judges: Anne Marie Grant, Sherry Suett

12-16

- 1st Chelsea Gordon, Finvoy YFC
- 2nd Laura Conn, Coleraine YFC

16-25

- 1st Michael Stewart, Kilrea YFC
- 2nd David Miller, Lisnamurrigan YFC

Rachel Gibson and Kyra Crawford, Trillick YFC, who both made it through to the final of the floral art competition to be held at the Balmoral Show 2012.

YFCU Members Debate It Out!

Members took part in the NI final of the Association's annual group debating competition at Ballee High School, Ballymena.

The group debating competition was sponsored by Elanco, the leading international veterinary pharmaceutical manufacturer. Elanco announced their commitment to a variety of YFCU events at the beginning of the year which has so far included support of the girls' football, Balmoral Show and the Executive Residential.

During the group debating heats, members had the chance to debate on a wide variety of topics that related to the work of Elanco. For the final, members had the opportunity to debate on topics focussing on world hunger and world aid which is a key area of Elanco's philanthropic and social responsibility. The company helps people in developing and developed countries produce nutritious affordable food and Elanco's goal is to provide safe, affordable, wholesome food to the world.

Senior members were given 30 minutes to prepare their debates and junior members had 40 minutes in which to form their debates. During that time they used personal opinion and a comprehensive fact sheet provided to each team. This format means that the debating in the contest is more spontaneous and encourages members to work together as a team. It also means that no one is disadvantaged by having more time to practice and prepare than others. Elanco worked with YFCU to provide topics and fact sheets for the debates.

After the judges totted up the scores, competitors gathered to hear the results. YFCU President William Wilson introduced Michelle McCotter, Elanco marketing manager for UK and Ireland, who spoke to the audience before presenting the prizes. Michelle told the members she was hugely impressed with the array of talent displayed in the debates that she had the pleasure of observing and congratulated all those who took part in the competition.

Following the presentation of prizes, YFCU President, William Wilson said:

"The YFCU group debating competition is one of the most popular in our calendar and we were delighted to have the support of Elanco.

"On behalf of the Association I would also like to extend a note of thanks to the representatives from Elanco, Michelle McCotter and Joe Crawford for all their help at the heats and this evening and for their continued support of YFCU" he added.

Roberta Simmons, YFCU vice President, concluded the evening with her vote of thanks to all involved in the event.

The results were as follows:

Results Class A: 12-14

- 1st Seskinore YFC Jenny Lyons, Rebecca Gibson, Christine Donaghy
- 2nd Donaghadee YFC Patrick Hamill, Rachel Murray, Kelsey Crawford

Results Class B: 14-16

- 1st Annaclone & Magherally YFC Jennie Cromie, Ellen Woods, Emma Martin
- 2nd Glarryford YFC Jessica Reid, Ruth McCloy, Cathy Reid

Results Class C: 16-18

- 1st Newtownards YFC Joy Dalzell, Jane Patton, Heather Martin
- 2nd Coleraine YFC Philip Black, Ryan Adams, Callum Lamont

Results Class D: 18-21

- 1st Coleraine YFC Neal Henry, Colin Henry, Kathryn Smyth
- 2nd Newtownards YFC Andrew Patton, Hannah Young, Rachel Martin

Results Class E: 21-25

- 1st Annaclone & Magherally YFC Nelson Shanks, Ian Porter, Geoff Thompson
- 2nd Kilraughts YFC Kathryn Woosey, Sara Gardner, Laura Calderwood



Pictured are the winning 14-16 category group debating team, Annaclone & Magherally YFC Emma Martin, Ellen Woods and Jennie Cromie being congratulated by Michelle McCotter, Elanco, Joe Crawford, Elanco (l) and William Wilson YFCU President.

YFCU Big Comedy Night

The YFCU over 18's big comedy night, held on Friday 25th November 2011 at Corick House Hotel, Co Tyrone was a great success.

An audience of over 240 enjoyed an evening of laughs which started with several comedians from the Braid Comedy Club, Ballymena who got the audience warmed up before the star of the show, one of Northern Ireland's best loved comedians, William Caulfield, took to the stage.



William Caulfield pictured with YFCU President William Wilson before the big night.

Demonstration/ Presentation Competition

This competition which took place in November provides members with the opportunity to employ a combination of different skills that they use in other YFCU contests including prepared and impromptu public speaking. It then incorporates these with the use of practical aids and presentation equipment which then serves to enable members to further develop their communication and presentation skills.

Competitors were given a maximum of 10 minutes to speak about or demonstrate a topic of their choices. Some examples on the night were dancing, fishing and craft.

At the event, judges Trevor Woods, Jane McCollam, Stephanie Fulton, Maura Ellis and Rosalind Ellis had a diverse range of presentations to judge. Check out the results at www.yfcu.org

12-14 Years

- 1st Andrew McCracken, Ballymiscaw YFC
- 2nd Alison Davis, Moneymore YFC
- 3rd Dylan Walker, Cookstown YFC

14-16 Years

- 1st Andrew Pyper, Finvoy YFC
- 2nd Jade Hunter, Moneymore YFC
- 3rd Ruth Adams, Coleraine YFC

16-18 Years

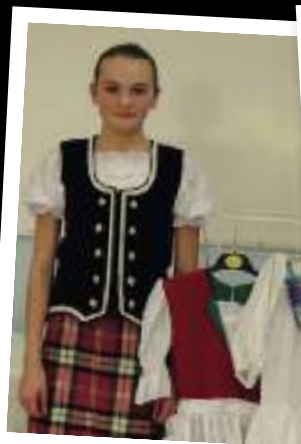
- 1st David Reid, Coleraine YFC
- 2nd Kendal Hunter, Moneymore YFC
- 3rd Rory Woods, Annaclone & Magherally YFC

18-21 Years

- 1st Zita Blair, Moneymore YFC
- 2nd Andrew Patton, Newtownards YFC
- 3rd Jade Hegarty, Coleraine YFC

21-25 Years

- 1st Geoff Thompson, Annaclone & Magherally YFC
- 2nd Jennifer Townley, Moneyrea YFC
- 3rd Aaron Craig, Annaclone & Magherally YFC



Alison Davis, Moneymore YFC shows off her dancing outfits during her demonstration on dancing at the demonstration / presentation event.



Zita Blair, Moneymore YFC gave a demonstration as to how to wrap the perfect Christmas gift.

YFCU Choir Festival

YFCU held their annual choir festival at CAFRE Greenmount campus in December. Adjudicator on the night was Sam Murray and compere was YFCU deputy president, Martyn Blair who introduced the choirs. At the end of the evening Mr Murray gave the participating choirs the benefit of his expertise by relating some constructive and encouraging advice on each of their performances.

He commended the choirs on their musical talent and range of song choices and said the competition was of a very high standard. In conclusion he added that he was pleased to be asked to adjudicate a competition of such a high standard.

YFCU deputy president, Martyn Blair said; "The choir festival is an eagerly anticipated evening in the YFCU events calendar. All the choirs who took part have worked very hard on their performances and the response from the audience illustrates this."

The results were as follows:

- 1st prize – Gleno Valley / Straid YFC
- 2nd prize – Moneymore YFC
- 3rd prize – Glarryford YFC
- Best solo – Lindsey Henry, Finvoy YFC
- Best choral piece – Coleraine YFC
- Best accompaniment – Thomas Wilson, Lylehill YFC
- Best new comer – Moneymore YFC

The YFCU would like to thank John Fay, director of the CAFRE for the use of the facilities and YFCU deputy president Martyn Blair for leading the evening. Special thanks must also go to Sam Murray for giving up his time and expertise to adjudicate the event and for the invaluable advice which he made freely available to the participating choirs and accompanists.



Pictured are first place winners, Gleno Valley / Straid YFC, with YFCU's deputy president, Martyn Blair at the YFCU's annual choir festival held at Greenmount campus, CAFRE.



Diary Dates

Bleary YFC @ Mullahead Ploughing Match, Sat 25th February 2012

Curragh YFC Annual Dinner Dance, Sat 3rd March 2012, Manor House, Kilrea. For tickets contact David 07845179905

Glarryford YFC 2 Act Play 'Big Bad Mouse', 15th - 17th March 2012, Glarryford YFC Hall, 8pm. For more info contact Robyn 07745229041

Bleary YFC Quiz Night, Fri 16th March 2012, Bleary YFC hall, 7.45pm

Finvoy & Garvagh YFC 3 Act Play 'Awaken the West', Ballymoney High School 23rd & 24th March 2012 8pm. Tickets £7 can be purchased from Club Committee Members

Curragh YFC Parents Night, Sat 24th March 2012 in Curragh Orange Hall

Glarryford YFC Parents Night, Sat 24th March 2012 in Clough Presbyterian Church at 8pm

Glarryford YFC Abseil Ramore Head, Portrush, Sat 7th April 2012 to raise money for Marie Curie Cancer Care. For more details contact Robyn 07745229041

Gleno Valley YFC BBQ, Sat 5th May 2012 at Larne Rugby Club

Finvoy YFC BBQ, Sat 9th June 2012. Same venue as last year - Drumlee Road. Over 18's only

Donaghadee YFC BBQ, Sat 28th July 2012 at Six Road Ends. Over 18's only. Contact Alison 07889816043 for more info

Finvoy Gear Up for Another Great Year

Members of Finvoy YFC are coming to the end of what has been a very successful year for the club. They have celebrated their 70th anniversary with various events throughout the year including a very enjoyable and memorable 70th anniversary dinner held in October at the Royal Court Hotel, Portrush. Thanks must go to the 70th anniversary committee who worked very hard to make the night the success that it was.

The Club recently held its AGM and members have no doubt that the incoming office bearers will ensure that the club will go from strength to strength in the year ahead. Congratulations must go to Junior Member Chelsea Gordon and Senior Member Richard Beattie who have been nominated for this year's YFCU Member of the Year competition. Club members are currently busy preparing for this year's Arts Festival competition under the watchful eye of producer Jonathan Hanna and his team. Finvoy and Garvagh YFC have also joined forces to take part in this



Finvoy YFC members at the club's 70th anniversary dinner.

year's YFCU 3 Act Drama Festival. The cast will be performing "A Wake in the West" on Friday 23rd and Saturday 24th March in Ballymoney High School. Tickets are priced at £7 and can be purchased from club committee members. Everyone welcome - a great night's entertainment is guaranteed.

Kesh YFC Annual Dinner Dance

Kesh YFC members recently held their annual dinner dance where members received awards for competing in YFC competitions. Congratulations to all who won awards and made the night such a success.



Zara Stubbs, Ruth Graham, Alice Stubbs, Lorna Graham and Alison Neville pictured at the dinner dance.

Glarryford YFC going from Strength to Strength

Glarryford YFC has been busy taking part in various events and competitions. Congratulations to the Glarryford team 'The Flintstones' who battled hard to finish in 1st place at the Co. Antrim Quiz.

Big congratulations to club member Adam Harris, for securing an apprenticeship with Finning, the Caterpillar dealer for the UK and Ireland. Our Annual Club dinner was held on Friday 18th November at the Ross Park Hotel. The evening included short speeches, a delicious meal, prizes, a raffle, red or black competition and the dancing shoes came out to end the evening. Many thanks to Martyn Blair for agreeing to be our special

guest at our annual club dinner and thank-you to everyone who attended the evening.

A 'buzz' is floating around the club in preparation for the Arts Festival performance on Wednesday 22nd February at Ballymoney High School.

On Friday 10th February 2012 we are holding the official opening of one of our halls since it has been renovated. The Club has decided dedicate this hall to the Gregg family whose contribution to Glarryford YFC has been enormous over the past years.

Hillhall YFC Enjoy Action Packed Year

Hillhall YFC hopes 2012 will be as fun and successful as 2011 was. In the past year members took part in a wide variety of club meetings that included go-karting, bowling and everyone's favourite – reptile night! Members were shown a range of reptiles and poor Molly Simpson discovered she had a fear of spiders when she encountered a killer tarantula! The club also celebrated its 60th anniversary and all the hard work and determination put in by the committee resulted in a very successful anniversary dinner held at La Mon House Hotel and enjoyed by all.

As the club enters 2012, members are looking forward to welcoming home David Simpson and Darragh Rutledge from New Zealand and also wish Ross Maxwell, Ashleigh Coyle and Amy Laverty all the very best in their new club committee posts.



Hillhall YFC members at the reptile night.

Curragh YFC

Take Me Out!

Curragh YFC recently took part in St Lurachs Church of Ireland Variety Night. The night was in aid of the church hall building funds. Various members took part in a Take Me Out performance, which the club had performed at their annual Parents Night earlier on the year. The boys in Curragh loved this performance especially having to dress up as 'single ladies'. The club leader David Johnston was our very own Paddy McGuinness with Kyle Irwin acting as the single man from Tobermore.

The response from the Rector and the audience was very positive and Curragh YFC has been invited to perform at the opening of the new Church Hall.



The boys from Curragh getting ready for their performance.

Moycraig YFC

Moycraig YFC kicked off their winter programme with a cheer as they celebrated a third consecutive win as County Superclub! The cheers continue with a variety of club meetings from Planet Fun to farmer style bush tucker trials.

Members are also digging out their makeup bags and wigs for yet more theatrical fun. Arts Festival and Three Act Drama practices have been keeping all members busy as they prepare to take to the stage once more. This year's Three Act Drama will be hitting the road from February so come along for a good nights craic, you won't be disappointed! Contact Judith or Daniel on 07513008057 for more information and tickets.



Moycraig YFC members picking up the shield after being named County Superclub.

Newtownstewart YFC

Newtownstewart YFC has been busy taking part in various competitions and club visits including a BBQ and games night, learning to play golf at a driving range, floral art, public speaking and club quiz night.

Senior members of the club scrubbed up well and attended the Co Tyrone Dinner, in the Silver Birch Hotel. An enjoyable night was had by all, and Newtownstewart YFC was successful in obtaining many prizes, including coming 2nd in the Super Club section. Well done to everyone involved!



Members taking part in the visit to the driving range.

CAFRE SPRING 2012 chat

Kick start your new career at CAFRE



Now is the time to get your career started at CAFRE, so come along to our Spring Open Events to find out about the excellent careers and courses available in the agri-food and land based sectors. During the open events you will have the opportunity to meet and talk to staff, tour the campus facilities and gain an insight into life and study at CAFRE.

For those who are interested in a career working with horses, the date for your diary is **Saturday 24th March at 12 noon** for the **Equine courses Open Day at Enniskillen Campus**.

Loughry Campus, Cookstown provides courses in Food Technology, Food Management and Marketing, Food Design and Nutrition and Postgraduate courses in Communication. **Loughry's Open Evening is on Tuesday 24th April from 3pm to 8pm.**

Greenmount Campus, Antrim is the main provider of courses in Horticulture, Agriculture, Rural Studies, Agricultural Engineering and Floristry. Come and see **Greenmount Campus** and meet the staff at the **Open Evening on Wednesday 25th April between 2pm and 9pm.**

Greenmount Campus celebrates 100 years

This year marks a milestone in the history of Greenmount, as it was on 8th October 1912, that the first class of eleven agriculture students enrolled at Greenmount.

To celebrate this centenary year, there will be a series of events throughout the year featuring guided tours, student reunions and a Centenary Open Weekend on 16th and 17th June.

Please visit our website and click on the centenary link which contains a wealth of photographs of students and staff down through the years. There is also a section on the proposed events for 2012. If you have any suggestions or ideas which your club could offer please feel free to contact us as we'd be delighted to hear from you.

CELEBRATING
GREENMOUNT
CENTENARY

1912
2012

Veterinary Nursing Courses Open Day at

Greenmount Campus

Saturday 10th March,
2 - 4pm

Spring 2012 Open Days

Enniskillen Campus

Saturday 24th March,
12 noon

Loughry Campus

Tuesday 24th April,
3 - 8pm

Greenmount Campus

Wednesday 25th April,
2 - 9pm

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