

PRESS RELEASE

16th September 2024

For immediate release

**Irish Grown Wool Council and Teagasc launch ‘Shear Success’; a new guide for sheep farmers on how to maximise their wool’s value.**

**The ‘Shear Success’ guide will be officially launched at the National Ploughing Championships on Tuesday** and will be available from the Irish Grown Wool Council display in the *Sheep Shearing Tent* and for download and print at [irishgrownwoolcouncil.com](http://irishgrownwoolcouncil.com)

Produced by the Irish Grown Wool Council (IGWC) in partnership with Teagasc, the ‘Shear Success’ guide is aimed at supporting sheep farmers to maximise the value of their wool. The practical guide offers recommendations to sheep farmers on how best to prepare before, during and after shearing, in order to maximise their wool value and avoid reducing its potential value and use.

The guide emphasises best practices for maintaining fleece quality before and during shearing plus wool handling techniques to ensure that fleeces are rolled and stored correctly post-shearing to preserve their integrity and value.

The ‘Shear Success’ leaflet is being published to complement the earlier launch this year of two comprehensive short videos produced by the Irish Grown Wool Council and Teagasc. These videos available online and via Youtube are presented by sheep farmers David Heraty, Irish Sheep Shearers Association and Jayne Harkness-Bones, Ulster Wool, both participants of the Wool Quality & Presentation working group in the Irish Grown Wool Council. The video content provides best practice for sheep farmers to ensure enhanced wool quality and presentation so that wool is presented in the best possible condition for sale onwards to wool merchants and exporters.

The ‘Shear Success’ guide and videos are prepared and presented by sheep farmers:

**David Hearty, of Irish Grown Wool Council and Irish Sheep Shearers Association outlines** *“Both Jayne Harkness-Bones and I are featured in the ‘Shear Success’ guide and videos because we are experienced sheep farmers, shearers and wool handlers who understand the challenges that farmers face during shearing.”*

The printed and digital guide and videos, created in partnership with Teagasc are designed to offer clear, practical advice that can be easily implemented, helping farmers to maximise the value of their wool.

**David Heraty explains** *“It’s been 25 years since there has been a formal educational piece on Wool Care and Presentation for sheep farmers. This campaign is to encourage better awareness and training on Wool Handling and Presentation. With a view to reinstating traditional wool handling and presentation standards for farmers, producers, shearers, merchants and graders. Wool quality and presentation is important to ensure that farmers are presenting fleeces in the best possible condition. We see that value is often lost at shearing time due to a lack of preparation or presentation. Additional resources may then be required to bring wool up to standard, which reduces both the price for the farmer and the potential development for the wool. Advancing the standard of wool presentation at the farm gate is essential, this enables industry to begin to develop new markets for Irish grown wool across a range of sectors.”*

The Shear Success leaflet will be officially launched at the National Ploughing Championships this week and will be available at the Irish Grown Wool Council display in the Sheep Shearing Tent (Block 1, Row 1, Stand 3) and also for download at [irishgrownwoolcouncil.com](http://irishgrownwoolcouncil.com)

Visit the Irish Grown Wool Council in the Sheep Shearing Tent (Block 1, Row 1, Stand 3) at the National Ploughing Championships for the following activities:

**Tuesday 17th September 2024:**

- Information and display of Irish grown wool products
- ‘Shear Success’ guide for farmers will be available
- 12pm: Talk by Tim Yeomans of Shannon ABC on the Springwool project

**Wednesday 18th September 2024**

- Information and display of Irish grown wool products
- ‘Shear Success’ guide for farmers will be available

**Thursday 19th September 2024**

- Information and display of Irish grown wool products
- ‘Shear Success’ guide for farmers will be available
- Sharon Wells and Tamara Fiabane (Feltmakers Ireland) demonstrating crafts using Irish grown wool including peg loom weaving, needle felting, baskets making and spinning.



Also coming up in October, the Irish Grown Wool Council will once again join in the West Kerry Wool Marquee at Dingle Food Festival from Saturday 5th - Sunday 6th October 2024. The Wool Marquee returns to Dingle Food festival following its success and engagement with visitors last year during the Festival. Spearheaded by West Kerry Wool, INFHA Kerry and Kerry Lamb Co-Op. Expect expert panel talks on wool, display of Irish grown wool products and wool spinning over the two days of the festival. [www.dinglefood.com](http://www.dinglefood.com)

An all-island initiative, the objective of the Irish Grown Wool Council is to transform Irish-grown wool; an underutilised and undervalued resource, into a branded, value-added product for the benefit of farmers and the wider supply chain.

The Irish Grown Wool Council are developing collaborations to apply innovative solutions to address current challenges and create pioneering innovation in wool and sustainable practices.

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#### **Notes for Editors**

##### **PR Contact:**

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**Images:** Images available for download now at <https://bit.ly/ShearSuccessIGWC24>

##### **About Irish Grown Wool Council:**

The Irish Grown Wool Council (IGWC) is a voluntary body with an all island approach. Its purpose is to promote an Irish grown wool brand both domestically and internationally. IGWC is creating, developing and overseeing structures designed to bring disparate groups together for collaboration, innovation and scaling activities to advance the standard and develop markets for Irish grown wool. IGWC was established in April 2023 based on the recommendations of a Department of Agriculture Food & Marine (DAFM) sponsored report 'Review Of Market Opportunities For Irish-Grown Wool Based Products'.

IGWC is dedicated to promoting the wool industry through education, advocacy and support for farmers. By providing resources and information, they aim to enhance the quality and marketability of wool, ensuring the industry's sustainability and success.

The Irish Grown Wool Council is focused on creating additional value in the total Irish grown wool chain to ensure a fair proportion goes to the farmer. They work with farmers (primary producers), industry, enterprise, education, general public, media, partners, agencies and research providing organisations and Governments, (nationally and internationally).



Supported also by a Wool Research & Innovation Hub 'Wool Hub', hosted by the MTU Circular Bioeconomy Cluster South-West where researchers from institutions across the Island of Ireland collaborate on sustainable processes and products incorporating Irish wool. [www.irishgrownwoolcouncil.com](http://www.irishgrownwoolcouncil.com)

**About Teagasc:**

Teagasc; the Agriculture and Food Development Authority, is the national body providing integrated research, advisory and training services to the agriculture and food industry and rural communities. The organisation is funded by State Grant-in-Aid; the National Development Plan; fees for research, advisory and training services; income from national and EU competitive research programmes; and revenue from farming activities and commodity levies. See [teagasc.ie](http://teagasc.ie)

**About Shannon ABC (Springwool Project):**

Springwool; a project led by Shannon ABC and delivered through Munster Technological University, Technological University of Shannon, University College Dublin, and Atlantic Technological University received €574,683 in funding from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Announced in July 2024 as part of the €22.3 million the Department is providing for 21 new research projects. The Springwool project aims to remove obstacles and provide a platform for innovation in the Irish-grown wool sector, in which supporting innovation and key research is essential to ensure its competitiveness in the global market. [shannonabc.ie](http://shannonabc.ie)

**About Sharon Wells & Tamara Fiabane (Feltmakers Ireland):**

Sharon Wells, a fibre artist from Kerry living in Bray, creates beautiful landscapes and sculptures from wool by felting and embroidery. She teaches all aspects of wet felting and needle felting, coiled basket making, peg loom weaving, archaeological illustration, decoupage and more. Sharon sources, washes and dyes Irish wool direct from farms for her work which includes spinning art yarn and making peg loom rugs. She has been teaching and making for over 20 years. [sharonwellsart.com](http://sharonwellsart.com)

Tamara Fiabane is a textile and fibre artist originally from the Italian Alps. Her upbringing in nature has greatly inspired her to create textile art and crafts using mostly recycled or locally sourced materials. Tamara teaches sustainable sewing classes and needle felting. [feltmakersireland.com](http://feltmakersireland.com)