



FarmPEAT Project

Farming on Peat Competition

Competition Brief

Abstract

The Farming on Peat Competition engages with young people studying or working in the agricultural sector on the importance of farmed peat soils and management actions to conserve them.

The FarmPEAT Project is being administered by Nature Based Agri Solutions Ltd. The Project is funded by the EU Recovery Instrument Funding under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2022.



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
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Who are we?

The FarmPEAT (**Farm Payments for Ecological and Agricultural Transitions**) Project is running a results-based scheme for farmers managing land that surrounds some of Ireland's finest remaining raised bogs. Raised bogs are one of Ireland's most valuable natural assets and their transition to surrounding agricultural land plays an important role in enhancing their long-term conservation value. FarmPEAT gives results-based payments to farmers for improved management of their land. In other words, higher scores (indicating better environmental quality) get higher payments.

What is the Farming on Peat Competition?

The Farming on Peat Competition is part of FarmPEAT's community outreach programme, Love Your Wellies. The competition raises awareness about the importance of agricultural peat soils and management actions to conserve them. It presents a case study of a FarmPEAT project farm and asks you to compile environmental recommendations based on the farm's scorecard. The competition is designed to cater for young people working in or studying agriculture or other relevant degree subjects. It is open to anyone who is 25 years old or younger. For the duration of the competition, FarmPEAT is offering field trips, workshops, presentations, and general guidance to help with submissions. If you would like to avail of this service, please contact us by email or phone.

Nature needs our help: By joining the competition you'll expand your knowledge of the farmed peat landscape and demonstrate your farm management skills. Plus, there are also cash prizes!

Ok I'm in, how do I enter?

All the entry requirements are listed in this document, so be sure to read them carefully. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to get in touch. Working solo or with a group up to 4, assemble your submission and get it in to us before Friday the 16th of August 2024.

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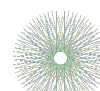
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1. Entry Requirements

1.1. Timeline

The deadline for entries is 16th August 2024. The winners will be announced in early September and invited to share their work at our end-of-project conference in October 2024.

1.2. Eligibility

Anyone in the Republic of Ireland who is 25 years old or younger is eligible to take part. It is designed to cater for young farmers and people studying agriculture or other relevant degree subjects.

1.3. Entry Specifications

- All entries are welcome as **single** entrants, or as groups up to a maximum of **4**.
- Use the submission form accompanying this document to structure your entry.
- There will be a 1% score reduction for every 10 words over the maximum 3000-word limit. This is an upper limit, there is no minimum word count.
- References are mandatory if citing specific examples or research.
- Submit your entry as a PDF file to loveyourwellies@farmpeat.ie by 16th August 2024.
- If your file size exceeds that allowed to submit via email, upload to Google Drive or WeTransfer, set the file to public and share a link to the file with your submission.
- Contact FarmPEAT if you have questions or experience issues with your application.

Requested entry format:

Section 1: Executive Summary

Section 2: Farm Overview

Use the case study provided to complete this section.

Section 3: Environmental Recommendations

There is no limit on the number of recommendations you may suggest, however, they must be appropriate and specific to the case study. The recommendations should ideally answer:

- Why are you suggesting this action? Use our [scorecards and supporting actions specification](#):
 - What is the environmental problem on the farm that it will solve?
 - How will it affect the farm score in the FarmPEAT project?
 - What are the wider benefits, e.g. to climate change, water quality or biodiversity?
- What are the details of this action? Use our [useful links](#) and [publications](#):
 - Are there best practice guidelines for this action?
 - Are there potential pitfalls that would affect the farm or surrounding land?
 - How can these pitfalls be avoided?

Section 4: Conclusion

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1.4. Marking Scheme

	Poor (<40%)	Inadequate (40-59%)	Good (60-79%)	Great (80-89%)	Excellent (90-100%)
Understanding management actions (30% of Total)	Inappropriate actions and no, or an inaccurate, display of their nuances.	Appropriate actions but no, or an inadequate, display of their nuances.	Appropriate actions but very little display of their nuances.	Appropriate actions and adequate display of their nuances.	Sophisticated analysis displaying the benefits and pitfalls of actions.
Understanding farm needs (30% of Total)	Inappropriate application of case study with no evidence of understanding the case study.	Good application of case study with minor errors. Little or no awareness of the case study.	Good application of case study, little awareness of the case study.	Excellent application of case study, adequate awareness of the case study.	Excellent application of case study, with high awareness of the case study.
Understanding wider context of Ireland's farming and environmental sectors (30% of Total)	Inadequate knowledge of the wider context in Ireland.	Basic knowledge of the wider context in Ireland.	Relevant and sound knowledge of the wider context in Ireland.	Thorough knowledge of the wider context in Ireland.	Exceptional knowledge of the wider context in Ireland.
Use of language and structure (10% of Total)	More care needed with grammar, spelling, and sentence construction. No clear structure and key sections omitted.	Acceptable standard of English. Some grammatical errors and more careful editing needed. Structured, but not in the requested entry format.	Good standard of written English, with few, if any, grammatical or spelling errors. Somewhat structured in the requested entry format.	Very good standard of written English with all points correctly expressed. Clear structure, mostly following the requested entry format.	Excellent use of standard written English with correct relevant terminology. Clear structure, following the requested entry format.

1.5. Prizes

The top three entries will receive a certificate and a One4All voucher with the following amounts:

- 1st Place: €1000
- 2nd Place: €600
- 3rd Place: €400

For groups entries, the prize will be split equally (e.g. If the 1st Place winners are a group of 4, they will receive €250 per person).

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1.6. Additional Support

In-person or virtual support will be available during the competition. We offer group workshops to help inform people about farmed peat soils and to help guide entrants as they develop their submission. Entrants are encouraged to attend FarmPEAT’s community events to learn more about our project farmers and supporting actions: www.farmpeat.ie/events.

Please contact the project team for more information on loveyourwellies@farmpeat.ie, (089)-4147367, (090)-6482745, or fill out the form on this webpage: www.farmpeat.ie/resources-1.

2. Case Study

Joe Bloggs is a suckler farmer working on 10ha near Clara Bog SAC, Co. Offaly. All 10ha are part of the FarmPEAT Project. In this Competition, we provide you with a subset of Joe’s total farm—4 habitat plots and 3 linear features (Figure 1). A herd of cattle grazes Plots 1 and 2, while Plots 3 and 4 are not currently utilised for agriculture. All plots have heavy, peat soils which are naturally slow-draining. On the grassland, drains were installed in the past and cleaned out every other year. Joe also spreads slurry during the spring and chemical fertiliser through the summer until early autumn. The hedgerows are cut on an annual basis with a flail and have never been laid. There are no stone walls or earth banks. There are no national monuments in the farm’s proximity, however there is a derelict house adjacent to Plot 2. No supporting actions have been completed on any of the plots.

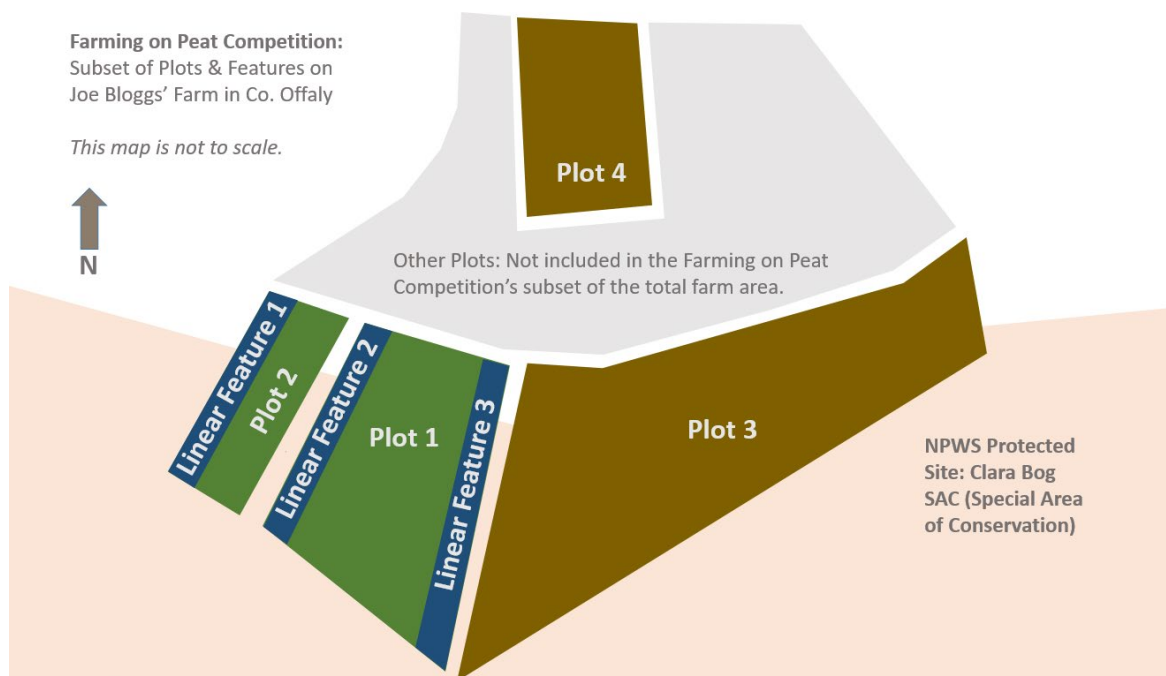


Fig 1. Farming on Peat Competition: Subset of Plots & Features on Joe Bloggs' Farm in Co. Offaly.



Plot Number	1	2	3	4
NPWS Designation (www.npws.ie/protected-sites)	Partly	Partly	Partly	No
% Peat Soils	90	100	100	100
Scorecard	Wet Grassland	Wet Grassland	Peatland	Peatland
Dominant Habitat	Improved Grassland	Wet Grassland	Raised Bog	Cutover Bog
Positive Indicators in the Plot	Knapweed, Marsh Thistle, Meadowsweet, Ox-Eye Daisy, Sedges, Selfheal, Small Umbels, Tormentil, Vetches, Yellow Composite	Birdsfoot Trefoil, Devils-bit Scabious, Heather, Lady's Smock, Marsh Thistle, Meadow, Sedges, Selfheal, Mosses, Small Bedstraw, Small Rushes, Small Umbels, Tormentil, Vetches, Yellow Composites	Cross-leaved Heather, Ling Heather, Bog Asphodel, Bog Cotton, White Beaked Sedge, Non-crustose (bushy) Lichens, Sphagnum, Sundews, Deer Grass	Cross-leaved Heather, Lousewort, Sundews, White-Beaked Sedge, Non-crustose (bushy) Lichens
Total Positive Indicators	10	15	9	5
A1	5	10	10	2
A2	10	10	10	0
Negative Indicators	Nettles	Nettles, Thistles	Conifers	Bracken
A3	0	-5	0	10
A4	0 (4a. Grazing)	10 (4a. Grazing)	0	0
A5	No	Yes	10	-10
Total Section A:	15	40	30	2
B1	5	10	15	5
B2	0	0	0	0
B3	-15	0	N/A	N/A
Total Section B:	-10	10	15	5
C1	0	0	5	5
C2	0	0	10	-10
C3	0	0	0	0
C4	10	10	0	0
C5	0	0	0	0
Total Section C:	10	10	15	-5
Total A-C (/100)	15	60	60	2
Final Score	2	6	6	0
Plot Payment	€85 (1.7ha @ €50)	€125 (0.5ha @ €250)	€525 (2.1ha @ €250)	€0 (1.1ha @ €0)
Total Payment	€735			

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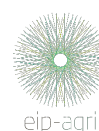


Linear Feature No.	1	2	3
Scorecard	Field Boundary	Field Boundary	Field Boundary
Dominant Habitat	Hedgerow	Hedgerow	Hedgerow
Width	>1m	>1m	>2m
Height	<1.5m	>1.5m	>3m
Continuity	Frequent gaps	Occasional gaps	Continuous
Non-native invasives	Absent	Absent	Absent
Non-native trees	Rare	Rare	Rare
Margin	Absent	<1.5m	<1.5m
Final Score	2 (Poor)	6 (Moderate)	6 (Moderate)
Linear Payment	100m @ €0.00 = €0	100m @ €0.10 = €10	150m @ €0.10 = €15
Total Payment	€25		

Whole Farm Assessment Scorecard	
Section A (Peat Soil Bonus - % peat soil plots in good condition)	20
Section A Score (adequate <50% of plots = 1; good >= 50% of plots = 1.2)	1
Section B (Water Quality Risks) Result (High, Low, None)	High
Section B Score (High = 0.6, Low = 0.8, None = 1)	0.6
Overall Whole Farm Adjustment Result (lowest of Section A, B)	0.6
Comment	Poaching & dung in drain due to cattle drinking from the drain in Plots 1 & 2.

Payment Category	Payment
Plots 1-4	€735
Linear Features 1-3	€25
Whole-Farm Adjustment	0.6
Final Results-Based Payment to Farmer (for this subset of plots & features)	0.6 x (€735 + €25) = €456

In your submission, use the scorecard results above to give recommendations on how the farmer could improve their score in the future to increase the total payment. Find our scorecards, supporting actions specification, and Terms & Conditions on www.farmpeat.ie/project-information.





Photos:



Plot 1: Improved Grassland



Plot 2: Wet Grassland



Plot 3: Raised Bog



Plot 4: Cutover bog



Linear Feature 1: Hedgerow



Bracken on Plot 4

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3. Submission Form

Please use this form as a template for your submission.

For queries, contact loveyourwellies@farmpeat.ie, (089)-4147367 or (090)-6482745.

A) Entrant details		
Name:		
Email Address:		
Phone Number:		
Please tick this box to confirm that all entrants are 25 years old or younger []		
B) Submission. <i>The combined maximum word count for this section is 3000 words.</i>		
Section 1: Executive Summary		
Section 2: Farm Overview	Name	
	Farm Location	
	Farm Enterprise	
	Farm Size	
	Soil Type	
Section 3: Recommendations		
Section 4: Conclusion		

Submit your entry to loveyourwellies@farmpeat.ie

Closing date for entries: 16th August 2024

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