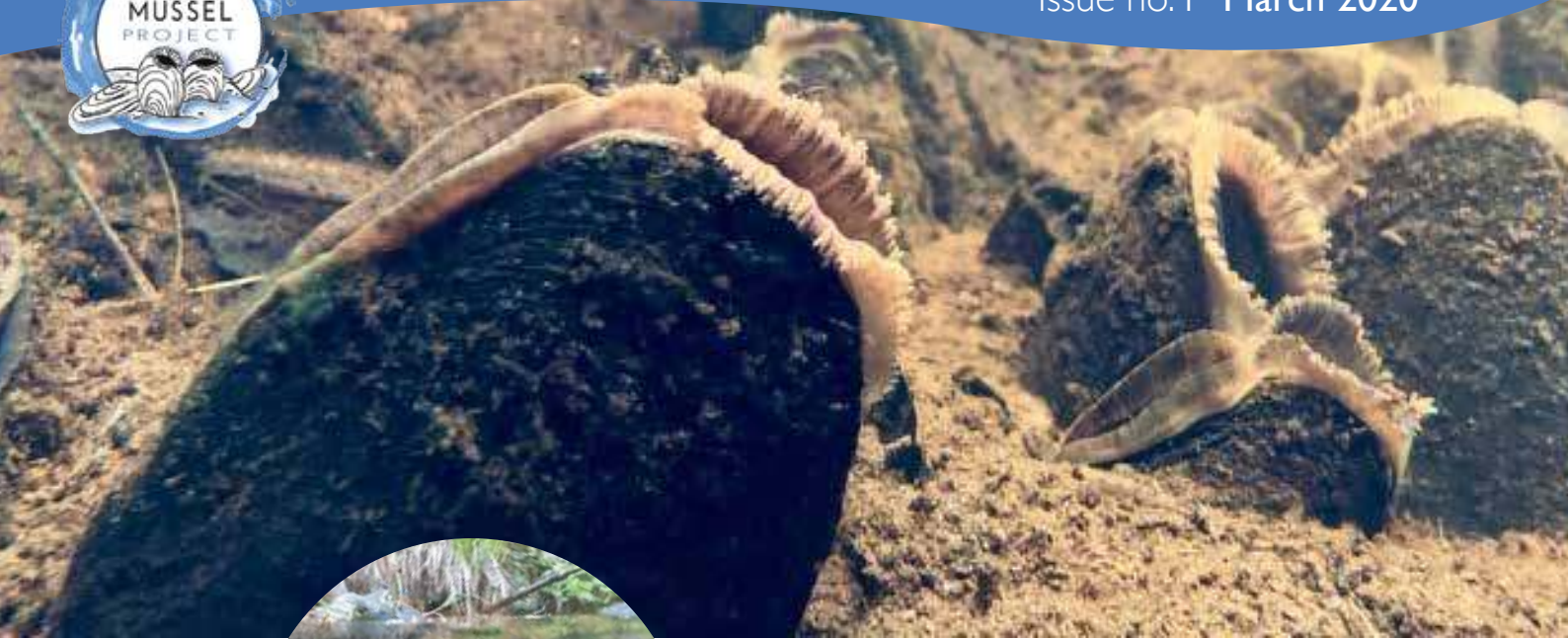


# Pearl Mussel Project News

*Farming for nature in a vibrant rural economy*



Issue no.1 March 2020



*The freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*) are extremely long lived and are capable of surviving for up to 140 years, making them Ireland's longest living animal.*

## Expressions of Interest

The Pearl Mussel Project would like to remind farmers interested in joining the Project in 2020 that the closing date for expressions of interest is the 31st of March 2020.

Forms are available at <http://www.pearlmusselproject.ie/resources/publications.html>

Or by phoning the office on 064 6640685

## Farmer Payments

Payments totalling more than €645,000 have been paid out to over 300 participant farmers in the first year of the project.

## Bundorragha Catchment County Mayo



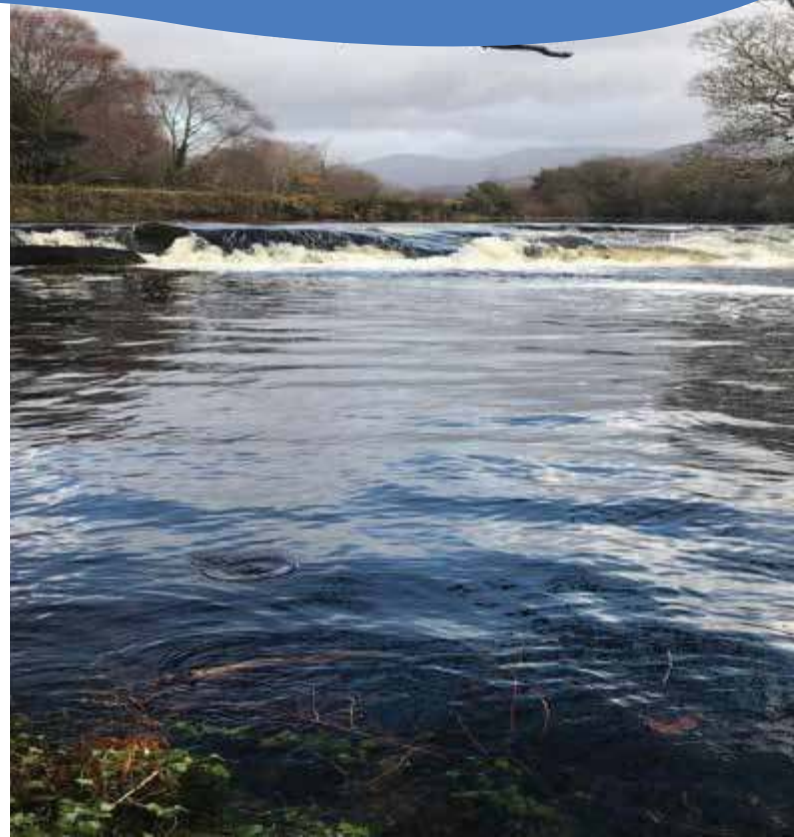
# Project Update

The project team is currently working on annual works plans for farmers. These are developed based on the supporting actions submitted by farm advisors.

Supporting actions are aimed at addressing any on-farm issues affecting scores.

Farmer update meetings were held in Galway, Mayo and Donegal during March 2020. Further meetings have unfortunately been postponed until further notice due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus. We are currently working on alternative arrangements to update farmers on the project and receive feedback.

If you are interested in being a PMP farmer representative for your catchment, please contact a member of the project team.



**T**he Pearl Mussel Project attended a stream side presentation by ASSAP and LAWPRO held in the Inny and Currane Catchments earlier this year. There was great interest amongst the local farming community who turned out in good numbers.

**W**e welcome our new South West catchment officer **Stephen O'Shea** to the Pearl Mussel Team. Stephen has worked as an agri-environmental consultant since 2015.

We wish Tara Challoner, who held the post for the past year the very best for the future.

email: [stephen@pmproject.ie](mailto:stephen@pmproject.ie)



## Contact us

 064 6640685

 [info@pmproject.ie](mailto:info@pmproject.ie)

 [PearlMusselProject.ie](http://PearlMusselProject.ie)

 [@pearl\\_mussel](https://twitter.com/pearl_mussel)

 [pearlmusselproject](https://www.facebook.com/pearlmusselproject)

# Pearl Mussel Farmer Profile

**T**om Keane is one of the Pearl Mussel Project Pilot Farmers who farms in the Dawros Catchment in Connemara. Tom came back from England in 1983 to farm with his father. He started his own flock with 9 hoggets he bought in Maam Cross and now has a flock of 160 ewes.

Tom is very passionate about where he farms, he feels one of the best things about farming in this area is the wild nature of the area, "It's not the easiest place to farm, but I love the area".

Tom thinks the Pearl Mussel Programme is great for the area. When he was a child, both pearl mussel and fish stocks in the catchment were plentiful. This is not the

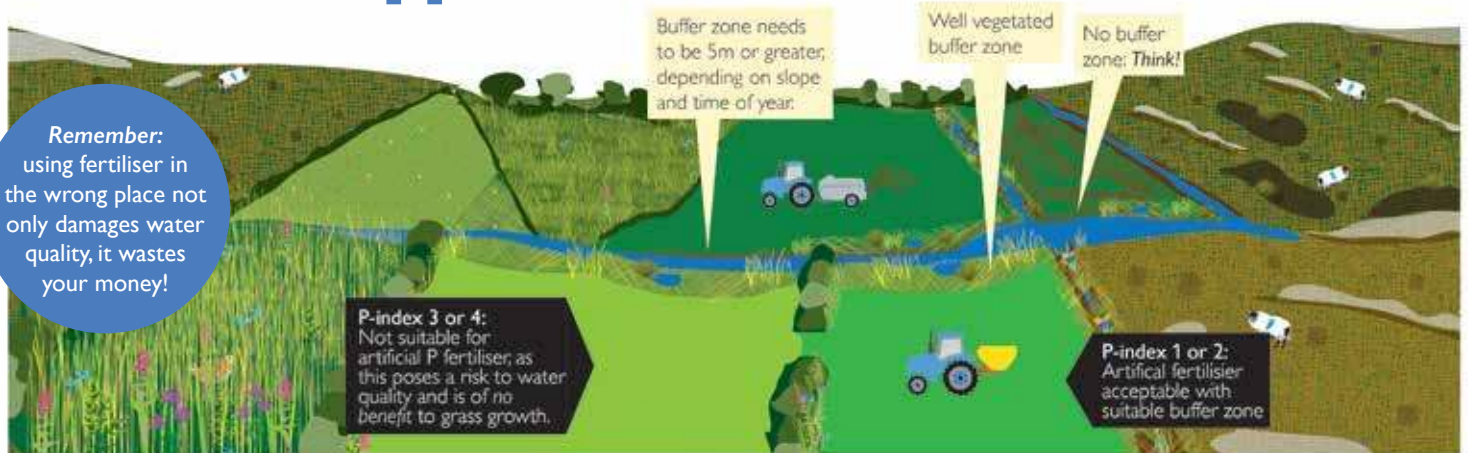
case anymore and programmes like this can only help.

Tom used to feed meal, but he found it was just too costly. He feels the key to getting the best from his farm is "getting the land to work for you". He ensures his stock are rotated regularly and works with nature to get the best from his land.

When asked what he feels the future of farming is for areas like Connemara, Tom said that Connemara has a very special environment and more locally led initiatives like the Pearl Mussel Programme working with farmers will help to preserve the area for future generations and for visitors to the area.



# Nutrient Application



- ▶ As phosphorus is one of main threats to water quality and Freshwater Pearl Mussel, PMP participants are required to provide soil samples if they wish to apply phosphorus to their land, to show that it is necessary.
- ▶ **Buffer zones should be adhered to for all fertiliser/slurry spreading.**
- ▶ All drains on the farm should have the same buffer zones when spreading fertiliser as rivers/streams as they are all linked to the main river.
- ▶ **Don't spread all slurry in one application, maximise uptake of nutrients by spreading over two to three applications from late spring to mid-summer.**
- ▶ Only spread when ground conditions are suitable, do not spread when rain is forecast within 48hours.
- ▶ **Lands that flood along main river are highest risk and are unlikely to benefit much from fertiliser application regardless of P Index.**
- ▶ If using artificial fertiliser, CAN/Urea is preferred as there is a lower risk to watercourses while also being less costly.



## Bird Nesting

It is now bird nesting season, and therefore hedge cutting and scrub burning is prohibited from 1st March until the 31st of August.

## Send us your photos!

The Pearl Mussel Project invites students, farmers, local residents and amateur photographers to submit photos for our 2021 calendar. The theme for the calendar will be:

**“Farming for nature in a freshwater pearl mussel catchment”**

Photos can be of anything topic or theme that you feel captures what it is like to farm in your catchment. The best entries as judged by PMP will be included in our 2021 calendar. Winners will receive a complimentary copy of the final 2021 calendar.

Photos should be emailed to [mary@pmproject.ie](mailto:mary@pmproject.ie) and should be in landscape format. Please remember to let us know who took the photograph and where and when it was taken.

So get snapping and best of luck!

