Horticulture Grant Scheme

The 2019 Scheme of Investment Aid for the Development of the Commercial Horticulture Sector is expected to be launched imminently. This scheme allows mushroom growers to avail of 40% grant aid on capital investments (The minimum investment which will be considered for grant aid is €10,000 excluding VAT). The budget for the scheme which was recently announced in the 2019 budget is €6 million which is up by €1 million from the 2018 grant scheme.

DAFM will notify all horticulture advisor when the scheme is officially launch and I will notify all growers if there are any significant changes to the scheme. Applications will be available online on DAFM website. The closing date for applications to be submitted is expected to be the week before Christmas.
See below a checklist of what is required to submit an application for the horticulture grant scheme:

- Completed application signed and dated.
- Complete business plan including a financial sensitivity analysis (Cost and Returns)
- Up-to-date and fully descriptive signed quotation(s)
- Latest set of accounts
- Planning Permission approval letter if required
- Full set of construction drawings and site map for permanent structures/building
- Original birth certificate if claiming the higher rate of grant aid on the basis of being under 35 years of age.

I will be contacting all growers over the next two weeks to get an indication of who is submitting an application and will meet with each grower on one to one bases to go through their application in detail before I sign off on it.

Mushroom Researcher awarded with Teagasc RDS Gold Medal

Eoin O Connor is a Teagasc Walsh Fellow in the final year of his PhD studies, which are
being done in collaboration with Teagasc’s Mushroom Research Group and Maynooth University. Eoin recently won the Teagasc RDS Gold Medal at the 25th Anniversary Walsh Fellow Seminar at Johnstown Castle. This event showcases the great work being done by Walsh Fellows across the whole of Teagasc and it is a prestigious award for any PhD student. It is the first time a Walsh Fellow from Horticulture has won the medal and we congratulate him on this achievement.

Dr Helen Grogan with Eoin O’Connor after receiving his Teagasc RDS Gold Medal

Eoin is working with Dr. Helen Grogan in the Horticulture Development Department, Teagasc and Dr. David Fitzpatrick at Maynooth University on a mushroom research project that is characterising how mushrooms respond to the many viruses that can infect them. Mushroom viruses reduce the quality of fresh mushrooms and result in the produce being downgraded or rejected and so they effectively reduce the profitability of the grower. Eoin’s work has identified that the viruses can be found in different locations within the cells of the mushroom ‘mycelium’ and that different mushroom strains respond differently to virus infections. He hopes to identify some factors that could be used to produce virus-resistant strains for the future. We wish him every success in his career.
Increasing Costs for the Irish Mushroom Grower

Mushroom growers are feeling the squeeze as there cost of production increases. The increased cost of straw and the lack of availability have led to compost prices increases for growers. Electricity and Oil prices have also increased over the last 6 months. Budget 2019 was announced on 9th of October and as expected the minimum wage will increase by €0.25 to €9.80 from the 1st of January 2019. With all these price increases it’s obvious that the market price for mushrooms needs to increase for mushroom growing to remain a viable enterprise.

Growers need to analysis their own farms finances and see what their breakeven point is. It’s an exercise that growers should do monthly as mushroom price can fluctuate based on product mix. As Teagasc advisor, I meet growers on regular bases and do a cost and returns profit monitor which is a good indicator of farm profitability. Growers need to focus on factors that are within their own control such as yield and labour efficiency as they have a massive effect on profit or loss on a mushroom unit.

Omnicide-M Label Changed

There is new label for Omnicide M with a new PCS number. The new labels will be on all Omnicide-M products purchased going forward. However Omnicide-M purchased recently may still have the old label which is out of date. Any grower using the product will be
provided with a new label which should be stuck over the existing label. Application rates for this product remain the same as displayed on the new label below.

New Omnicide-M Label (New PCS Number Highlighted)

Any grower with the old label on the displayed on the product will be liable for an audit non-conformance. Please note the new PCS number is 99380. This number should be displayed on the pesticide usage records and inventory record for Omnicide-M.
Contact

Please get in touch if you would like further information, if you have any issues you would like to discuss or topics you would like to hear more about.

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