Snail Farming

Introduction

Heliciculture commonly known as snail farming is a niche farming concept which has evolved here in recent years.

The existence of snails in Ireland dates back 8000 years, Snails were carried by traders from the Pyrenees as a source of snack food.

According to a study by the University of Nottingham the natural snail here is almost genetically identical to a species in France; therefore there is the existence of a snail trail from the French Pyrenees to our Atlantic Island.

It is claimed that snail food was held in high esteem in the Catholic countries of France, Spain and Italy, because snails were not classified as meat and could be eaten on days of fast and abstinence

Establishing a Snail Farm

Before investing in a snail farm, it is recommended that you identify your market.

Every Irish pallet is not yet ready for the snail fare, though there is a growing interest.

Europe provides an open market for snail producers, large quantities are imported from Eastern Europe, however there are concerns regarding the quality of this product.

There is a growing demand in the Middle East and Asia for our Irish snail

Land requirement is minimum, preferably, medium light soil, rich in lime and calcium, in a location with moisture bearing winds.

Space for growing leafy vegetation or vegetables is necessary for feeding purposes. Night dew is important for healthy snail mobility.

Sheds or snail boxes must be secure to avoid snails escaping, and protect against predators. Also use materials which are decay resistant.
Production
Climatic conditions in Ireland are suitable for year round snail breeding. One acre is capable of producing 10 ton of snails over a six month period.

As well as being a culinary delicacy, snail based beauty products are making a mark amongst the conglomerates of the health and beauty industry.

Training Courses on Snail Farming

Teagasc, as part of the Options Programme are on a rural quest to:
- Provide new thinking
- Generate new ideas
- Generate additional income on and off farm

Snail farming as a viable enterprise, is well positioned to give maximum return on minimum space and capital outlay.

It is recommended that potential snail farmers visit a commercial snail farm and get involved in a course, prior to investing resources in the project.
For further information and courses on Snail farming techniques contact;

www.gaelicescargot.com
www.theirishsnailfarm.ie
www.nots.ie

National Organic Training Skillnet will be hosting a snail farming seminar on the 14th and 15th of November 2016 in The Bridge House Hotel Tullamore www.nots.ie
**Gaelic Escargot**

Set up by Eva Milka, in 2014 in Co. Carlow. Eva is originally from Poland and has now set up home in Ireland.

**Gaelic Escargot** snail farm [www.gaelicescargot.com](http://www.gaelicescargot.com) has become a Research and Development Centre for breeding free-range Irish snails. Eva believes that domestic and international markets are well disposed to Irish produced snails.

Gaelic Escargot aims to provide knowledge and mentoring for all Irish snail farmers in procuring products. The Centre offers seminars, breeding stock and materials for infrastructure. Continuous support and a step by step guide to ultimately ensure the success of each snail farmer are ensured.

Gaelic Escargot aims to become the leader in producing the best quality snails in the world. Eva is confident that she is producing the snail best suited to Irish weather conditions - Helix Muller.

Whilst Eva refers to herself as the Mother of snail farming in Ireland, because of her input, research and development, she believes that much more work is still required in the area of training, research, processing and marketing. She emphasizes the need for a collaborative effort amongst snail farmers to drive the industry to the level of our European counterparts.

For further information visit [www.gaelicescargot.com](http://www.gaelicescargot.com)
Irish Snail Farm Ltd
Set up in 2014 on a family farm in Co. Carlow. The farm is run by Kiley and Brian McDade helped by their children. Brian says that they have made mistakes, learned from the experience and now have the building blocks in place from where prospecting snail farmers can learn the technique of snail farming. Brian and Kiley have done their research, travelling to the UK and Europe. They have identified snail types, suitable to snail farming in Ireland as well as identifying open markets for the product. Now in the process of engaging a network of snail farmers, with a vision to having a collaboration of like-minded farmers, working independently. Irish Snail Farm Ltd (www.irishsnailfarm.ie) intends to be a knowledge base for Irish snail farmers. Ideas expertise and technique will be streamlined to maximize innovation. Aggregate selling should leverage marketing power and enhance the export process, Delivering some predictability amongst produc