

PRESS RELEASE

Food and the Circular Economy – an Online Conference in Conjunction with Wicklow County Council and Wicklow Naturally

Wicklow Naturally, Wicklow County Council, The Local Enterprise Office Wicklow and Sustainable Tourism Ireland have come together to offer an online conference to explore opportunities in the circular economy for food producers. The conference will explore the importance of the Circular Economy to food production and consumption. Globally 22% of all carbon emissions have been linked to food so any steps we take to use food more sustainably and reduce food waste is a win for Climate Action.

Wicklow Naturally is a network of food producers and food related businesses in the county. Its membership includes the best producers of ingredients and food products in the county, businesses serving food in the hospitality sector and the many businesses specialising in selling Wicklow's great produce. The conference will explore how these businesses can improve their business model and processes to become more efficient and create more sustainable opportunities.

The conference will cover topics such as resource optimization, reuse of resources, composting and by products. It will look at existing programmes including Green for Micro and Origin Green as well as exploring certification options for sustainability in businesses. Local case studies will feature in the programme of speakers.

Welcoming the announcement of the event Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council acknowledged the strength of the Wicklow Naturally brand in marketing and raising awareness on local products. He commented "Members of the network have identified sustainable production as core goal for Wicklow Naturally and this conference will help to deepen members discussion and engagement in delivering that goal."

The conference will be held on the 3rd of February from 10.00am to 3.00pm. The morning will contain an introduction to the Circular Economy and Food while the afternoon will separate into two sessions, one for the hospitality sector and one for the food production sector. The conference is funded by the EPA through the Local Authority Prevention Network and free to attend. It will be delivered via Zoom.

For further information on the conference businesses or members of the public can contact the Environmental Awareness Office of Wicklow County Council by email on eao@wicklowcoco.ie

Any business can **register** on line for the event using the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0pf-6hrjMrEtASTnP1zTC7FwVVw4nByZVN>