



‘There is real pride in winning a rosette – and we celebrate that’

We go behind the scenes of the **Cork Summer Show** with Catherinea and Ann O’Mahony to find out more about the rich history showcasing the best of Munster’s agricultural heritage

By Sarah McIntosh

With the summer months upon us, it is a busy time for agricultural shows as farmers begin to travel the length and breadth of the country, with their pedigree and commercial animals in search of that first-place honour and red rosette. All roads lead to Curraheen on 20 and 21 June for the **Cork Summer Show** which has been running for over 220 years, making it Munster’s longest-running agricultural show.

Two people working behind-the-scenes in bringing the competitions, stands and exhibitions together are Catherinea and Ann O’Mahony.

With a background in governance and project management, Catherinea joined the Munster Agricultural Society two years ago as one of the organisers of the **Cork Summer Show**.

“In all the jobs I have done, there has always been a connection to agriculture,” she explains.

Catherinea’s role is varied and changes depending on the time of the year but her main focus at the beginning was building the website and making the public aware of the Munster Agricultural Society.

“The society has been around since 1805, it is over 220 years old and we wanted to show the different aspects of what they do and open the curtains to the society,” she explains.

History is a massive element of the organisation and they have really tried to connect generations and stories from the past through their social media and website.

Strong connection

Working alongside Catherinea is Ann, who joined the society six years ago as the agricultural competitions coordinator.

“I have a nursing background; the society were looking for someone to do part-time work. I wanted to do something socially as we are farming at home and then, I retired from nursing,” says Ann.

Having travelled to the show every year when she was young, Ann has a strong connection to the show and society.

“If you go back to those days, every farm had a bit of everything. My father would have shown sheep and been involved in the organising part of the shows. In later years I was involved in Macra and coordinating competitions in ring one at **Cork Summer Show** so I have been in and around there for a while and am still showing today,” she explains.

With an interest in animals and show-



Zara and Mary Butler from Kilkenny with pony Danny at the 2025 Cork Summer Show. ©Clare Keogh



Ann and Catherinea O’Mahony, who work for the Munster Agricultural Society.

ing learning opportunities focused on modern farming and sustainability.

“Agri Aware is facilitating a farm, milking cows and shearing sheep for anyone who wants to come along and learn how to do it. We all have nieces and nephews who are interested in farming and love tractors and machinery. Agri Aware will be bringing people along on that experience. They’re also doing a Food For Thoughts marquee which will tell the story of Irish food with a chef demonstration,” says Catherinea.

Visitors can also look forward to the Cork Reenactment Military Show, the RSA Education Truck as well as Tug of War Ireland, adding a new competitive element to the event.

None of this could happen without the 500 dedicated volunteers who are passionate about their craft, according to Ann and Catherinea.

“The passion of these people we get to work with is brilliant,” says Catherinea.

It really is a community event, as Ann highlights it links rural Ireland with urban Ireland.

“It shows some of the urban population a small snippet of what goes on in farming. One of our committee members said that it’s much more interesting for someone from the city to see a bull being washed and dried, than what’s going on in the showing ring. Many are fascinated by the fact animals are being showered, shampooed and blow-dried at the side of the field,” explains Ann.

“It’s good to show people what is involved in showing cattle. The amount of effort, care and money that people spend in getting their animals ready to present them at the show is fascinating and interesting. They are generally a show family within themselves and support each other. There is real pride in winning a rosette, it’s about celebrating that.”

Tips for attendees

For anyone interested in attending Catherinea advises to be in early – gates open at 9am.

The society is also encouraging people to leave their cars at home and take public transport where possible as there are four bus locations.

“You will get into the showground within 10 minutes of getting onto that bus, from all four locations,” says Catherinea. Ann also advises attendees to be prepared for all weather, and wear comfortable footwear. Admission for adults is €25. A one-day family ticket is €60.

See corksummershow.com