

**Summary Report on the First European Week for Waste Reduction
(EWWR) in the Republic of Ireland
21st to 29th November 2009**

Introduction

The EU Commission and their *Life+* fund are sponsoring EU-wide weeks for waste prevention in 2009, 2010 and 2011. The Environmental Protection Agency National Waste Prevention Programme (NWPP) is acting as the national organiser/coordinator for the events in the Republic of Ireland supported by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government. Invitations are issued to the DEHLG, CGPP (EPA STRIVE), LAPN co-ordinating group, Green Business (Enviros), Green Hospitality (CTC/HSL), Packaging Prevention (Repak), Green Schools/Home (An Taisce), Food Waste/Home Composting (CTC), all Environmental Awareness Officers and other people involved in prevention, to seek their proposals for actions/projects. Draft registration forms for events to take place during the designated week are submitted to EPA for approval for inclusion in EWWR.

Proposed actions generally fit in with existing/ongoing prevention initiatives and may consist of a press release welcoming EWWR, explaining the ongoing prevention programme and the particular project/event they are planning for during the week (e.g. report publication, workshop, seminar, awards presentation, community or fun event etc). Prevention must be the primary focus with projects solely relating to recycling being ruled out.

The First EWWR Outcome

Up to 31 separate events were registered and approved by EPA, recorded and reported to the EU organisers periodically in the run up to the week. Unfortunately, some events had to be postponed due to adverse weather conditions (severe flooding) in parts of the country and other local logistical reasons. Nevertheless, up to 27 events did proceed and these are detailed below with information provided by the Project Developers.

EWWR and related matters received print media coverage nationally in 3 newspapers namely the Irish Examiner, Irish Daily Mail and the Sunday Business Post Special Supplement. Regionally, print media covered EWWR in 17 newspapers including the Cork Evening Echo, Navan Weekender, the Argus (Louth), the Kerryman, Northern Standard, Mallow Star, Vale Star, Longford Leader, Kilkenny Advertiser, Kilkenny People, Athlone Advertiser, Finn Valley Post, Letterkenny Post, Dungarvan Observer, Sligo Post, Waterford Today and the Connaught Telegraph.

In addition to the paid for radio advertising, interviews on EWWR were broadcast by Newstalk (The Right Hook), Dublin City FM, Kilkenny KCLR96FM, Inishowen Radio and Community Radio Mayo.

Over the course of the week, the webpages at www.ewwr.ie were viewed 482 times with a peak of over 200 hits on 23/11/09 presumably arising from the press releases and radio advertising.

Overall it was a difficult week to make an impact in the media with the various press releases from EPA, the Minister and even the launch of the National Waste Report 2008 receiving very little coverage (in the face of severe floods, strikes, budget discussions and the report on abuse in the Dublin Archdiocese). Nevertheless, many projects did proceed locally and in most cases the Project Organisers noted excellent participation and very positive reactions from participants.

The EWWR Projects in 2009

Some months in advance of the week, EPA developed a webpage at www.ewwr.ie (linked to www.ewwr.eu) providing information on EWWR. This was updated on a periodic basis including contact details for events being developed in Ireland.

In advance of the week, EPA issued regional print articles giving details of NWPP and EWWR. The level of media interest engendered is noted above.

EPA also commissioned national and regional radio adverts on EWWR, which ran throughout the week.

On 21/11/09, EPA issued a press release informing the media about EWWR and NWPP.

Mr John Gormley, T.D. Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government issued a press release on 23/11/09 welcoming EWWR.

The EPA launched the National Waste Report 2008 and the 5th Annual Report of the NWPP with a press release on 26/11/09.

EPA STRIVE Research issued a press release on 25/11/09 launching their Community Composting Research Report. This was covered in the Irish Examiner.

The Repak Packaging Prevention Programme launched their programme and new web-based tool-kits at a Conference in Dublin on 23/11/09. A demonstration of the Self-audit Tool for packaging legislation compliance was demonstrated. The Packaging Prevention Programme (50% funded by EPA NWPP) has worked with 40 companies and saved 4,400 tonnes of packaging and costs of €9 million. Other event participants included Gypsum Industries, Cadbury Ireland, Irish Packaging Society and Print & Packaging Skillnets. Twenty people attended the forum and videos of the proceedings are available on the www.preventandsave.ie website. The Irish Examiner, the Irish Daily Mail and Envirosolutions.com covered a press release issued by Repak.

Over five days (23-27/11/09) An Taisce Green Home held a public display unit at IKEA, Ballymun that has a daily footfall of 7,000 customers. A competition for a compost bin garnered 120 entrants. Stickers for “No junk Mail” and insulation depth checkers were distributed. Informal conversations were held with hundreds of customers concerning the Green Home project and EWWR. A novelty actor with a Green Home costume added a fun element to this family-oriented event. Over 500 IKEA staff were circulated with information also. The IKEA store is very progressive environmentally with its own geo-thermal heating system and rain-water harvesting facility.

An Taisce also held a day-long Prevention Seminar at their Dublin premises on 25/11/09 with their local authority prevention partners. Over 20 people attended with 13 local authorities represented. Seven presentations and Q&A were conducted before lunch with a breakout session in the afternoon.

The Clean Technology Centre held a Waste Reduction Fair at the Cork Institute of Technology. Advance information was provided to 1,000 staff and 10,000 students. An estimated 600 people attended the event that included a composting demonstration area. A new food waste prevention guide for the catering sector was also launched.

CTC also held a Low Waste Cooking demonstration by celebrity chef Kevin Dundon that was attended by 80 people. The Cork Evening Echo covered the event extensively and Kevin was interviewed on Newstalk national radio.

Cork County Council, in partnership with South East Cork Area Development, on 23/11/09 held a Waste Prevention Opportunities Workshop for Businesses in the Catering & Hospitality Sector. The event was advertised by flyers to many businesses and in local papers such as Youghal News, Midleton News, East Cork Journal and Evening Echo. The event was held at the Midleton Park Hotel, Midleton, Co Cork with 38 attendees. Four presentations were made followed by Q&A. Relevant literature on prevention was made available to participants including Calling Time on Waste CD-ROM, www.stopfoodwaste.ie, www.greenbusiness.ie, www.wastewatchers.ie and a food regulations leaflet. Positive feedback was received.

Waterford City Council held a Seminar on Sustainable Waste & Energy Management for Business on 23/11/09. A new certification scheme was launched named Eco Cert. The event was held with Waterford City Enterprise Board. Over 30 participants attended and feedback was positive. Coverage was received on local radio and newspapers.

Kilkenny Local Authorities held a number of events including 12 Energy Conservation Workshops for Primary School students. The workshops were run by Sustainable Energy Ireland. Over 270 children in 7 schools participated (4th to 6th Class). An evening seminar on techniques for school principals, Boards and management to conserve water was also run. Over 30 attendees representing 26 different schools were present. Other events run included a public food waste prevention cookery demonstration and a local authority administration Waste Prevention Pledge project.

The Limerick/Clare/Kerry Regional Waste Management Office held the following four events:

1. At University of Limerick, Dromroe Village student accommodation (population 456), a Choose Tapwater weeklong event, including blind tasting for the public, was held.
2. Presentation 25/11/09 to Thomond Park management from the Incredible Cup Company on reuseable/returnable drinking container system for leisure event management. 33% of all waste from Thomond Park consisted of plastic cups and a trial is planned for the new system in 2010.
3. Presentations on waste prevention were made to staff at **5** different organisations across the region during the week: Weener Plastics Ltd, St Ita's Hospital, Astellas Ltd, Timler Ltd and Fexco Ltd.
4. Clean Ireland Refuse Ltd held a 3-day public waste prevention display stand at Crescent Shopping Centre, Limerick. Over 750 people were contacted through interaction at the stand.

Specific feedback has been requested from the Project Developers for the following events:

- The Green Hospitality Award held a prevention awareness competition among their member hotels.
- Community Network Recycling Ireland held a public Reuse Exhibition at the Science Gallery, TCD (50 people attended this event).
- Monaghan County Council held a business seminar on packaging prevention in association with Repak.
- They also held a food waste prevention cookery demonstration event at Monaghan Library (20 people attended this event).

Galway County Council unfortunately had to postpone three planned events to the New Year due to severe flooding in their area.