

# HORTICULTURE FORUM NI



Dear Members of the Horticulture Industry

31 January 2022

The last two years have been momentous for us all. Brexit and Covid-19 have thrown into sharp focus the importance of secure supply chains based on locally grown food, flowers and plants. The Northern Ireland protocol has created both difficulties and opportunities while the population is increasingly aware of the need to be environmentally responsible and reduce our carbon footprint. The familiar 'grown here not flown here' has assumed even greater significance and relevance.

At the same time the government will be changing the subsidies it pays to farmers and growers, to encourage the use of land in a sustainable manner. This has the potential to impact on all of us. More locally and immediately, the Northern Ireland Department – DAERA – due in part at least to the case repeatedly presented in recent years by the Horticulture Forum - is increasingly aware of the importance of horticulture to the local economy and public health.

**This all means that, this is a time for a strong and unified voice to influence government policy and highlight the high-quality goods and services which we provide. The Horticulture Forum NI, by representing the whole industry can speak with authority on our behalf, providing us with an opportunity to promote the industry, influence policy and communicate to government the opportunities and challenges facing the industry.**

**We do this by –**

- i. Representing the industry, The Horticulture Forum NI has attended the Balmoral Show staging a colourful and informative display of local produce. This display showcases each sector to the public and serves as a facilitator for interaction with supply chain, retail, political influencers and engagement with the general public.
- ii. Responding to consultations on policy and schemes - In the recent past the Horticulture Forum has responded to the consultation on the future use of peat in the Northern Ireland Peatlands Strategy 2021 – 2040, highlighting the importance of sustaining peat supplies for commercial horticulture as we work towards developing cost-effective alternatives. The Horticulture Forum also recently engaged in discussions on future research and will soon be responding to the anticipated consultation on future support for the industry.
- iii. Interacting directly with MLAs, Ministers and senior DAERA officials.

**However, to help us do this we need each individual businesses to support and subscribe to and play a part in their sector organisations which nominates a representative to sit on the Forum to represent your interest and feedback to you on the Forums activities.**

**The following Sector Organisation are currently members of the Forum -.**


- Growers NI
- UFU Vegetable Committee
- UFU Apple Committee
- Northern Ireland Flower and Foliage Association (NIFFA)
- Northern Ireland Soft Fruit Growers Association (NISFGA)
- Horticultural Trades Association (HTA)
- Mushroom Sector - Northway Mushrooms
- Park Managers Association

**This is not an exclusive list and we will be happy to consider participation by other sector organisations from the industry.**

I would urge you to become a member of “your” sector organisation, as it is by us all working together that we can ensure your voice is heard and we obtain the support required to help us address the challenges and embrace the opportunities ahead.

I would therefore invite you to make contact with your local sector organisations listed below on the next page before **8 February 2022** and at your earliest convenience. We look forward to having your support as we work together to represent our industry.

Yours faithfully,



**Hamilton Loney**

**Chair of the Horticulture Forum for N Ireland**

## **Membership Organisations;**

### **Growers NI (Ornamental Plants)**

Growers NI is made up of local growers who supply nursery stock and bedding plants to the garden market. It aims to represent the interests of the local suppliers of nursery stock and promote their extensive range of high-quality plants to garden centre buyers and landscape contractors.

**For further information:** Contact Doug Thomson

Chair Growers NI

**Email:** [irishgardenplant@btconnect.com](mailto:irishgardenplant@btconnect.com)



## **Ulster Farmers Union**

### **UFU Vegetable Committee - Vegetable sector**

UFU represents the interests of its farmer and grower members in Northern Ireland, through contacts with businesses in the supply chain as well as policy makers in the EU, Westminster, the NI Executive and relevant Government Departments. The UFU is represented on the Horticulture Forum by representatives of the **Vegetable and Fruit Policy Committees**.

**For further information:** Contact Adrian Magowan

**Phone:** 0779 873 0403

**Email:** [adrian@millbankfarm.com](mailto:adrian@millbankfarm.com)

**Website:** [www.ufuni.org](http://www.ufuni.org)

## **NI Fruit Growers Association (NIFGA)- Apple sector**

The Fruit Grower's Association represents the apple industry and brings together like minded apple growers to promote their sector.

**For further information:** Contact David Johnston

**Tel;** 0790 990 8064

**Email:** davidjohnston272@hotmail.com

## **Northern Ireland Flower and Foliage Association**

Formed in 2013 to represent the interests of the rapidly expanding cut flower and foliage sector in Northern Ireland. NIFFA currently has more than 20 members producing and marketing a wide selection of flowers and foliage.

**For further information:** Contact Sandy Carney

**Tel;** 0776 840 7808

**Email:** info@sustainableblooms.co.uk

**Website:** www.nilocalflowers.com

## **Northern Ireland Soft Fruit Growers Association**

The Northern Ireland Soft Fruit Growers Association (NISFGA) is a group of like-minded soft fruit growers who have joined forces to promote their produce more effectively in the marketplace. The group share information and collaborate where possible in order to strengthen and develop the sector to its full potential.

**For further information:** Contact Peter Donnelly

**Phone :** 0759 591 2718

**Email :** jamespdonnelly44@gmail.com

## **Horticultural Trade Association (HTA)**

HTA is the trade association of the UK garden industry and it operates a number of groups that represent specialist areas within the industry. HTA member businesses include garden centres, garden retailers, growers, landscapers, manufacturers and suppliers.

**For further information:** Contact John Shannon, N.I. Council Rep for HTA

**Email:** [nsmolly@nsmolly.plus.com](mailto:nsmolly@nsmolly.plus.com)

**Phone:** 028 2827 6351

**Website:** [www.the-hta.org.uk](http://www.the-hta.org.uk)