



Plenty of events planned for National Organic Week

TREVOR SARGENT recently said September is a crucial month for the organic sector in Ireland.

Well, it is upon us now, and there are events the length and breadth of the country to increase the profile of organics in Ireland.

All roads lead to Waterford, where the National Organic Conference (starts today) and the Terra Madre (which runs from today until Sunday) are being held.

Then, there is a whole plethora of events pencilled in for National Organic Week, which runs from September 15 to 21. This year, at the request of producers, the event is being held earlier in the year, so it's closer to harvest time and further from Christmas. It also overlaps with Britain's organic fortnight.

This timetable change seems to have the desired effect, as already, there are 39 events of all shapes and sizes listed in 18 counties.

One major event not listed thus far but no doubt a highlight for the week is the arrival of Erin Brockovich.

The feature film in 2000 that carried her name was nominated for five Academy Awards. It portrayed her role in constructing a case against the Pacific Gas and Electric Company of California in 1993, alleging contamination of drinking water with chromium, which was settled in 1996 for \$333 million, the largest settlement ever in a di-

rect action lawsuit in the US.

Erin will be brought by organic dairy company Glenisk to speak in UCD on September 20. She will also meet Environment Minister John Gormley.

Sure to figure in her meeting with the minister will be the recent discovery of carcinogenic chromium in 500,000 tonnes of waste at the Haulbowline Irish

Roscommon (Pádraig and Bríd Tiernan's Pollnmaughill); Leitrim (Mary Luther's Bluebell); Kildare (Jenny and Peter Young's Castlefarm, as well as Yuki Kobayashi's Moyleabbey).

Shops and stalls all over the country are doing tastings, from Kate's Kitchen in Sligo to Ecologic in Dublin and the Pantry in Kerry.

An interesting event is organised by Simply Organic in Dublin: they have taken it upon themselves to distribute organic fruit in local schools and hospitals.

However, Leitrim seems to be the place where the most, and indeed the most interesting, events are occurring. There are five listings for the county, but one of these includes an entire food festival with 34 events of its own.

This is the Harvest Feast, and it runs over the weekend of the 13th and 14th. Six restaurants will host Harvest Feast lunches. They are The Cottage, Jamestown; Oarsman and Bush Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon; Riverbank, Dromahair; Courthouse, Kinlough; and in Sligo, the Tobergal Lane.

There are three competitions — photography, potato painting and boxty making. Kevin Dundon (Dunbrody House) will announce the winners (entries must be in by Thursday, September 11 to The Food Hub, Drumshanbo). There are also lots of

events in the Organic Centre, for the Harvest Feast and Organic Week.

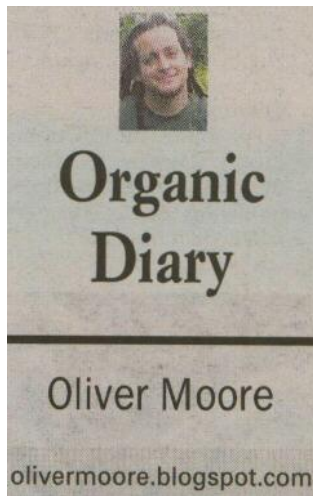
These include healthy lunch boxes (15th and 16th), women's day (17th), community gardens, and the pre-launch of the Organic Guide to Ireland (18th).

Then there is an introduction to care farming (farming as therapy in a special needs context) and allotments, children's storytelling and cookery, and a range of novel cookery classes, including raw food (with Gaby Weiland) and cooking with seaweed (Dr Prannie Rhatigan).

Plus a barbecue, a market, and cookery demos by Noel McMeel and Kevin Dundon.

What's more, there are a number of genuine eco-places to stay in the north west. Most of Ireland's EU Flower accommodation is up there. (This means they are independently audited for sustainability in water, waste, energy and a range of optional extras). See www.greenbox.ie for more on these.

More details of National Organic Week are on the www.bordbia.ie website, and you can find out more about Harvest Feast at www.harvestfeast.ie or by calling 087-6337423.



Steel/Ispat site in Cork, which the Department of Environment took control of in 2003.

Her campaigning against what she terms "corporate deceit", with regard to toxins, has led her to organic food — hence the Glenisk invite.

Some organic week highlights include: farm open days in Cork (Ballymaloe); Carlow (Grace Maher's); Clare (Siobhán Garvey's St Tola farm);



Chef Alice Waters, an international governor of the Slow Food movement, and Eoghan and Orlaith Joyce from Churchtown, Dublin, at the launch of the Terra Madre Ireland four-day food festival starting today in Waterford.