

FERGAL KEANE, FIONN DOHERTY & CIARÁN BONFIL

LOOP HEAD PENINSULA, CO. CLARE

STAND



THE STORY

Meet Fergal, Fionn and Ciarán, three seventeen-year-old lads with a vision to tackle plastic pollution with sustainable innovation. Fresh from finishing their leaving certs and after placing second in the 2021 Young BT Scientist Award, they each have different plans for what's next and where to go but one shared vision that binds them together—hemp bale netting.

Growing up on the Loop Head Peninsula with farming backgrounds means they've seen first-hand the impact plastic has in the agricultural sector.

The aim of their project is to raise awareness of problems with the widely used single-

use bale plastic wrap and promote their innovative alternative that uses hemp. Hemp is a biodegradable and edible material that can grow in abundance in Ireland.

The enterprising trio are just wrapping up a funded feasibility study that explores the future viability and potential of their sustainable hemp bale netting.

Their project is supported by their community, has potential to create jobs in the green economy and is motivated by their honest vision **"to reduce pollution in the agricultural industry"**.

"Plastic is a massive problem, it's causing huge amounts of pollution and it's harming our cattle when they ingest it."

THE WHY

"We're all from farming backgrounds so we can see first-hand that plastic is a massive problem in the agricultural sector. This biodegradable bale netting has the potential to have a huge impact on our farms and in our community."

THE IMPACT

"In ten years we hope 90% of bale netting will be made from hemp, and that's just in Ireland. We want to branch out to different countries and diversify by replacing other types of plastic like single-use food packaging with hemp."

THE CHANGE

"The laws around hemp need to change. Lots of laws are too old fashioned.

We need to move on and look at the modern uses and benefits of hemp."

THE CHALLENGE

"We're just three young lads back here in rural Ireland and we thought, "plastic is a massive problem, how can we get rid of it?" We hope our story gives people the motivation to realise they can make a difference."

THE HOPE

"Hearing big companies that have a big impact on the environment talk about reducing their carbon emissions and their plans to be net zero."

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One of the best parts of this project is feeling how strong the community spirit is here, they're like a family we didn't know we had.

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CHANGE
PRODUCTION

Photo by Jacqui Devenney Reed

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