Irish Grain Growers Group

- Citizens Assembly on Biodiversity

- 15th October 20122

Arable Farming

- Lowest carbon footprint of any agri-sector
- Carbon neutral in many cases with an amazing ability to sequester carbon
- Enhances biodiversity of pollinators, birds along with soil-based insects, fungi and microbes
- Produces a diverse array of plant products for both human and livestock consumption.

Beans

- Provide their own Nitrogen
- Reduce nitrogen requirements in the following crop
- Valuable native plant proteins
- Break crop
- When in flower, the crop is alive with bees and numerous other insects feeding

Oilseed Rape

- It can be planted in both autumn and spring
- This gives two different flowering periods
- Autumn planted, flowers early in April, giving vital food in a lean time for insects before other plants flower
- Flowering can last 6 weeks
- Spring crops flower in June
- Similar to beans, it is alive with all sorts of insects during flowering

Incorporating Compost and planting a cover crop

- Compost or farmyard manure or chopped straw adds humous to the soil, builds carbon stores and organic matter in the soil
- It improves the soil structure
- Improves water and nutrient retention
- It feeds the worms, bugs, fungi and microbes in the soil
- While we think biodiversity is what we see above ground, there is a whole world below our feet that is just as important
- Planting a cover crop also aids in nutrient and carbon capture

Cover Crops

- Planted after harvest between two crops
- Usually, it is left over winter
- It is not harvested, but incorporated back into the soil via mechanical means or grazed with livestock recycling nutrients
- It captures carbon and nutrients and aids water quality
- It usually flowers over the autumn, winter and early spring ‘hungry months’ for a variety of species