

# Food Dudes of good taste

Healthy eating has never been better for Kerry pupils as they get to grips with all kinds of fruit and vegetable in their classrooms - with a new healthy eating programme.

BY MICHELLE CREAN

Food Dudes, a new healthy eating programme has proved very popular with pupils in Ardfer National School who opened their classrooms and their lunchboxes to the idea of new foods.

"The programme was designed by the Department of Agriculture and Food to encourage children to eat more fruit and vegetables," teacher Mary Costello said.

"It has created a great feeling of healthy eating by motivating the children to think about what they eat as well as the nutritional value of the food."

The programme, which was on trial in eleven North Kerry schools, was run in two phases.

"Phase one is a sixteen day trial in the school where the fruit is supplied to the children," she said.

"They were each given a different piece of fruit and vegetable over a few days.

"Similar foods were then repeated to give them a chance to get to like it."

And as a reward for tasting the foods, they were given a different little gift

each day, she added.

"They received rulers, pencil cases, colouring pencils and other bits each day."

According to Mary, phase two was a little harder, as children themselves were asked to bring in fruit and vegetables.

"Many children wouldn't have even tasted some of the fruit or vegetables so it was a great opportunity to open their taste buds to new foods," she said.

"They each were given two small snack-sized boxes, one in green and one in red, for the separate fruit and vegetables.

"They then had to bring in a small little bit of fruit and vegetables and are again being rewarded for this," she said.

But, the key to the project is understanding, she added.

"The children were shown a DVD and we read letters from the programme explaining what nutritional value the food has.

"And because of this they have a better understanding about the project overall, which has had a knock on effect both in school at home."



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