



CO. MAYO  
IRELAND

# CONG FOOD VILLAGE

GOOD  FOOD





# Cong Food Village 2015

Welcome to the birth of Cong Food Village, this Initiative is a celebration of all Cong has to offer as a Top Food Destination. It's a movement with a true community heart run by a voluntary committee of people who are passionate about food. Growing it, making it, cooking it, sharing it and eating it!

Cong Food Village's aim is to educate our youth on good quality food and where it comes from. To put Cong on the Map as a good quality food destination.

## Meet the members:

**Ashford Castle, Cong, Co. Mayo**

[www.ashfordcastle.com](http://www.ashfordcastle.com)

094 95 46003

**Danagher's Hotel, Cong, Co. Mayo**

[www.danaghershhotel.com](http://www.danaghershhotel.com)

094 95 46028

**Lydon's Hotel, Cong, Co. Mayo**

[www.lydonsslodge.com](http://www.lydonsslodge.com)

094 95 46053

**Puddleducks Cafe, Cong, Co. Mayo**

[www.puddleducks.com](http://www.puddleducks.com)

**Ryan's Hotel, Cong, Co. Mayo**

[www.ryanshotel.com](http://www.ryanshotel.com)

**Ryan's Food Emporium, Cong, Co. Mayo**

[www.ryansfoodemporium.com](http://www.ryansfoodemporium.com)

**The Lodge at Ashford Castle, Cong, Co. Mayo.**

[www.thelodgeatashfordcastle.com](http://www.thelodgeatashfordcastle.com)

**Caherduff Farm**

Cong, Co. Mayo

**Connaught Pale Ale**

Cong, Co. Mayo

**Corofin Honey**

Corofin, Co. Galway



### **Cong Food Village Committee Members**

**Chairperson** – Jonathan Keane, Head Chef, The Lodge at Ashford Castle. Slow Food Member

**Treasurer** – Sharon McGrath – Proprietor of Pat Cohan's Restaurant

**Public Relations Officer** – Mairead Geehan, Wedding & Events Manager, The Lodge at Ashford Castle. Cong Festival Committee Member.

**Secretary** – Jacinta Downey, Assistant Manager, The Lodge at Ashford Castle

### **Aims & Objectives**

- To increase the length of the tourist season.
- To increase community spirit & togetherness
- To increase local employment
- To educate the youth of Cong, about food quality
- To put Cong on the map as a good quality food destination

### **Who benefits**

- Local Businesses.
- Local suppliers & producers
- The community
- Tourists & visitors



### **Ashford Castle, Red Carnation Hotel Collection**



Ashford Castle provides a romantic backdrop in superior surrounds, offering guests both relaxation and comfort. There are many opportunities to explore the vast estate with fishing on Lough Corrib, equestrian pursuits, golf, falconry and trail walking. Or simply relax in our luxurious interiors and enjoy your favourite novel or pamper yourself with treatments from our beauty therapists.

The Castle has welcomed and entertained its fair share of celebrities and public figures over the years. Members of Europe's royal families, political figures, industrialists and film stars have all enjoyed the hospitality of the castle.

Ashford Castle has an unsurpassed reputation for providing guests with the very finest rooms and suites. Each guest room is individually designed to provide stylish personal comforts, from the marble fittings of bathrooms to sumptuous co-ordinated fabrics and furnishings. Many of the rooms retain their original features and all are equipped with modern amenities.

Ashford Castle offers guests an abundance of activities to enjoy in true spirit of a resort property. From the combination of pursuits involving physical exercise to the more relaxed beauty treatments, we will attempt to ensure you leave Ashford refreshed, relaxed and replenished.



## **Quite Man 1951 & Quite Man Museum**



In 1951 John Ford's greatest movie "The Quiet Man" starring John Wayne, Maureen O'Hara and Barry Fitzgerald was made. It was set in the beautiful west of Ireland with filming being centred in the village of Cong on the Mayo-Galway border.

The Quite Man Cottage Museum is a novel concept which will give the visitor a total Quiet Man experience as if they were actually 'on-set'. Located by the river at Circular Road, Cong, between actual locations used for the filming, the ground floor of the cottage has been designed as an exact replica of 'White-o-Mornin' Cottage.

Painstaking effort has ensured that all the furnishings, artifacts and costumes are authentic reproductions. The four poster bed and the tables and chairs which Mary Kate cherished, the thatched roof, emerald green half door and white washed front combine to charm all those who visit it. The museum was visited a number of times by John Wayne's family and by Maureen O'Hara. John Wayne's widow, Josephine, wrote in the Museum's visitor's book – "Duke would have loved this



### Corrib Cruises



Corrib

Cruises was founded by John Luskin in 1976. A native of Cong, Co. Mayo. John from a very young age had a great love for Lough Corrib, as a young man loved nothing better than a day's fishing on this wonderful lake. In 1975 John and his wife Kitty, while visiting The Isle Of Wight, off the south coast of England, were presented with the opportunity of a lifetime. While chatting to some locals, it was brought to his attention that the "Cunard Line", owners of the famous "QE2" were selling the original tenders (lifeboats) of the liner at auction in Sandwich Marina, in Kent. He arrived at the auction house just as the last of the tenders was coming under the hammer. ON a whim John purchased the tender for £GBP 10,000. Corrib Cruises sails daiuly to the famous Inchogoill Island, guided by local historian Pat Luskin. Enjoy a glass of wine while listening to local musician Martin Noone. The perfect way to spend an afternoon.





## Inchagoill Island



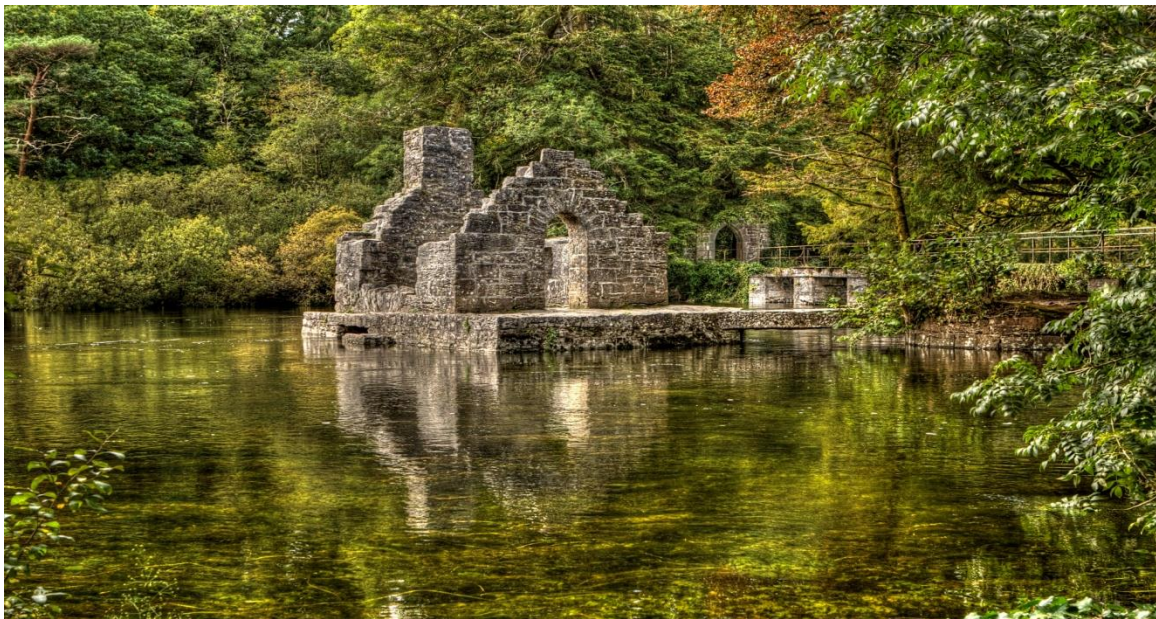
Of all the 365 islands on Lough Corrib Inchagoill is the most famous and most visited. The name Inchagoill comes from 3 Irish words "Inis An Ghaill" meaning the Island of the stranger. Situated approximately half way between Cong Co. Mayo and Oughterard Co. Galway (4.5 miles from each) this special island is home to a number of ancient monastic ruins, some dating back to the 5th Century. In order of size Inchagoill measuring 104 acres is the fourth largest island in size. To-day Inchagoill is owned by the state and its national monuments are protected by "Duchas" in the Department of the Environment.

Sir Benjamin Lee Guinness purchased this Island as part of the Ashford Castle estate in 1852. At that time there were four families living on the Island and these families were tenants on this estate. Some family names included O' Sullivan's Kineavy's and Conway's. In older times there were as many as six families living on the Island with other names including Murphy's, Lydons, and Butlers. These families farmed 80 acres of land in the centre of the Island with 50 acres of high trees as shelter all around. By about 1935 there was only one inhabitant on the Island, a man called Thomas Nevin.





### **Cong Abbey & Monks Fishing House**



Cong Abbey, the ruins of which are in the centre of the village, was first built in the 12th century, burned in the early 13th and rebuilt between the 13th and 16th centuries.

From the abbey grounds, a footbridge spans the river, passing the monk's fishing house pictured above, probably built in the 15th or 16th century – fish would have been an important part of the monks' diet. This small house is built on a platform of stones over a small arch that creates a passage for water to flow under the floor. A trapdoor in the floor may have been used to allow a net to be cast into the river, and a fireplace kept the monks warm while they waited for their catch. It is said that a line was strung from the fishing house to the abbey kitchen, to alert the cooks when there were fish to be cooked.





### **Cross of Cong**



This magnificent piece of 12th century craftsmanship is regarded as one of the finest of its era. It is called the “Bacall Bui” (yellow crozier) and was commissioned by the king, Turlach O’ Connor and was made in Roscommon in 1123. It now lies in Cong. It has since been transferred to the National Museum in Dublin where it is kept with other national treasures.

### **Dry Canal**



Indeed in 1848 an attempt was made to join the two lakes by way of a canal whose main aim was to allow steamer traffic from Galway port through to Lough Mask and onto Lough Carra. Because of the porous nature of the limestone this was to become an engineering disaster because the bed of the Canal proved too porous and was unable to retain water. This artificial waterway elaborately finished with sluice gates, substantial locks of cut stone and arched bridges has since been now as the dry canal.

### **Pigeon Hole & Caves**



The Cong area (Counties Galway and Mayo) is a low-lying area with some spectacular karst development and where all of the drainage of the Lough Mask catchment discharges via underground routes.

Reaching the limestone pools deep inside Kelly cave, outside the County Mayo town of Cong, is more self-propelled and non-commercial. You have to pick up a key from the Quiet



Man Coffee Shop, in order to open the gate at the mouth of the cave.

Despite the modesty of Ireland's caving industry, potholing is an ancient and mysterious pastime. Cavers tell mythic stories of the two fairy trout still living in Pigeon Hole cave, also outside Cong. Another nearby cave is where centuries ago a madman stashed his victims' murdered bodies. Note that, with Ireland's prolific rainfall, caves can flood quickly and dangerously. The Speleological Union of Ireland can help provide guides or books and articles on caving techniques.

## **Activities In Cong**

### **Falconry**



Ashford's School of Falconry is the oldest established Falconry School in Ireland and offers you the chance to fly hawks around the beautiful castle grounds and woodlands during a private Hawk Walk.

### **Archery**





Enjoy this ancient sport played by kings and lords for centuries. All delegates can participate simultaneously as long as the participants are as tall as the bow.

### **Clay pigeon shooting**



The Ashford sporting clay range features targets that simulate the game typical of this region. Test your skill against the bolting rabbit, springing teal or wily woodcock

### **Horse ridding**



The Ashford Equestrian Centre is situated on the Ashford Estate. Rides can be enjoyed over the beautiful wooded countryside between the shores of Lough Corrib and Lough Mask and into the mountains of Connemara to the West.

### **Corrib Cruises**



Enjoy a voyage of discovery on Lough Corrib! The Isle of Inisfree is an 80 passenger, all-weather craft with a full bar service and toilet facilities on board. Chartered VIP arrival and private hire are available.

### **Kayaking**



Paddle out on to Lough Corrib where one will surrender to the magnificent peace and tranquillity of this beautiful location.

### **Water skiing & Water boarding**



Ashford Adventure offer the ultimate adrenaline-rush with Water-ski and Wakeboarding on Lough Corrib. Let our experienced instructors introduce you to this amazing sport!

### **Fishing**



Lough Corrib is one of the most famous fisheries in all of Ireland for wild brown trout and Atlantic salmon. Our Ghillie, Frank Costello, is an Orvis endorsed guide and is recognized as one of the most knowledgeable on Lough Corrib.

### **Golf**



This beautiful 9 hole 2996 yards par 35 parkland course, provides the perfect environment for golfers of all ages to hone their skills

**Please provide a description of the Tourism and Local Gastronomy Assets/destination with the following points:**

The tourism destination in regards to this application is Cong food Village, encompassing the village of Cong which includes a stretch of Lough Corrib, Cong Abbey, Ashford Castle, The Lodge at Ashford Castle.

#### **Tourism products available**

Accommodation: Cong village is the home a range of available accommodation from the iconic Ashford Castle which plays host to 80 bedrooms, to The Lodge at Ashford Castle with 50. In the heart of the village lies Ryan's Hotel with 12 bedrooms and Danaher's Hotel with the same. There are a number of B&B's also available.





Quiet Man: Cong Village and Ashford Castle played host to a large film crew and cast including members such as Maureen O'Hara and John Wayne in 1952. The film they were making is as popular today as it was then and is known worldwide, the Quiet Man. The Quiet Man museum is located in Cong and is run by local man and historian Gerry Collins. Quiet man tours are also available which includes sites such as the Dying man's house and Cohen's Bar.

Activities: Cong has a number of activities available to make the most of the beautiful surroundings such as mountain biking, clay pigeon shooting, Archery, horse riding, canoeing and kayaking. Cong is also home to the first School of Falconry in Ireland and a 9 hole Golf course based at Ashford Castle. Cong is lucky to be within Ireland's Lake district and is known to be an amazing fishing destination for Salmon and Brown Trout. It is possible to fish from the bank but most fish from small boats on the river and local Gillies are available such as Frank Costello who has been fishing on the Lake for over 30 years.

### **Geography of the location**

Cong Village is located between Mayo and Galway within Ireland's Lake district. Cong is actually an island surrounded by lakes and streams from two of Ireland's largest lakes, Lough Mask and Lough Corrib.

### **Accessibility and quality of standards in place**

The Lodge at Ashford Castle and much of the village of Cong itself is Wheel Chair assessable. Knock Airport is located 40 minutes from Cong. Bus routes are plentiful into Cong via Bus Eireann and the closest train station is Clare Morris, 40 minutes away.



Ashford Castle has won numerous awards for best hotel in Ireland and was recently named within the top 20 hotels in Europe.

The Lodge at Ashford Castle most recently has won Gold standard at the IASI Awards.

Gerry Collins has won awards for his Quiet man Tours

### **Ways in which the destination represents good food practice in Tourism**

Cong is home to a number of different food producers and suppliers who have joined the Cong Food Village initiative. All food producers source their ingredients as locally as they possible can. Foraging walks take place on the Grounds of Ashford Castle lead by Jonathan Keane, Head Chef at The Lodge at Ashford Castle. Cooking lessons have taken place in the local schools to help them learn about good food, healthy eating and the environment. Jonathan Keane is also Chairperson of the slow food in Mayo.

### **Promotion of destinations local and regional food offering to visitors**

Ashford Castle and The Lodge at Ashford Castle are largely promoted and an Estate with 5 different food offerings, through print media, radio and most recently a UTV Ireland campaign. Food destinations in Cong such as Ryan's, Danagher's, Lydon's Cohan's and the Hungry Monk are promoted through their own websites as well as the Cong Village website.

### **Promotion of destinations biodiversity and natural heritage**

Lord Ardilluan who once owned Ashford Castle built the forest area up to what it is today. He brought different tree samplings from all over the world and planted them in the forest in Cong making it one of the most diverse forests in Ireland. This forest is currently renovation to fell some of the old and damaged trees to make sure the forest is sustainable.

Mayo County Council has drafted a nature and wildlife plan for 2014-2017. It includes activities such as biodiversity training for the community of Cong, enhancing the walking trails with the Tidy Towns Committee and conducting a survey on Ferox Trout.

**Section 2: The tourism offers associated with Tourism and Local Gastronomy should be sustainable and comply with the least three of the following:**



**A) Be organised by the most relevant local stakeholders in the partnership**

The Cong Food Village members are made up of food suppliers and producers in Cong. Almost all businesses have a representative and it is chaired by Jonathan Keane (Head Chef at The Lodge at Ashford Castle). It was developed to try to extend our high season as much as possible, create a community that produces the freshest and best quality local food possible and create an environment of learning about food to anyone who wants to learn.

**B) Be an integral part of the local tourism strategy**

Ashford Estate is a known worldwide and it brings in tourists from all over the world and actively promotes Cong itself in most countries especially America. The Quiet man is also a huge draw to the area and sees thousands of visitors in the season.

**C) Be organised outside of the high tourism season**

Local food nights have been organized in some of the producer's establishments in February and March. The Hungry monk was the first night and they did a traditional Irish night which sold out on a Monday night.

**D) Show an important impact of the local community**

Ashford Estate employs over 150 staff members most of which are from the local area. The Lodge at Ashford Castle often includes an activity from the village into their bedroom packages such as the quiet man tour, archery, Bike tours to encourage guests into the village. The Quiet man Tour and Museum actively encourage their guests into the nearby cafes such as Puddle duck's and the Hungry Monk after their tours.

**Section 3: Please comment of how the destination, in partnership with the authorities responsible for the management of the destination and all those involved in tourism locally, manages its own tourism product in such a way as to ensure its social, cultural and environmental sustainability.**

The aim of the Food Cong Village was not solely based on increasing Tourism in the area, although obviously important. The main aim was to enhance what was already an amazing destination for good, fresh, local food in Ireland and to build and teach the community as a whole about good food and where it comes from. The food Village has started a number of initiatives so far including Foraging walks through the forest, led by Jonathan Keane; he leads locals through the forest area to the hot spots where mushrooms and herbs can be found growing wild. We have also had some cookery skills classes with some of the children from Cong School to teach them the basics in the kitchen. Outings are planned to the local farmers to show the children where the food comes from and how easy it is to cook for





yourself. We are also in the process along with Mayo County council of setting up and month Market in the village, where suppliers and set up stalls to sell and educate about their produce. A BBQ is planned on Inchoigoill for the summer for the local community to enjoy, local farmers and butchers are supplying the meat and local historian Pat Luskin will take us through the history of the island. We also have monthly events, each month it is a different producers in the group. It is to encourage trade on what would otherwise be a slow day for that business but everything has to be sourced from within the group of suppliers. Future events included a Cong Food Village day during the Cong Festival in October.

**Section 4: Please provide a description of the destination referencing at least two for the following points:**

**C) Greater Financial sustainability for the area as a result of tourism and local gastronomy**

The Cong Food Village's long term aim is to draw in more and more tourists' year on year and also extend the high season by organising events for what would normally be perceived as low season. In conjunction with the Annual Cong Festival we are having a food day this year to promote and educate locals and even people further afield on what Cong has to offer. Michael Ryan of Ryan's Hotel currently has planning permission for a Brewery in Cong which will add so much to the village. Michael has been Brewing Beer for 20 years and will be Brewing Connemara Pale Ale in Cong very soon. Cohen's Bar, made famous by the quiet man has now been turned into a fantastic gastro pub which again is another draw for fans of the film. Member of Cong food village as a whole have also been in contact with their suppliers, such as bread, milk etc. to try to bargain down the unit price for everyone involved with their joint buying power. Smaller members are now availing on the better prices with the Village working together and we hope to get more on board.

**D) Enhancement of the profile of the area as a result of tourism and local gastronomy**

The Profile of Cong has always been mainly linked to the Quiet Man and Ashford Castle. We aim to put Cong on the map for great produce and great food. The Cong Food Village has set up a Facebook page, we are currently in talks to get a Website up and running and we have brochures and flyers with a schedule of event on the way out. We will be taking part in The Connaught Spring Show in May where we will have a section of the arena dedicated to Cong Food Village where all the suppliers and producers in the group will sell their produce. Each supplier or producer will also do a small cookery demonstration to the crowd. This food show is visited by thousands of people annually and will help us greatly to get our message out there.



## **SCHEDULE OF PAST AND FUTURE EVENTS**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>
<b>March</b>	A Taste of Cong	The Hungry Monk	The Hungry Monk worked with local producers to create a back to basics menu such as Fish & Chips served in Cong Craft Beer Batter. Sold Out.
<b>10<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Launch of Spring Menu & First Birthday Celebration	Puddleducks	Puddleducks will be showcasing a spring menu with guest chefs Siobhan Ryan & Sheila O'Malley, chefs from Echoes, Cong's very first Restaurant. Sold Out
<b>27<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Cooking class & tour of Ashford & The Lodge at Ashford Kitchens.	The Lodge at Ashford Castle & Ashford Castle	5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> Class of Cong National School were asked to design a logo for Cong Food Village. The winner will be announced on the 27 <sup>th</sup> of April in the Lodge at Ashford Castle. The winner will have the honour of being Head Chef for the day. The school children will take



			part in a cookery class, tour of both Kitchens & poly tunnels finished with a forage walk in Kinlough woods.
<b>17<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Cong Food Village In association with Connacht Spring Show Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> May	Ballinrobe Race Track	Cong food village members showcasing, offering a taste of Cong. Various Cooking demonstrations from Head Chef, Jonathan Keane of the Lodge at Ashford Castle & Friends. Cooking Spring Lamb supplied by Kelly's Butchers.
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> June</b>	St. Johns Night Celebration Pig on a Spit	Ryan's Hotel Cong & Ryan's Food Emporium.	A pig from Keeley Cleshams Farm, In Cong will be roasted and served in celebration in St. Johns Night. BBQ for 100 guests
<b>July`23<sup>rd</sup></b>	A Taste of Pat Cohan's	Pat Cohan's Restaurant	Cong's newest Restaurant will be showcasing recipes that have been handed down through McGrath generations. Sharon McGrath trained in world famous Ballymaloe Cookery School,
<b>August</b>	Cong Food Village Farmers Market	The Lane in Cong Village	The first market since 1648 will take place on the first Sunday in August. Each Cong Food Village member will have a stand showcasing a taste of Cong. Local food producers will be selling their products. Fruit & Veg, eggs, sea salt, cheese making, live poultry & much more
<b>September</b>	A Taste of Lydons	Lydons Hotel	Deirdre Lydon
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> October</b>	Cong Food Village in association with Cong Festival	Cong Festival Marquee in Cong Village. Each food outlet will also be offering a taste of Cong & selling their food products to visitors	Cong, Village Members will be setting up a marquee in Cong Village, cooking demos throughout the day, offering visitors a taste from each business. Local suppliers will also be showcasing their products, Organic fresh fruit & vegetables, Achill Sea Salt, Cong Craft Beer, Cornamona Smoke House, Keeley Cleshams Raw Milk Ice cream.
<b>November</b>			
<b>11<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Cong Food Village Christmas Party Night	The Lodge at Ashford Castle	Jonathan Keane will be showcasing his festive menu. Tickets €55.00 per person.

<b>Project Type</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Marketing</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>Comments</b>
MKTG	1	Design of Logo	Completed	Logo was designed by Cong National School
MKTG	1	Website & Design	In progress	Create a website for Cong Food Village
MKTG	2	Banners	Completed	2 banners for Spring Show, Farmers Market & Cong Festival
MKTG	2	Pull Ups	Completed	2 pull ups for Spring Show, Farmers Market & Cong Festival
MKTG	1	Flyer for Connacht Spring	Completed	Create 1000 flyers to promote Cong



		Show		Food Village at the Connacht Spring Show.
MKTG	1	Cong Food Village Maps.	June 2016	Cong Food Village Maps. 2 large maps to be placed each side of the village, showcasing places to eat & attractions & Cong Festival
MKTG	1	Cong Food Village Brochure in association with Cong Festival	In progress	Brochure to be created for Cong Food village and Festival which takes place October Bank Holiday weekend
MKTG	1	Cong Food Village Brochure	June 2016	A brochure promoting Cong Food Village, this is to be placed in tourist offices & for promotional events
MKTG	1	Facebook	Done	This is used to promote events
MKTG	1	Twiter	Done	Account is in progress
MKTG	1	Cong Food Village launch	Completed	Cong Food Village & Food Village Logo to be launched. Invite local press
MKTG	1	Local Press	On going	Advertising of Farmers market, Cong Food Village Festival