



Kerry Social Farming Newsletter

11th Edition March 2021

Resuming post Covid-19 closures.....again!!

Thankfully our communities in Kerry have worked hard at following the covid-19 guidelines and we are now in a very good position to benefit from this good work. At Kerry Social Farming, Evelyn and Rena are working with our service providers to get social farming resumed for some participants this month. It has been a long 2 months plus since social farming has been operating and we are keen to get some social farming action for our participants again coming into the exciting period of growth and new beginnings that is Springtime.



It is unfortunate that for many of you, our host farmers and participants, this still may not be possible for a while. Many of you have vulnerable people in your lives that you must prioritise at the moment – we look forward to welcoming you all back when the time is right throughout the year ahead.



Lots of activities await our social farming participants which keep everyone on the farms busy. New lambs and calves will be arriving on lots of farms over the next few weeks and months. Some host farmers in this lambing and calving season will be busy checking sheep and lambs at all hours of the days and nights. Playing the role of a midwife in delivering many new-borns as well as a carer in feeding and minding the new moms and babies to ensure everyone is well fed and looked after!

There will be lots of growth over these months, gardens set, tunnels filled and seedlings sprouting to fill our cupboards with fruit and vegetables over the coming year!

We wish you all a successful 2021 season and we look forward to seeing and hearing about all the additions and work on all the farms.

International Women's Day 8th March 2021

Some of our Women Host Farmers who featured in the Kerryman on 3rd March



KERRY SOCIAL FARMING
WORKING TOGETHER!

Women on the Land 2021

Kerry Social Farming is delighted to acknowledge and celebrate women in farming this international Women's Day 2021. In Kerry we are seeing really exciting developments on farms in terms of diversification, small startup enterprises and biodiversity projects. Kerry social farming is benefiting from this through having a wide range of host farms, all providing a unique farm business and farm experience. Host farmers, many of whom are women, open their farm business and share their expertise with participants. Here are some of our women host farmers who support social farming through their own businesses.



Maura Sheehy from 'Maura's Cottage Flowers' has a family run business which nurtured from the seed of an idea and a love of gardening. It was established in its Tralee base in The Spa in 2015 and is now known throughout the county. Maura's home grown business has a reputation for quality, freshness, personal service and high standards. Contact details: Facebook, [maurascottageflowers](#) and 087 0612622



Breeda O Sullivan and her husband Pat have a suckler and sheep farm in Glencar and Kenmare. Breeda is social farming for the last 4 years and is a great role model for her participant, working on the farm and taking care of the animals.



Rena Blake runs The Barna Way an eco-social, organic farm with her partner Lisa just outside Ballybunion. Their farm includes native woodland, wildflower meadows and horticulture. Rena co-founded the very successful Ballybunion Community Market with Billy Jo O'Connor where they sell their products in the summer months. Details: facebook.thebarnaway and 086 1618869



Mary Healy, also in Ballyduff, has been involved in Kerry Social Farming for a number of years. Mary has a dairy and suckler farm and is well known by all for her love of animals.



Liz O Halloran and her husband John relocated in 2013 back to John's native home place, Ballyduff, from a busy city life of London. Having the freedom to be creative and the time to be thoughtful grew a new business opportunity. On their smallholding they grow a variety of organic vegetables and flowers which are sold at farm stand at the farm. Liz has also developed a range of Irish skincare products that incorporate organic flowers, medicinal herbs and locally harvested seaweed. Contact details: ionorganics2019@gmail.com and 087 4561217



Irene Brune started her own horticultural business in 2019. Most of Irene's working life has been as a social carer or instructor in therapeutic gardening and farming. These days there are only a few possibilities for people with different abilities to access occupation, but Kerry Social Farming is one of them. With a desire to support the environment, Irene grows vegetables organically in her garden outside Cahersveen and offers them for sale on a stall at the roadside for some months during the year and delivers a small number of vegetables boxes. For Irene the most significant aspect of her work is that on different day's people with different abilities help her in the garden.



In Castleisland **Joan Brosnan** has a wealth of knowledge in terms of growing and preserving food. She supports Kerry Social Farming through the Castleisland Community Garden.



Leagh Farm is run by Billy Jo O'Connor with her family in Ballyduff, North Kerry. Billy Jo grows without chemicals on a small plot and offers seasonal vegetables and fruit in a vegetable box scheme. Leagh Farm started in 2019 and has expanded slowly, currently Leagh farm is offering a 'doorstep delivery' service, where the veg box is dropped at your door and contact is minimal. Contact details: Facebook page (Leagh Farm), Instagram @leagh_farm, email: leaghtfarm@gmail.com

For more information on Kerry Social Farming contact our Social Farming Facilitators
 South Kerry Evelyn O Connell T: 066 9472724 | Email: eoconnell@skfp.net • North Kerry Rena Blake T: 087 1039355 | Email: renablake@newkd.ie

Stephen Brosnan, social farming participant

Stephen is staying in touch with nature while in lockdown and enjoying the sights and countryside around Killarney! There is lots for him to see within his locality as Stephen is lucky enough to live very close to Killarney National Park and Kilcummin Community Park.



Stephen is also a great GAA supporter with his club Dr. Crokes and with Kerry.

No doubt he will be delighted when GAA activity gets up and running again.



An interesting read for anyone looking for a good book.....

Diary of a Young Naturalist by Dara McNulty



'An extraordinary voice and vision' Robert Macfarlane

'One of the most talented and passionate writers of our era' Steve Silberman

Diary of a Young Naturalist chronicles the turning of 15-year-old Dara McNulty's world. From spring and through a year in his home patch in Northern Ireland, Dara spent the seasons writing. These vivid, evocative and moving diary entries about his connection to wildlife and the way he sees the world are raw in their telling. *Diary of a Young Naturalist* portrays Dara's intense connection to the natural world, and his perspective as a teenager juggling exams and friendships alongside a life of campaigning.

"I was diagnosed with Asperger's/autism aged five ... By age seven I knew I was very different, I had got used to the isolation, my inability to break through into the world of talking about football or Minecraft was not tolerated. Then came the bullying. Nature became so much more than an escape; it became a life-support system."



Gardening calendar for March ☺

The many benefits of gardening as Social Farming active

By using our gardening has a Social Farming active it allows us great scope to contact with our participants each week as gardening is a hands on activity, its multiple sensory and so many benefits. We all move a little slower in the garden, which allows time for chatting. Because gardening is so seasonable we see the fruits of the labour each week which is very satisfying and allows continuity and has edible rewards. There's no better place to relax or become one with nature than in a garden.



The start of March is your last chance to prune apple tree and blackcurrants, blueberries, & raspberries this year. Enjoy, plant something different this year just for FUN ☺

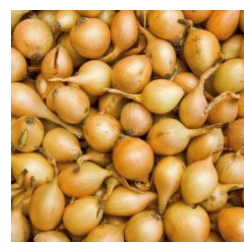
Outdoors in March

1. Plant garlic early this month
2. Later, start sowing seeds directly out into drills, you can sow root crops such as parsnips, carrots, beet, radish and turnips directly into the soil
3. Prepare drills and sow early potatoes such as Sharps Express or Collen. Ensure to add a good helping of farmyard manure and water in well
4. It's always best to wait until you are sure frost has passed. People try to sow vegetables on St. Patrick's weekend every year, but if conditions don't suit it is better to leave it for a week or so. You will find that the vegetables will soon catch up in finer weather
5. Plant out brassicas & onion transplants once large enough to handle. You can also plant onion sets
6. Cover rhubarb for forcing



In the Tunnel in March

1. You can still start your tomato seeds at the start of the month
2. Open greenhouse door on sunny days to ventilate
3. Increase watering as the month goes by
4. Continue to sow salads such as lettuce, strawberry runners, french beans & peas, cucumbers, peppers and chillies



Rebecca O Brien, social farming participant

Rebecca has been in our social farming team for just over 1 year! Rebecca is always keen to be on the farm helping out Irene Brune! She brings another helper with her in Tracy Dolders, (Kerry Parents & Friends Association) so an abundance of work gets done!

“We are looking forward to go to Irene’s garden every Thursday, taking the fancy pink wellies with us, helping Irene with her endless tasks of feeding birds, planting seeds, water the plants, shredder branches, clipping, weeding, driving the wheelbarrow, composting, collecting the veg and filling the vegetable stall and many more things, not to forget our so important coffee break in the poly tunnel or outside.

Social farming is the best program available to us offering work, purpose, achievement and fun combined, getting all the other benefits Mother Nature has to offer as well, fresh air, sunshine, organic vegetables and fruits (if we’re doing a good job) all worth it!”. Feedback from Tracy Dolders

Here are the words Rebecca associates with social farming and Irene’s farm.....



January & February 2021 by Breeda O Sullivan, social farming participant

January has been a very busy month for me. I returned to my centre 5 days a week and love meeting the others in my group. I love all the classes I do through zoom with the ETB - I also get to talk to all my friends through zoom.

I was very disappointed when social farming had to stop because of level 5. I am looking forward to seeing Breeda and Pat soon. In the meantime I enjoy WhatsApp calls with Breeda. She will show me all the new born lambs and calves when they arrive.

February has got off to an exciting start for me and my friends in Killorglin. After 4 years we are finally moving to our new centre in the Fairfield. I hate the packing but am looking forward to our cosy new centre. We will have a big party and invite all of you as soon as it is safe to do so!



Happy St. Patricks Day from KSF

KSF NOTICE BOARD



New and coming this week with KSF

Growing in a Polytunnel

Video tutorial with Ian McGregor - this will be posted on our Kerry Social Farming webpage and Facebook. You will find many useful growing tips on how best to use tunnels, crop rotation and year round planting etc.

We welcome your input into this newsletter or the noticeboard section, if you would like to write or share something please get in touch with us; Rena, renablake@newkd.ie Evelyn, eoconnell@skdp.net and Julie jbrosnan@skdp.net .

If you've changed your contact details recently for example, your email or postal address, please let us know so we can make sure the Newsletter gets to you each month. If you know of someone else who'd like to get a copy by post or email, just let us know the details.

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