



Kerry Social Farming Newsletter

Issue 5 October 2020

Hello and welcome to our 5th newsletter. We hope you are all still enjoying these updates, we hope to get around to having a piece from all of our host farmers and participants in time to share out and hear all the experiences of social farming in Kerry. We have a wide variety of pieces for you here from creative projects, a parent's view of seeing her son experience social farming, a gathering of some of our host farmers as well as some information on our training links with FARCURA and UCC.

Kerry Social Farming funding renewed for 2021

We are delighted to share with you that Kerry Social Farming has secured another year of funding from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) for 2021. The staff of Kerry Social Farming compiled a report for the DAFM in July 2020 detailing all of the great work that had been completed in the previous 12 months by all those involved in social farming; host farmers, participants, service providers and staff, and KSF staff. The continued growth of KSF was clearly visible and thanks to the continued work from all involved, funding has been secured for 2021. Thank you all for your contributions to social farming.

FARCURA

Kerry Social Farming through SKDP is part of the Farcura project. The Farcura website www.farcura.eu is well worth a visit and has all the details about the project. The ultimate aim of Farcura is to research and create an online training programme for those involved in social farming in Europe, whether they are farmers, social care providers, health care providers, government agencies or other groups. The programme will be designed to enhance their ability to deliver social farming in whatever context it happens in their country. Many of the events and site visits which were planned cannot go ahead now due to COVID-19 restrictions across Europe. But the work of the project continues and all meetings are being held on-line so partners are maintaining their links in that way.



The Summary Report titled 'State of the Art on Innovative Models of Social Farming' which describes social farming practices in Germany, Ireland, Poland and Slovenia has been finalised and can now be read on the website under the heading **Results** <https://farcura.eu/summary-report>.

The Case Studies document on social farms across Europe is also under that heading. These case studies feature four Irish Social Farms, including Eamon Horgan's farm at Kilgarvan which is part of Kerry Social Farming. You can access the Case Studies here <https://farcura.eu/case-studies>

Stephen Faley and Seamus McCarthy at Mary Healy's farm, Ballyduff



Stephen and Seamus have been delighted to start back social farming with Mary. They have been busy helping with lots of jobs around the farm and garden and preparing the milk churns for display for the garden. Stephen and Seamus love having the craic with Mary and her family on the farm. They are managing well with the new guidelines that Covid has brought to social farming, social distancing, having their tea break outside.....they are well looked after by the host farm family!

Mary says she is “delighted to have them back on the farm” she likes to keep them busy and cleaning out the sheds is their favourite job!! ☺

Social farming – a parent's view – by Kathleen Faley

Social Farming is a great initiative for adults with intellectual disabilities. It provides both the opportunity and the encouragement to bring out skills and abilities that may otherwise be left undiscovered.

My son, Stephen looks forward to going to his Social Farming host, Mary Healy each week on Thursdays from 11.00am – 1.00pm. Mary has plenty varied tasks ready for him to do and to help out with. The outdoor and practical hands on nature of Social Farming suits Stephen as he enjoys doing practical farming tasks as well as other activities. Social Farming is beneficial for Stephen because it gives him a great sense of achievement and job satisfaction when he completes a task well.

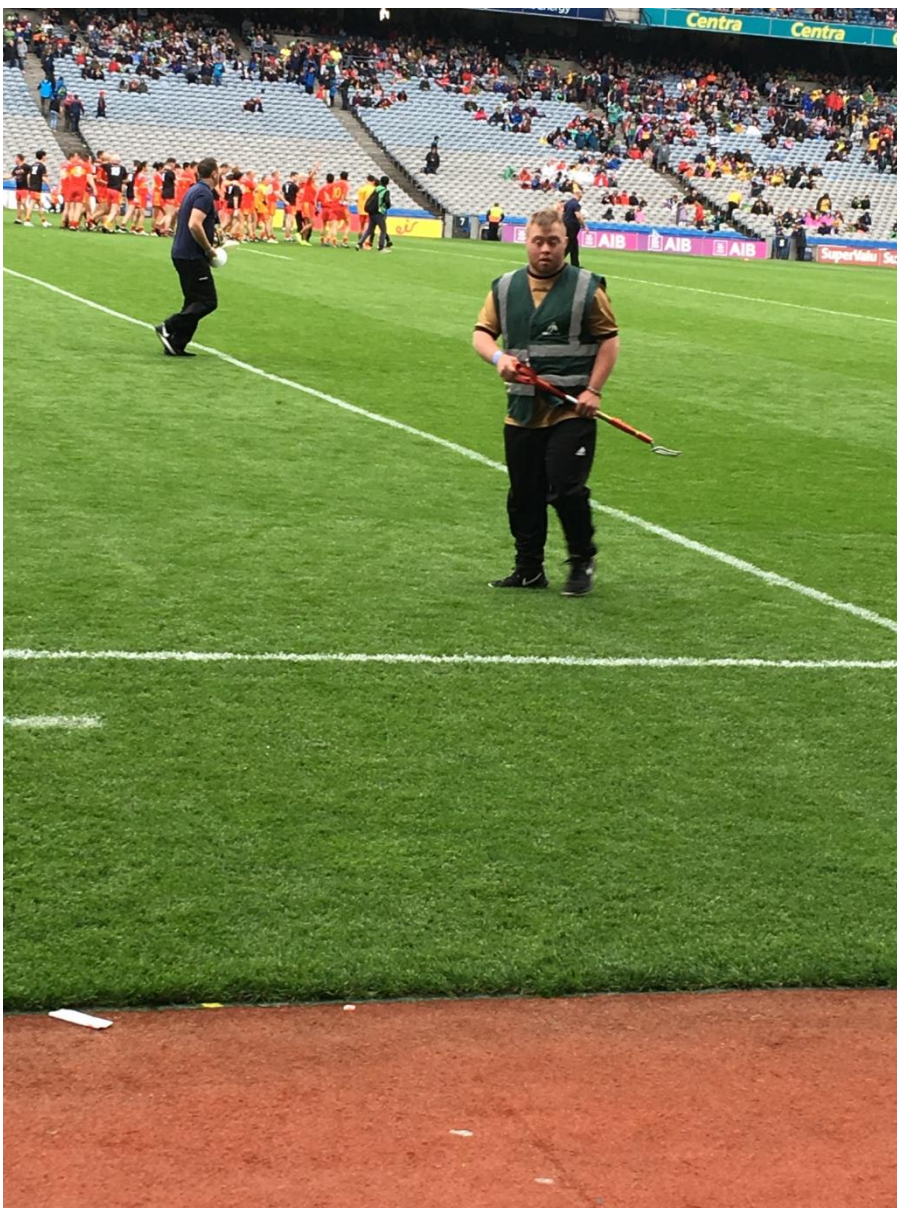
Social Farming as its name suggests has the social aspect of inclusion in the community as an important factor.



Interaction with the host farmer and other workers on the farm encourages teamwork along the Meitheal idea of all working together doing their own particular tasks as a valuable contribution. The outdoor life and activity on the farm can be beneficial for both mental and physical health.

Stephen has previous knowledge of the farming routine as he used to feed the calves with his Nan at his uncle's farm next door. He knows about cows being milked and new calves being born in Spring-time, cutting and baling hay and silage. Stephen knows that keeping a close eye on the weather is important for farmers and he uses this skill in regard to his Social Farming.

Stephen's Social Farming host, Mary feeds him well after he has completed his Social Farming tasks each week as she knows he has a countryman's appetite. Overall Stephen likes going to his Social Farm each week and he prepares his farming outfit the night before in readiness for his journey there the following morning.



Stephen is pictured on the previous page with his nephew Noah and above Stephen is pictured on work experience in Croke Park GAA Stadium 2019 Donegal V Kerry, Result = A Draw

UCC course – A message from Dr. Joan Cronin



I am very glad to have been asked to contribute to the most recent edition of the *Kerry Social Farming Newsletter*, and am delighted to announce that the *Certificate in Practice Support in Social Farming* has recently commenced. With close on twenty students registered for the 2020/ 2021 academic year from counties Kerry and Cork, our (virtual) journey began on Monday September 28th, and we are in the midst of exploring the module entitled, *Disability Models, Education and Work*.

The year ahead will no doubt be a challenge for staff and students alike, given the persistence of the Covid 19 pandemic. In response, all lectures and tutorials will be online for the current academic term, in line with Government and UCC regulations, however, I am confident that together we can make this a very enjoyable, informative and worthwhile journey.

Before I conclude, I wish to make special mention to my dear colleagues who have been a great support during these past months; Belinda Gascoigne, Joe McCrohan, Evelyn O'Connell and Rena Blake, and to our current cohort of students, for their dedication and enthusiasm for the course.

With every good wish to you all, *Dr. Joan Cronin, Course Coordinator, ACE @ UCC*

Creative mosaic activities in Kerry

During the lockdown there wasn't much to do if you didn't have the possibility to do much outside. Of course, all farmers have a lot to do outside, but the participants were at home and couldn't wait to come back to their farms. I had a lot to do in the garden but at the same time I could join courses through webinars. Where I usually would have had to travel and maybe even spend a night somewhere, I now could join classes from home. Though it didn't make up for the social meetings, tea and coffee you would have had in a classroom.

This gave me the idea of trying to also offer some activities for you that couldn't attend your daily activities any longer. I designed some online activities as videos on YouTube. In the first video I encouraged to collect bottle tops as a preparation for an art activity some weeks later. My idea was to bring individual art pieces together as a mosaic in the end. The whole project was supported by SKDP through Éadaoin Moynihan and funded by the SICAP Programme.



KPFA's outreach centre in Cahersiveen got very busy with the online activities. Rebecca O'Brien that comes every Thursday to my place as a participant of the social farming created the first art piece.



Ger O'Sullivan followed with the second piece. He also has applied to become a participant for social farming. I am looking forward to meeting him in the farming world.

Anybody that still wants to be creative with bottle tops can design a picture in a 20cm x 20cm square on a piece of paper or cardboard. Once I have a few more artworks together I will add them together to a mosaic and exhibit them. You can contact Evelyn if you are interested in contributing to the art project. Enjoy the colourful autumn, Irene Brune.



Farm walk Sept 2020

@ Ian McGrigors, Gortbrack



Due to Covid 19, 2020 has been an unusual year for Kerry Social Farming and we had to suspend a lot of activities that were planned for the year. It is great to be able to report that the first farm walk of the year took place last month.

This was a great morning, where our North Kerry Host farmers all met up at Gortbrack Organic Farm on Monday 21st September. Tea/coffee and scones were provided by Ian in a large tunnel area at the start of walk so everyone got a chance to catch up and chat before the walk began. Our group consisted of 15 people in total.

Gortbrack Farm, located 5 miles outside Tralee town was set up by Eileen Carroll and Ian McGrigor in 1991. Back then it was a neglected 10 acre strip with most of the land run over with rushes. This is the probable origin of its name 'gort' meaning 'field' and 'breac' meaning 'speckled'. With many willing hands it has developed into a comprehensive certified organic smallholding.

Ian was our host for the morning and gave us all a guided walk of Gortbrack Farm. Weather-wise we were so lucky with the most bright and sunny autumn morning this along with Ian's wealth of knowledge around organic, sustainable farming made it a very enjoyable morning. Ian is highly regarded for his vast knowledge and teaching experience on these subjects, and he practices what he preaches; the biodiversity of Gortbrack is truly amazing.

It was a very informative, educational and fun morning. Lots of questions were asked and answered along the way. I really feel everyone got something from the morning.

Over all our Farm Walk was a great success allowing our small group to meet up in a social setting and to enjoy the outdoors. We also got the opportunity to welcome some of KSF newest host farmers who attended on the day. Planning has already begun for our next host farm walk.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all our Host Farmers who took the morning off and attended the walk. I know your time is precious and farm work is never done so thanks again

All the best

Rena

<https://gortbrackorganicfarm.com/online/>



Bronagh's Social Farming Diary

Kerry Social Farming

My name is Bronagh Enright

I go social farming every Friday morning to the beautiful Barna Farm in Ballybohion. Rena and Lisa run this beautiful farm with Kerry the dog and ginger the cat.

My mom drive me to barnafarming every Friday work begins.

My first job the day is to collect the egg in the hen house and check another places he might lay their egg. We go to the tunnels check if their is weeding to be done or strawberries to be picked. Now its time for a break with Antoinette and John and Rena. Some times we go to the beach to collect seaweed for to fertiliser the tunnels its an organic fertiliser. My last job is to pick cooking apple for mom from Bronagh Enright

If you'd like to write or share something in our Newsletter, you can contact our facilitators Rena, renablake@newkd.ie Evelyn, eoconnell@skdp.net and Julie our administrator jbroshnan@skdp.net.

Visit our website www.kerrysocialfarming.ie, follow us on Twitter @KerrySocialFarm or find us on Facebook!