



# Kerry Social Farming



Ger O'Sullivan, Earl Leahy and Tim O'Sullivan cleaning up after building a wall on Ger O'Sullivan's Farm in Laharn outside Cahirciveen.



Bringing in the cattle for winter at Ger O'Sullivan's Farm in Laharn outside Cahirciveen. L/R Front Earl Leahy and Ger O'Sullivan with Tim O'Sullivan in background.

## 'You instinctively know that you're doing something right...'

TO be honest, we didn't know that much about Social Farming at the time we started. It was explained to us and after Mary Anne and I discussed it, we said we would give it a go. Honestly and truly, we are delighted that we did get involved.

We have a wonderful participant named Earl and he loves it and we have a brilliant facilitator in Irene Kavanagh. She is the driving force behind

social farming in Kerry.

It is a voluntary model which is important as you can't place a value on helping wonderful people. The bond that's built up is very strong. Earl is a proud man and as part of his job he likes to sign the dockets and bring the cheque up to the vet.

Earl's confidence has improved leaps and bounds since he started with us. Social farming

is something that makes us feel very happy and a sense of pride in seeing Earl doing well. With Social Farming you instinctively know you're doing something right. It makes you look at life in a different way.

I had a cow calving one day and Earl was there beside it holding the tray for the vet. He was delighted. I would hope more farmers would get involved. We believe in catering for their abilities

rather than talk about their disabilities. All the neighbours get on with Earl also and we have great fun. Farmers should give it a try.

Gerald & Mary Anne O'Sullivan  
Cahersiveen

## Farmers supporting their local communities



Working on Helen O'Mahony's Farm Lissenora, Castle Island, Helen O'Mahony, Shane Savage, Anthony O'Carroll and John Gleeson.

## 'The benefit to you and the participant will soon become obvious...'

IN or around 7 years ago I met Joe McCrohan at an IFA meeting and he introduced me to Kerry Social Farming. Even though I was very impressed with Joe's story I didn't feel I was in a position to have a person with a disability on my farm at this time.

I had assumed it would be too much of a responsibility, this was the mistake I made. Irene Kavanagh our Facilitator arrived, sorted all the paper work and we now enjoy having Michael on the farm every Thursday. Anthony and Shane come with John their support worker on Mondays. I can honestly say in hindsight that I wish I had listened to Joe initially.

My participants love being involved on the farm as we have a machinery business and they enjoy plenty social activity throughout the day. We also include some social days to the garden centre or maybe shopping, lunch or visiting the local marts. The men get great satisfaction and enjoy the work experience. It gives them a feeling of responsibility, ownership, commitment and accomplishment.

I and their care workers have seen an enormous improvement in their self confidence since joining Social Farming. Their parents are so grateful to us farmers for helping their children to live normal daily lives in the midst

of our families. It gives me great joy to help these people and take them out of institutional settings and we look forward to seeing them every week. I can certainly say they have become part of our family. If for some reason it doesn't suit a farmer on a particular week the service providers are always a huge backup. Since joining us we realise the abilities of these men and women.

Kerry Social Farming spreads happiness among people less fortunate than ourselves and to be outdoors is a way of exploring a personal ability. We have 33 participants in Kerry with just as many on a waiting list which is closed at the

moment until we get more farmers involved. So I reach out to you fellow farmers to consider joining us at an open day or contacting us by phone my number is 087 2461714. We have farmers from Ballybunion, Ballyduff, Tralee Castle Island, Cahersiveen, Killorglin and we would only be too delighted to have you on board with us. So don't delay make the call and get informed and see it for yourself. The benefits to you and the participants are enormous even if you have a busy life it's still possible to include someone in it. Where there's a will there's a way.

Helen O'Mahony