



Kerry Social Farming



Geraldine Egan care worker, Kevin McNamara participant, Aoife McCarthy care worker, Donal McCarthy participant and Ian McGrigor Gortbrack Organic Farm, Ballyseedy, Tralee.

Everyone benefits from the shared experience...

WE'VE run a small environmental education centre with a farm for the last 30 years. We were more or less Social Farming before it existed as we would have worked with people from St John of Gods.

We grow and supply our own vegetables, so when the participants come to us we design jobs to suit them and it's the feeling of contributing that is nice for them.

It's about variation and the participants getting the most out of Social Farming in the open air - and getting their hands dirty - they enjoy it. I've noticed the sense of belonging the participants get from it all, the sense of group work and getting to know the place.

Eileen and I enjoy the contribution Social Farming brings. I do a lot of other work with psychiatric groups around the county as well

and, psychologically, gardening is a really good thing for us all to do. We enjoy people coming to the farm and everyone benefits from the shared experience, we figure out the jobs they like. The Social Farming model also works with farmers to ensure they are prepared to cater for the participants.

Even though I would be out teaching most of the time, Social Farming is a great way of com-

bating rural isolation. I think for a lot of farmers they are isolated and Social Farming really leaves you with a warm feeling. The feel-good factor is the main thing.



Ian McGrigor, Gortbrack Organic Farm, Ballyseedy, Tralee.

Ian McGrigor & Eileen Carroll, Gortbrack Organic Farm, Ballyseedy



Farmers supporting their local communities



Vincent Lache with Patricia, Daniel, Anthony and Louise Kelliher on the Kelliher farm, Knocknagowna, Faha, Killarney.

'It's made us appreciate our surroundings, the farm and nature...'

I FIRST saw an article in the local paper about five years ago that they were looking for people to take part in Kerry Social Farming. We were very interested in it as we wanted to give something back to society.

I wrote a letter to the South Kerry Development Partnership and they visited us and we struck up a partnership. We look forward to every Tuesday when Vincent comes to us. He absolutely loves it and is learning something new every week. It's very peaceful where we are and I think the open space and working with animals is what he loves most.

Vincent is hands on and he likes helping Anthony when moving and vaccinating cattle, while fixing fencing and cutting silage are other

things that he enjoys. We grow vegetables too and Vincent knows a lot about vegetables, he teaches us as well. Our children are around during the holiday time and they benefit from it. I think it's important for them to see the positive side a service like this can have on someone's life.

Since Vincent has started coming to us he has made us appreciate our surroundings more, the farm, the view and nature. We have become more aware of how important it is to help a person's mental health and wellbeing and how being on a farm assists this. Vincent really loves it and the great thing about Kerry Social Farming is that someone's disability becomes less of an issue the more they take part.

Patricia & Anthony Kelliher, Killarney



KCC is a proud supporter of Kerry Social Farming and is represented on the Working Group

- The Kerry Social Farming Project addresses many of the social inclusion objectives of the Kerry LECP which include:
- The provision of appropriate needs-based social and community infrastructure
- Creating an environment where people with disabilities can participate in their communities with equal rights to live life to their full potential
- Providing education opportunities through the concept of lifelong learning for all
- Building community pride and participation
- KCC works in partnership with the local development companies; service providers; farmers; participants and education sector under the guidance of the Kerry LGDC in delivering the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme 2018 - 2022 (SICAP)
- SICAP is funded by the Irish Government through the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and co-funded by the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employment, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020.
- The 'Certificate in Care & Social Farming Practice' Training course with UCC provided through the Skellig Centre for Research & Innovation (Skellig CRI) has been developed as a training programme for the social farming participants
- The Skellig CRI Centre has been developed by KCC in partnership with UCC & SICAP and supported by funding from the Town & Village Renewal Programme under the DRCD