



Kerry Social Farming



Kerry Social Farming Contact Details

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Irene Kavanagh Kerry Social Farming with Ryan O'Sullivan Farmer Dessie Cronin and Mary Lucey Sheehan Support Worker on Dessy's farm at Kinard East, Ballinskelligs.

'I would encourage all farmers just to give it a try...'

MY son David has special needs and I've been involved in the Kerry Social Farming Working Group from day one. Both as a parent and a social farmer I'm in a good position to see the benefits it can bring for people.

Many people will say social farming is about getting out doors, but it's more than that. It's a different experience and the whole ethos of

Social Farming is that it is hands on. I have two participants and it gives them an outlet they wouldn't normally have. And even though they are non-verbal you still know that they are enjoying it.

I get great satisfaction from it and seeing them advance is special. One of my participants started out being totally afraid of animals yet

last year he was feeding a pony. You can see little improvements that might be small to someone else but are massive to the individuals. These are big leaps for people with special needs. There is a strong social side to it too with outings and walks.

It's only for a couple hours a week and the sense of satisfaction you get out of it is huge. I would encourage all farmers just to give it a try.

Even from a purely practical point of view social farming makes you keep the farm tidy and in order. This is a positive in itself. It's well worth giving it a go.

Dessie Cronin
Ballinskelligs

Farmers supporting their local communities



Mags O'Donoghue with farmer Eamon Horgan, Kilbanow, Kilgarvan.

'Participants have become part of our families ... that's the success of it'

I GOT involved in Kerry Social Farming when I read a piece in The Kerryman newspaper a few years ago and it's hard to believe what was a small article has today turned into a full supplement on Social Farming. This is proof that what we're doing is working and I would urge more farmers to get involved. I just knew this was a good project from the moment I heard about it.

I have two participants at the moment, Mags

and Tim, and one of the big things Social Farming is doing for people is building confidence and ability. If there is one thing I feel very pleased about is that we're offering a service to places like St John of God and Kerry Parents & Friends. Our farms are places where participants can come and enjoy themselves.

The host farmers in Kerry have put their heart and soul into Kerry Social Farming and that's the

seed of this success. The difference it's making to people lives is immense. It makes people equal and brings huge happiness to their lives.

I would say to farmers give it a go. This is a voluntary model and there are supports there to help host farmers with any upgrades they need to make their farm suitable for Social Farming. We have some very busy farmers involved in this project who are making the time to be hosts. Meet

the facilitator and get a feel for it.

There is a great sense of achievement in it for the host farmer. Another thing is that the participants have become a part of our families. That's the true success of it. Try it out during a quiet time on the farm if you like to get a better feel for it. But the benefits won't become apparent until you try it.

Eamonn Horgan, Kilgarvan