

Social Farming Across Borders Pilot Farm Profile:

Section 1 – Your Details

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Section 2 – Your Farm

About my Farm:

My wife Betty and I farm a small holding of 10 acres in the Killeshandra area of County Cavan. Our farm has been in the family since the 1830's, before The Great Famine.

We grow vegetables for domestic use and we rear and breed horses and donkeys. We also keep laying hens.

Our small holding is largely South facing with uninterrupted views across the valley to Bruce Mountain and into County Longford. On the North side we face directly into the Cuilcagh Mountain Range some 20 miles away.

All of our land is arable although we use only 10% for vegetable growing. There is also a small ring -fort on the holding.

We have a good range of modern farm buildings including a slatted shed, stables and a large American type barn situated 150 metres from our dwelling house.

We propose to provide a communal area including a small kitchen with adjacent wheelchair accessible toilet and shower unit.

Most of our neighbours are small farmers and we all get along well together and co-operate with each other.



Farm Activities offered to the Participants:

We will offer Participants the opportunity to care for, feed and groom horses and donkeys, including those in foal and rearing their young. This will also include mucking out stables and replenishing bedding. They will also help to take care of working harness and tack. We will also teach them to work with farm horses.



We will teach them to sow and grow vegetables and plants and to tend and harvest root crops. We will use our Green House, Poly-tunnel, and raised beds for horticulture training and skills development. We are committed to sustainable farming including non use of pesticides and commercial fertilizers. Instead we use farm yard manure, compost and leaf mould to grow our produce. This ethos would in turn be passed on to the Participants. We are very aware of the need to preserve and nurture wild life on our farm, including birds and the Irish hare. We will demonstrate the safe and appropriate use of farm tools and machinery.



Preferred days of the week:

Thursdays

Projects on-going at the moment:

We are in the process of restocking the hedge of our Ring Fort with Whitethorn and Holly. This entails the removal of briar and deadwood etc., and the preparation of the ground for planting.



The completion of a horse arena, which involves the spreading of gravel dust on the arena surface and the erection of top boundary rail.

Sowing of seeds, ground preparation for main crop vegetables, painting of boundary walls at farm yard.

Section 3 – Your Locality & Community

Nearest Services: Killeshandra Town with Doctors Surgery, Post Office & Shops etc., Arva with Bank, Pharmacy etc.,

Nearest town: Killeshandra ,Arva, Cavan.

Nearest public transport or rural transport initiative:

Bus Service from Cavan to Longford daily with drop offs on route as requested.

My locality and community interests :

Cornafean Community Centre which holds activities for drama, Over 55's Club, Womens Groups & Walking Club
Vibrant GAA Club which hosts Football & Hurling matches. There is also an active Foothound Hunt Club and Vintage Club.

Section 4 – You, the Farmer

Me and my Farm:

My wife and I farm a typical Cavan farm of rolling drumlin countryside. We carry out mixed farming with an emphasis on vegetable growing and animal husbandry. As well as running our small holding my wife works in the community within the Physical Disability Services and I work as a Community Employment Supervisor/Manager.

I have managed the Garrymore Community Employment Scheme for the past 20 years and therefore have extensive knowledge of the support needs of people who are long term unemployed, have disabilities or are socially disadvantaged. My brother Frank who lives nearby has a professional background in Mental Health Services Management and is very supportive of the Project.



Over the past 12 years I have trained and received certification in a number of courses which I feel are relevant to the running of a Social Farming Enterprise. e.g. Equine Assisted Learning, Community Development, Community Leadership, Organic Horticulture, Train the Trainer, Hedge Laying.



I have a keen interest in drama, local history and culture. Over the years I have been involved with a wide variety of organizations eg. GAA-Scór, Drama, Community Council, Church Pastoral Team, School B.O.M., Director of Cavan Drugs Awareness. I also have a proud record for charity fundraising.



Other information:

Leisure activities we aim to provide for Participants

- ❖ Safe, scenic country walks with identification of local flora and fauna.
- ❖ Outdoor picnics in good weather
- ❖ Learning to properly pitch a tent
- ❖ Food preparation and cooking outdoors
- ❖ Access to Over 55 Clubs at local Community Centre
- ❖ Local Golf and Pitch & Putt
- ❖ Indoor & outdoor French Boules (Petanque)
- ❖ Local history and folklore talks
- ❖ Horse and cart rides
- ❖ 'Cois Tine' Traditional music sessions
- ❖ Story telling

