

Social Farming Across Borders Pilot Farm Profile:

Section 1 – Your Details

<p>Name: Marie Kelly</p> <p><i>My family enjoying The National Ploughing Championships last year</i></p> 	<p>Address: Hilltown Co. Down</p>
<p>Contact to be made via the Social Farming Across Borders office: Laird House Drumshanbo Leitrim</p>	<p>+353 (0)71 964 1772 <a href="mailto:socialfarming@ldco.ie">socialfarming@ldco.ie</a> <a href="http://www.socialfarmingacrossborders.org">www.socialfarmingacrossborders.org</a></p>

Section 2 – Your Farm

<p>About my Farm:</p> <p>We have a small mixed farm located outside of Hilltown. Our enterprise is mainly sheep and suckler cows, but also have an orchard and small kitchen garden were we grow vegetables. Our land is broken up with some of it situated beside the home and the rest situated on out-farms including some mountain land. As well as the sheep and Cattle we also have a Pet Dog called Buddy who is a black Labrador and two black and white cats called Felix and Marbles</p>	
<p>Farm Activities offered to the Participants:</p> <p>Participants who may choose to come to our farm shall be offered the opportunity to work with our animals and tend our kitchen garden. The tasks which need to be completed are seasonal and weather dependent. During the winter months as the cattle and sheep are housed indoors they require feeding every day as well as mucking out. During the busy lambing season expectant ewes need extra care as well as the new born lambs.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>My father-in-law feeding the pet lambs</i></p> <p>This year we have a lot of pet lambs due to the adverse weather conditions. Our children adore feeding the lambs, they give them all names and I believe it helps to encourage a caring attitude in life.</p>	
	<p>During the warmer weather in late spring, our attention turns to the garden and to sowing our crops for the following year. I just love the feeling of being able to go into my garden and steal some fresh peas or glorious strawberries. Of course we make our own jam and as we try to follow organic principles wherever possible, I know the food we grow is really good for us.</p> <p><i>I love to mix flowers in with my vegetables just like Alys Fowler .</i></p>





We paint our wooden gates and fences and maintain farm machinery and equipment during the summer. In this way the farm gets a little “face lift” each year. Like many other farmers we cut our hay for wintering stock, during the summer if the weather is kind. I have been known to throw an “impromptu hay making party” for our friends. Everyone loves haymaking and eating the outdoor picnic.

For the last 5 years my husband and I have been involved in the Farm Management Scheme and we have planted 2,500 native hedging plants. All this hedging needs wed and pruned and a lot of this work happens during summer and into autumn.



*Haymaking August 2010*

When the days shorten in September/October harvesting the fruit from the orchard is a real treat for us all!



*Buddy running through our orchard*

Preferred Days:  
Monday or Friday

Projects on-going at the moment:

Current Projects

There is always something to be done on our farm. We have recently acquired an old chicken coup which we hope to restore and fill with happy clucking hens. This is a project I am really excited about, as I have always wanted to rear hens.

We are currently felling some trees around our farm so there is some chopping and sawing to be carried out .We also would hope to plant some new trees around the farm next year.

Our house is adjacent to the old homestead, which over time we hope to restore .This year, we will paint the external walls white and the windows red.

Last year I started building a dry stone wall along our lane with my father –in-law, this is a project that will take quite a few years.



*The Old Homestead*

### Section 3 – Your Locality & Community

Nearest Services: Hilltown is the nearest villages, it has a shop, chip shop and pub.

Nearest town: Newry, Banbridge, Kilkeel, Newcastle.

Nearest public transport or rural transport initiative:

Hilltown Square, Public Bus Service

My locality and community interests :

We live in a very close knit rural community where farmers and neighbours know one and other and are always willing to share both their resources and time. The community we live in is steeped in Irish sports and culture and my husband and children are all involved in traditional music representing our club at county level in the Scór this year. I love Music, so it is a real treat for me to live in a home which is always ringing with children playing instruments.

### Section 4 – You, the Farmer

Me and my Farm:

I feel very privileged to live on our farm and I know that other people would really enjoy being here. Every day brings something new to learn and a skill to practise. Farming has a natural rhythm dictated by our seasons, which cannot really be manipulated; this is the real joy and challenge of living on a farm. I believe that by being a conscientious farmer, paying due respect to the environment I can contribute in a positive way both to the place I live and those in my community.

I look forward to sharing our farm and hopefully watching participants really benefit from the experience of working here. In my professional career I have worked with people with both learning disabilities and mental health issues. I am currently working as a part-time literacy support teacher in a local Primary School and I have just completed a certificate in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy this year. Next year I will continue my studies to become a qualified CBT counsellor.

Other information:

I look forward to sharing my love of country life and getting to know the individuals who want to experience our farm.....