

Social Farming Across Borders Pilot Farm Profile:

Section 1 – Your Details

<p>Name: Matthew and Clodagh McGreehan</p> 	<p>Address: Riverstown , Dundalk Co Louth</p>  <p>Creag Ard Award Winning Traditional Lambic, Beef & Brecker</p>
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Section 2 – Your Farm

About my Farm: Creag Ard Sheep Farm

The farm and farm yards are based at the foot of Sieve Foy mountain in the Cooley Peninsula. We are predominately sheep farmers with four hundred of a flock. The farm comprises of 70 acres of lowland and 80 acres of mountain commonage. We breed a horned black-face ewe which is suited to the hills. Busy times of the year are April - August and October. Ewes are scanned and those with multiple births are kept in the lowlands for extra feeding and monitoring. Lambing season begins the end of April. In June we will begin clipping the sheep and preparing them for their return to the hills. We frequently shepherd the sheep on the hills to ensure that they kept to their own pasture. They are then gathered in October and some are housed over the winter.



The farm is suitable for participants with a moderate to high level of physical agility and fitness but farm activities can be adapted and graded to suit the clients and provide a safe and purposeful environment.

There are several sheep dogs, hens, ducks, cows, donkey, and pig that also need feeding daily. We have two farmyards and some small fields are close by which frequently can involve a short walk. When weather is permitting and during non busy times these other fields involve a 5- 10 minute cycle during which sheep are fed and monitored. At busy times and when required participants can travel with the farmer in his Jeep to complete these farm activities. There are 10 acres along the Cooley Coast which provides a scenic contrast from the mountain hillside.



Farm Activities offered to the Participants:

- Daily activities include attending and feeding farm animals.
- Participants on the farm can help in opening / closing gates, rounding up and loading sheep into pens for various handling activities and transportation.
- Annual activities include injecting ewes, cleaning wool, foot baths, marking fleeces, tagging lambs, cutting lambs tails, shearing sheep and rolling their fleeces, feeding pet lambs.
- Farm maintenance activities include: Piling and fencing, painting piling posts, brushing yards.
- Cleaning out sheds.
- Building and repairing stone walls.
- Annual power washes of machinery Inc tractor and sheds.



Preferred days of the week:

Thursday or Friday

Projects on-going at the moment:

- Painting Traditional Farm Machinery
- Restoring two High Nelly Bikes
- Growing organic vegetables
- Restoring the piggery



Section 3 – Your Locality & Community

Nearest Services: Bush service station: fuel etc, Martins pub and Riverstown Chinese; Omeath Village

Nearest town: Newry and Dundalk both eleven miles away

Nearest public transport or rural transport initiative: Omeath 4 miles, Bush 4 miles approximately

My locality and community interests :

I have an active involvement with the Irish Farmers Association.

I have historical interest in farming and in the old field names and ways of prolonging our ancestral history. I have restored old farm buildings to their previous glory. I have attended courses in genealogy and have build up a large collection of vintage farm machinery over the years.

In 2000 My wife Clodagh and I open a B&B and incorporated farm activity demonstrations for some guest during the Summer months which included hand milking Kerry cows and butter making, shearing sheep by hand, feeding pet lambs, collecting eggs. We no longer continue the B&B as we have four children aged 5-10 yrs. In 2004 we won a Rural Tourism Award for Farmhouse Accommodation.

Section 4 – You, the Farmer

Me and my Farm:

From a young age I loved farming, learning the skills of sheep farming from my uncle and grandfather. My father has a small cattle farm. In 2000 we lost the entire flock to the foot and mouth cull and had to start from scratch sourcing sheep from the west.



When I was a teenager I became a farm worker for a neighbour's farm of the late Tom MC Cann. I inherited his farm, when he later required care in the home. I developed my interest in the caring profession and I became employed with the HSE as a home help and completed a FETAC course in health care. The original homestead is the centre of the farm and a few years ago we restored the outhouses that came from the Famine era, which will be home to our donkey, cow and pig.

Other information:

My wife Clodagh is also a sheep farmer and an occupational therapist working in rehabilitation. She has an interest in mental health and has completed a certificate in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and various other modalities.