

Social Farming Across Borders Pilot Farm Profile:

Section 1 – Your Details

<p>Name:</p> <p>Michael Heslin</p> 	<p>Address:</p> <p>Gortlettragh Co. Leitrim</p>
<p>Contact to be made via the Social Farming Across Borders office:</p> <p>Laird House Drumshanbo Leitrim</p>	<p>+353 (0)71 964 1772</p> <p>socialfarming@ldco.ie</p> <p>www.socialfarmingacrossborders.org</p>

Section 2 – Your Farm

<p>About my Farm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Farm is a fully organic farm and consists of approximately 21 hectares. It is mostly situated in one block with approximately 1 acre of bog, one mile away from the main farm. Due to the presence of many trees and hedgerows, wildlife is in abundance on the farm. We save our own turf and timber to be used as fuel. • We have a suckler heard of Aubrac cows running with an Aubrac bull. We sell most of the calves as weanlings. The cows calve in the springtime. • We have five stables and a sand arena and keep horses and a donkey. We have a variety of vintage horse and donkey carts, which have been restored and are used from time to time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have hens and ducks from which we gather eggs, as well as a pet dog. • We grow vegetables in our poly-tunnel • The farm boasts a perfectly preserved Ring Fort, a Fulacht Fiadh and Dolmen, erected by ancient ancestors. I have been privileged and proud to have inherited it and continue to invest in and improve it, in order to hand it on to future generations. 	
<p>Farm Activities offered to the Participants:</p> <p>Participants of Social Farming Project, could with farmer's help, assist in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of windfall and deadwood from ring fort, in order to make it more visitor friendly. • Gathering of firewood and the footing of turf. • Care of housed animals. 	

- Cleaning and filling of potholes in gravel road to slatted shed.
- Picking stones from pasture fields, prior to topping.
- Fencing and forming culverts, under field crossings.
- Keeping hedgerows trimmed.
- Tree planting.
- Cleaning of sheds.
- Making square bales of hay, weather permitting.
- Building fox proof pen for ducks and hens.



Preferred days of the week
Any day would suit.

Projects on-going, at the moment:



- Two culverts being constructed to take water at field crossings.
- Calving shed being constructed.
- Winter windfall of trees being sawed up and collected.
- Getting poly-tunnel ready for planting.
- Checking fencing and repairing where necessary.
- Breaking-in horse.
- Calving, tagging and dehorning calves.
- Bedding horses and cattle.
- Feeding, repairing, greasing and servicing machinery.

Section 3 – Your Locality & Community

Nearest Services: Foxes of Toman, petrol station, grocery, bar, general store

Nearest town: Mohill

Nearest public transport or rural transport initiative:
Dromod railway station

My locality and community interests :

- I am one of the directors of the local water co-op.



- I have adopted, with some neighbours, a stretch of road alongside the farm, in order to stop the dumping of rubbish.
- I help organize our annual day in the bog, when neighbours gather together to cut turf in the traditional way, and also have a cook out.
- I am currently attempting to enlist council help and local volunteers to clear rubbish from an area named Foley's Pass.

Section 4 – You, the Farmer

Me and my Farm:

- I am married to Siobhan and have three children. They all love animals; Emma in particular is very good with the animals and would like to work with them some day.
- I previously worked as a carpenter, erecting timber framed houses for a local company. I have a good working knowledge of most trades.
- I have worked in the manufacturing industry, service industry and construction industry, but now do what I like to do best, farm.
- I like working with people and animals and I love the outdoors no matter what the weather. When I am not on the farm working I enjoy hobbies such as; boating, fishing, hunting, hiking, diving and archery.



Other information:

- We are currently renovating the old farmhouse and have almost finished. I have a neighbour who helps me out from time to time and is also interested in the concept of social farming. He is an expert on local history and traditions and is a great man with horses. He is looking forward to helping out.
- We have an old Stanley range which is used for cooking and another wood burning stove to heat water.
- The Aubrac cattle are very docile and easy to manage. (Aubrac were used to pull carts in France until a few hundred years ago).
- The ring fort is very well preserved and the removal of scrub and deadwood would provide a worthwhile project.

