

Social Farming Across Borders Pilot Farm Profile:

Section 1 – Your Details

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Section 2 – Your Farm:

About my Farm:

- I took over from my father in 2005 and currently farm approximately 25 hectares.
- There are approximately fifteen suckler cows and all beef animals kept until around two years old. The main breed on the farm is Hereford.
- There are modern cattle sheds and safe cattle handling facilities on the farm and also old style farm buildings including an old barn with stables and other assorted buildings.
- Most of the farm consists of fairly good grassland area.
- Silage/Hay is made every year for winter feeding.
- There is an old orchard in close proximity to the farmyard
- There is a small woodland (mixed species), and a small area suitable for planting.
- A small vegetable garden is maintained every year, with room for expansion.
- Also on the farm is an old forge in working condition, with associated tools. Could be made functional to learn an ancient skill that was practiced on the farm by previous generations.
- There is an assortment of antique machinery on the farm in various levels of condition: Vintage tractor – the first tractor to come on the farm, old ploughs and other horse drawn equipment as well as an assortment of antique farm equipment: an ongoing restoration project.



Farm Activities offered to the Participants:

Some of the regular farm activities that could be offered to participants:

Winter-Time:

- Feeding Cattle: this would include graping silage, hay and also carrying supplementary feed to cattle in slatted accommodation and loose houses.
- Cleaning out and bedding Cattle Sheds, particularly around the calving period.
- Maintenance/repair around sheds e.g. ensuring water troughs, water channels are fully functional, cleaning yards etc.

Summer-Time:

- Checking on Livestock, moving livestock from pasture to pasture.
- Fence Maintenance: repair of existing fencing using hand tools; removing weeds from along electric fence using suitable cutting equipment; erecting new fencing.



All Year Round:

- Hedgerow Maintenance: coppicing; laying of hedgerows outside the nesting season, with suitable tools and safety equipment. Planting quicks.
- Woodland Maintenance: thinning/branching trees; removal of ivy from trees; planting trees. All carried out with suitable tools and safety gear.
- Timber/Block Cutting e.g. chopping sticks
- Dealing with animal health & welfare issues where appropriate and safe.
- General tidying around the farm and farmyard; which could include painting, white-washing, cleaning yard surfaces etc.
- Vegetable Garden Maintenance: preparing the beds; planting seeds, ongoing weed control, harvesting
- Other projects of specific interest as outlined below.

Preferred Days of the Week:

Wednesdays and Fridays

Projects on-going at the moment:

- Orchard Regeneration – The old orchard on the farm is in need of some work i.e. trimming grass/weeds, removing some materials, pruning, fertilising, planting, removing ivy of trees, stock-proofing. This is a project that could potentially yield results in a season.
- As outlined above, there is a lot of old machinery such as ploughs and other horse drawn implements, as well as an old Fordson tractor (the first tractor on the farm). This machinery is in various states of repair and there is on-going restoration work required. There is a shed on the farm with plans to convert it into a suitable workshop, so this work could be carried out on a 'rainy day'. This work could be done with a view to participating in some kind of vintage display.
- The Old Forge on the farm could provide an interesting opportunity for participants in the SOFAB Project to learn an old skill, pending the availability of a black smith. This would be a good heritage project around an ancient skill once practiced on the farm.



Section 3 – Your Locality & Community

Nearest Services:

There is a small/medium sized general store approximately one mile away. The local hardware store and the co-op are located approximately four mile away on the edge of Monaghan town. All other services: Post Office, doctor, chemist, minor injuries unit, larger stores are in Monaghan Town. Nearest A & E is in Cavan; thirty six miles away; and Drogheda; fifty miles away, but on a better road.

Nearest town:

Nearest town is Monaghan; town centre is approximately five miles.

Nearest public transport or rural transport initiative:

Ulster Bus runs a service between Armagh and Monaghan that stops within a mile of the farm. BALTI Bus operates in the area, but I am unsure of the schedule.

My locality and community interests :

The farm is located in the parish of Tyholland, just a few miles from Monaghan town, where most of the nearest services are located. The majority of those living in the immediate vicinity of the farm are from a non-farming background; a product of the Celtic Tiger. Off-farm activity centres around the local town of Monaghan. Farm activities include regular visits to the local hardware store, the co-op, veterinary surgery, general store and occasional interaction with neighbouring farms.

Section 4 – You, the Farmer**Me and my Farm:**

I grew up on the family farm which I took over from my father in 2005 at the age of 32. As such I have a working knowledge of farming activities including animal husbandry and associated administration. For the first 25 years of my life, my family looked after my uncle who had a mental health issue and lived with us full-time. For 10 years I was a self-employed REPS Planner/Agricultural Consultant in the Cavan/Monaghan area and gained much experience of working with farmers in many different situations. Since 2009 I have been employed as a community development worker with Co. Monaghan Community Network as well as running the farm part-time. In a voluntary capacity I have been a youth club leader for a number of years with a foroige club and with a local church.

My background as outlined above has brought me into contact with many different people from both a farming and non-farming background; young and old. My life experiences have taught me how to be adaptable and be able to relate to people; skills which I believe will be essential as a participant in the SOFAB Project.

Other information:

There is an up-to-date Health & Safety Statement on the farm, with any potential hazards identified and remedial action planned or underway. As already outlined above, we looked after a family member on the farm for twenty five years. Also for a number of years during the 'noughties' we looked after my father who had Alzheimer's, and tried to maintain a regular routine for him on the farm. This also meant that we had to be extremely safety conscious, as well as running a working farm. I believe that this experience will be invaluable as we undertake this pilot SOFAB Project.

The farmhouse is currently occupied by my mother and my sister's family. My mother's kitchen and toilet facilities will be available for participants on the project. The farmhouse has obviously played a very important role in the life and working of the farm in the past, and will continue to do so under this project. This was the hub for food, planning, socialising, and visiting farmers/casual workers etc. as was the case with many Irish farm houses. There will be interaction with other family members from time to time, as would be normal for anyone coming on to the farm, and participants will be treated with the highest regard.

Hopefully the facilities, activities and experience outlined will provide a safe, rewarding and sociable environment for participants on the project, while of course it is still a working farm with all that entails.