





Care farming can improve health of people on the land

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Helen Doherty and Teresa O'Hare from INI Social Farming Project, chat with Rural Development Minister, Michele O'Neill at Balmoral Show.

Care farming is a new name for a project which aims to improve the lives of farmers and their families in rural areas.

A new Social Farming Project was launched recently and made its introduction at last week's Balmoral Show. Among those involved is Teresa O'Hare from Lisnarick, who is acting as Project Co-ordinator.

Located on the DARD stand, the project staff met with farmers and visitors to discuss how the project works. A spokesman stated, "They explained how involvement in normal day to day farm activities can provide opportunities for inclusion, create ways to increase self-esteem and deliver activities to improve health and well-being of individuals and groups of disadvantaged people. The INIF project is both an exciting and challenging opportunity for the people of the border region and Northern Ireland made possible by the European Regional Development Fund. Over the next two years it will raise the profile and potential of social farming within rural communities."

The project is led by University College, Dublin in partnership with Queen's University, Belfast and Leitrim Development Company.

Social farming is already established in the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy. In the Netherlands, farm households generate an additional income from providing such services to disadvantaged groups of people.

A number of pilot farms will now be established across the region.