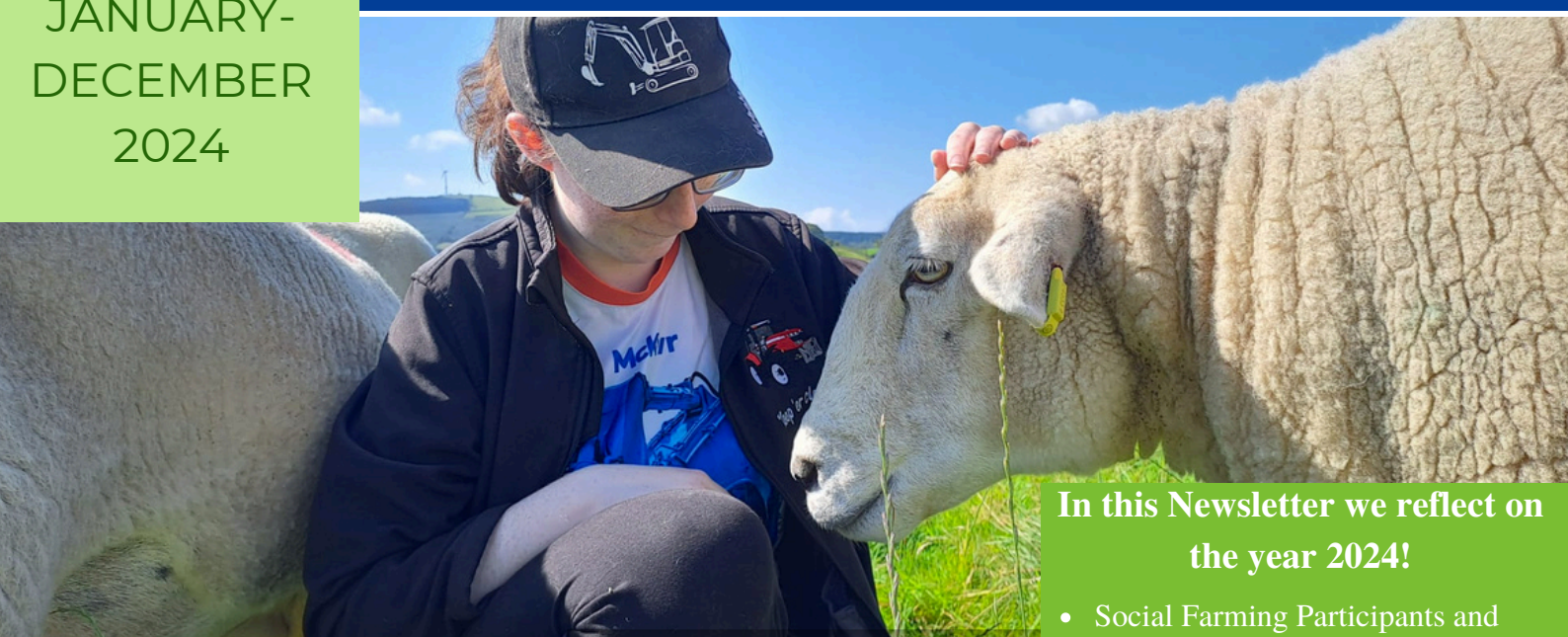


JANUARY-
DECEMBER
2024



In this Newsletter we reflect on the year 2024!

- Social Farming Participants and Services Insights
- Farmer Wellbeing Events
- Social Farming Around the Country
- Social Farming Awareness Week
- Training Programme
- Policy & Research Activity
- National & International Activity

Celebrating a Year of Growth and Connection in 2024

Our social farming network and activities have grown substantially during 2024. We sought further support from the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine through Minister Charlie Mc Conalogue T.D and from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth / HSE through Minister of State Anne Rabbitte T.D. and they have both delivered through increased allocations in Budget 2025. This will help us with the resources to deliver for our network and the increasing numbers of farmers who want to become social farmers and to provide them with training and support. This core funding will change and improve what we do for Social Farmers and the Social Farming Ireland Network in 2025.

In 2024 we had local, European and General elections. In the debates we heard about the needs of people with disabilities, people with mental ill health, immigrants, young people at risk older people and others and of the gap in services for them. Social farming is filling these gaps for many people as it is person centred, flexible and is community based. We want to ensure that the new programme for Government, being developed at this point in time, takes account of this and incorporate supports/ funding for placements and for the many people we know that want to access placement on social farms. People want more and also longer placements for their benefit and to help them to progress their own goals. We need a national programme of scale to cover the cost of social framing placements from across various government departments including health, education, social protection, Children Disability Integration and Youth to ensure that people who choose social farming will have the resources to access a placement on a farm over the next 5 years of this new Government. It is vital that this funding / programme for placements is defined / mentioned in some way in the new programme for Government.

You can help by talking to politicians, decision makers, funders, policy makers and advocates about the many positive aspects of Social farming and of your experiences of it and of the people who you see benefiting.

We are deeply grateful for the incredible support we've received throughout 2024. A heartfelt thank you to our dedicated social farmers, supportive services, and inspiring participants—you have all played a vital role in making a meaningful difference.



SOCIAL FARMING PARTICIPANTS & SERVICES INSIGHTS

On Tuesday, 12th November 2024, we welcomed 12 visitors from the Netherlands as part of an exchange visit organised by South West Mayo Development Company. The itinerary included a visit to Angela Healy's Social Farm. Understanding that meeting visitors can sometimes feel overwhelming, we prepared participants Shauna and Caroline in advance for the day's activities. We also contacted Cherisse from the Irish Wheelchair Association to ensure Shauna and Caroline were comfortable with the plans. On the day, Angela spoke with the girls again, and they confirmed they were happy with the events of the day

At first, both girls were a little quiet when the group arrived, as expected. But as we took the visitors on a tour of the farm, something amazing happened. One of the girls, who had been reserved at first, suddenly stepped forward and took the lead. She confidently shared her knowledge of the farm's daily activities – explaining everything from looking after the animals to feeding the horse and collecting eggs. As the visit progressed, it was clear that the girl became more comfortable and enthusiastic showing the visitors around the farm.

The transformation was incredible, and the support workers were absolutely astounded and incredibly proud of the girls. It was a powerful reminder of how social farming provides not just a chance to learn about farming, but also an opportunity to build confidence and skills in an environment that feels safe and supportive.

Seeing the girls grow and shine in this way was an unforgettable experience for all in attendance, and it was a privilege to witness their pride and joy in sharing what they do every day.

A sincere thank you to Shauna and Caroline for generously sharing their knowledge and experience with the group. Their invaluable contributions truly elevated the experience and made it unforgettable for all. Finally, a big thank you to Cherisse and Margaret and all in IWA Belmullet for championing social farming.



"When I first heard about Social Farming, I didn't think I would like to do it, but then two of my friends did it on a farm in Carrickmacross. When I heard about what they did on the farm, I really wanted to try it. So I am working on Nigel and Bernices farm now. I like animals but the first time I went to the farm, I was afraid of the dogs, but I not I am not afraid of them anymore. They are family dogs and they just want you to rub them and play fetch. Bernice and Nigel helped us to do different things at the farm. I like working with them. I learned how to look after different animals, like chickens, cows and horses. My Grandad and my uncle have a farm and I told them about everything I do on the farm."

- Participant CB (NLN)

"Val and Una (Kildare Social Farmer) are so compassionate and caring; they are the perfect match for our lads. They treat them like family, which is so welcome as some participants have no families of their own. The lads love sitting around the kitchen table, having tea and homemade scones, and chatting about farm activities. Social farming with Val and Una is the best thing we've ever been involved in."

- Deirdre Farrell, facilitator from St. John of Gods



SOCIAL FARMING PARTICIPANTS & SERVICES INSIGHTS

“I joined the social farming programme this May and it was a thoroughly enjoyable experience. It was a welcome distraction to my daily routine. I met Bernie and Tom her husband and they welcomed me into their life. The chat around the breakfast table was thoroughly enjoyable and fresh homemade produce available every day. Bernie was an excellent host. My two companions DB and SOM, DB I’d met before and SOM was new to me but we both clicked very well.

The 10 weeks flew in with all the excursions we did off-site like Knights and Conquest Granard, Corlea trackway, seeing the qualifiers for the Mullingar Show was exhilarating. I thoroughly enjoyed all the planting shrubs and maintenance of the fences and seeing how the milking happens. Bernie went above and beyond for us and I was so delighted to be part of it.



The highlight for me was getting up on Rosie, Bernie’s horse and Tom leading me around the arena. I couldn’t put into words how exhilarating this was for me and a bucket list event to get back on a horse. Thank you so much to Bernie and Tom Whyte.”

– Feedback from participant TT on her social farming experience sent to farmer 5 months after placement finished.

“This rare opportunity- we are sad for it to cease.
We’ve had great outcomes,
Made new friends,
and bad energy we’ve released.

Empathy fostered; work ethic maintained.
Education imparted and our minds a chance to rest.
Our time here at O’Connor’s of Shallee
Has been as good as any respite you’d find on that Isle of Innisfree”

Snippet from a poem by Theresa Tierney Bugler (CAMHS Nurse) about a recent placement on Oonagh and Mike’s farm in Tipperary



“IT’S BEEN A GREAT EXPERIENCE. IT’S DIFFICULT TO PINPOINT ONE SINGLE BEST PART, BUT I FEEL IT WAS INVALUABLE TO ME. IT HAS OPENED UP MY SOCIAL WORLD IN A WHOLE DIFFERENT WAY AND GAVE ME A SENSE OF PURPOSE AND MY INTERACTIONS HAVE ALL BEEN POSITIVE. I WOULD COMPLETELY RECOMMEND SOCIAL FARMING TO ANYONE. 20 OUT OF 10!” (JL)



“I feel this has been such a positive experience for CB. CB had little experience working outside the National Learning Network and was often supported by his staff or his family to take part in various opportunities. It has been great for CB to have the experience of working with new people who he knew he would be safe around, without relying on his regular support network. This was a personal goal of CB’s. He told us that he wanted some experience outside the NLN and this was the perfect scenario for him. It was also a great comfort for his family to know how the social farming programme is set up and that it is a safe environment for CB to go to. CB has enjoyed sharing his experience with family, friends and staff and feels proud that he is working on the farm. CB is also proud of the fact that he has overcome his fear of the dogs. The programme is giving CB a great sense of confidence and he feels now that he is capable of the same things that his friends are capable of. Nigel and Bernice were so welcoming during his induction and they seem to have made CB feel very comfortable as he speaks highly of them and talks about how they help him. It has been a really great experience for him”



–Support worker, Patricia Redmond

RESEARCH & POLICY ACTIVITY

Famer Wellbeing Events

Social Farming Ireland developed and delivered five wellbeing events for farmers and farm families, with support from the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine's dedicated Farm Safety, Health and Wellbeing Projects Call. Hosted on various social farms nationwide, these events provided farmers with practical knowledge to safeguard and enhance their mental health and wellbeing, while also fostering meaningful peer connections. Delivered in collaboration with mental health and wellbeing advisors and advocates, each event was tailored to address a broad range of mental health issues specific to the farming community.



An integral part of the Research and Policy Officer's role is fostering awareness and understanding of Social Farming.

This year, Mary took on a pivotal role in showcasing Social Farming Ireland at numerous conferences and events. Notable moments included her impactful presentation at the Housing First National Conference in Dublin Castle, where she, alongside Southwest Development Officer Eadaoin O'Connell, highlighted the role of Social Farming in supporting individuals experiencing homelessness. Additionally, Mary presented alongside Helen Doherty, National Coordinator, and a Social Farmer, Ciaran Duggan at the AOTI Conference, further amplifying the reach and impact of Social Farming.



Mary also shared valuable insights on Social Farming as a farm diversification opportunity at the Teagasc Energy and Farm Diversification event, showcasing the Social Farming Ireland model.



These engagements underline the growing recognition of Social Farming as a transformative initiative in both social care and agricultural sectors.

Eramus+

Brian, our National Project Manager, and Mary, our Research and Policy Officer, collaborated with colleagues in Terra I Dona Association, Valencia, Spain on the Eramus+ project 'Agrosocial'. The Agrosocial project is part of an initiative that seeks to eliminate barriers and promote social inclusion through active participation in urban ecological gardens in Spain. This project is developed with the aim of integrating people with physical and intellectual disabilities, as well as other groups at risk of social exclusion, in agricultural activities that promote community cohesion and sustainable development.



European Movement Ireland Roundtable Discussion

In December, Mary participated in a Roundtable Discussion on agriculture and rural development hosted by European Movement Ireland, a leading NGO dedicated to fostering strong connections between Ireland and Europe. The event featured MEP Maria Walsh, a member of the European Parliament's AGRI Committee. Invited as part of European Movement Ireland's engagement strategy, our policy officer contributed to discussions that highlighted key challenges and opportunities for rural development and the agricultural sector.



Border Midlands Region



SOCIAL FARMING AROUND THE COUNTRY

SOCIAL FARMING IN THE BORDER MIDLANDS

More than 230 participants were supported by Social Farmers in the Border Midlands region .

Participants with disabilities, mental health challenges, from LCA, youth services, homeless and addiction services, acquired brain injury and and some who are socially excluded spent time and carried out activities on ordinary family farms as a form of social support!

To contact the Border Midland Regional Development Officer

☎ 086 144 8796

✉ Bordermidlands@socialfarmingireland.ie

COUNTRYWIDE - RTE RADIO 1

In October, Brenda Donohue visited Tommy Earley's farm in Leitrim to record a piece for CountryWide on RTE Radio 1.

Brenda spoke with participants attending Tommy's farm from the WorkAbility Leitrim programme.

[LISTEN HERE](#)



SOCIAL FARMS IN THE BORDER MIDLANDS

There are currently 42 Social Farms in the Border Midlands available to deliver Social Farming Placements in 2025 with 4 new farms becoming fully trained and ready to welcome participants!

BIODIVERSITY WALK ON GAVIN AND CAROL DURKIN'S FARM, CO. LEITRIM

Charlotte presented at the Biodiversity farm walk as part of the Creative Ireland Shared Island Programme.

It was a valuable opportunity to engage and connect with members of the farming community. It was heartening to see the enthusiasm and curiosity about inclusive community and farm diversification initiatives!



OCEAN FM

In November, Aisling Heraughty from Ocean FM came out to two of our social farms to record a piece about social farming from the farmer and participant perspective. This will be aired in January 2025.

NEW WAVE WORKABILITY MEETS SOCIAL FARMING!

Charlotte facilitated two farm visits for WorkAbility Sligo to learn more about Social Farming and how it could benefit their participants.

Sandra and Michelle from our New Wave WorkAbility team recently had an inspiring day visiting two incredible social farms in Sligo



West Region



SOCIAL FARMING AROUND THE COUNTRY

SOCIAL FARMING IN THE WEST

It has been an busy year in the West!

Well in excess of 100 participants were supported by Social Farmers across Galway Mayo and Roscommon.

In 2024, we have worked with 21 organisations in the West. Participants with disabilities, mental health challenges, from LCA, acquired brain injury services and elderly people all had great farm experiences.

To contact the West Regional Development Officer

☎ 087 623 3862

✉ west@socialfarmingireland.ie

SOCIAL FARMS IN THE WEST

There are currently 19 Social Farms in the West available for Social Farming Placements in 2024 with 4 new farms becoming fully trained and ready to welcome participants!

TEAGASC FBD ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AWARD

Congratulations to Social Farmer Shane Keaveney for taking home a national award at the Teagasc FBD Environmental Sustainability Awards in the suckler beef category!



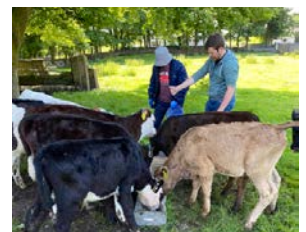
BROTHERS OF CHARITY BALLINASLOE

Deirdre attended the opening of the new SUAS premises at the Brothers of Charity Services Ireland in Ballinasloe. It was wonderful to reconnect with Social Farming participant Bernard and to meet Sector Manager Sean Connealy



BROTHERS OF CHARITY BALLINASLOE

We had the opportunity to share information about Social Farming at Shane and Grainne Keaveney's "Future Beef Farm Walk", alongside social farmers Marie and Jimmy Barlow. It was a fantastic chance to engage with the local farming community and share valuable insights!



Southwest Region



SOCIAL FARMING AROUND THE COUNTRY

SOCIAL FARMS IN THE SOUTHEAST

There are currently 30 farms available for Social Farming participants in the Southeast Region, with 5 new farms available to participants this year!

KILKENNY FARM OPEN DAY

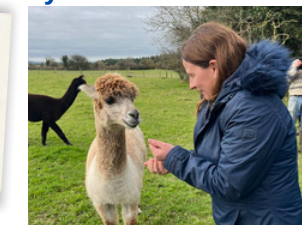
Ériu Farm in Jerpoint, Co. Kilkenny, hosted a fantastic open day. Christine Rossi, CEO of Waterford Leader Partnership CLG, opened the event with a thoughtful introduction. Southeast Regional Development Officer Gillian and Janette from Healthy Kilkenny shared their experiences, followed by Social Farmer Cornelia, who spoke about their farm and the impact Social Farming has had on them.



OVER 70 NEW PARTICIPANT ON SOCIAL FARMS THIS YEAR

CARLOW FARM OPEN DAY

An inspiring open day took place on Alan and Helena's farm in Carlow. The event featured insightful contributions from Jennifer Murnane O'Connor TD, Trevor Jacob (CEO of Reachability), and Jamesy Salter (BEAM Services), who shared their experiences with Social Farming and its benefits for participants. Alan and Helena also shared their journey as Social Farmers, adding depth to the discussions.



SOCIAL FARMING IN THE SOUTHEAST

It has been an incredibly busy year in the Southeast (Waterford South Tipp, Kilkenny, Carlow & Wexford).

The past year in our region we supported over 195 participants on ordinary farms in the Southeast.

Participants with disabilities, mental health challenges, elderly, refugees and asylum seekers and some who are socially disadvantaged, spent time on a family farm in a healthy, supportive and inclusive environment.

To contact the Southeast Regional Development Officer

- 087 231 1061
- southeast@socialfarmingireland.ie

FAREWELL!

Social Farming Ireland would like to wish Gillian McCarthy, Southeast Regional Development officer farewell! Gillian has been an integral part of our team and her influence will be greatly missed. While we are sad to see her go, we wish her nothing but the best in all her future endeavours. Thank you, Gillian, for everything you have contributed to our team!



South Midlands Region

SOCIAL FARMING AROUND THE COUNTRY



SOCIAL FARMING IN THE SOUTH MIDLANDS

SOCIAL FARMS IN THE SOUTH MIDLANDS

There are currently 26 Social Farms in the South Midlands available to deliver Social Farming Placements in 2025 with 3 new farms becoming fully trained and ready to welcome participants!

LAOIS PARTNERSHIP

It was great to collaborate with Liam Ramsbottom from Laois Partnership this year as we continue growing the positive impact of social farming in the region, looking forward to more partnering in 2025 and reviewing the impact of our collaborations!



COUNTY KILDARE LEADER PARTNERSHIP

We have been working with County Kildare Leader Partnership for a number of years now and they have supported placements through the SICAP Fund. They captured the incredible impact of social farming in a recent case study video. It was inspiring to hear from the Social Farmers Joe and Ailish McFadden and Jeremy Haworth, as well as participants who shared their experiences. Social Farming National Coordinator Helen Doherty also contributed, emphasising the positive impact of social farming for both participants and farmers and the importance of the support provided through Social Farming Ireland to make it all possible!



It's been two years since the South Midlands region was established, and what a busy and impactful time it has been! Covering Wicklow, Kildare, Laois, Offaly, Westmeath, and South Dublin, the region has gone from strength to strength

In this region we this year supported some 235 participants on Social Farms.

In 2024 we have worked with 22 organisations in the South Midlands with participants from ID services, mental health services, LCA, youth services, and Social Inclusion project

To contact the South Midland's Regional Development Officer

☎ 086 136 6503

✉ Southmidlands@socialfarmingireland.ie

[WATCH HERE](#) ←

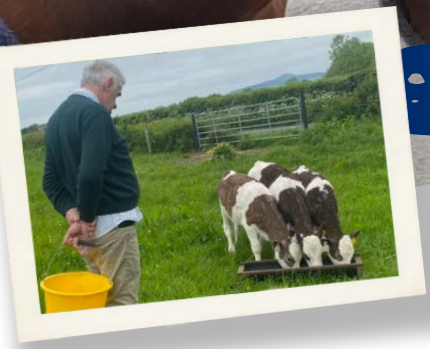
OVER 165 NEW PARTICIPANT ON SOCIAL FARMS THIS YEAR

TEAGASC AND OFFALY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

Recently, in Tullamore, Helen & Shannon presented to Offaly Local Development Company, as well as Teagasc Westmeath-Offaly-Cavan-Monaghan! These event provided us with the opportunity to meet and discuss all things Social Farming!



Southwest Region



SOCIAL FARMING AROUND THE COUNTRY

SOCIAL FARMING IN THE SOUTHWEST

It has been a busy year in the Southwest, with over 175 participants being supported by Social Farmers in the region.

Participants with disabilities, mental health challenges, those in LCA, youth services, homeless and addiction services, acquired brain injury and some who are socially excluded spent time and carried out activities on ordinary family farms as a form of social support!

To contact the Southwest Regional Development Officer

☎ 087 366 3842

✉ southwest@socialfarmingireland.ie

SOCIAL FARMS IN THE SOUTHWEST

There are currently 28 Social Farms in the Southwest ready to deliver Social Farming Placements in 2025!

ENERGY & FARM DIVERSIFICATION SHOW

Eadaoin, alongside Helen, Brian and Mary attended the Energy and Farm Diversification show in Gurteen! Our outside stand, with farm produce and animals (piglets and hens!), was a big hit with everyone as they arrived! A panel discussion with Ivan Yates gave all a deeper understanding of how beneficial and rewarding Social Farming can be for both the participants and the farmers.



SOCIAL FARMING OPEN DAYS IN THE SOUTHWEST

Julie Powell hosted an outstanding open day in the Southwest that brought together Social Farming participants, service providers, and farmers from the region and beyond. The event was a fantastic opportunity for networking, sharing experiences, and strengthening the connections within the Social Farming community.



FAREWELL!

It is with great appreciation that we bid farewell to Eadaoin O'Connell, our Southwest Regional Development Officer. Eadaoin's expertise, passion, and tireless effort have made a lasting impression on all of us, and her work has played a crucial role. We are truly grateful for the time and energy she dedicated to the role. While we will certainly miss her, we know she will continue to achieve great things in her next chapter. Wishing you all the best, Eadaoin – thank you for your invaluable contributions!

SOCIAL FARMING AWARENESS WEEK

Social Farming Ireland was delighted to have participated in the second annual all Ireland Social Farming Awareness Week from the 7th to the 11th October!

During this week 5 Farms hosted exciting open days on their farms:

- National Social Farming Awareness Week 2024 kicked off very successfully in Inagh, Co. Clare with an Open Day on Michael Callinan's farm. The morning was a resounding success for those in attendance, with great interest arising from the event and people now having a greater understanding of Social Farming and the benefits for those who both facilitate and participate in the initiative!
- On Tuesday for the second day of the Social Farming Awareness Week, James and Emer's farm in Co. Cork held a very successful Open Day on their beautiful farm. It was a great gathering of participants, services, neighbours, friends and farmers! John, a participant from St. Raphael's, moved us all with his story of how his time with the Leahy family made them feel like a second home to him. The day also sparked great interest from new and developing farmers looking to get involved!
- On Wednesday there was a wonderful atmosphere of positivity and inclusion at Anne and Gerry Beirne's farm outside of Elphin as they opened their gates as part of Social Farming Awareness Week 2024. The highlight of the day was hearing from a participant's parent about the incredible progress her son has made since engaging with Social Farming and a participant himself spoke about how social farming has positively impacted his mental health! This couldn't be more fitting during this year's Mental Health Month, as social farming continues to prove its value in promoting mental wellbeing!!
- On Wednesday also, Helen & Charlotte also made the trip to Tyrone to attend one of the the Social Farming Open days in Northern Ireland. It was to Annie Mullans farm close to Plumbridge in Tyrone where we spoke about our current development of social farming and heard from farmers and service providers on the state of play in NI. Thanks to Annie and Vincent for a great event and to Aoibheann and the team in Social Farming Support Service NI - we had a great day of sharing and learning
- On Thursday, Social farmer Stephen Morrison opened their farm. Jack Murphy with [Nua Healthcare](#) shared powerful insights about the impact Social Farming has had on participants. He spoke passionately about watching them grow, and become more confident, and how their involvement has positively influenced other areas of their lives! We also had valuable contributions from Social Farmers Ciaran Duggan and Val Cross, alongside our wonderful host, Stephen Morrison!
- National Social Farming Awareness Week 2024 wrapped up on Gerard Lynch's Farm in Butlersbridge Co. Cavan. Gerard, along with social farmer John O'Reilly, spoke passionately about the positive experiences of their participants and about their social farming experience, and Padraig McBreen [Cavan County Local Development](#), who has been involved since the early days, reflected on how far social farming has come since its development and the huge impact it has had on farmers and participants alike! We wrapped up the day with a great farm walk, complete with a stunning view of the lake!



SOCIAL FARMING FARMER WELLBEING EVENTS

Our Social Farming Farmer Wellbeing events kicked off on Stephen Morrison's Hartwell Farm in Co. Kildare, followed by a fantastic evening in Ballymoe.

It was wonderful to see the strong support from both social farmers and local farmers in the community. These evenings were all about fostering connection and learning, and we couldn't have asked for better conversations.

We were delighted to hear from our four incredible speakers—George Graham, Ann Phelan, Deirdre Deegan, and JG Murphy—who shared invaluable insights and practical tools for recognising and reducing stress.



Our southeast Farmer Wellbeing event took place on Louise and Eamon Maher's farm. It was a truly welcoming and engaging community gathering. We were delighted to hear from Harold Kingston and Mairead Steele from Corporate Wellness Ireland, who provided valuable insights on recognising stress and burnout, along with practical tools to help manage and relieve stress.



We had another fantastic Farmer Wellbeing event, this time at Kilmeedy Social Farm in Co. Limerick! Our inspiring speakers, Harold Kingston and Treacy O'Connor from Corporate Wellness Ireland, shared invaluable insights and practical strategies for managing stress. Their presentations sparked meaningful conversations, highlighting the vital role of mental wellness in farming.



We wrapped up our final Farmer Wellbeing event at the beautiful Ross Castle in Co. Meath, hosted by the Social Farmers Richard, Jackie, and Steph.

A huge thank you to our guest speakers, Dr. Tony Bates and Melissa Wylie from Rural Support, whose insights encouraged meaningful conversations about the importance of stress management and self-care in the farming community.

Irish farmers are facing unprecedented challenges, from rising costs and market pressures to unpredictable weather. In response to the growing need for mental health and well-being support, Social Farming Ireland, Leitrim Development Company, launched a series of five Farmer Wellbeing events. Funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's Farm Safety budget, these events provided practical tools for mental health, stress management, and self-care, while fostering connection and peer support.

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

Renew your membership at dairywomenireland.ie



ZOOM MEETING
DECEMBER 5TH 7.30PM-8.45PM



Social Farming Ireland's National Coordinator, Helen Doherty presented to the Dairy Women of Ireland members in December! It was a great opportunity to discuss Social Farming with farmers!



In September, we had the pleasure of hosting a Polish Government Study Group as they toured several Social Farms to learn about Social Farming in Ireland. They visited farms across Cavan, Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford, Westmeath, and Kildare, engaging with farmers and hearing first hand experiences. A heartfelt thank you to our Social Farmers for their warm hospitality and to the group for their interest and insightful questions!



We were in great like minded company at the launch of the Leitrim Development Company WorkAbility Programme where people are assisted to find work and meaningful roles and receive ongoing support!

Adam Harris & Peter Kearns were inspiring bringing their insights values and lived experience to us all.

We look forward to working with Sabrina & Eddie to improve lives!!

We had an exciting and busy couple of days at the National Ploughing Championship in Ratheniska. It was a fantastic opportunity to connect with a diverse range of people and share the many benefits of Social Farming. We had meaningful conversations about the positive impact it has on both farmers and participants, and it was inspiring to see such interest and enthusiasm. Thank you to everyone who stopped by to learn more and engage with us!



SOCIAL FARMER TRAINING

Social Farming Ireland has successfully ran 24 training sessions so far in 2024. These sessions have been designed to equip farmers with the necessary skills and knowledge to engage in social farming.

We ran six online training sessions this year, which is the starting point for all new farmers and is followed up with further in-person training. All our training (currently provided free) is aimed at enhancing farmers understanding of working with individuals with support needs, ensuring that they are well-prepared to provide a supportive and inclusive environment on their farms.



Over 73 new farmers have attended our Introductory to Social Farming training in November and December! The next step in their Social Farming journey is the in person training, Framework for Practice, Disability Awareness and Peer Learning.

Additionally, we have a group of farmers who are diligently working towards becoming practicing social farms this year.

They are actively applying the skills acquired during the training sessions, preparing themselves to welcome participants to their farms in the near future!



As always, essential sessions such as HSE Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children First are included.

The on-farm 'Peer Learning' days remain the most popular, offering farmers the opportunity to engage in a practical session hosted on an established farm.

Our awareness workshops also prove to be very popular and enjoyable, pushing peoples boundaries!

Training new farmers is always rewarding and we are looking forward to their journey with us!

IN THE NEWS

2024

 **Irish Examiner**

At the beginning of 2024, the **Irish Examiner** highlighted the announcement made by Minister Anne Rabbitte “**€200,000 in support announced for social farming in 2024**”

Read the full article [here](#)

 **IRISH FARMERS JOURNAL**

“**Social Farming is 'more rewarding than I could ever put words to'**”

Two of our Social Farmers, Bernie Whyte & Gerard Deegan featured in an article in the **Irish Farmers Journal** to discuss their Social Farming experience

Click [here](#) for the full article

 **AgriLand**
THE HOME OF UK AGRICULTURE

“**‘Social Farming’ is a ‘win-win’ for rural communities**”

Social Farming Ireland featured in article in **AgriLand** discussing how Social Farming can be used to diversify your farm and about the benefits of Social Farming for the farmer, as well as the community

Click [here](#) for the full article

 **Irish Independent**

Social Farmer Ciaran Duggan was interviewed by the Irish Independent where he discussed Social Farming & his recent research project on ash dieback!

Click [here](#) for the full article

 **northern sound**
The Spirit of Cavan & Monaghan

Northern Sound spoke with Helen about Gerard Lynch's open day as part of Awareness Week

Click [here](#) to listen back

 **kilkenny live**

“Kilkenny farm to hold free wellbeing event for farm families”

Click [here](#) for the full article

 **Irish Independent**

‘I don't live on a farm, and I didn't think cleaning cow dung out of a shed would be fun, but it is. I recommend it to everyone’ - Social farmers & were interviewed by Catherina Cunnane at an open day Anne and Gerry Beirne's farm

Click [here](#) for the full article

 **Irish Independent**

‘How social farming is cultivating confidence and changing lives for Mid-West youth’ The article highlights how Social Farming is positively impacting youth in the Mid-West by cultivating confidence and providing new opportunities.

Click [here](#) for the full article

Follow Social Farming Ireland on our social media for regular news & updates

