

Social Farming Support Service Northern Ireland Update September 2020



Update September 2020

This bulletin covers the July-September period of 2020, which happily included the phased restart of Social Farming delivery regionally.

This third newsletter of 2020 will update you how the Social Farming Support Service for Northern Ireland continued to support farmers and promote Social Farming.

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SoEngage Project

The SoEngage project came to an end in September 2020 after a successful two-year period. As a project partner, Rural Support had the opportunity to promote the model of Social Farming in Northern Ireland and share the learning of the Social Farming Support Service as a dedicated resource for farmers delivering or preparing to deliver Social Farming.

SoEngage was funded through Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership in the field of Vocational Education and Training with the objective to develop training to support farmers to engage in Social Farming for economic benefit and sustainability of the farm and the rural community. Training modules with case studies from each partner region were developed and are available on www.soengage.eu.

To mark the end of the project and the materials developed within it, Rural Support and The Rural Centre hosted a multiplier event virtually for those involved or interested in Social Farming. The feedback from attendees demonstrated the value of the project in producing training for new farmers and demonstrating examples of practice across Europe.



Final partner meeting of SoEngage project, held virtually 24th September



SoEngage UK multiplier event hosted by Rural Support and The Rural Centre on 29th September

Promotion & Opportunities

Over the summer months, there were a number of opportunities to promote Social Farming and demonstrate its impact.

After filming in July, Social Farming at Behind the Stable Door in Bangor, Co. Down featured on BBC Northern Ireland's Home Ground on Monday 14th September. As a flagship show on farming and rural stories in Northern Ireland, this was an excellent means to spread the word of what Social Farming offers. Another day of filming took place in August on Islaharnan Farm & Parklands in Armoy, Co. Antrim for a piece on NVTV on areas of interest in the local community.

The Royal Ulster Agricultural Society's (RUAS) Horticulture Committee visited An Tobar Social Farm in Silverbridge, Co. Armagh in September to discuss the potential to showcase Social Farming through their horticulture displays at Balmoral Show 2021. This would be an excellent opportunity and something to look forward to!



Social Farming at Behind the Stable Door, Bangor, featuring on BBC Home Ground



SFSS Coordinator featured on BBC Home Ground



Eugene Mullan of Islaharnan Farm & Parklands, featured on NVTV



RUAS Horticulture Committee visiting An Tobar Social Farm, Silverbridge

DAERA Social Farming Capital Grant Scheme

DAERA again offered a Social Farming Capital Grant Scheme through its Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TPRSI) Framework with 13 successful applicants receiving 50% match funding to support capital improvements on their farm to achieve Social Farming Standards. The Social Farming Standards enable Social Farmers to provide clear evidence of service quality excellence and practically demonstrate their professionalism in delivering Social Farming.

