Social Farming Support Service Update December 2022

Update October – December 2022

This bulletin covers the October – December period of 2022, and this update will detail how the Social Farming Support Service for Northern Ireland is continuing to support farmers and promote Social Farming. Please visit the Social Farming section of the Rural Support website: www.ruralsupport.org.uk or follow Rural Support on social media (Twitter: @RuralSupport; Facebook: Rural Support) to keep up to date on developments. You can also contact the Social Farming Support Service on the details below.

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November saw a new member of staff join Rural Support. Elaine Conlon has joined the team as Social Farming Support Coordinator covering Nikki Foster maternity leave under the expert guidance of Dr Aoibeannn Walsh. Originally from Co Armagh, and from a farming background Elaine has spent the last 24 years working withing Southern Health and Social Care Trust – Elaine has worked in various Departments across the Trust and most recently in a Social Prescribing project within the Promoting Wellbeing Team. Elaine is a huge supporter of the Social Farming model.



Social Farming Conference

The Social Farming Conference held in Loughry Campus, CAFRE on 25th November 2022 invited delegates from Health & Social Care, Public Health, Community and Voluntary Sector, Education/Training Sectors. The event was well represented from each sector and feedback was very positive.



The main purpose was to mark the development of Social Farming in Northern Ireland to include:

- How do we make it sustainable
- What could the future look like for Social Farming in Northern Ireland



The conference included a round table discussion and an expert panel to discuss the positive benefits of Social Farming for both farmers and participants and the importance of stakeholders working together.

The conference also had opportunity to hear more of the European experience of Social Farming Ireland from Helen Doherty and a video presentation from Marjorlein Elings, Netherlands.



Social Farming Standards badge were also awarded to three successful farms:

- Jubilee Farm – Glynn
- Magennis Farm – Newry
- Laurelview – Templepatrick

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October 2022

The First Social Farming Awareness Week took place from **Monday 3rd October to Friday 7th October,** with the opportunity to attend Social Farm visits across five different farms.

Yellow Farm Hilltown hosted Minister Poots who attended and enjoyed the array of talents from the Social Farming Participants, and hosts.

The aim of awareness week was to promote the concept of Social Farming across Northern Ireland to potential participants, families, farmers, referral organisations and other relevant stakeholders. It was an opportunity for those interested to attend a Social Farm to see delivery in practice and hear first-hand from the farmers and their participants.

Farms that hosted the awareness week:

- Yellow Road Farm, Hilltown
- Laurelview Equestrian Centre and Farm, Templepatrick
- Annagh Social Farm, Derrylin
- Jubilee Farm, Glynn
- Behind the Stable Door, Bangor













On the 6th of December Rural Support Chief Executive Veronica and Elaine Social Farming Coordinator were invited to An Tobar Lottery award presentation. An Tobar won The National Lottery Project of The Year 2022 Award for Northern Ireland, (coming second overall in the UK out of 1300 entrants).
An incredible achievement for An Tobar and well deserved. Ardal O'Hanlon formally presented the award to An Tobar staff and attendees enjoyed a guided walk in the woods with An Tobar Chair Una Walsh, with everyone enjoying music and refreshments afterwards to celebrate award. The Social Farming Participants were also in attendance and were delighted to get some pictures with "Dougall"









Social Farms Marking Christmas 2022













Please get in touch with Rural Support to learn more about Social Farming

Wishing you a Happy Christmas and a Happy Healthy 2023

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