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SOCIAL FARMING ACROSS BORDERS PROJECT

OFFICIAL LAUNCH

12TH OF SEPTEMBER 2012

LOUGHRY COLLEGE, COOKSTOWN, CO. TYRONE

**DR. JIM KINSELLA
PROJECT MANAGER**



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Social Farming Across Borders (SoFAB)

- **INTERREG IVA Programme**
Priority 2: Cooperation for a more sustainable cross-border region
Theme 1: Rural Development
- **Duration:** 3 years – Oct. 2011 to Sept. 2014
- **Partners:** -University College Dublin
- Queen's University Belfast
- Leitrim Development Company

- **Coverage:**
 - 6 Border Counties, Republic of Ireland
 - Northern Ireland (all counties)
- **Grant:** Euro 689,826
 - ERDF award of 75% grant and matched funding by Dept. of Agriculture & Rural Development Northern Ireland and Dept. of Environment, Community and Local Government (RoI)
 - Funding managed by the Special European Union Programme Body (SEUPB)

SoFAB Project

- *Promotes Social Farming as a viable option for achieving improved quality of life for people who use health and social services as well as farm families, through enhancing social inclusion and connecting farmers with their communities*

SoFAB Project

- ***Built on experience of:***
 - *SoFAR Project (2006-8) an EU Framework Project (7 EU countries incl. Ireland)*
 - *European Research Network (EU Cost Action Project)*
 - *Community of Practice Group (Ireland) 2009-date*
 - *DARD Report on Social Farming in NI (2010)*

Social Farming?

- About engaging with those farming activities (incl. horticulture/ gardening and working with animals) aimed at promoting the mental, physical and social well being of people



Social Farming Principles

- Promotes social inclusion through integrating services within existing resources of communities
- Recognises the social function of farming - service provision through a working farm
- Connects farm households to new groups of people in society and establishes new opportunities



SoFAB Co-ordination

– Project Steering Committee

- Every 2 months
- Partners + DARD + CAFRE + SEUPB

– Project Advisory Committee

- Independent of Project incl. CF UK, CFWM, SAC, Health Trust NI and HSE RoI, CoP RoI as well as Network reps.

– Staff

- Co-ordinator; Development Worker; and Project Support Worker

SoFAB Project Objectives?

1. Establish a network to enable information sharing and engage in public policy debate
2. Identify and disseminate best practices in delivery of Social Farming services
3. Strengthen the capacity of farm households and social services personnel to deliver quality social farming services
4. Raise public awareness and influence public policy towards recognition and support for Social Farming

SoFAB Network Development

- Cross-sectoral
- Shared learning
- Inform pilot and guidance documents
- Publish recommendations for improved institutional arrangements to enable cross-sectoral co-operation in Social Farming

SoFAB Pilot Programme

- 20 Farms
 - 10 from ROI counties and 10 from throughout NI
 - 60 people using social farming services (2013)
- Outputs
 - Experience of service users and providers
 - Demonstration/ Evidence
 - Practising Social Farmers
 - Cost Benefit Analysis and Guidance Handbook

SoFAB Training

- Develop training programme based on pilot
- Offer two consecutive training courses for 30 farmers and 30 social care personnel
- Evaluation of training programme
- Guide to design of future training programmes

SoFAB Dissemination

- Awareness events
- Media coverage
- Website
- Conferences
 - 1- Lessons from practice
 - 2 - Lessons learnt and recommendations for public policy
- Additional publications

Conclusion

- Project well-grounded and ready for take-off
- Substantial interest and goodwill
- Social Farming does work – needs to be understood within regional constraints and opportunities
- Challenges ahead:
 - building relationships
 - compiling the case
 - convincing policy makers

