The Duncannon Blue Flag Farming & Communities Scheme EIP

• Smart Villages and Rural towns in Ireland: Revitalising Rural Areas through Community-Led Innovation

• National Rural Network
  • 4th July 2019
  • Athlone
"We are all accountable for our actions; their affect and influence on our lives and the lives of others"
Structure of Farming in Ireland 2016

Total Number of Farms: 137,500
Average Farm Size: 32.4 hectares

Livestock Numbers:
- Poultry: 11.1m
- Pigs: 1.6m
- Sheep: 5.1m
- Cattle: 7.2m

Total Agricultural Area: 4,455,800 hectares

Land Usage:
- Grassland: 4,104,300 hectares
- Other: 62,100 hectares
- Cereals: 280,400 hectares
- Potatoes: 9,000 hectares

Farm Labour:
- Total Number of Family Farms: 137,100
  - Male Holder: 121,100 (88%)
  - Female Holder: 16,000 (12%)

Age of Farmholder:
- Under 35: 7,400 (5%)
- 65 and over: 41,200 (30%)
Green Low-carbon Agri-environment Scheme (GLAS)
- 16,600 km watercourses protected from bovines
- 4,900 using low emission slurry spreading
- 24,800 ha wild bird cover
- 281,600 ha low input permanent pasture

- Maximum payment €5,000
- Current participation – approx 50,000

Total RDP Funding €4bn
GLAS Funding €1.3bn
Duncannon Beach

- Designated bathing water & shellfish water
- River Barrow & Nore SAC
- Important for local tourism and economy
- Lost Blue Flag during 2007
- Four main pressures
Investigations to date

**Farmyards:** 16 inspections – 3 direct discharges

**Domestic Waste Water:** 40 septic tank inspections – 16 failed, 6 directly discharging

**Limitations to these inspections:** Top-down, management etc

**Multiple Different Pressures**
European Innovation Partnerships (EIP)

‘A completely new way of responding to local challenges’

- New source of EU funding through DAFM of €59 million
- Locally Led Section (Johnstown Castle)
- Opportunity to design an innovative locally-led scheme for this catchment which improves water quality and protects farm incomes
- Focusing on the farming and forestry sectors
- 12 successful projects in Round 1:
  - “BRIDE”
  - Caomhnu Aran
  - Hen Harrier Project (€25 million)
- “SUAS”
- Blackstairs Farming Futures
- Pearl Musscle Project (€10 million)
- Now 23 EIP funded projects
- We will receive funding of €550,000 for a 3 year project
- Authors: Dr. Mairead Shore & Con Curtin
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- **Aims:**
- Sustainably restore, protect & enhance water quality
- Develop an effective model for the future catchments
- Foster positive relations between farmers and households
Catchment Area

- 13km² 1km²
- 60 Landowners
- >220 households

- Village of Ramsgrange
- Several Business’s
- Two schools & creche

- Elevated nitrates & phosphorus (May 2019)
- Impact on Ecology
Our Approach

1. Create a ‘Pollution Potential Zone’ (PPZ) Plan for each farm.
2. Provide farmers with a full-time ‘Sustainability Advisor’.
3. Advisors come on board to engage with farmers.
4. Monitor farm practice change and water quality in the catchment.
5. Create a local awareness programme for domestic waste water treatment systems (WWTS’s).
6. Develop community wide engagement with the project (ownership, responsibility & appreciation)
1. PPZ Plan

- PPZ Survey
- Water Protection Payments
- Funded Works

PPZ MAPS
Our Operational Group

- Wexford Co. Co.
- Teagasc
- Local Farmer and IFA
- BordBia
- Glanbia
- Advisory Service

Members:
- Eoin Kinsella
- Dermot Leahy
- Gerry Forde
- Brendan Cooney
- Nicholas Rossitor
- David Wall
- Eddie Burgess
- Ger Shortle
- Kay O’Connell
- Catherine Colfer
- Larry Murphy
- Tom Deane
- Kevin Brennan
- James Wallace
- Eileen Murphy
- Redmond Barry
- Geoff Barry
- Emma O’Grady
- Anne Browne
- Pat Ryan

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So how do we get Community wide engagement?

- Bottoms up approach
- Engagement type
- Opinions/ actions
- Participation
- Courses
- Local Business
- Farmers
- Household owners
- Schools
- Organisations
- Local Councillors
- Scientists
- Researchers
The stakeholders/‘Multipliers’
Education/Engagement

• 2 ‘Citizen Science’ courses in Duncannon for farming/wider community in 2017 (18 participants)
• Ken Whelan showed participants how to monitor the water quality of local streams
• Focused on SSCS – identifying & scoring the invertebrates
• Huge interest and enthusiasm, particularly for their own farms
• Going forward...
Future engagement/education

- Encourage farm participation in knowledge exchange (KE) initiatives
- Farm Demonstrations- farmer change/ local water-environment
- Maintain ‘citizen science’ courses
- Carlow IT- Final year student project
- System of communicating water-quality results to farmers/community- local meetings
- ‘Text-alert’ system
- “Blue Flag Communities Committee”
- “DWWTS campaign”
- “Expert talks” - Agriculture, water quality
- Fishing competitions, kick sampling
- Social Media- Twitter, website & facebook
- Maintain core location
Expected Results, return and performance

• Reduction in Bacterial Pollution
• Improvement in Ecological quality
• Compliance above Nitrates Directive
• Efficiencies on catchment farms
• Reduction in septic tank failures
• Local ownership, responsibility and appreciation for local water environment
Thank you!

“Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships.”

@DuncannonEIP

Website coming soon!
(Duncannonblueflag.ie)

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