



**Teagasc Signpost Series, May 21<sup>st</sup> 2021**  
***Brendan Dunford – Motivating farmers to address the climate and biodiversity***

# A Burren journey...

2005

BurrenLIFE

2010

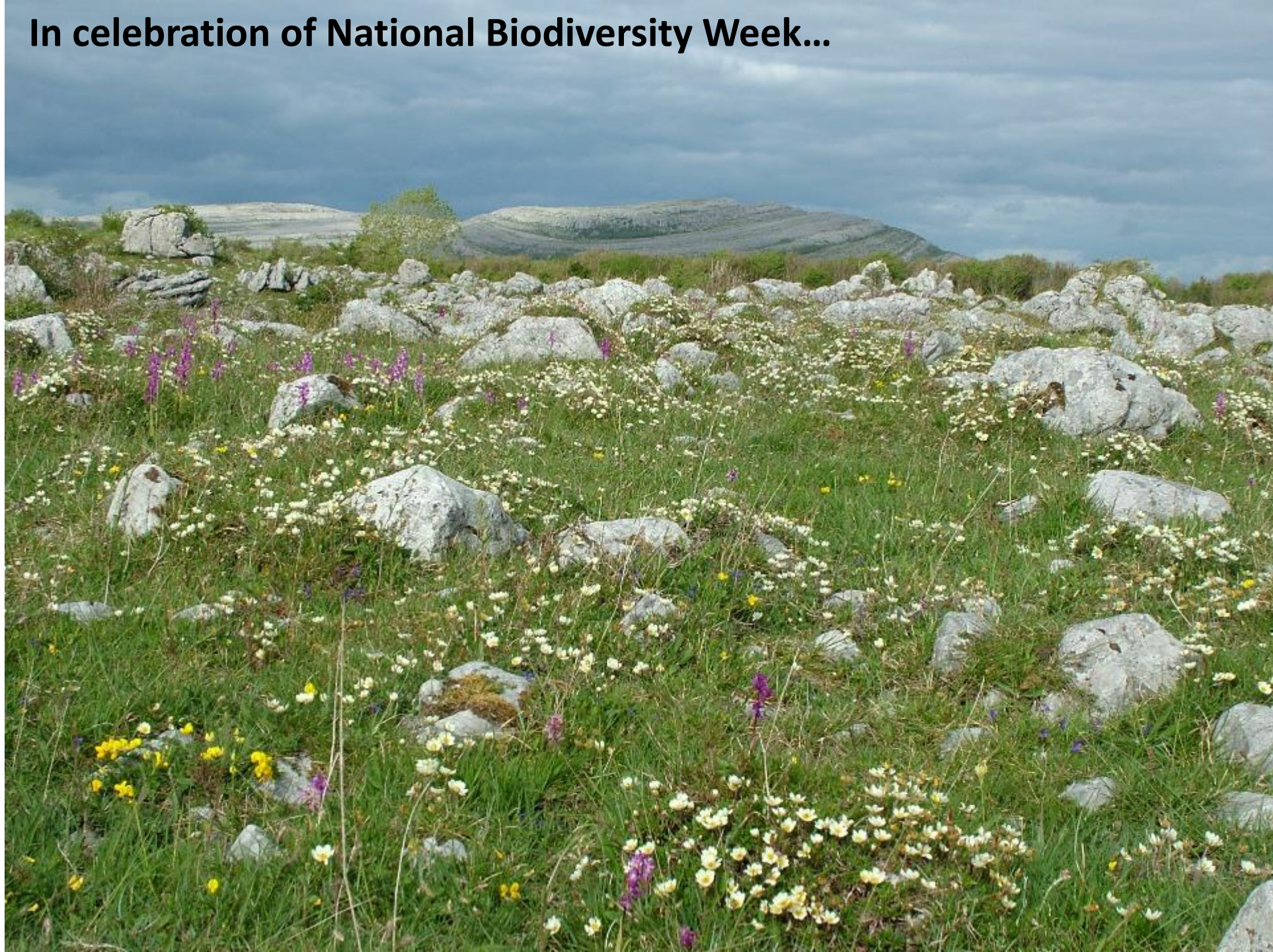
Burren Farming for  
Conservation

2015

The Burren  
Programme



**In celebration of National Biodiversity Week...**























**Lords and ladies**  
**Cuckoo pint**  
**Red hot poker**  
**Snakes meat**  
**Willy lily**  
**Cows and bulls**  
**Jack in the pulpit**  
**Devils and angels**  
**Soldier in a sentry box**  
**Fairy lamps**



In recent decades, the rate and scale of change in farming has outstripped the Burren's ability to adjust, resulting in a growing imbalance between farming and nature.

*When **under-farmed** or **over-farmed**, the Burren's heritage becomes eroded – reducing the range of **ecosystem services** being delivered..*



- *This isn't unique to the Burren. Over 30m ha of High Nature Value (HNV) farmland in the EU face similar challenges - 16% of EU-designated habitats are in favourable conservation status, with farmland habitats faring worse.*

# Farming and 'Ecosystem Services'

**Farmer:** 'a person engaged in agriculture, raising living organisms for food or raw materials' (*Wikipedia*).

However, many farmers also have the potential to generate **additional 'Ecosystem Services'** using their land and livestock.



Biodiversity/pollination Cultural heritage



Water management



Carbon storage

**Farmers are only paid for the food they produce, often doing so at the expense of other ecosystem services.**

# How do we motivate more farmers to deliver more 'Ecosystem Services'?



**Pocket:** Pay farmers to *deliver* clearly defined Ecosystem Services.



**Head:** Support farmers on *how* best to deliver Ecosystem Services.



**Heart:** Persuade farmers that this is really *worth doing*, their legacy.



*If we want farmers to 'farm for nature' we must provide a more compelling proposition than what's on offer now.*



# 1. Paying for Ecosystem Services using result-based payments model



0/10 **Overstocked, no 'ecosystem service' payment**



4/10 **Undergrazed, no 'ecosystem service' payment**



10/10 **Really well managed, 'ecosystem service' payment of €315/ha**

**'Paying for results' means that the farmer is free to decide how to manage the land**



Co-financed by the Connecting Europe Facility of the European Union



# Simple Burren Score Card (focus on local priorities, optimising co-benefits)

EU Score Sheet for **WATER** (Type: Pasture) Scheme Programme v1.7 June 2019

Field	Field	Field	Field
Overall Grazing Practice (Score of 0-100)	Water Management (Score of 0-100)	Soil Health (Score of 0-100)	Overall Score (Score of 0-100)
Water: 100	Water: 100	Soil: 100	Overall: 100

**SCORING (please approximate values)**

A1. What is the grazing level?

100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0
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A2. What is the level of the water?

100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0
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A3. In Burren areas, what is the level of the water?

100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0
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A4. In Burren areas, what is the level of the water?

100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0
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A5. What is the level of the water?

100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0
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A6. What is the level of the water?

100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0
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A7. What is the level of the water?

100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0
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A8. What is the level of the water?

100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0
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A9. What is the level of the water?

100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0
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A10. What is the level of the water?

100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0
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**Comments:**



# Payment structure designed to incentivise improvement

Per ha payment	Score 10	Score 9	Score 8	Score 7	Score 6	Score 5	Score 4	Score 3	Score 2	Score 1	Score 0
0-10 ha	€315	€240	€192	€168	€144	€120	-	-	-	-	-
>10-40 ha	€180	€135	€96	€84	€72	€60	-	-	-	-	-
>40-80 ha	€90	€68	€48	€42	€36	€30	-	-	-	-	-
>80-120 ha	€45	€34	€24	€21	€18	€15	-	-	-	-	-
>120 ha	€23	€17	€12	€11	€9	€8	-	-	-	-	-

- **No payments** for scores less than 5.
- **Bonus payments** for scores of 9 & 10.
- Annual payments of up to €315/ha, ceiling of €10k, **average € 2,714.**
- Degressive, banded payments with **lowest scoring fields paid first** in order to target these fields for urgent action.

2. Paying for *practical* conservation actions: Low scores → Mgt issues → Action needed!



Addressing water pollution? Provide alternative sources.



Restoring grazing? Repair walls.

Scrub encroaching on species rich grassland? Targeted removal.



Farmer nominates conservation tasks to suit his/her farm and boost the field score. Farmer also co-funds work.

Farmers avail of a fund (per ha) within which (s)he can **nominate** (and **co-fund 25-75%**) tasks to increase score.

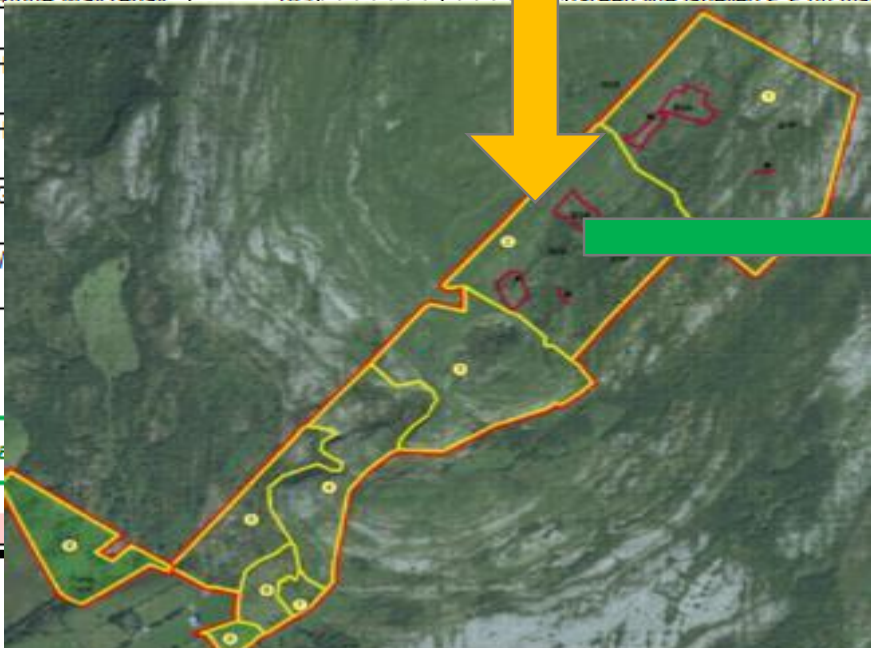
Payment for Actions (M2)

Payments are subject to completion of actions planned, obtaining all necessary permissions and complying with any conditions attached

Maximum allowance €7,000.00

Please tick all tasks farmers agrees to do

Field no(s).	Work	Length (m)	Area (ha)	No.	Work description	Funding rate (%)	Paid per unit (€)	€ Farmer receives	Agree to do?
					<p><i>For the following scrub tasks (S1A): Cut using chainsaws and immediately treat stumps with herbicide. Cut Jan-Feb or Sept-Dec (outside the bird nesting season). Costings include piling, treating, herbicide &amp; dye.</i></p> <p><i>When using herbicides: Roundup Biactive and Barclay Gallup Biograde are the only herbicides permitted by the NPWS. Make sure you read and follow the directions on the product label. The Basic Payment Scheme</i></p>				
9	Scrub control		0.0912		<p>Area S1A : Cut and treat all briars, blackthorn, hazel and other scrub within and around the enclosure, and along the wall with the mothair but leave the mature scrub marked on the map. <u>All cut scrub must be removed from the enclosure and either piled in a suitable location for rotting or removal by tractor to a place where it can be burned.</u> Labour estimate of 4 days for 2 people, which includes additional time to allow for removing scrub from enclosure.</p> <p>As this is in and around a Recorded Monument the work was notified to NMS and permission received on 16</p>	75%	n/a	909.72	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Stone wall repair	214			Green line labelled A-B on map. Repair the northern boundary wall to its original high standard using fallen and loose scattered stones. Do not take stones from other built structures.	50%	2.29	486.06	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Stone wall repair	245			Green line labelled C-D on map. Repair the northern boundary wall to its original high standard using fallen and loose scattered stones. Do not take stones from other built structures.	50%	2.29	560.05	<input type="checkbox"/>
2/3	Stone wall repair	183			Green line labelled E-E on map. Repair internal wall to its original high standard using fallen and loose scattered stones from other built structures.	75%	3.43	629.69	<input type="checkbox"/>
9,10	Fence				part of field 9 and throughout summer. Labour estimate of 10 c			0	<input type="checkbox"/>
5,6,7,8	Fence				mid-June and again 6 weeks la			0	<input type="checkbox"/>
4/9	Gate				estimate of 5 days for 1 person			0	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Well				nal, Burren-style gate at the			0	<input type="checkbox"/>



General... s to be exceptional.

### 3. Creating new economic *and social* opportunities for farmers and the local community



#### Conservation Services



Supporting an average of **20 local jobs** each year among Burren businesses, contractors and craftspeople

Promoting opportunities for **agri-tourism** and contributing to the Burren's appeal as a **visitor destination**

#### Locally Produced Gates, Troughs



#### Educational services

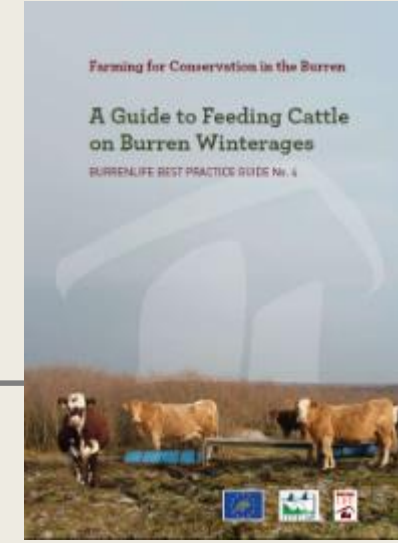


## Case Study: Nagle Family Winterage

- Increased stocking levels by 20% through better management
- Annual premium payment for high field scores (mostly 10s)
- Employing several local contractors for work on scrub, water, walls
- Purchased 8-10 locally produced 'Burren' gates
- Uses Irish barley-based, bespoke Burren feed ration
- Regularly hosts visitors, study groups, media etc
- Employs local farm advisor, has support of local BP team, archaeologist etc

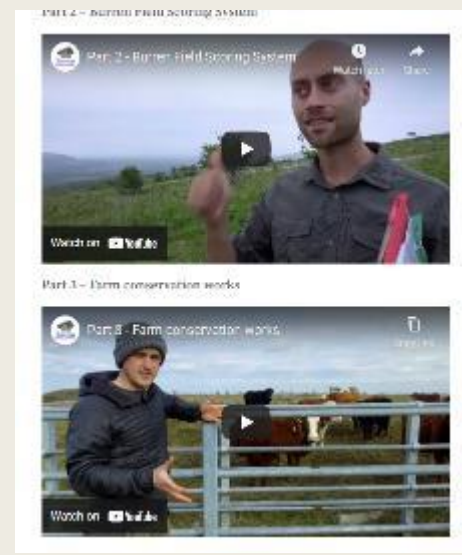
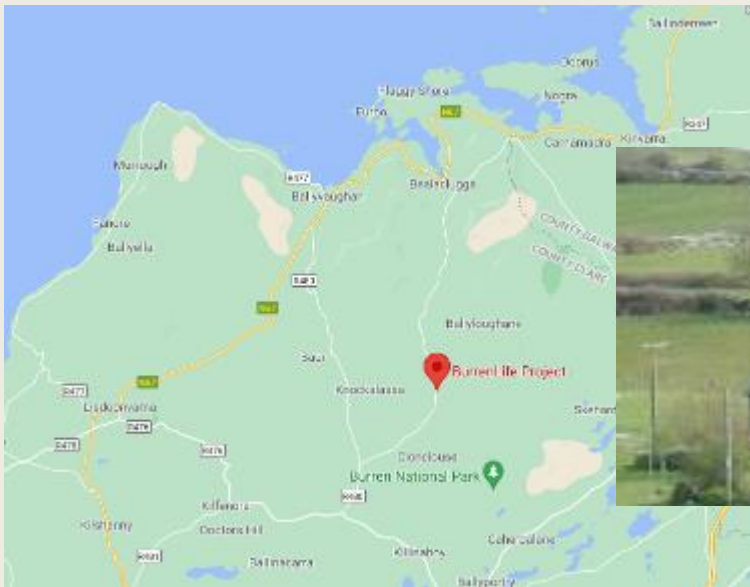


# 4. Co-creation - and on-farm demonstration of – innovative environmental solutions





# 5. Providing *Environmental* Training, Advice and ongoing Support – ideally at a local level







# 6. Sharing farmer's knowledge (peer to peer learning) – [www.farmingfornature.ie](http://www.farmingfornature.ie)



## John McHugh

## Short Films



## On-line forum



## Tommy Earley



## Webinars



## Podcasts



- 1: Rest meadows and pasture during the main flowering season (May-July), in meadows this will allow flowers to seed and replenish the seed bank, in pastures it reduces nutrient load, competition, encouraging more flowering plants to thrive.
- 2: Good diversity of plant and insect species present.
- Grazing Pastures**
- 3: Graze in late Summer, Autumn or Winter at an appropriate rate, avoiding poaching (especially on wet ground) or undergrazing
- 4: Muck any encroaching scrub before it gets too large or before it encroaches too widely. Invasive species – creeping thistle, bracken, thorns – controlled before seeding and before they become dominant
- 5: After grazing, aim for a grassland with tufts and lawns as this will allow the best range of biodiversity to prosper.
- Mowing Meadows**
- 6: If the weather permits, save hay instead of silage as more seeds will be shed in the meadow as the crop dries out
- 7: Start mowing in centre of meadow as this will allow any remaining wildlife a better chance of escaping
- 8: Don't mow if you suspect the presence of ground nesting birds
- 9: After saving the grass crop, graze the 'aftermath' with livestock – they will help to enhance the vegetation structure and create niches for new seedlings to establish
- 10: There may be good demand for hay from species rich meadows
- 11: Dung and farmyard manure helps improve organic matter levels in the soil

## Best Practice Guides



WALKS ARE FREE TO ATTEND & YOU HAVE TO REGISTER IN ADVANCE AS SPACES ARE LIMITED.

- SAT 7 MARCH 2PM Tommy Earley, Co. Roscommon
- SAT 28 MARCH 11AM Oily Nolan, Co. Dublin
- SAT 25 APRIL 2PM Ailbhe Gerrard, Co. Tipperary
- SAT 9 MAY 2PM Donna Mullin, Co. Meath
- SAT 16 MAY 2PM Boyd Bryce, Co. Donegal
- SAT 30 MAY 2PM Michael Hickey, Co. Tipperary
- SAT 6 JUNE 2PM Gerard Walsh, Co. Galway
- SAT 20 JUNE 2PM Feargal O Dufineagáin, Co. Mayo
- SAT 27 JUNE 2PM Mervyn Aschemery, Co. Roscommon
- SAT 18 JULY 2PM Suzanne Crampton, Co. Kildare
- SAT 25 JULY 2PM Michael Hickey, Co. Tipperary
- SAT 1 AUGUST 2PM Thomas O'Connor, Co. Kerry
- SAT 8 AUGUST 2PM Mark Hirst, Co. Kildare
- SAT 15 AUGUST 2PM Moyhill Community Farm, Co. Clare
- SAT 22 AUGUST 2PM Ailbhe Gerrard, Co. Tipperary
- SAT 5 SEPTEMBER 2PM Kate Egan, Co. Wexmouth
- SAT 19 SEPTEMBER 11AM Clive Bright, Co. Sligo
- SAT 10 October 2pm Edmund Joyce, Co Carlow

Registration and more information at [buytickets.at/farmingfornature](http://buytickets.at/farmingfornature)

[www.farmingfornature.ie](http://www.farmingfornature.ie)



With thanks to the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine and the National Parks and Wildlife Service

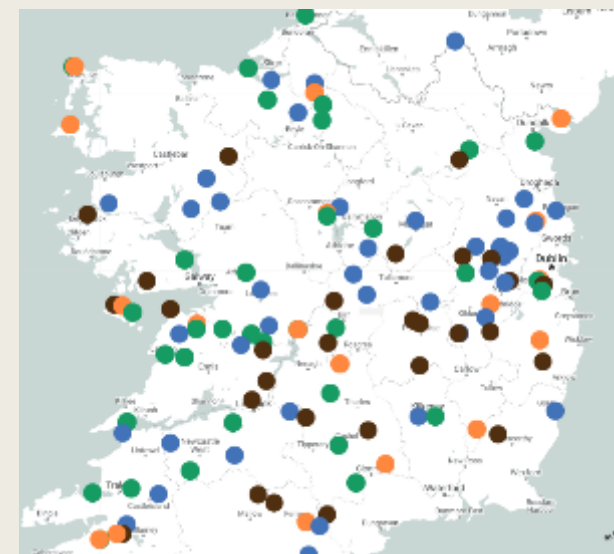


# 7. Giving farmers a voice - sharing a more *positive, practical narrative* around farming and nature

## The Farming for Nature Ambassadors Programme



*'To change the world, let's start by changing the way we talk about it, and let's highlight those initiatives that are having a positive impact on people and the planet, to renew our confidence and spur us into action'* (Sparknews)





## 8. Investing in the future guardians of the land – place-based learning



Using critical thinking and having fun, to foster a sense of informed pride and stewardship of your place



# 9. Celebrating our farming heritage –the Burren Winterage Festival



## A perfect day for a cattle drive: Seasonal movement benefits both land and animal

Many wonder why similar farming-for-conservation programmes are not being rolled out with as much energy across Ireland

© Sat, Nov 14, 2015, 10:01

Paddy Woodworth



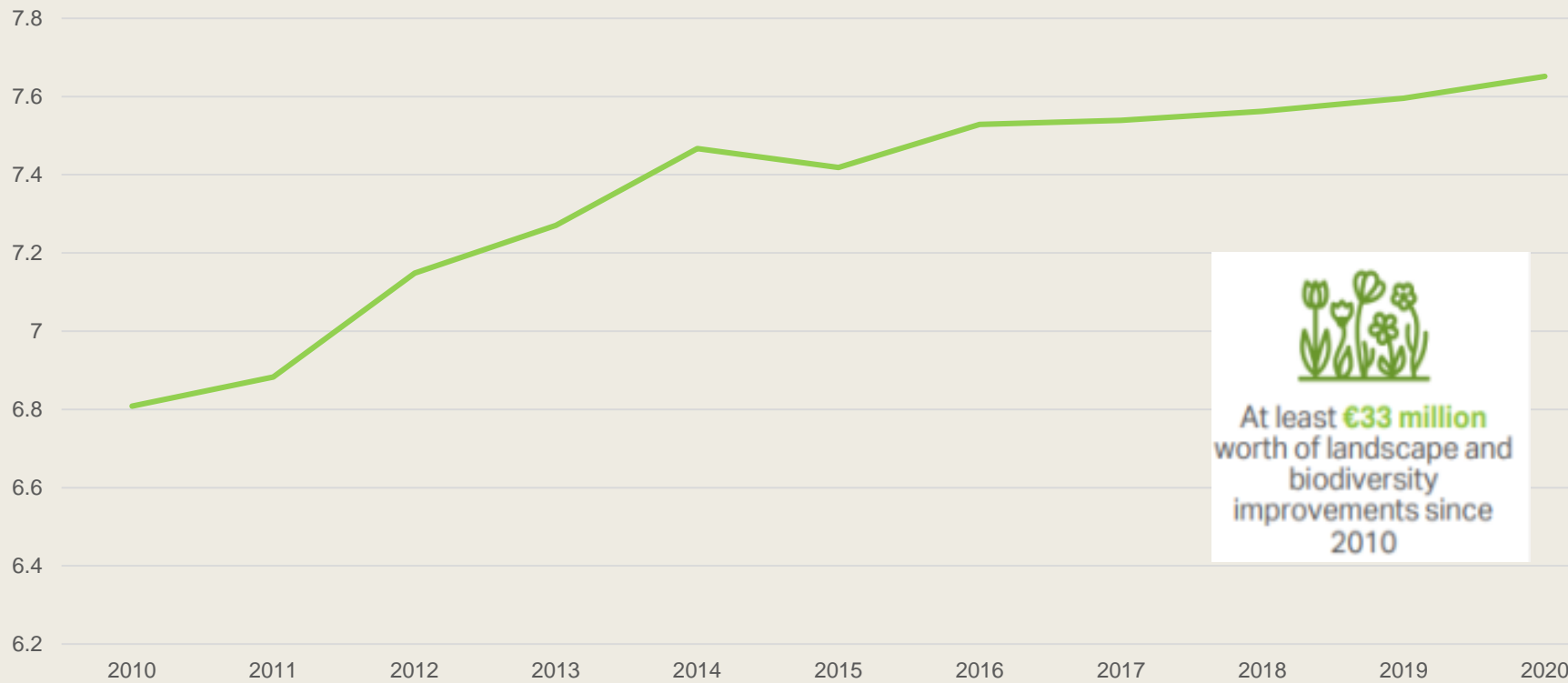
Winter is coming: Aine Forde drives her family's cattle towards upland pasture, followed by participants in the Burren's Winterage Weekend. Photograph: Ru In: Casey



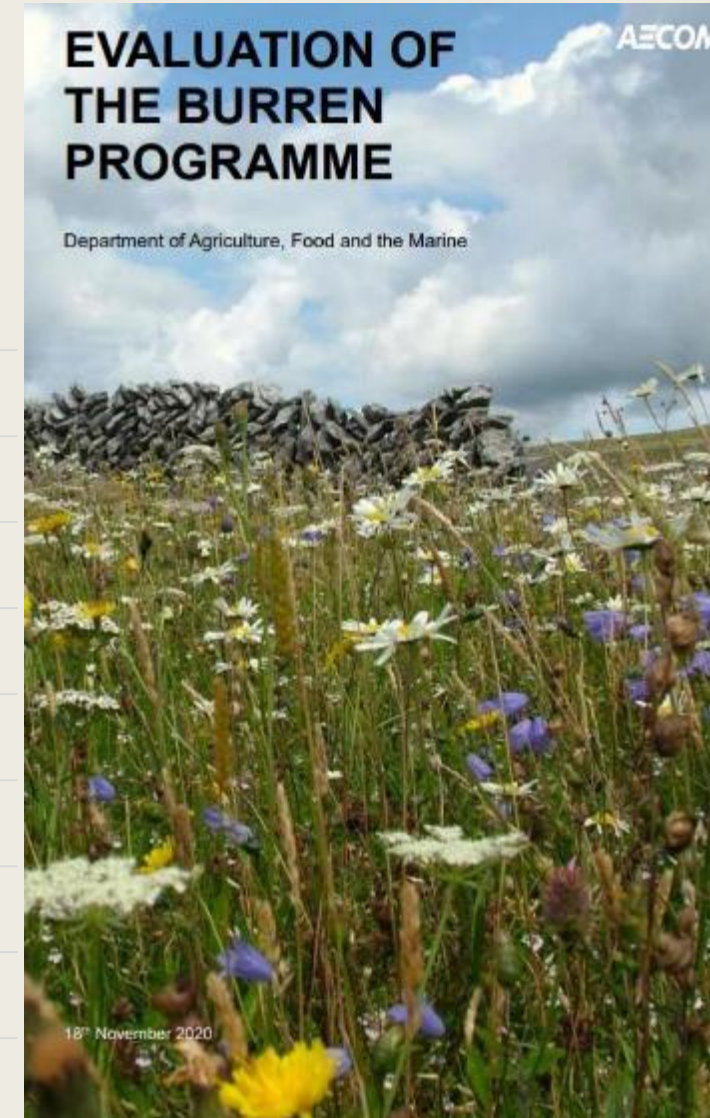
# All pie in the sky or does this approach actually work?



Average Field Score(2010-20)



At least **€33 million**  
worth of landscape and  
biodiversity  
improvements since  
2010



**IMPACT:** Consistent improvement in Environmental outcomes since 2010

# Conclusion:

When properly supported, our farmers can be the ‘first responders’ to our climate and biodiversity emergency.

Let’s start by designing better, farmer-friendly supports that are:

Local – design, management etc – greater pride of place, ownership

Fair – money *earned* should reflect both effort and outcomes

Flexible – ensure freedom to farm, to innovate, to adapt (weather, disease..)

Simple – e.g single, integrated whole farm sustainability plan, minimise need for receipts, support to secure permissions, payments etc.

Long-lasting – continuity - of support, of payments etc – builds trust

Engaging - Positive (language, incentives), inclusive, fun, celebratory.



Thank you. For more info., please visit:



[www.burrenprogramme.com](http://www.burrenprogramme.com)



[www.farmingfornature.ie](http://www.farmingfornature.ie)



[www.burrenbeo.com](http://www.burrenbeo.com)



[www.burrenwinterage.com](http://www.burrenwinterage.com)

