

Gerard MacMahon

Irish Dairy Farmer

Tuesday 29th August





ABOUTTHE FARM

- Location: County Cork, South of Ireland.
 - Farm purchased in 1959 by Father
 - Gerard began farming in 1987.
- Activities: 72 Dairy Cows Spring Calving.
- · 20 Males finished as beef at 20 months.
- Surplus heifers sold as replacement for other farms.
- Grass based system
- Farm in Nitrates Derogation:
 - Stocking Rate +2.5LU/HA



MAP OF THE FARM

45 Hectares in total

- 27 Owned
- 18 Leased







BIRDS ON THE FARM



YELLOWHAMMER



BLUE TIT



GOLDFINCH



SWALLOW



SONG THRUSH



BLACKBIRD



ROBIN



STONECHAT

BIRDS ON THE FARM



KESTREL



SPARROWHAWK



BUZZARD



LONG TAILED TIT



BARN OWL



BLUE JAY



GREAT TIT



COALTIT

HEDGEROWS

- Approx. 12,000m of Diverse Hedgerows.
 - o 200m were newly planted 20 years ago.
 - Provide food, shelter and movement corridors for native wildlife.
 - Wildlife: Birds, Bats, Hedgehogs, Field Mice,
 Shrews, Badgers, etc.
- Ecosystem services:
 - Shelter for livestock, pollination, flood prevention, water quality protection.
- Hedgerows maintained manually.



The Hedgerows are teeming with Pollinators & Butterflies this time of year.

LOCAL WILDLIFE



HEDGEHOG



BADGER



PYGMY SHREW



RED FOX



WOOD MOUSE



RED SQUIRREL



BROWN RAT



PHEASANT



- 0.4 HA Native
 Wildflower Bird Feed
 Area set Annually.
 - €500 of farmer's own spending - outside schemes.
- Mixture of Wildflowers
 & Plants.
- Alive with insects, butterflies, bees and birds.



BIRD FEED COVER: PLANTS



PIONEER SUNFLOWER



RAMPART RAPE



WHITE MUSTARD



REDSHANK



TRITICALE



TORO FODDER RADISH



PHACELIA



RED AND WHITE MILLET



- 72 Dairy Cows
 - Predominantly Grassfed Diet.
 - Winter feed grown on farm.
- Milked twice a day
 - 4.5% BF, 3.8% Protein
- All Dairy Female are Genotyped

- 450,000 litres of milk produced a year.
 - 6,000 litres per cow a year.
- Herd EBI (Economic Breeding Index)
 top 1% in Ireland
- 4 Bulls selected for breeding with Al companies

LOW EMISSION SLURRY SPREADING





Dairy Farms under derogation in Ireland must use LESS: Low Emission Slurry Spreading.

LESS uses slurry application techniques such as trailing hose or trailing shoe to reduce the amount of harmful Nitrous Oxide and Ammonia displaced into the atmosphere.

PROTECTED UREA

 Nitrogen Urea Fertiliser that has been coated with a urease inhibitor to reduce ammonia loss and reduces the harmful greenhouse gas "nitrous oxide", without affecting performance.

 Recommended by Teagasc (Ireland's Agricultural State Agency) as the least harmful chemical fertiliser.









BENEFITS OF FARMING ALONGSIDE NATURE

- Hedgerows and Ditches are vital habitats for wildlife.
- You can farm with profit while protecting and enhancing the wildlife & biodiversity.
- Nature **adds interest** to the farm, it is a pleasant place to work.
- Increase of positive insects, pollinators, birds.
- Nature is ever-changing
 - Flowers, fruit, hazelnuts.

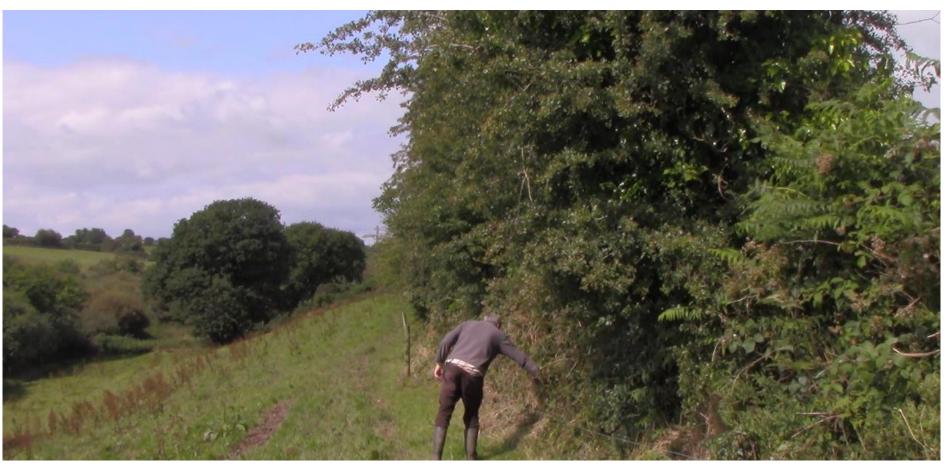




CHALLENGES

- Cost huge challenge this year.
- Price Volatility.
- Manual Labour:
 - Electric fences must be cleared of hedgerow obstruction manually.
- Strict Regulations.
 - Nitrates regulations.
 - Not always sensible!
- Factory Beef Grading is a problem.





LESSONS LEARNED

- Habitats must be retained and enhanced, rather than manually creating new habitats.
- Grazing Livestock important for flora & can enhance biodiversity.
- Land abandonment is negative for biodiversity.







THANK YOU FOR LISTENING



Happy to answer any questions.

My Question to you:

What more could I do to enhance biodiversity?

Presented by **Gerard MacMahon**



