



Return to Social Farming

A FANTASTIC OUTLET MAKES A MUCH-NEEDED RETURN AS SOCIAL FARMING GETS INTO POST-LOCKDOWN MODE

JOHN O'Shea has been a host farmer with Kerry Social Farming since 2018, and he supports two social-farming participants on his land, set in a beautiful peaceful location surrounded by mountains in the Blackwater Valley.

John is a sheep farmer, an occupation that brings with it regularly hectic periods, and no little upkeep and care of the flock and farm area. He also has plenty of activities for the social-farming participants to tend to, whether its feeding the animals, helping John with any upkeep of the farm, or shearing and marking sheep.

James Cullinane is one of the participants on John's farm and has been social farming since November 2018. He enjoys being outdoors and taking part in activities, and social farming provides ample opportunity for this.

"Social farming is James's favourite day of the week," said Joan, James's mom. "He is in

good form when he knows he is going there, and he is in good form when he comes home".

The impact and restrictions that came with COVID-19 have affected everyone, and for James, the social-farming experience, one which he so enjoys, was inaccessible to him.

Kerry Social Farming has, however, been able to plan and prepare for James's return with John and Damian O'Neill, James's key worker from his service provider, Studio 3.

A 'COVID-19 Response Plan' and the necessary documentation and safeguards were completed - as is the case with any other workplace at the moment - allowing James to enjoy his first day back in social-farming action last week.

Over the coming weeks and months, Kerry Social Farming, along with its dedicated host farmers, is looking forward to welcoming more participants back onto the farms and to a safe, outdoor environment.



John O'Shea and James Cullinane.

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KERRY SOCIAL FARMING

FARMERS SUPPORTING THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

KEY FEATURES

- Kerry Social farming is a sustainable project providing long term placement for people with disabilities on family farms across Kerry.
- 20 Kerry Host farmers provided over 800 Social farming days for people with disabilities on a voluntary basis during 2019.
- There are many benefits for farmers including being part of a strong farmer's network, meeting and working with new farmers, reduced isolation, educational opportunities and helping people with disabilities.
- New farmers are wanted to expand the project and give all people on the waiting list an opportunity to enjoy working on a family farm.
- Target is to have 50 host farmers in Kerry providing social farming opportunities for up to 100 participants by 2025.



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