

Empowering Farmers to Protect Nature and Wildlife **(<https://www.activelink.ie/node/111677>)**

New €1.3+ million ‘Project ReFarm’ launched

Statement by Project ReFarm and Community Foundation Ireland

Farmers are to be encouraged to develop wildlife ponds, hedgerows, woodlands and species-rich grasslands as part of new €1.3+-million initiative called ‘Project ReFarm’.

Representing a partnership between biodiversity advocates research teams at Trinity College Dublin, philanthropists and farmers across Ireland, the project is being launched on a pilot basis that will see farms receive payments for initiating nature-positive actions on their lands.

Partners include Burrenbeo Trust which is already working with landowners to develop ‘Hares Corners’ to allow plants and animals to flourish and Community Foundation Ireland which is supporting over 200 local Biodiversity Action Plans across the country.

At the launch of Project ReFarm, Co-founder Anke Heydenreich said:

“If we are to reverse the emergency and save our plants and wildlife then farmers are key. Not only do they account for 70% of Irish land-use, they also have an inherited passion and knowledge of nature. In many cases they have grown up side-by-side with plants and animals, and are now watching as many of them disappear. We believe Project ReFarm has the potential to be a game-changer in terms of growing a partnership with agriculture.”

Dr Brendan Dunford, Co-Founder of ReFarm and founder of Burrenbeo Trust said:

‘Having worked with farmers in the Burren and elsewhere for over two decades, I’m convinced that they have the potential to be the difference we need to reverse declines in nature. Part of the solution will be to provide hassle-free financial support, advice and encouragement for farmers who want to create more space for nature on their land’.

Denise Charlton, Chief Executive of Community Foundation Ireland adds:

“We know from our work with over 200-communities the appetite and the interest to act to protect biodiversity is strong in the farming community. It is also true that like all families incomes must be protected. This pilot seeks to balance both needs. At the Foundation we see farmers as vital partners. We simply cannot protect our wildlife without their co-operation as well as their knowledge of the land and nature, often passed from generation to generation. Project ReFarm is pioneering and represents a new way forward. We wish all involved every success.”

Region

Nationwide

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