



# RDP IN ACTION

*A showcase of projects supported by the  
Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013*

# COMMUNICATING AT A LOCAL, NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVEL

*Communication is one of the core elements of EU Rural Development policy. Great value is placed on sharing information, practice, experiences, ideas, projects and concepts between stakeholders.*

*At a domestic level the Rural Network for Northern Ireland (RNNI) carry out this work by identifying and sharing practice, exchanging information, providing training and support, supporting Local Action Groups to promote and assist the development of co-operation projects and managing online communication tools and networking opportunities.*

*In turn National Rural Networks (NRNs) are members of the wider European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) which helps Member States implement their RDPs efficiently. The ENRD serves as a platform for the sharing of ideas and experiences on how rural development policies are working in practice and how they can be improved. In addition to NRNs its stakeholders include National Member State Authorities, Local Action Groups (LAGs) and rural development organisations with an EU perspective.*

*RNNI holds membership of the European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD) on behalf of the seven Northern Ireland Local Action Groups. ELARD actively promotes the 'bottom-up' local development LEADER methodology which is an intrinsic element of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013. Networking and co-operation are two of the key features of the LEADER approach. Membership of ELARD allows LAGs transfer good practice, disseminate innovation and build on the lessons learned from local rural development strategies in other EU regions.*

# INTRODUCTION

*The Rural Network for Northern Ireland is very proud to present this Rural Development Programme in Action guide which highlights a range of projects which have been initiated across rural Northern Ireland with support from the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme (NIRDP) 2007-2013.*

The Programme, which is worth over £500million was designed to protect and enhance our rural environment and contribute to the development of competitive and sustainable rural businesses and thriving rural communities.

When the programme opened in 2007 its aims and objectives were clear however the real test of any programme is if it can attract enough public interest and if that interest can translate into real life outcomes.

We are pleased to be able to respond positively on this front. The range and volume of applicants across the various measures shows a clear demand and interest from across Northern Ireland and from across the broad range of sectors from farm families and businesses to private individuals and local councils.

This project guide captures the breadth and diversity of projects and showcases examples undertaken so far across Northern Ireland. To date the programme has supported thousands of people begin new schemes and ventures, maintain services, improve existing facilities, embark on training, plant woodland, develop local food products or take advantage of good advice and support. Some projects are first tentative steps into the world of grant funding while others are ambitious



*"Rural Northern Ireland is brimming with life, activity, fresh ideas, new ventures and entrepreneurs of all ages and genders."*

moves taken by those who have been encouraged by success stories from the previous programme or have just decided to take a leap of faith. All projects though are underpinned by faith and trust in the Programme to support each action at every stage.

The guide showcases all that is good about rural Northern Ireland. It is brimming with life, activity, fresh ideas, new ventures and entrepreneurs of all ages and genders. The projects presented here range from specialist woodcraft and baby food to recycling, planting native woodland and allotments to picture framing, organic pig production and even broadband for chickens!

As a Network one of our main tasks is to promote Information and

Communication Exchange, in essence that means the sharing of ideas and techniques to make the programme a success. It is our hope that this guide will provide food for thought or perhaps simply a spark of inspiration to those who could initiate projects in their own areas, not just here in Northern Ireland but in other European regions.

Those involved in the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme are constantly encouraged by activities we read about or experience in other EU countries. The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) does an exemplary role in making the activities of other regions real and accessible. It is our aim also to ensure the good work being done here in Northern

Ireland is brought to the European stage and that we are showcased as a 'can do' region and that rural Northern Ireland is open and thriving with business.

This brochure will be circulated to all stakeholders involved in the delivery of the Rural Development Programme in Northern Ireland as well as to the Republic of Ireland, across the UK regions to Wales, Scotland and England and across Europe.



The Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (NIRDP) is jointly funded by the European Union, through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). The Rural Network for Northern Ireland is managed by the Northern Ireland Rural Development Council (RDC) through the Agri Rural Forum as part of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

# MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

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*As Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development it gives me great pleasure to introduce this project guide which highlights the range of activities which are taking place in rural areas across the north of Ireland with help from the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013.*

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- Improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry by supporting restructuring, development and innovation); Environment & Countryside - Improving the environment and countryside by supporting land management; and Rural Life - Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity.

agricultural and forestry land in Axis 2; and improving the quality of life through the diversification of rural economies, business creation and development, village renewal, access to basic services, and tourism activities with the support of strong and confident 'on-the-ground' Local Action Groups in Axis 3.

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*"This guide showcases examples of projects which meet the policy objectives of all three axes, but arguably more importantly, mobilise people and communities to take action for the good of their own area."*

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The programme was designed and developed to protect and enhance our rural environment and contribute to the development of competitive and sustainable rural businesses and thriving rural communities. In real terms it is worth over £500million to the north of Ireland and is just one of 94 Rural Development Programmes which are now operating across Europe offering an investment of 230 billion euro budget.

This huge investment is testament to the significant commitment by both the domestic government and the European Union to the development of rural areas across Europe. It is not an exercise in providing grants in the hope that rural areas will improve through financial assistance alone, rather it is planned at a strategic policy level. The European Union has set three main themes within which all Member States focus their Rural Development Programmes. These themes known as 'axes' each has a set of 'measures' to which interested parties apply for support and funding. These are Farming & Food

In addition all Rural Development Programmes are required to incorporate a LEADER-type approach – focusing on 'bottom-up' rural development actions. In practice this means the social partners, local businesses and elected representatives working together in a Local Action Group (LAG) partnership. The LEADER approach is a cross-cutting theme in Axis 4.

This guide showcases examples of projects which meet the policy objectives of all three axes, but arguably more importantly, mobilise people and communities to take action for the good of their own area. The activities highlighted range from physical and capital investments, restructuring, development and human resources skills training and enhancing quality of production processes and products in Axis 1 underpinned by skills training; to general improvement of the environment and countryside through good practice land management and the promotion of environmentally sustainable methods on

This project guide includes a sample of the projects which have been supported across the north of Ireland thus far in the programme. It also features some projects from other regions and hopefully it will be used not as a reference manual for projects which can be funded but to ignite ideas, spark discussion and motivate and enthuse readers to take new interest in the programme.

The production of this project guide has been coordinated by the Rural Network for the north of Ireland and I want to thank the Network team for their continued work on communicating our collective achievements through generating information, good ideas and experiences not only here in the north of Ireland but via their website, ezine, bulletins and events to our Rural Development colleagues and activists through Britain, Ireland and Europe.

I have no doubt that the publication will be of interest and inspiration to anyone involved in any aspect of rural development.

**Michelle O'Neill MLA**  
*Minister of Agriculture and  
Rural Development*

# FARMING AND FOOD

*Of the total Northern Ireland land area of 1.4 million hectares, approximately 80% is in agricultural and forestry use which defines much of the rural landscape character. While the contribution of agriculture to the economy of Northern Ireland remains significant the number of farms has fallen by a third since 1980, from 42,000 to just over 27,000 in 2005.*

*With a budget of £50million Axis 1: Farming & Food (implemented by Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and Countryside Agri Rural Partnership) aims to improve the performance of Agriculture and Forestry businesses.*

*This is achieved by funding Farm Modernisation projects, helping businesses to improve their Processing and Marketing skills and supporting projects that will strengthen Supply Chain partnerships. Advice, mentoring and training and practical support is also available for farmers and their families through the Focus Farms, Farm Family Options and Benchmarking measures.*

*The projects featured in this section demonstrate how the NIRD has assisted a range of people take advantage of the measures on offer and which have brought real benefits to the Farming and Food sector. Projects featured here include farmers and farm families and those working in the wood supply and renewable energy chains to primary producers and processors.*

# LECALE ORGANICS

**Applicant:** Jonathan Carson, Dale Orr Michael McMullan

**Location:** Downpatrick, Co. Down

**Measure:** Ongoing Mentoring & Support under Measure 1.4 Supply Chain Development Programme

When it comes to describing new business ideas it could be said that the terms 'unique' and 'it's a first' often tend to be overused. However, in the case of three young farmers from Downpatrick Jonathan Carson, Dale Orr and Michael McMullan – these terms aptly describe their recently established organic pig production and processing venture.

At the heart of the new venture is a commitment to use Tamworth breeding stock in order to produce finished pigs that really do 'live off the land'.

*"The Tamworth is the only pig with true Irish origins,"* confirms Jonathan, *"It is also unique in being able to secure a significant proportion of its daily feed intake from grazed grass and other forages, hence the breed's nickname – the Irish Grazer."* The aim of the new business is to make available a range of unique pork and bacon products while guaranteeing that the pigs have been farmed to the highest management and welfare standards. The use of the Tamworth

genetics will ensure that customers experience a unique taste sensation.

The three neighbouring farmers had been informally discussing ideas for this new business for some time before taking the next step to apply for support under the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme, Supply Chain Development Measure which is aimed at helping farmers and others in the supply chain to work together to improve the rewards from their supply chain. The measure supports group formation and development by providing input from experienced professionals, as well as targeted grants for training, study tours, business tools and cooperation support.

*"We each have extensive experience in developing organic beef and sheep farming operations,"* says Michael. *"So the challenge of growing all our own feed organically would not prove daunting. The unique aspect of our new business is the use of Tamworth boars on Landrace and Large White sows to produce a distinct range of pork*



*and bacon products that are not available on the Irish market at present."*

By last summer Jonathan, Dale and Michael had sourced their initial breeding stock and put in place the facilities they required in order to get the new business off the ground and the 'Lecale Organics' brand was born.

The trio was delighted at being able to source Tamworth boars that reflected the famous Fingal Glen bloodline. *"The pigs are kept outdoors the year round,"* Dale comments, *"They have access to a sty and grazed grass at all times. The units can be moved to a range of different locations throughout the year in order to minimise poaching. The pigs are fed an exclusively home grown diet comprising of grazed grass, silage, naked oats and a range of other cereal and protein sources."*

Courtesy of this management system, finished pigs will be produced at around twenty two weeks of age, weighing around 70 kilos. The first pigs are due to be slaughtered soon. All the processing operations will take place at

Dale Orr's existing facility.

*"We are in a position to produce a wide variety of pork and bacon products. Tamworth meat is high in taste. It is also extremely rich in omega 3 and omega 6 oils. "Lecale Organics' produce will be marketed to local hotels, restaurants, butchery outlets and high quality meat outlets and farmers markets,"* Jonathan explains.

Patricia Devlin, who works as a consultant facilitator on the Supply Chain measure says, *"Lecale Organics is an excellent example of the types of project which the Supply Chain Development Measure was set up to nurture. Through the facilitation process the group has developed an action plan to support the development of their supply chain. They also received funding towards a study tour in England where they visited examples of best practice in outdoor organic pork production. The three farmers also viewed processing and box marketing options for organic pork products and considered current market trends for these products."*



# CHILDCARE THE WAY TO GO FOR JOAN

**Applicant:** Joan Davis  
**Location:** Cookstown, Co. Tyrone  
**Measure:** 1.1 Farm Family Options

Joan Davis always had an interest in childcare but raising her 3 children and helping out on the family farm meant her time was limited. The launch of the Farm Family Options Skills Programme however coincided with two of her children studying at University, and it proved timely for Joan to reconsider completing a Childcare course. Joan undertook an NVQ level 3 in Children's Care, Learning & Development with support under the Farm Family Options Skills Training Programme.

Joan explains, "Farm incomes are such at the moment, that my husband and myself thought this could be a potential way to bring more income into the household. I thought childcare would offer me a range of options to follow, either on the farm or off-farm, such as employment in a crèche or classroom assistant or even establish a childminding facility at home."

Following successful completion of the course, Joan has secured a temporary position in



a local primary school. "I now work one day a week and it has provided me with an opportunity to gain

experience and confidence. Hopefully, this will open up more opportunities for me in the future," smiles Joan.

# HEAVY PLANT PROVES USEFUL ON FARM

**Applicant:** John Davidson  
**Location:** Stewartstown, Co. Tyrone  
**Measure:** 1.1 Farm Family Options



"I was interested in doing the course as it would benefit the family farm by offering cost savings. Now I can carry out essential work on the farm such as digging ditches, drainage and clearing laneways."

John from Stewartstown, Co. Tyrone, the son of a beef and sheep farmer, works part time on the family farm, but is also employed off the farm on a part time basis.

John had an interest in digger driving from an early age and, having discovered that the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme could assist with the costs of gaining a license, he applied for the 360o Excavator license and was successful in securing grant assistance and a training allowance to pursue the course.

"I was interested in doing the course as it would benefit the family farm by offering cost savings," said John. "Now I can carry out essential work on the farm such as digging ditches, drainage and clearing laneways. It means that we don't incur a cost for doing these jobs and that helps with the farm income. I would also be keen to take up some part time employment off the farm and use the new skills that I have learned by potentially offering a service to our neighbouring farms."

# CAUGHT ON CAMERA!

**Applicant:** Danielle & Jerome Gormley  
**Location:** Carrickmore, Co. Tyrone  
**Measure:** 1.3 Farm Modernisation Programme

Danielle Gormley of Carrickmore, Co. Tyrone farms with her father Jerome, they combine running a suckler herd with off farm employment. Danielle applied through the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme for grant aid towards the installation of a CCTV camera for their farm outbuildings. *"A huge amount of time and energy is saved checking cows about to calve,"* Danielle explained. *"Now we can see stock without disturbing them and only go into the shed at night if a calving is proving difficult. Before we would*

*have been disturbing cows and putting them off settling to calve for another hour or two."*

Danielle also invested in bulk animal feed bins to keep rodents, wild birds and farm cats at bay thus cutting disease transmission risks. In addition calf creep feeders to ensure meal was not wasted on vermin were also purchased. The Gormleys are full of praise for the Farm Modernisation Programme. *"This grant has allowed us to press forward with farm modernisation a lot faster than we could otherwise have afforded,"* says a happy Danielle.



# BROADBAND BOOST FOR FOWL AND FAMILY!

**Applicant:** Thomas and Maria McVey  
**Location:** Ballinderry, Co. Tyrone  
**Measure:** 1.3 Farm Modernisation Programme



Through the Programme Thomas and Maria McVey of Ballinderry Bridge, Co. Tyrone have installed CCTV cameras on their 20,000 bird broiler breeder unit. By bringing broadband to the poultry houses Thomas can now use his mobile phone, to log onto the farm website and check each camera's view in turn. *"This marvelous technology, has improved our management and family life. No longer are members of the family walking down to the unit at all hours of the day*

*and night to check on birds."* The McVey's also acquired a standby auto generator, which comes on automatically should mains power fail, vital given that fans stopping during hot weather quickly causes the birds distress leading to heavy losses. In addition the McVey family bought a road sweeper to keep the site tidy and help clean houses after birds leave at the end of lay. Thanks to this grant aid Thomas and Maria are now achieving more in less time and at less cost.



## PEDIGREE CATTLE GIVEN HIGH CLASS TREATMENT

**Applicant:** Gary Beacom  
**Location:** Ranenly, Co. Tyrone  
**Measure:** 1.3 Farm Modernisation Programme

Gary Beacom recently acquired a farm at picturesque Ranenly near Fivemiletown, Co. Tyrone and seized the opportunity under the Farm Modernisation Programme to help develop it. Funding has been used to provide modern facilities for the Lakeview Pedigree British Blue Herd, the enterprise of the farm business. All Gary's cattle are now housed in an impressively designed new shed which was fitted out to a very high standard.

Gary also invested in an automated slurry scraping systems which he says has been 'a terrific help when starting a new farmyard from scratch'. A huge vermin proof bulk feed bin giving stock access to quality assured animal feed stored safe from contamination was also bought with the grant aid enabling Gary to purchase feed in bulk. This reduces the farm's carbon footprint as no packaging material is used nor needs disposed of.



## VEGETABLES FROM THE SHORES OF LOUGH NEAGH

**Applicant:** Loughshore Veg **Location:** Derrylaughan, Co. Tyrone  
**Email:** loughshore.veg@btinternet.com  
**Measure:** 1.2 Agricultural and Forestry Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme (PMG)



Loughshore Veg (Ltd) was funded under the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme Processing and Marketing Grant (PMG) Scheme, which provides support for capital investment to companies involved in the processing of primary agricultural and horticultural products.

Pat Cushnahan began growing vegetables in the rural area of Derrylaughan near Coalisland in 1986. In

the past 25 years his family company Loughshore Veg Ltd has focused on prepack whole vegetables such as carrots, parsnips, whole soup veg and prepacked prepared vegetables. Pat is aided in the day to day management by his son Oliver and daughter in law Ursula. In the early years business was mostly comprised of independent supermarkets although in recent years this channel began to decline

and Loughshore began to work with larger chains.

In 2003 Loughshore Veg began to supply Curleys Store in Dungannon. Curleys was then sold to Sainsburys in 2008 and Loughshore were extremely busy building the business in the hope that they would secure the Sainsburys contract which they did in August 2009. The company now produce 180 units of pre-packed vegetables per week to Sainsburys with a seasonal increase at Christmas. Loughshore Veg now also have a contract to supply all 11 Dunnes Stores in NI and have started to supply Dunnes in the Republic of Ireland. Sales have increased dramatically and Loughshore is now producing as much pre-packed soup vegetables each day as they were doing at the peak of

daily production last year.

Staff numbers have also now increased from 7 in 2007 to 23 in 2011. The Cushnahan family were aware that additional machinery would reduce the amount of manual handling in the production and an extension to the premises would improve the welfare facilities for the employees.

Construction of the new building is now well underway. Ursula Cushnahan from Loughshore Veg Ltd commented, "The funding provided for investment in new buildings and plant and equipment will help us guarantee a quality service to our customers. In addition the expansion within our company will give primary producers the opportunity to expand to meet our increased level of demand."



## TREES FOR THE FUTURE

**Applicant:** Michael Kane

**Location:** Limavady, Co. Londonderry

**Email:** [mjkane@biomassenergynti.com](mailto:mjkane@biomassenergynti.com) **Web:** [www.ballyhenry.co.uk](http://www.ballyhenry.co.uk)

**Measure:** Measure 1.3 Short Rotation Coppice Scheme

Michael Kane, from Limavady has planted 16 hectares of high-yielding willow trees and aims to produce his own renewable wood energy.

As an arable farmer cultivating some 200 hectares, including his farmhouse, self-catering cottages, farm buildings and his sister's house, Michael's farm previously consumed some 32,000 litres of heating oil each year. Spurred by the significant cost to his business Michael applied for funding for Short Rotation Coppice (SRC) willow with the objective of

reducing heating costs to his home and businesses.

Many farmers like Michael have been subject to the unpredictable increases in oil prices, making it very difficult for them to make any long term plans for their businesses. By investing in SRC Michael has guaranteed supply of fuel for heating without the worry of price fluctuations. Being an arable farmer he already had the facilities to dry and store the wood chip produced and has just completed the installation of a specialist 120 kW wood chip-burning boiler. On

Michael's fertile soil, the willow will be harvested every 2 years.

Michael estimates that he will use two thirds of the wood-chip he produces from his own crop, and is currently sourcing an end-use for the remaining quantity. He has been in talks with potential suppliers, but stresses that it is still early days for the market. *"People are unsure about wood chip energy; it is still in its infancy. Hopefully volatile oil prices, which in the long term can only go one way, will start to change minds."*

Michael is part of Biomass Energy Northern Ireland

(BENI), a group of farmers and suppliers set up to ensure that standards are set for wood chip energy in the hope that it will encourage farmers like him and those interested in producing their own energy crop. The group also hopes to seek out sustainable markets for the end product.

Asked if he was happy with the route he had chosen, Michael has no regrets. *"SRC was a natural choice for an arable farmer like me, and everything appears to be working out well. It won't be long before others start to see the benefits for themselves."*

# FARM FAMILY OPTIONS MENTORING PROGRAMME HELPING FAMILIES PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

**Applicant:** Nigel Robinson

**Location:** Clogher, Co. Tyrone

**Measure:** Mentoring & Training under Measure 1.1 Farm Family Options

Succession planning for families and farm business is a difficult issue which confronts every farming family in Northern Ireland. Under the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme, free, one to one, independent and confidential advice and support is available through the Farm Family Options Mentoring Programme. The process allows farmers and family members consider issues such as business decisions, alternative off-farm income, farm diversification, training and development opportunities and sources of funding. A mentor is available to visit families in their own homes at a time which suits them and will help pinpoint ways in which they can secure a better future. In addition a grant of £250 is available for professional advice from an accountant or solicitor in relation to succession planning. One man who has already availed of the service is livestock farmer Nigel Robinson from Clogher in Co. Tyrone. Nigel commented,



*"It's very easy to bury the head and go from one day to another without planning ahead, but getting another perspective on things really helped me. My work circumstances had changed and I needed to make decisions. The Programme encouraged me to sit down and take the time to identify the skills and resources which we have within the family and, with the help of the mentor, we were*

*able to fully consider our choices for the future."* Nigel had recently set up an agricultural and home heating oil delivery service. Through the mentoring process it was identified that a boiler maintenance course would add great value to this business. He subsequently completed the course and has recently established a new business: 'Robinson Fuels – Boiler Maintenance Service and Repairs' -

a comprehensive oil delivery and boiler repair/maintenance service. Nigel is just one example of how the Programme is helping farm families across Northern Ireland to start planning for a better future.

# ENVIRONMENT AND COUNTRYSIDE

*With a budget of £350million Axis 2: Environment & Countryside (implemented by Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Forest Service) will help to protect and enhance Northern Ireland's natural resources and landscapes in rural areas. It aims to assist farmers to manage the land more sustainably and deliver important outcomes on biodiversity, landscape and climate change.*

*This will be achieved by funding projects which promote environmental services and practices, preserve the farmed landscape, encourage the development of new and existing forests and woodlands and support the growth of organic farming.*

*Given the long term commitments and investments results in this Axis will only be fully realised a number of years into the future.*

*The enduring nature of the schemes are demonstrated through the featured projects, some of which were funded under the 2001-2006 programme period.*

# ENVIRONMENT AND COUNTRYSIDE



Improving the environment and countryside by supporting land management is essential to protect and enhance Northern Ireland's natural resources in rural areas. £350 million is available through the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme to support this.

## There are four measures:-

The **Less Favoured Areas Compensatory Allowances Scheme** provides support for farmers by compensating them for additional costs related to maintaining agricultural production in Less Favoured Areas. Support under this scheme will contribute ensuring

continued agricultural land use, maintaining the countryside and promoting sustainable farming systems.

The **Agri-Environment Programme** provides grant aid under 2 schemes. The **Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme** supports those who enter into a seven year commitment to adopting farming practices which enhance the countryside and the **Organic Farming Scheme** provides support during the conversion of land from conventional to organic farming methods.

Woodlands and forests are major components of the landscape and provide essential habitats for much of our wildlife. They make

a substantial contribution to meeting our growing demand for wood, and can be an effective means of locking up carbon from the atmosphere. They provide major opportunities for recreation and public access to the countryside, especially near towns and cities, and play an important role in the rural economy, providing jobs and support to rural communities. New forests and woodlands also offer an attractive long-term use of land as an alternative to agriculture.

**First Afforestation** also offers 2 schemes the **Woodland Grant Scheme** which supports costs of first afforestation on both agricultural and non-agricultural land and also for the creation of agro-forestry systems combining extensive agriculture with forestry.

The **Farm Woodland Premium Scheme** provides annual payments for a maximum of 15 years for agricultural income which has been foregone as a result of afforestation on agricultural land.

The **Forest Environments** measure aims to enhance biodiversity, improve public amenity of woodlands. It aims to preserve forest ecosystems and assist in achieving the expansion, maintenance, enhancement or restoration targets set out in the native woodland Habitat Action Plans. Under the **Sustainable Forestry Operations Grant Scheme** support is available for participants who make a voluntary commitment to undertake agreed forest-environment actions to improve the ecosystems within private forests and woodlands and prevent damage by domestic and wild animals and the **Woodland Environment Grant** offers one-off financial commitments to achieve environmental objectives or to enhance the public amenity value of existing forests.

**Given the long term nature of investments, results can only fully be realised a number of years into most schemes.**

## FRUITS OF LABOUR

Ted Loughran of Armagh is a landowner who took advantage of both the Woodland Grant Scheme and the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme in the previous NIRD and is now enjoying the fruits of his labour. Ted is a retired farmer who planted trees on 10.5 hectares of land adjacent to the Navan Centre in Armagh back in 1998. Ted's land is open to the public and its wide paths and convenient location near the

Navan Centre ensures that it is a popular spot for many to enjoy. This development of woodland is not only an attraction to people, but to birds and animals alike, with Ted having spotted all manner of wildlife in the area. An additional benefit to the Loughran family is the supply of firewood – Ted carries out the pruning operations himself and as many years worth of firewood stored for both himself and his family.



## TURNING NEGATIVES INTO POSITIVES

William McLroy, a full time farmer in Killyman, Co. Tyrone had some difficult land which was wet and proved troublesome to manage. Aided by the Woodland Grant Scheme, he planted trees on almost

8 hectares of this land including Ash which was well suited to the type of wet land he had available. William has long term plans for the Ash, and may perhaps consider selling it for the manufacture of Hurling sticks in the

future. In the short term the wood obtained from pruning can be sold for fuel. Along with the Woodland Grant Scheme, William also decided to avail of the Countryside Management Scheme. Two hectares of his

land was unsuitable for tree planting as a small power line crossed over it, and so William decided to utilise the scheme to provide Wild Bird cover in this area.

*The current programme offers real and tangible benefits to landowners under this Axis. One Co. Antrim family have forged ahead with their planting plans with the help of the NIRDP.*



## WOODLAND GRANT SCHEME ENHANCES LOCAL LANDSCAPE

**Applicant:** Stewart and Kirsty Cameron

**Location:** Randalstown, Co. Antrim

**Email:** [info@glendaletreeservices.com](mailto:info@glendaletreeservices.com) **Web:** [www.glendaletreeservices.com](http://www.glendaletreeservices.com)

**Measure:** 2.3 Woodland Grant Scheme

Stewart and Kirsty Cameron, who live just outside Randalstown, Co. Antrim, felt that their 65 acre holding was lacking one feature – woodland. They decided to plant 18 acres of land with native woodland. In 2008,

with grant aid from the Woodland Grant Scheme, the planting got underway. They used mainly oak saplings but also rowan, birch, hazel and alder scattered throughout. Stewart, a tree surgeon, said always had a natural

passion for trees, *"In my line of work it is sometimes regrettable that certain trees have to be removed. So through our woodland planting I feel we're really putting something back."* Stewart and Kirsty got the Woodland Trust

involved and through them organised for children from two local schools to take part in the tree planting, *"Letting them have an involvement in something that in years to come will be a local landmark is priceless,"* said Kirsty.

# RURAL LIFE (AXIS 3) AND THE LEADER APPROACH (AXIS 4)

*With a budget of £100million Axis 3: Rural Life is focused on people.*

*It recognises that those who live in rural areas ultimately know what's best for those regions. It encourages grassroots involvement in the design and delivery of projects and programmes to focus on solutions to improve quality of life.*

*All Axis 3 Measures are delivered through an Axis 4 LEADER-type approach which means focusing on 'bottom-up' development involving local businesses, elected civic representatives and local councils. This public-private partnership is known as a Local Action Group (LAG). The LEADER approach ensures that all development actions and objectives taken forward in a local area have been approved at local level. Almost 2200 LAGs are working locally to implement projects across Europe.*

*The aims of the Axis will be achieved by supporting a wide range of projects which including diversification from agricultural activities, business creation, tourism, basic services for rural communities, village renewal and development, conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage.*

*The projects showcased on the following pages illustrate the diversity of rural life and also demonstrates the flexibility and adaptability of EU rural development policy. Local Action Groups can offer a choice of measures which will appeal to a wide range of people and interests within their local communities. The measures can then be interpreted and actioned differently in each area therefore maximising local value.*



# MEASURE 3.1

## *Diversification into Non-Agricultural Activities.*

*This measure aims to assist farm households to diversify into activities which are non-agricultural. This would then as a consequence, maintain or increase the income of the farm households and create employment opportunities.*

Grant Rate	Maximum Grant Amount
50% Private Sector	£50,000

## VIOLIN STUDIO AND WORKSHOP

**Applicant:** Martin McClean

**Location:** Moneymore, Co. Derry

**Measure:** 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities

**Local Action Group Area:** South West Action for Rural Development (SWARD)

Martin McClean, who assists on the family farm near Moneymore, is also a highly skilled craftsman who has turned a passion for his niche craft into a successful business. Martin's drive for perfection led him to undertake extensive training, much of which took place in America. During that time he thoroughly researched the Italian methods of violin & viola making and then returned home equipped with the skills required to establish his business. Martin initially began by designing his own tools and equipment and his own varnish and he crafts specific woods to hand-make violins, mainly for professional musicians. It soon became clear that his makeshift workshop on the farm was too cramped making it difficult for Martin to maintain the high standards required in his craftwork. In addition, the premises were most

unsuitable to showcase his finished products. Encouraged by the potential of the Rural Development Programme Martin applied to his Local Action Group SWARD for assistance and support. SWARD duly assisted Martin to access funds to build and equip a fit for purpose workshop and studio so that he can work in an environment which will help him to perfect his craft and one which will maximise a good customer experience.

SWARD have also provided support for a marketing strategy to enable Martin to actively target his market and potentially increase sales. The end result of this project will be that the promoter will have a specially designed workshop that is best suited to his craft. Martin's high standards will be maintained and he will be able to properly display his craft to potential customers.



*"Martin McClean has researched the Italian methods of violin making and has designed his own tools and varnishes to craft violins, violas etc. His skills are well recognised and the instruments he crafts are much sought after by professional musicians."*



# FOYLEHOV

**Applicant:** FoyleHov

**Location:** Limavady, Co. Londonderry

**Email:** info@foylehov.com **Web:** www.foylehov.com

**Measure:** 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities

**Local Action Group Area:** Assisting Rural Communities north west (ARC north west)

Foylehov (Foyle Hovercrafting and Leisure) offers a range of activities including hovercrafting, powerturn buggying, laser clay shooting and archery in the Limavady Borough Council area. The business was established by John

Mark in 2007 as a farm diversification project and has benefited from a grant to provide a further hover crafting track, additional hovercrafts, a new laser combat system with assault course as well as marketing for the business.



*"This farm diversification project has benefited from a grant to provide a further hover crafting track, additional hovercrafts, a new laser combat system with assault course as well as marketing for the business."*

# GH ENGINEERING

**Applicant:** GH Engineering

**Location:** Castleberg, Co. Tyrone

**Measure:** 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities

**Email:** ghengineering240@yahoo.co.uk

**Local Action Group Area:** Assisting Rural Communities north west (ARC north west)

GH Engineering in Castleberg, Co. Tyrone was established in 1995 by Gordon Hamilton. Though the business was well established, manufacturing conveyors for crushers, roller boards and lorry bodies for the commercial and agricultural sectors, agricultural equipment, sheds and trailers, Gordon wanted to

enhance his business further by producing a wider range of metal products. Through the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme, Gordon plans to purchase a 175-tonne capacity Hydraulic Press-Brake which allows consistently reproducible standards in the forming, bending and shaping of high tensile metal sheeting.



# MOLENAN COTTAGES

**Applicant:** Molenan Cottages

**Location:** Ballougy Road, Londonderry

**Email:** robert@molenancottages.com **Web:** www.molenancottages.com

**Measure:** 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities

**Local Action Group Area:** Assisting Rural Communities north west (ARC north west)

Robert Moore had been running his family farm in Derry for almost 30 years. A derelict house on his family farm previously built for farm workers, was no longer used and Robert recognized that it would make perfect self catering tourist accommodation. In addition as the cottages are close to the border with Donegal in the republic of Ireland, they provide an

ideal location for tourists looking for a rural setting within close proximity to both Derry City Centre and Donegal. A grant through the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme assisted with building works which are now complete and having achieved 5\* Northern Ireland Tourist Board accreditation, Robert and his wife are now busy warmly welcoming guests.



# BALLYCLARE SELF STORAGE

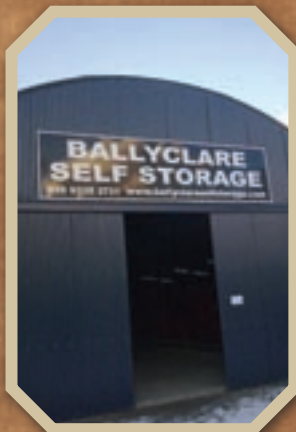
**Applicant:** Ballyclare Self Storage

**Location:** Ballyclare, Co. Antrim

**Email:** info@ballyclareselfstorage.com **Web:** www.ballyclareselfstorage.com

**Measure:** 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities

**Local Action Group Area:** GROW South Antrim



Roy Kennedy has been farming for over 40 years. After completing a Diversification Challenge course at his local College of Agriculture Food and

Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) he saw a gap in the market for storage services and decided to diversify by converting redundant farm buildings and setting up a new storage business on his farm. Roy received funding to convert an agricultural shed into a secure storage facility with 20 units and spaces for larger outdoor storage e.g. for boats and caravans. According to Roy, "With people travelling or relocating and having smaller homes or living in apartments, often they don't have enough space to store furniture or seasonal

belongings, such as bikes, garden furniture or even caravans in the wintertime. This project is an ideal

business as it will allow me to continue to farm on a smaller scale and will supplement my income."



# DRUMAKNOCKAN HOUSE

**Applicant:** William Greene

**Location:** Hillsborough, Co. Down

**Measure:** 3.1 Diversification into Non Agricultural Activities

**Local Action Group Area:** Lagan Rural Partnership

William Greene resides with his parents on the family farm in Drumaknockan House. William assists in running the traditional mixed farm business but hopes to use his equine experience and qualifications to fulfil his ambition of building a high quality equestrian centre adjacent to the farm. Through Lagan Rural Partnership William received funding to construct a Livery facility which in time will be complemented by the construction of an off road trekking facility and ménage. Commenting on the project Cllr Ann Marie Beattie, Chairman of the Local Action Group Joint Council Committee said, "It is very positive to see the Rural Development Programme progressing



*with money going out to projects and making a real difference to the rural area. With the regular inflow of applications*

*being processed and Letters of Offer issued to a wide variety of projects, the potential of the NIRDP for the rural economy*

*and rural dwellers is becoming very clear."*

# TULLANS CARAVAN PARK

**Applicant:** Tullans Caravan Park

**Location:** Coleraine, Co Londonderry

**Email:** tullansfarm@hotmail.com **Web:** www.tullansfarm.co.uk

**Measure:** 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities

**Local Action Group Area:** North East Region (NER)

Ian McClelland's mother established a caravan park on the family farm in 1991. Over the past 20 years the site has evolved and now has thirty six fully serviced touring sites and thirty four static sites. Ian saw an opportunity under

the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme to increase provision and received planning permission for a further 35 new fully serviced static caravan sites, adjacent to the existing sites. For each site, Ian needed

to install access roads, kerbing, hard standing for the sites, lighting, electricity, water and gas. With Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme funding he will also install a children's play area to make the facilities more

family friendly. Demand for the services provided by Tullans Caravan Park is high due to the secluded nature and tranquil location of the farm and Ian has a waiting list of over thirty people who wish to rent a static caravan.

# LISGLASS ALLOTMENTS

**Applicant:** Lisglass Allotments

**Location:** Lisglass, Co. Antrim

**Email:** iansmcfall@btinternet.com

**Measure:** 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities

**Local Action Group Area:** GROW South Antrim



With an increasing number of people growing their own fruit and vegetables, Ian McFall saw a gap in the market for private allotments available to rent. Ian received funding to prepare improve road access, create pathways and car parking and to install a water connection to a new site for use as an allotment. Says Ian, "People are more and more interested in where their food comes from and what goes on their families' plates for dinner. There is also the health benefit of getting out into the fresh air, taking time away from work and

*being active. It is a chance for families to spend time together and for children to have fun and learn about gardening and nature too. The grant gave me the opportunity to continue farming alongside running the allotment business."*

*"People are more and more interested in where their food comes from and what goes on their families plates."*

# MADE EASY BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

**Applicant:** Made Easy Business Solutions

**Location:** Magherafelt

**Email:** info@madeeasysolutions.com **Web:** www.madeeasysolutions.com

**Measure:** 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities

**Local Action Group Area:** South West Action for Rural Development (SWARD)

Made Easy Business Solutions, run by entrepreneur, Eilish Devlin benefited from the RDP by receiving a grant to contribute to business start-up costs for a small business marketing web portal. Eilish comments 'Business start ups with their limited access to capital and small budgets find marketing and promotion costs

expensive. Ironically, the start of a business is when this promotion becomes so vitally important to its on-going success. Our portal gives our clients access to logo design, print, web development and promotion, while maintaining quality of design, through a 'one-stop shop' portal.'



# WESTWIND TURBINES

**Applicant:** Andrew Graham

**Location:** Carmavy Road, Aldergrove

**Email:** info@westwindturbines.co.uk **Web:** www.westwindturbines.co.uk

**Measure:** 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities

**Local Action Group Area:** GROW South Antrim

Andrew Graham's interest in renewable technologies led to him set up Westwind Turbines in 1994, distributing, installing and maintaining wind turbines and other renewable energy products.

Andrew identified a need to expand the manufacturing facilities in order to improve the capacity of the business, cutting the lead-in time for orders and meet ever-increasing customer demands. With the support of GROW Local Action

Group Andrew has expanded the manufacturing side of his business to supply larger turbines and enhanced his new premises which has created a more professional

image for the business. The project is a great example of how funding can kick start expansion and really make a difference to a local business.

*"We are a small engineering company in the renewable energy sector with a desire to grow and spread our wings. The current economic climate is difficult and thanks to some funding from GROW we have been able to buy additional engineering equipment and employ 2 additional staff members. Through the more recent projects we aim to create an additional 4 full-time jobs as well as sustain employment for existing staff."*



# BENVARDEN GARDENS BRIDGE

**Applicant:** Benvardeen Gardens Bridge

**Location:** Bushmills, Co. Antrim

**Email:** info@benvardeen.com **Web:** www.benvardeen.com

**Measure:** 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities

**Local Action Group Area:** North East Region (NER)

Hugh Montgomery owns a country estate near Bushmills, Co. Antrim. Most of the estate is rented out, with the exception of 80 acres of broadleaf woodland which are used for commercial purposes. The estate is open to the public in the summer months with the main attractions being the walled garden, cobbled stable yard and tea room. The estate is home to a 120 foot Victorian bridge which spans the river Bush and is one of

only a few bridges in Ireland designed using cast iron girders with open spandrels. Hugh wanted to sand blast and repaint the Victorian bridge, but was held back by the technicalities of the project. Funding through the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme will now allow a team of specialised painters to erect scaffolding across the river sandblast the bridge and repaint it all using chemical free products and prevent pollution of the river.



# COLTON CONCRETE

**Applicant:** Colton Concrete Ltd

**Location:** Dromore, Co. Tyrone

**Email:** mark@coltonconcrete.co.uk **Website:** www.coltonconcrete.co.uk

**Measure:** 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities

**Local Action Group Area:** Assisting Rural Communities north west (ARC north west)

Colton Concrete Limited, located between Omagh and Dromore, was one of the first projects to benefit from NIRD investment. The company, established in 2005, specialises in the manufacture of a wide range of precast concrete products and also produces regular concrete products including lintels, sills, kerbs, posts and decorative pillar caps, as well as hand made products for the water mains and road gullies sector, which are marketed throughout the UK and Ireland.

The grant support was used to purchase specialist equipment to enable the business to mechanise production of previously hand made products as well as diversify into a new, extensive product range. It also supported the creation of additional employment and has enabled the company to become more efficient and competitive.

Mark Colton, a farming family member and owner of the company said, "This welcome investment will



*give me the opportunity to develop additional products and concentrate on sales rather than dealing with production. It will also allow*

*me to employ more staff to undertake sales and office management, which are very important aspects of a progressive company."*

# COMPLETE RECYCLING SYSTEMS

**Applicant:** Complete Recycling Systems (CRS NI Ltd)

**Location:** Carrickmore, Co. Tyrone

**Website:** www.crsni.com

**Measure:** 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities

**Local Action Group Area:** Assisting Rural Communities north west (ARC north west)



Complete Recycling Systems (NI) was established by Seán Conlon and is located beside Seán's family home in Carrickmore. The company manufactures recycling machinery. Seán had worked in the industry for several years and saw an opportunity to maximize his skills and meet demand for high quality product design. Seán applied to the NIRD and was awarded funding to enhance his workspace to meet the needs of his existing customer base and to facilitate new customers. Since then

Seán's business has gone from strength to strength - he has at least doubled his workload and now employs 4 additional members of staff, as well as increasing turnover year on year.

*"Other rural businesses should be inspired by the success of CSR - the Rural Development Programme has been established to help sustain, and further grow rural businesses and enterprises, and enable them to take full advantage of future improvements in the economy,"* commented north west Joint Committee Councillor Pat McDonnell.

# KILCOOTRY BARN

**Applicant:** Anne Johnston

**Location:** Fintona, Co. Tyrone

**Email:** info@kilcootrybarn.com **Website:** www.kilcootrybarn.com

**Measure:** 3.1 Diversification into Non Agricultural Activities

**Local Action Group Area:** Assisting Rural Communities north west (ARC north west)

Anne Johnston ran the family farm, about 8 miles from the main county town of Omagh, for over 15 years. Anne recognized that the beautiful setting of the extensive grounds, traditional barns and coach house at her property had huge tourism potential. In addition she realised that there was a niche in the market for self catering facilities in the area and knew that if developed some of her outbuildings could be rented to create an additional income to the farm. Spurred by the opportunities offered

by the NIRD Anne was awarded funding towards the conversion of a 150 year old stone barn into a self catering unit. The result is the stunning and spacious Kilcootry Barn which is beautifully furnished throughout boasting a host of original features including vaulted ceilings, exposed beams. It has two double bedrooms, open plan Living / Dining / Kitchen, bathroom with separate shower, flat screen TV with Freeview & DVD player in each room, a hand crafted kitchen with granite worktops and equipped with all modern



appliances. In addition the front door opens out to a large landscaped garden with patio area and

barbecue facilities. Anne has also been awarded a five star rating from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB).

