

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE IN IRELAND

Sharing Good News Stories
Online Webinar & Q+A

Tuesday, 11th July

7:00-8:30PM

John McHugh



Andrew Bergin



Moyhill Farm



The Auchmutys



Wild Atlantic Hemp



Paul Moore



Derry Duff



Webinar Overview

Regenerative Agriculture in Ireland

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REGINA Erasmus+ Project

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Regenerative Agriculture Intro

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7 Farm Case Studies

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Q&A

Presenter: Isabel Power, ipower@secad.ie

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Register on Eventbrite
or email: ipower@secad.ie

SECAD    Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

What is the REGINA Project?



“Regenerative Agriculture – An Innovative Approach Towards the Mitigation of Climate Change through Multi-tier Learning”, funded through the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission.



The project focuses on the theme of Regenerative Agriculture (RA) as an alternative concept and **method of sustainable farming employed in the fight against climate change.**



Development and pilot-testing of a **Learning Methodology and Modules** for introducing the theme in Higher Education.





DESK RESEARCH

The basic characteristics of the agricultural sector of each partner country & uptake of RA.



SURVEYS

70+ farmer surveys around RA.



INTERVIEWS

7 Farmer Interviews & 6 Stakeholder Interviews.



IRELAND
SLOVENIA
HUNGARY
ITALY
GREECE



What is Regenerative Agriculture?

Introduction to Regenerative Agriculture



“While there is no strict definition, Regenerative Agriculture is **an umbrella-term** for sustainable farming methods that focus on:

- **Restoring Soil Fertility**
- **Increasing Biodiversity**
- Animal Welfare
- Sequestering & Reducing Emissions
- Improving nutrient cycling in the soil
- Increasing water quality and availability



This style of farming **integrates plants and animals**, and **avoids practices that cause long-term damage to soil**, such as excessive tillage and chemical inputs.



Practices that involve **“farming for nature”** are encouraged, such as hedgerow preservation, field margins, winter stubble, cover crops, agroforestry, and flowering belts.



Regenerative Farming Methods



Min-Till of the Soil



Natural/Semi-natural Habitats



Agroforestry



Crop Diversity & Rotations



Flower Strips (Pollinators)



Buffer Strips



Cover Crops



Grassland Management

Findings so far...



Only **1.3% of farm holdings** in Ireland are **organic** (registered/in conversion). The lowest of the partnering countries (**15.2% – Italy, 10.3% – Slovenia, 8.7% – Greece**).



SURVEY:

- Farmers want to see **more financial support, training and information sessions for regenerative farming.**
- Most respondents agreed that there is a **strong need to redirect agriculture towards new approaches to help mitigate climate change.**
- The majority of farmers agreed that there is a **knowledge gap** amongst farmers about the alternative ways of farming.
- **Main obstacles** for RA appear to be: *lack of know-how, lack of financial support from the state, suspicion regarding results, financial uncertainty*

Desk Research



“The 2 main aims of Regenerative Agriculture is to **restore soil health** (& increase its capacity to sequester & store carbon) and **enhance biodiversity** (reversing biodiversity loss).



Official policies / standards regarding RA have not yet been developed



RA is being employed freely by farmers and has a growing online & in-person community of farmers and other stakeholders who are engaging **in peer-to-peer learning & knowledge creation.**



Apparent increase in the use of the term as a "marketing buzzword" – **greenwashing.**

Cons: Regenerative Agriculture

 Transition to RA: **lack of know-how and support from the experts/consultants** (e.g. agronomists, advisors).

 Farmers implementing RA are often the only ones in their region and **they lack support** from other farmers in order to share concerns and seek solutions together.

 Marketing the RA products: there is **no certification of the RA products** and it is **not easy to achieve a good premium price**; the RA farmers can try to sell their products directly to the consumers (short supply chains), however this adds to their workload.

 Also, farmers in Hungary, Italy and Slovenia reported there is an **issue with weed management**. Finally, the **slow return on investment** is an obstacle reported by most farmers.

Pros: Regenerative Agriculture



Benefits for the environment: *increase of biodiversity, regeneration of the soil and enhancement of fertility and CO2 sequestration, minimizing the danger of soil erosion, reduction of natural resources (water) used in farming, achieving more balanced temperatures.*



Benefits contributing to the economic sustainability of the farm: *nutritional and taste supremacy of products, reduced production costs (in terms of less water used, reduced input in terms of fertilizers and pesticides/herbicides, lower fuel costs and costs to maintain machinery, etc.*



Personal/social benefits for the farmers: *the knowledge and experience gained, personal development in a healthy environment; empowering experience, mental and psychological benefits, a reduction of feelings of stress, as social benefits in terms of having a sense of accomplishment, gaining recognition for their efforts to contribute in a more sustainable future, and being part of a vibrant community of like-minded farmers.*



Irish Farms engaging in
Regenerative Agriculture

Good News Stories

Case Studies



Diverse Range of Farms interviewed.



Running Order:

1. Laura Jane Foley & Daniel Lyons, **Wild Atlantic Hemp**, County Clare [Hemp].
2. **Andrew Bergin**, County Kildare [Arable].
3. Steve & Claire Collins, **DerryDuff Farm**, County Cork [Berry Farm & Mixed Livestock].
4. John McHugh, **Clondarrig Farm**, County Laois [Dairy, Beef & Community Allotments].
5. **Paul Moore**, County Cork [Arable]
6. **Mervyn & Robert Auchmuty**, County Roscommon [Arable]
7. Fergal & Sally, **Moyhill Farm**, County Clare [Market Farm & Mixed Livestock]



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue jacket, stands in the foreground of a large field of green hemp plants. She is smiling and has her hands on her hips. In the background, a man in a white jacket stands among the plants. The field is dense with tall, green stalks. The background shows a line of trees under a grey, overcast sky.

Case Study 1

Wild Atlantic Hemp

Wild Atlantic Hemp

Laura Jane Foley & Daniel Lyons
Co. Clare

- 1 Hectare Farm, Loop Head Peninsula, County Clare.
- Started 2018.
- Growing Industrial Hemp for CBD Oil & CBD infused Honey.
- Regenerative Qualities of Hemp.
- Hemp is a 'Bioaccumulator' - soaks up toxins from the soil.



Wild Atlantic Hemp



Wild Atlantic Hemp

Laura Jane Foley & Daniel Lyons

- Experimentation with Natural Fertilisers & Pesticides.
- Mycelium Powder, Seaweed, Microbial Teas.
- Coffee Grounds for Slug Derrent.
- Soil Samples & Testing.
- Increase in Bugs & Bird Life.
- Cover Crops in the off-season.
- Leads in Hemp4Soil EIP Project





Question & Answer
Wild Atlantic Hemp

A man wearing a blue and green knit cap and a dark jacket stands in a lush green field. He is smiling and holding a large clump of dark soil with grass roots. In the background, there are rolling hills, a cloudy sky, and a few sheep grazing in the distance.

Case Study 2
Andrew Bergin

Andrew Bergin

Arable (tillage) Farmer
Co. Kildare

- 90 Hectare Tillage Farm.
- Variety of crops from peas, beans, oil seed rape, winter wheat, spring wheat, barley and oats.
- Spaces for Nature & Pollinators.
- No Ploughing & Minimum Tillage of soil.

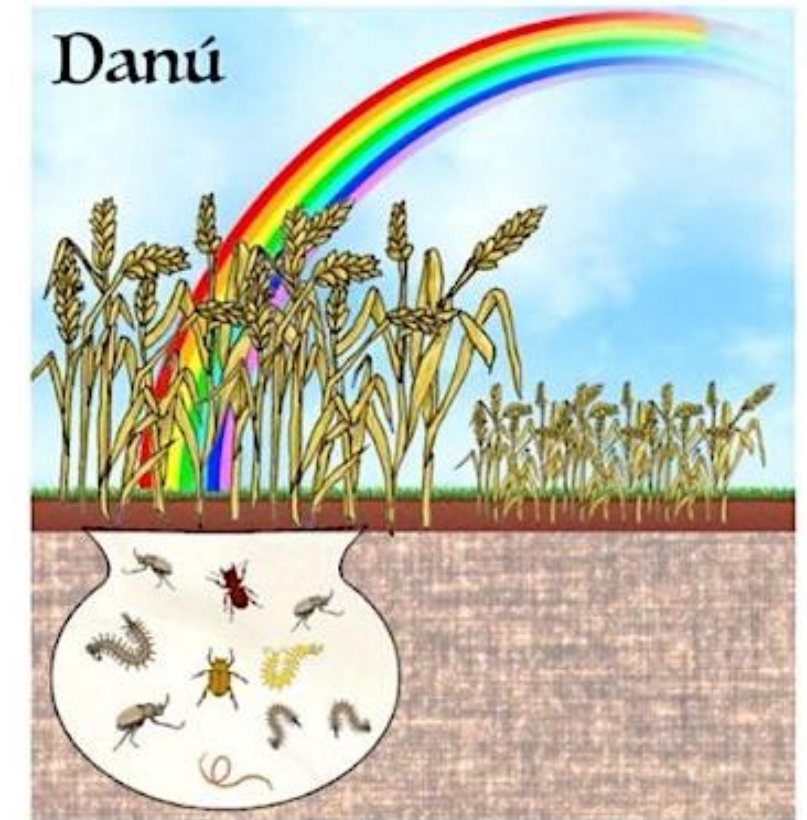


Andrew Bergin

Arable (tillage) Farmer

Co. Kildare

- Cover Crops; maintaining living root.
- Protecting Ground Nesting Birds.
- Danú Farming Group & BASE Ireland
- Regenerative farming “*would be very hard without the BASE community and the internet*”.



Nurturing nature's abundance



Andrew Bergin

Arable (tillage) Farmer
Co. Kildare

- Start Slow; Take one field at a time.
- Hire a contractor to test min-till & no-till drill.
- RA is not prescriptive - use your own judgement.
- Keep an open mind.
- *"farming is a lot more engaging and interesting now"*.



A man wearing a blue and green knit beanie and a dark jacket stands in a lush green field. He is smiling and holding a large clump of dark brown soil with some grass roots attached. In the background, there are rolling hills, a few trees, and a dog running in the distance under a cloudy sky.

Question & Answer
Andrew Bergin



Case Study 3
DerryDuff Farm

DerryDuff Farm

Steve & Claire Collins | Co. Cork
Berry Production & Mixed Livestock



- 54 hectare farm, West Cork.
- Attained organic status in 2010.
- No Chemical Inputs.
- Mountainous, rugged landscape.
- Main Crops: Blueberries & Aronia Berries.
- Main Product: Health food drinks & powders.



DerryDuff Farm

Steve & Claire Collins | Co. Cork

Berry Production & Mixed Livestock

- Clover and herbs mixed into grassland.
- Manual weeding.
- Native trees, Shrubs & Ponds.
- Integrating Cattle & Chickens with the land.
- Tree nursery and agroforestry.



DerryDuff Farm

Steve & Claire Collins | Co. Cork

Berry Production & Mixed Livestock

- Apple Orchard.
- Farming in harmony with the natural landscape.
- Trial & Error, "common sense".
- Improved income, land management, soil & biodiversity.



The background image shows a lush green landscape. In the foreground, there are several trees, some with dense foliage and others that are bare. The middle ground consists of rolling green hills with some rocky outcrops. In the background, a large, prominent mountain with a rounded peak rises against a clear sky. The overall scene is a natural, rural setting.

Questions and Answers
DerryDuff Farm

A photograph of a farm scene with a group of chickens and several pigs in a grassy field. The chickens are of various breeds, including black, white, and brown. The pigs are brown and appear to be grazing. The background shows a line of trees and a clear sky. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

Case Study 4
Clondarrig Farm

Clondarrig Farm

John McHugh

Dairy & Mixed Livestock | *Co. Laois*

- 95 hectare farm, became farm manager in 2001.
- 60 Dairy cows, small beef herd, hens & pigs.
- Began his journey into RA in 2014 due to issues with the conventional system.
- Farming regeneratively for almost 9 years.
- His farm is more resilient to weather changes.
- All cows fed 100% forage based diet, grown on-farm.



Clondarrig Farm

John McHugh

Dairy & Mixed Livestock | *Co. Laois*

- Cattle kept out year-round, abundant pasture.
- Semi re-wilding areas of land.
- RA is "highly contextual".
- Community Farm & Allotments.
- Improved quality of product & animal health.



A photograph of a farm scene. In the foreground and middle ground, there are several chickens of various breeds (black, white, brown, grey) and three brown pigs. They are in a grassy field with some fallen leaves. In the background, there are trees and a fence. The text "Questions & Answers" is written in a smaller font above "Clondarrig Farm", which is written in a larger, bold font. The entire image has a dark green overlay.

Questions & Answers
Clondarrig Farm



Case Study 5
Paul Moore

Paul Moore

Arable (tillage) Farmer

Co. Cork

- 56 hectare tillage farm.
- Malting Barley, Beans and Oilseed Rape, with a small herd of cattle
- Began experimenting with RA in 2017.
- About one quarter of Paul's land is farmed regeneratively, with the hope to transition more.
- Strip tilling: improved water drainage & soil health.



Paul Moore

Arable (tillage) Farmer Co. Cork

- Wildlife Field Margins.
- Beetle Banks amongst tillage fields.
- Promoting helpful insects that attack aphids: Ladybirds and certain beetles.
- Use of Cover crops.
- Reduced workload and input costs.



Aphid Yellow Trapping Survey

Spring Barley 2023 – Update 16/05/2023 (Sites 2 – 10)

Time	Distance	<u>Rhopalosiphum</u> <u>padi</u>	<u>Sitobion</u> <u>avenae</u>	<u>Metopolophium</u> <u>dirhodum</u>	Other aphids	Other Insect
2	20m	2	0	2	26	300
2	50m	1	0	1	25	190
5	10m	0	0	0	0	90
5	20m	0	0	1	0	210
5	50m	0	0	0	0	150
4	10m	0	0	0	2	60
4	20m	0	0	0	1	40
4	50m	0	0	1	1	40
1	20m	0	0	0	0	0
1	50m	0	0	0	0	300
3	20m	1	0	0	2	560
3	50m	0	0	0	1	640



A photograph of a farm scene featuring a group of chickens and three pigs in a grassy field. The chickens are of various breeds, including black, white, and brown. The pigs are brown and appear to be foraging. The background shows a line of trees and a clear sky. The text "Questions & Answers Paul Moore" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Questions & Answers
Paul Moore



Case Study 6

Mervyn Auchmuty

The Auchmuty's

Mervyn & Robert - Arable (tillage)
Co. Roscommon

- 161 hectare arable & mixed livestock farm.
- Introduced to RA in 2013 with "Min Till" demo.
- Bought a "Strip-till Drill" with TAMS grant.
- Now have a "Direct Drill".
- Importance of Cover crops.



The Auchmuty's



The Auchmuty's

Mervyn & Robert - Arable (tillage)
Co. Roscommon

- Improved Root Structure.
- Natural Fertilisers, farmyard manure.
- Seaweed & seed washes.
- Member of BASE Ireland.
- Taken part in NOTS Soil courses.



The Auchmuty's



A blue New Holland tractor is parked in a field of cut grass. The tractor has a yellow Claydon implement attached to the back. The text "Robert J. Auchmuty & Sons" and "090 64 99187 017 2517724" is visible on the side of the tractor. The background shows a line of trees under a clear sky.

Questions & Answers
Mervyn Auchmuty



Case Study 7
Moyhill Farm

Moyhill Farm

Fergal & Sally | Market Farm & Mixed Livestock
Co. Clare

- 80-acre regenerative farm, west coast of Clare.
- Mix of livestock; cows, sheep and hens, and grow about 25 different crops in their Market Garden.
- Began RA in 2017, engaged in many trainings.
- Mob Grazing.
- Forward Planning.
- EOY Verification.



Moyhill Farm

Fergal & Sally | Market Farm
Co. Clare

- Farming with Intention.
- Diversity is key.
- Improved product marketing & price.
- Thriving ecosystem.
- An "affirming experience".



A photograph of a sheep farm with sheep grazing in a field, overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter and white text. The sheep are of various colors, including brown, black, and white. The background shows a line of trees under a clear sky.

Questions & Answers
Moyhill Farm

Conclusions

Regenerative Agriculture in Ireland

- 1** RA in Ireland is being led by a community of self-driven farmers.
- 2** Mantra of 'trial and error'.
- 3** Peer-to-peer learning is key.
- 4** RA encourages farmers to feel like they are part of the solution, not the problem (*Farming for Nature aim*).

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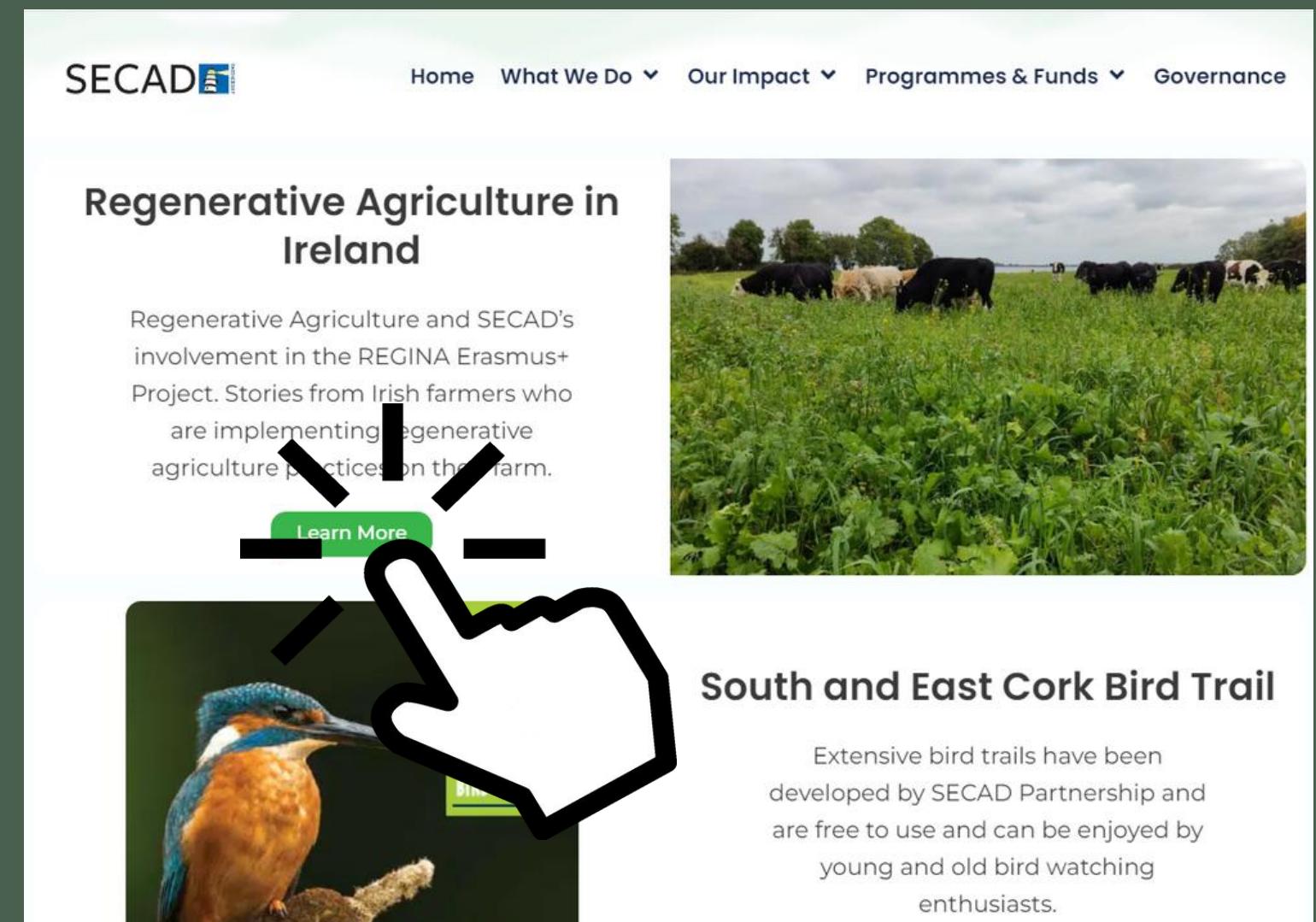
"Don't let 'perfect' get in the way of 'good'".

**The future of
Regenerative Farming
in Ireland is bright...**

Check out the SECAD Website...

Regenerative Agriculture Blogs & other resources

www.secad.ie



Support farmer-led initiatives...

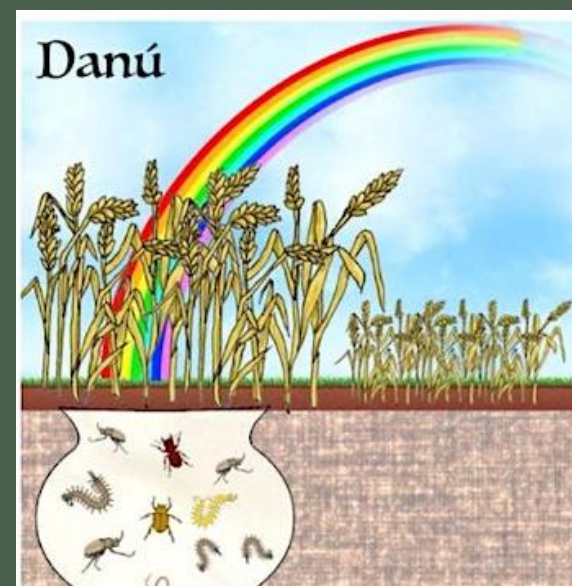
- BASE Ireland
- EIP Projects:
 - Loop Head Together- Hemp4Soil
 - Danu Farming Group
- NOTS Training Programmes
- Farming for Nature - Upcoming Farm Walks



BioFarm 2023

Ireland's Biological Farming Conference

- Back to basics: 2-day in-person Conference
- 2 full days of Irish & international speakers from the world of



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

& to our Wonderful Speakers.

*Presenter: Isabel Power,
ipower@secad.ie*

John McHugh



Andrew Bergin



Moyhill Farm



The Auchmutys



Wild Atlantic Hemp



Paul Moore



Derry Duff

