



## **FARMING FOR CONSERVATION IN THE BURREN**

Old School House, Carron, Co Clare. Tel 065 708 9000

E-mail [info@burrenlife.com](mailto:info@burrenlife.com) Web: [www.burrenlife.com](http://www.burrenlife.com)

---

### **Project Update – Autumn 2009**

The BurrenLIFE Project (BLP) has reached the final five months in its 65 month operation and having recently been granted a five month extension, the BLP will now officially end its work on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2010. The Project Team is pleased with the results achieved on the 20 sites selected covering an area in excess of 2, 200 ha of Burren SAC land. The other great news is that in July 2009, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Mr Brendan Smith, TD announced an allocation of €1 million per year for 3 years to Burren farmers based on the BurrenLIFE model. This announcement clearly demonstrates the strong support of the Department for farming for conservation in the Burren and will result in the work of BurrenLIFE being rolled out across the wider Burren.

#### **Work on LIFE Farms**

Throughout the year, LIFE farmers have engaged in a considerable amount of work to enhance livestock management facilities on project sites. Local contractors listed with BLP's Register of Workers have also been engaged in wall work (internal wall construction and upkeep), provision of livestock watering facilities and improvements in site access. The treatment of scrub re-growth by herbicide wiping or cutting of the new re-growth has also taken place over the past number of months. This work has clearly highlighted that local farmers and local workers have the required skills and experience to undertake conservation work of this type. More importantly, it yet again demonstrates the linkage between the support for conservation work in the Burren and the options to support communities farming, living and working in the area.

Vegetation monitoring to gauge the impact of land and livestock management changes implemented via the BLP has been completed. The results thus far are very encouraging. Soil and forage analyses have also been completed and results are assisting the Project Team to build a knowledge base of the nutritional requirements of livestock on Project sites.

#### **Farm Demonstration Days – April 2009 & August 2009**

Two successful farm demonstration days took place during the year on the farm of Mr. James Keane (Ballyvaughan) and Ms. Caitriona O' Dea (Carron). These events highlighted the practical nature of the conservation farming measures being implemented by the BLP and LIFE farmers in the field. Some of the aspects highlighted at these events included better grazing regimes & grassland management, use of supplementary feed, animal condition scoring and animal health, stock type & breeding and enhancing livestock management facilities.

#### **BurrenLIFE & Ploughing Championships**

The BLP will participate in the National Ploughing Championship from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September in Cardenton, Athy, Co Kildare. The BLP will share a stand with the Department of the Environment. A member of the BLP team will be available at the stand on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September to discuss the work of the BLP and to answer queries.

#### **Public Awareness & Information**

The initial 4 year Heritage Education Programme in local schools has been completed. Three summer field trips of the wider community also took place in 2009 together with three successful blocks of free illustrated talks in Ennis, Tubber and Kilfenora covering a wide range of Burren related topics. The BLP's farming for conservation DVD entitled 'Farming the Living Landscape of the Burren' was officially launched in January 2009 by Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, Mr John Gormley, TD. At the local launch in Ennis over 300 Burren farmers attended a night of celebration where farmers themselves highlighted the success of farming for conservation on their farms.

#### **Marketing & Branding - Developing New Markets for Burren Produce**

Since the establishment of the Burren Beef & Lamb Producers Group (BBLPG) its members have worked tirelessly to become the leading producers of quality Burren beef and lamb. All member farmers actively farm for conservation in the Burren ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Burren via the production of 'conservation grade' quality beef and lamb. In addition, they manage their farms to enhance the local biodiversity of the Burren. Their core commitment is to produce quality food from a quality environment. Orders can be placed via [info@burrenlife.com](mailto:info@burrenlife.com) or contact 065 708 9000.

**Project Seminar:** The final BLP seminar will take place in Gort, Co. Galway on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2009. Full details on website.

#### **Project Website**

Updates and News are available through the website [www.burrenlife.com](http://www.burrenlife.com). Please feel free to register your details.