

## BurrenLIFE Conference 2008 Field Trips Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> February

### Site (a)

**Farm size:** Total area = 197 Ha (147 Ha is state owned and farmed by Frank via management agreement).

**Land type:** The farm is composed of extensive areas of rough limestone grassland and pavement with strong cover of scrub, as well as areas of improved agricultural grasslands. The land is split into three main parcels divided by public roads, with separate management units (fields) in each parcel.



**Farm system and management:** This farm is involved in suckler beef production. Currently there are approximately 35 suckler cows kept on the farm. These cows are bred to a Saler or Angus bull. March is the main calving month. Weanlings are sold off the farm in the autumn. Approximately 8 replacement heifers are kept each year.

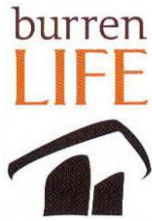


**Heritage value:** There are at least nine different wildlife habitats present on the farm including limestone pavement, heath, species rich dry calcareous grassland and Atlantic hazel woodland. The heritage value of the farm is recognised through the designation of the whole farm as part of the East Burren Complex Special Area of Conservation. Many of the habitats on the farm are 'Priority Habitats' in the EU Habitats Directive, meaning that they are among the most valuable and rare habitats remaining in Europe.

There are 9 listed archaeological features on the farm. These include fulacht fiadhs (a bronze age site thought to have been used for cooking and bathing), holy well, enclosures and earthworks. A large number of unmarked archaeological and historical sites may be seen throughout this site. These sites would include an old farmstead with outbuildings, turf tiles, goat cros, as well as some fine examples of shelter walls which may be seen on the hillsides. Numerous ancient stone enclosures are scattered throughout the farm. The wealth and diversity of structures found within this farm constitute an internationally significant resource.

## Summary of main works completed under BurrenLIFE Project on Farm

- Grazing** Fields 1, 2, 11, 14, 17 and 21 are used for outwintering. The estimated outwintering capacity of these areas (without feeding) is 7,240 'Grazing Days (1GD is the grazing of one 1LU for 1 day). This equates to c.45 suckler cows for a six month winter. The outwintering area used in 2006/7 was c.155 ha and 4,900 GDs were recorded over this time. This equates to an average winter stocking rate of c.0.2 LU/ha. Site assessments post-winter confirmed that main winterage areas were undergrazed (GL 1.5 - 2) with some areas ungrazed. As the land was stocked well below target levels, minimal supplementary feeding was required.  
The permitted winter grazing period for this farm has been extended from Sept 1st to April 30<sup>th</sup> and late (mid-July onward) light summer grazing of winterages is also allowed (derogation received from Dept. of Ag.).
- Feeding** No feeding was done on the main winterage areas in 2006/7. Most of the feeding was done in the slatted house, where silage was fed from January onwards. Some light feeding with silage took place on Fields 2 and 11, with some concentrate also fed to animals on green land areas. No BurrenLIFE ration was used on this farm in 2006/7.
- Scrub control** Scrub removal took place on the main winterage fields 1, 14 and 17. Paths were cut to improve cattle movement and encroaching scrub was removed from priority habitats. Chainsaws and other hand tools were used and the cut scrub was heaped into brashing piles. Stumps were treated with glyphosphate immediately after cutting to limit regrowth. Chemical treatment of regrowth on scrub cut in field 17 in Jan./Feb. 2006 was carried out using weed wipers in summer 2006.
- Water provision** Main watering point in field 17 was cleared of obstructing scrub.
- Internal Walls** Internal walls between fields 1 & 14 were repaired. The external wall around field 17 was also repaired as cattle were regularly breaking out from this field. This work was done by local contractors and 80% of this cost was met by the BLP, the remainder by the landowner, NPWS.
- Access provision** Access was greatly improved on fields 1, 14 and 17 through the removal of scrub along existing animal trackways.
- Site restoration** Fly-tipped material was removed from the perimeter of field 17 and recycled/disposed of by local contractors.
- Monitoring:** A detailed monitoring programme is taking place e.g.  
Ecological & Environmental: Vegetation (quadrats), scrub regrowth, water quality sampling, soil sampling etc.  
Agricultural: forage and silage sampling, animal condition scoring, blood sampling, herd health survey, detailed information collected on grazing and feeding regimes.  
Socio-economic: the farmer is participating in the National Farm Survey which involves three annual visits from a Teagasc recorder.



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### Site (b)

**Farm size:** Total area = 141.53 Ha

**Land type:** The farm is composed of extensive areas of rough limestone grassland and pavement with strong cover of scrub, as well as areas of improved agricultural grasslands. The land is all in one parcel divided into separate management units.



**Farm system and management:** This farm is involved in suckler beef production. Currently there are approximately 35 suckler cows kept on the farm. These cows are bred to a Limousin bull. Cows calf during the months of February and March and weanlings are sold off the farm during the period September to October. Approximately 4 replacement heifers are kept each year.

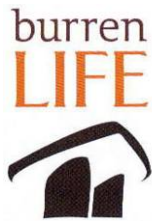


**Heritage value:** There are at least nine different wildlife habitats present on the farm including limestone pavement, heath, species rich dry calcareous grassland and atlantic hazel woodland. The heritage value of the farm is recognised through the designation of the 127Ha of the farm as part of Moneen Mountain Special Area of Conservation. Many of the habitats on the farm are 'Priority Habitats' in the EU Habitats Directive, meaning that they are among the most valuable and rare habitats remaining in Europe.

Listed archaeological features on the farm include an enclosures and associated stone walls. A very large number of interesting historical sites exist on this farm, most of them unmarked on maps. These range from ancient field systems ('mound' and 'slab' walls which may be thousands of years old), to more recent structures such as turf tiles, stone cottages and impressive stone walls.

## Summary of main works completed under BurrenLIFE Project on Farm

- Grazing** Fields 1-10 are used for outwintering. The estimated outwintering capacity of these areas (without feeding) is 5,750 'Grazing Days (1GD is the grazing of one 1LU for 1 day). This equates to c.36 suckler cows for a six month winter. The outwintering area in 2006/7 was c.123ha and 5,940 GDs were recorded over this time. This equates to an average winter stocking rate of 0.27 LU/ha. Site assessments post-winter confirmed that most fields were well grazed (GL 3), some undergrazed (GL 2.5) with feeding areas (Field 10, 14) slightly overgrazed (GL 3.5). As the land was stocked at close to target levels, minimal supplementary feeding was required. The permitted winter grazing period for this area has been extended from Sept 1st to April 30<sup>th</sup> and late (mid-July onward) light summer grazing of winterages is also allowed (derogation received from Dept. of Ag.).
- Feeding** Before the BLP, the farmer fed c.120 bales of silage over winter: this has been reduced to 40-50 bales used to feed cows around calving. This resulted in no silage being harvested in 2006. In 2007 the farmer tried to save hay, but due to poor weather conditions, only silage could be saved. The difference in fodder used has been made up by increased use of concentrate ration, fed using troughs (or on the ground) in field 7. Mineral supplements are also used. The BLP subsidizes 25% of the cost of the ration and mineral supplements being used by the farmer and also subsidised 50% of the cost of feed bins for storing feed. Targeted use of the ration encourages higher levels of grazing on these areas compared with that achieved under a silage or hay-based regime. This results in improved agricultural and ecological quality.
- Scrub control** Scrub was removed from Fields 6-10 in winter 2005/2006 and winter 2006/2007 to improve cattle access and movement, and remove encroaching scrub from priority habitats. Chainsaws and other hand tools were used and the cut scrub was heaped into brashing piles and later burnt. Stumps were treated with glyphosphate to prevent regrowth. A bladed strimmer was also used to cut back young saplings in summer 2007.
- Water provision** The BLP provided 50% funding toward the cost of purchase and installation of pipes and tanks to improve water supply on the winterage fields 6-9, and is exploring options regarding water provision on upper areas of the farm.
- Internal Walls** The farmer repaired internal walls between fields 10 & 14, 7 and 6-8-9, and 4 & 11. Gates have been inserted in the wall between 10 & 14, 7 & 10. This work was done by local contractors and 80% of this cost was met by the BLP.
- Access provision** The farmer received support (50% of cost) from BLP for creation of a trackway across field 10 to field 7. This has facilitated the feeding of ration to livestock on fields 6-9 and has extended grazing on these areas.
- Monitoring:** A detailed monitoring programme is taking place e.g.  
Ecological & Environmental: Vegetation (quadrats), scrub regrowth, water quality sampling, soil sampling etc.  
Agricultural: forage and hay sampling, animal condition scoring, blood sampling, herd health survey, detailed information collected on grazing and feeding regimes.  
Socio-economic: the farmer is participating in the National Farm Survey which involves three annual visits from a Teagasc recorder.



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### Site (c)

**Farm size:** Total area = 191.53 Ha (100.27 Ha is state owned National Park and farmed by Harry via management agreement).

**Land type:** The farm is composed of extensive areas of rough limestone grassland and pavement with strong cover of scrub, as well as areas of improved agricultural grasslands. The land is split into two main parcels with separate management units (fields) in each parcel. The remaining section of the farm is located approximately 10km away in Boston.



**Farm system and management:** This farm is a certified organic farm involved in suckler beef production. Currently there are approximately 24 Belted Galloway suckler cows kept on the farm. The cows are bred to a Belted Galloway bull. Cows calve mainly during the months of February - March. At present, most of the progeny are kept on, building up the herd. External inputs are minimal as this farm is managed according to Organic standards.

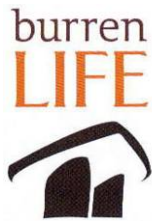


**Heritage value:** There are at least nine different wildlife habitats present on the farm including limestone pavement, heath, species rich dry calcareous grassland and atlantic hazel woodland. The heritage value of the farm is recognised through the designation of the whole farm as part of the East Burren Complex Special Area of Conservation. Many of the habitats on the farm are 'Priority Habitats' in the EU Habitats Directive, meaning that they are among the most valuable and rare habitats remaining in Europe.

A large number of unmarked archaeological and historical sites may be seen throughout this site. These range from prehistoric field-wall systems to stone forts to stone cairns. Of particular interest on this farm is the network of old 'boreens' and pathways that link up the farm, as well as the wonderful range of traditional farming structures such as goat cros, turf tiles, stone huts, stone enclosures and watering points which are found scattered throughout the farm. Listed monuments on the site include a Fulacht Fiadh, which is a bronze age site thought to have been used for cooking and bathing, which are always found close to a water source. The wealth and diversity of structures found within this farm constitute an internationally significant resource.

## Summary of Main Works Completed under Burren LIFE Project on Farm

- Grazing** The estimated outwintering capacity of the farm (without feeding) is 6,000 'Grazing Days (1GD is the grazing of one 1LU for 1 day). This equates to c.38 suckler cows for a six month winter. The outwintering area in 2006/7 was c.187ha and 5,830 GDs were recorded over this time. This equates to an average winter stocking rate of 0.173 LU/ha. Site assessments post-winter confirmed that most fields were well grazed (GL 3) or slightly undergrazed (GL 2.5). As the land was stocked at close to target levels, minimal supplementary feeding was required. The permitted winter grazing period for this area has been extended from Sept 1st to April 30<sup>th</sup> and late (mid-July onward) light summer grazing of winterages is also allowed (derogation received from Dept. of Ag.).
- Feeding** This farmer uses hay, concentrate feedstuffs and mineral supplements for his outwintering livestock at minimal levels. The BLP subsidizes 25% of the cost of the organic ration and mineral supplements being used by the farmer. Targeted use of the ration encourages higher levels of grazing on these areas compared with that achieved under a silage or hay-based regime. This results in improved agricultural and ecological quality. The farmer distributes hay and concentrate ration on the ground without any troughs or hay feeders: he finds this works very well for him and his stock.
- Scrub control** Some scrub was removed from fields 4, 30, 35 and 38 during winter 2006/2007. Paths were cut to improve cattle movement and encroaching scrub was removed from priority habitats. Chainsaws and other hand tools were used and the cut scrub was heaped into brushing piles. No chemical treatments were applied as this farm is organic, but the use of salt was piloted (with mixed results) as a measure to address regrowth. The regrowth on some of these cut areas was cut with a bladed strimmer in summer 2007.
- Water provision** The BLP provided 50% funding toward the cost of purchase and installation of pipes and tanks to improve water supply on the winterage fields 2 and 4.
- Internal Walls** The farmer repaired an internal stone wall in field 4. 80% of this cost was met by the BLP. Contractors repaired walls around a section of field 30 (state land).
- Access provision** The farmer received support (80% of cost) from BLP for ongoing hand-removal of scrub from a network of pathways throughout the farm
- Site Restoration** Over 20 'fertilizer bags' full of bottles and cans were removed and recycled by BLP contractors from a roadside area in Field 30. The farmer also removed fly-tipped rubbish from elsewhere on the farm at his own cost.
- Monitoring:** A detailed monitoring programme is taking place e.g.  
Ecological & Environmental: Vegetation (quadrats), scrub regrowth, water quality sampling, soil sampling etc.  
Agricultural: forage and hay sampling, animal condition scoring, blood sampling, herd health survey, detailed information collected on grazing and feeding regimes.  
Socio-economic: the farmer is participating in the National Farm Survey which involves three annual visits from a Teagasc recorder.



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### Site (d)

**Farm size:** Total area = 72 Ha

**Land type:** The farm is composed of areas of improved agricultural grassland, limestone pavement and unimproved limestone grassland, as well as some sections of scrub and turlough. The farm is divided into 4 main parcels, though separate management units (fields) exist within these parcels.



**Farm system and management:** This is a mixed organic farm involving dairy, beef and sheep production. Currently there are approximately 13 Dairy cows and 5 suckler cows kept on the farm. Cows calve mainly during the months of February and March. Weanlings are sold off the farm in the autumn. Approximately 30 ewes are kept on the farm, the lambs sold in spring and summer. External inputs are minimal as this farm is managed according to Organic standards.

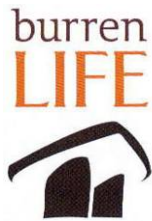


**Heritage value:** There are at least 12 different wildlife habitats present on the farm including limestone pavement, heath, species rich dry calcareous grassland and turlough (Ireland's unique ephemeral wetlands). The heritage value of the farm is recognised through the designation of 68.5Ha of the farm as part of the East Burren Complex Special Area of Conservation. Many of the habitats on the farm are 'Priority Habitats' in the EU Habitats Directive, meaning that they are among the most valuable and rare habitats remaining in Europe.

A large number of unmarked archaeological and historical sites may be seen throughout this site, including traditional farming structures such as goat cros and stone enclosures. Listed monuments on the site include a wedge tomb, which is a bronze age burial site approximately 4500 years old – the burial site of the first farmers on this land. The wealth and diversity of structures found within this farm constitute an internationally significant resource.

## Summary of Main Works Completed under Burren LIFE Project on Farm

- Grazing** The estimated outwintering capacity of the winterage (without feeding) is 1,150 'Grazing Days (1GD is the grazing of one 1LU for 1 day). This equates to c.6 suckler cows for a six month winter. The winterage area in 2006/7 was c.34 ha and 816 GDs were recorded over this time. This equates to an average winter stocking rate of 0.13 LU/ha. Site assessments post-winter confirmed that fields were slightly undergrazed (GL 2.5). As the land was stocked below target levels, minimal supplementary feeding was required. The permitted winter grazing period for this area has been extended from Sept 1st to April 30<sup>th</sup> and late (mid-July onward) light summer grazing of winterages is also allowed (derogation received from Dept. of Ag.).
- Feeding** Before BurrenLIFE, silage was fed on field 2, on average 40 bales per winter. The farmer no longer uses silage, replacing it with organic concentrate ration and mineral supplements. The BLP subsidizes 25% of the cost of the organic ration and mineral supplements being used by the farmer. Targeted use of the ration encourages higher levels of grazing on these areas compared with that achieved under a silage or hay-based regime. This results in improved agricultural and ecological quality, and grazing levels have increased substantially on this farm. The farmer distributes the concentrate ration on the ground without any troughs: he finds this works very well giving him greater flexibility, reducing costs while minimising wastage.
- Scrub control** Scrub was removed by the farmer (with a helper) from fields 1 and 2 in winter 2006/2007. The purpose of this work was to reopen access throughout the site. Chainsaws and other hand tools were used. No chemical treatments were applied as this farm is organic, but the use of salt was piloted (with mixed results) as a measure to address regrowth. The regrowth on most of these cut areas was cut with a bladed strimmer in summer 2007.
- Internal Walls** The farmer repaired internal stone walls on the northern and southern ends of field 2. 80% of this cost was met by the BLP. This has helped to improve herding and grazing.
- Access provision** Removal of scrub has greatly enhanced access throughout the farm
- Monitoring:** A detailed monitoring programme is taking place e.g.  
Ecological & Environmental: Vegetation (quadrats), scrub regrowth, water quality sampling, soil sampling etc.  
Agricultural: forage and hay sampling, animal condition scoring, blood sampling, herd health survey, detailed information collected on grazing and feeding regimes.  
Socio-economic: the farmer is participating in the National Farm Survey which involves three annual visits from a Teagasc recorder.
- Marketing** Farmer is a founding member of the Burren Beef and Lamb Producers Group, which supply "conservation grade" beef and lamb.



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### Site (e)

**Farm size:** Total area = 215 Ha

**Land type:** The farm is composed of extensive areas of rough limestone grassland and pavement with strong cover of scrub, with small pockets of improved agricultural grasslands. The land is split into two main parcels flanking the road, though separate management units exist within each parcel.



**Farm system and management:** This farm is involved in suckler beef production. Currently there are approximately 25 suckler cows kept on the farm. These cows are bred to a Saler or a Blonde D'Aquataine bull. Cows usually calve mainly during the months of March and April. Weanlings are sold off the farm in the autumn. Some replacement heifers are kept each year. External inputs are very low: small amounts of chemical fertilisers, silage and hay are purchased. A small number of sheep and horses are also kept.

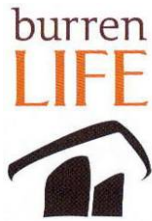


**Heritage value:** There are at least ten different wildlife habitats present on the farm including limestone pavement, heath, species rich dry calcareous grassland and atlantic hazel woodland. The heritage value of the farm is recognised through the designation of the whole farm as part of the East Burren Complex Special Area of Conservation. Many of the habitats on the farm are 'Priority Habitats' in the EU Habitats Directive, meaning that they are among the most valuable and rare habitats remaining in Europe.

There are nine listed monuments on the farm. These include three enclosures, three Fulacht Fiadhs (a bronze age site thought to have been used for cooking and bathing), a hut site complex, a barrow and a cashel. It is important to note that two archaeological complexes have been mapped on the farm. These complexes contain many of the listed features but may also contain additional sites not listed. A large number of additional unlisted monuments are also found on the farm. These include extensive wall systems of varying origin and structure, some quite ancient, some arranged into a network of enclosures. A number of cairns are also found - some for burials, others as markers. Some penetential stations may be seen as well. From more recent times a really wonderful range of traditional farming structures are also found: these include old farm settlements, trackways and turf tiles. The wealth and diversity of structures found within this farm constitute an internationally significant resource.

## **Summary of main works completed under BurrenLIFE Project on Farm**

- Grazing** All stock on this farm are outwintered. The estimated outwintering capacity of the land (without feeding) is 7,800 'Grazing Days (1GD is the grazing of one 1LU for 1 day), though this is difficult to estimate as most areas are also used for light summer grazing. This equates to c.48 suckler cows for a six month winter, or an average winter stocking rate of 0.2 LU/ha. Site assessments post-winter confirmed that some fields were overgrazed (GL 4), particularly those conveniently located and used for feeding. In contrast, more remote and rocky areas tended to be undergrazed (GL 2). Since the BLP there has been a reduction in stock numbers on the farm and significant improvements in distributing grazing levels more evenly throughout the farm.
- Feeding** Feeding of hay (plus some silage) and BLP concentrate ration takes place on this farm. Through the BLP, the farmer has moved towards a concentrate based feeding regime utilising targeted BLP ration. This BLP Feed is 25% subsidised and is tailored specifically to Burren winterages. Feed bins have been purchased to hold the ration: these have been subsidised at 50%. Targeted use of the ration encourages higher levels of grazing on these areas compared with that achieved under a hay or silage-based regime. This results in improved agricultural and ecological quality.
- Scrub control** Scrub was removed from several areas across the farm, mainly with a view to enhancing access for livestock to abandoned grazing areas. The scrub work was done by hand, using chainsaws and other tools, and brushings were collected in most cases. No chemical treatments were administered at the request of the farmer. Mixed results were achieved. This work was done by the farmer and her family and was subsidised by 80% by the BLP.
- Water provision** Initial efforts have been made to improve the water supply to upper areas of the farm but this serious restriction has yet to be fully overcome.
- Internal Walls** This has been one of the key actions undertaken on this farm. A very extensive programme of wall repair, including the erection of 7 gates, has resulted in the subdivision of the main area of the farm into four distinct sub-units. This should help the farmer to improve grassland management and make the task of herding easier.
- Marketing** Farmer is a founding member of the Burren Beef and Lamb Producers Group, which supply "conservation grade" beef and lamb.
- Monitoring** A detailed monitoring programme is taking place e.g.  
Ecological & Environmental: Vegetation (quadrats), scrub regrowth, water quality sampling, soil sampling etc.  
Agricultural: forage and hay sampling, animal condition scoring, blood sampling, herd health survey, detailed information collected on grazing and feeding regimes.  
Socio-economic: the farmer is participating in the National Farm Survey which involves three annual visits from a Teagasc recorder.



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### Site (f)

**Farm size:** Total area = 110 Ha

**Land type:** The summer land of the farm which is mainly improved agricultural grassland with approximately 8.8Ha planted as forestry is located near Kilfenora. The winterage area of the farm (51Ha) which we are visiting today is located approximately 20km away near Carron. Most of this land is species rich limestone grassland, pavement and scrub though some improved grasslands are also found.



**Farm system and management:** This farm is involved in suckler beef and sheep production and forestry. Currently there are approximately 55 suckler cows kept on the farm. These cows are bred to a charolais or blonde d'aquataine bull. The majority the cows calve mainly during the months of February and March, approximately 10 cows are autumn calving. Weanlings are sold off the farm in the autumn. 70 sheep mainly lamb in March and lambs are supplied to the Burren Beef and Lamb producers group.

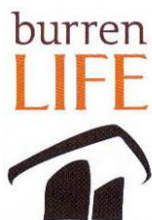


**Heritage value:** There are at least ten different wildlife habitats present on the farm including limestone pavement, heath and species rich dry calcareous grassland. The heritage value of the farm is recognised through the designation of the 64.5Ha of the farm as part of the East Burren Complex Special Area of Conservation. Many of the habitats on the farm are 'Priority Habitats' in the EU Habitats Directive, meaning that they are among the most valuable and rare habitats remaining in Europe.

A large number of unmarked archaeological and historical sites may be seen throughout this site. Examples would include mound walls (some of which may be 3,000 years old), goat cros, and a well-preserved example of a herdsman's house and gardens. Listed monuments on the site include a Fulacht Fiadh (a bronze age site thought to have been used for cooking and bathing) and a bronze age wedge tomb. The wealth and diversity of structures found within this farm constitute an internationally significant resource.

## Summary of main works completed under BurrenLIFE Project on Farm

- Grazing** Fields 1, 2 and 3 of this farm are used for outwintering suckler cows and weanlings. The estimated outwintering capacity of the land (without feeding) is 3,400 'Grazing Days (1GD is the grazing of one 1LU for 1 day). This equates to c.20 suckler cows for a six month winter. The outwintering area in 2006/7 was c.51.3ha and 6,050 GDs were recorded over this time. This equates to an average winter stocking rate of 0.65 LU/ha. Site assessments post-winter confirmed that most fields were slightly overgrazed (GL 3.5) with localised damage from poaching near feeding areas in fields 2, 3 (though much of the damage is historical). The permitted winter grazing period for this area has been extended from Sept 1st to April 30<sup>th</sup> and late (mid-July onward) light summer grazing of winterages is also allowed (derogation received from agri-envt measures).
- Feeding** Feeding with silage and with BLP concentrate ration takes place on this farm. The main impact of the BLP on the feeding regime has been to delay (and therefore significantly reduce) the feeding of silage by targeted feeding of the BLP ration instead. This has ensured winterages are fully grazed out and has also cut back significantly on the amount of silage being fed which in turn has reduced the nutrient loading on the site. BLP subsidises 25% of the cost of the ration, and also 25% of the cost of mineral licks used on the winterage. As field 1 was stocked close to target levels, light feeding of BLP ration sufficed for stock here and no silage was fed. On fields 2 and 3 however, which were stocked well above target levels, supplementary feeding with silage was required as there was insufficient forage available.
- Scrub control** Removal of scrub took place on fields 1, 2 and 3 in winter 2005/2006 and 2006/2007. Scrub removal was targeted at early encroachment on priority habitats. Mechanical treatments – using an arm-mounted flail and a rear-mounted drum flail – were carried out in January 2006 on fields 2 and 3. Regrowth was treated by wiping with glyphosphate in summer 2006. Hand removal of blackthorn (mainly) and hazel using chainsaws and other hand tools took place on all fields and stumps were treated by painting with glyphosphate. Brushings were gathered by tractor and heaped on old feeding sites and burnt. Low blackthorn and hazel was wiped with glyphosphate in summer 2006 and 2007. BLP subsidised this work to the tune of 80%.
- Internal Walls** Internal walls between Fields b and c were restored in 2007 by the farmer and this work was subsidised by 80% by the BLP.
- Marketing** The farmer now supplies “conservation grade” lamb to the Burren Beef and Lamb Producers Group, of which he is a founding member.
- Monitoring:** A detailed monitoring programme is taking place e.g.  
Ecological & Environmental: Vegetation (quadrats), scrub regrowth, water quality sampling, soil sampling etc.  
Agricultural: forage and hay sampling, animal condition scoring, blood sampling, herd health survey, detailed information collected on grazing and feeding regimes.  
Socio-economic: the farmer is participating in the National Farm Survey which involves three annual visits from a Teagasc recorder.



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### Site (g)

**Farm size:** Total area = 445 Ha (395Ha in the Burren and 50Ha in Co. Kildare).

**Land type:** The land in the Burren is divided into three main parcels, though separate management units exist within each parcel. The farm consists of extensive areas of rough limestone grassland and pavement with strong cover of scrub, as well as areas of improved agricultural grasslands.



**Farm system and management:** This farm is involved in drystock beef production. In autumn every year, c. 145 1.5 year old continental cross cattle are bought either at Kilfenora mart or else privately from local farmers. These are transferred onto the winterages from Sept/Oct onwards. Animals receive no feeding on the winterage and are left to graze here until late spring (March onwards) at which time they are removed in stages to finishing lands on the home farm in Kildare. Some cattle (c. 40 animals) are kept on for the summer on the land in the Burren and sold to the factory after the summer.

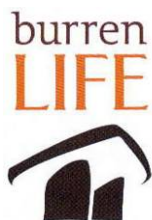


**Heritage value:** There are at least ten different wildlife habitats present on the farm including limestone pavement, heath, species rich dry calcareous grassland and atlantic hazel woodland. The heritage value of the farm is recognised through the designation of 357 Ha of the farm as part of Moneen Mountain Special Area of Conservation. Many of the habitats on the farm are 'Priority Habitats' in the EU Habitats Directive, meaning that they are among the most valuable and rare habitats remaining in Europe.

There are at least 17 listed archaeological features on the farm. These include fulacht fiadhs (a bronze age site thought to have been used for cooking and bathing, which are always found close to a water source), enclosures, a burial mound, wedge tomb, cashel, church, an archaeological complex and field systems. A large number of unmarked archaeological and historical sites may be seen on the farm. A range of traditional farming structures such as goat cros, turf tiles and stone enclosures may be seen as well as some fine examples of old stone farm settlements. Walls are also a feature: extensive networks of ancient 'mound' walls - some possibly over 3,000 years old - and 'slab walls' are common, in some cases forming extensive field systems. The wealth and diversity of structures found within this farm constitute an internationally significant resource.

## **Summary of main works completed under BurrenLIFE Project on Farm**

- Grazing** This portion of the farm is used for outwintering beef animals. The estimated outwintering capacity of this land (without feeding) is 10,700 'Grazing Days (1GD is the grazing of one 1LU for 1 day). This equates to c.60 strong cattle for a six month winter. The outwintering area in 2006/7 was c.206.45ha and 7,600 GDs were recorded over this time. This equates to an average winter stocking rate of 0.2 LU/ha. Site assessments post-winter confirmed that most fields were undergrazed (GL 2- 2.5), though grazing levels were improving year on year. As the land was stocked well below target levels, no supplementary feeding was required. One of the problems encountered in 2006/7 was lack of water during a very dry spring – this restricted grazing levels as animals had to be removed earlier.
- Feeding** No feeding takes place on this farm.
- Scrub control** Scrub removal took place on fields 1-3 during Jan/Feb. 2007. A number of treatments were employed. A tractor mounted brush cutter was used to clear out areas of dense blackthorn in field 1 (non SAC) and to clear scrub from the route of the main access track. Regrowth on the track was wiped with glyphosphate in summer 2007. Chainsaws and other hand tools were used to remove scrub to improve access for stock to grazing and watering areas in all fields. Scrub was also removed along internal boundary walls prior to their restoration. Stumps were painted with glyphosphate to limit regrowth. In addition, areas of low encroaching hazel in field 3 were wiped with glyphosphate in summer 2007.
- Water provision** Access to watering points was severely restricted on field 3: scrub was removed from these areas to improve access to the water.
- Internal Walls** Internal walls between fields 1, 2 and 3 were restored in 2007. In some cases this involved removing scrub, digging out stone and replacing it on the wall. This work was done by local contractors and 80% of this cost was met by the BLP.
- Access provision** In 2006, BLP staff helped to plan and secure permission for the upgrading of an old trackway through the farm. A local contractor did the work which involved removing encroaching scrub, cleaning off surface material, adding layers of limestone chip and levelling off. Minimum disturbance to the local environment took place and local limestone chip was used for dressing. The farmer received support (<25% of cost) from BLP for this work. This has greatly facilitated the herding and movement of livestock on fields 1-3.
- Monitoring:** A detailed monitoring programme is taking place e.g.  
Ecological & Environmental: Vegetation (quadrats), scrub regrowth, water quality sampling, soil sampling etc.  
Agricultural: forage and hay sampling, animal condition scoring, blood sampling, herd health survey, detailed information collected on grazing and feeding regimes.  
Socio-economic: the farmer is participating in the National Farm Survey which involves three annual visits from a Teagasc recorder.



## BurrenLIFE Conference 2008 Field Trips Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> February

### Site (h)

**Farm size:** Total area = 118 Ha.

**Land type:** The land is divided into three main parcels, though separate management units exist within each parcel. Two of the land parcels are winterage areas with extensive areas of limestone grassland and pavement with strong cover of scrub. The other parcel is summer grazed mainly improved agricultural grasslands with pockets of wet grassland.



**Farm system and management:** This farm is involved in suckler beef production. Currently there are approximately 50 suckler cows kept on the farm. These cows are bred to a charolais bull. Cows calve mainly during the months of February-March. Weanlings are sold off the farm in the autumn.



**Heritage value:** There are at least 11 different wildlife habitats present on the farm including limestone pavement, heath, species rich dry calcareous grassland and atlantic hazel woodland. The heritage value of the farm is recognised through the designation of 74.5Ha of the farm as part of Moneen Mountain Special Area of Conservation. Many of the habitats on the farm are 'Priority Habitats' in the EU Habitats Directive, meaning that they are among the most valuable and rare habitats remaining in Europe.

There are approximately 12 listed archaeological sites on this farm. These include a cashel and souterrain, archaeological complexes, 4 enclosures and 4 wedge tombs. A large number of unmarked archaeological and historical sites may be seen throughout this site. These include a range of traditional farming structures such as goat cros, turf tiles and stone enclosures. Extensive networks of ancient 'mound' walls - some possibly over 3,000 years old - and 'slab walls' are common, in some cases forming extensive field systems. The wealth and diversity of structures found within this farm constitute an internationally significant resource. The wealth and diversity of structures found within this farm constitute an internationally significant resource.

## Summary of main works completed under BurrenLIFE Project on Farm

- Grazing** This portion of the farm is used for overwintering suckler cows. The estimated overwintering capacity of the land (without feeding) is 1,760 'Grazing Days (1GD is the grazing of one 1LU for 1 day). This equates to c.11 cows for a six month winter. The overwintering area in 2006/7 was c.21.73ha and 3170 GDs were recorded over this time. This equates to an average winter stocking rate of 0.8 LU/ha. Site assessments post-winter confirmed that this area was in fact slightly undergrazed (GL 2.5), in spite of the extremely high stocking levels and there was localised poaching. This is mainly attributable to the fact that significant levels of supplementary feeding occurred on the site, and also because much of the grass had lodged by the time stock were left in. To address the latter issue, a derogation was secured from the Dept of Agriculture to permit winter grazing to begin one month earlier (Sept 1<sup>st</sup>) and to permit late (mid-July onward) light summer grazing. This has already made a big difference: since the BLP began work on this site, grazing levels have improved substantially (pre BLP GL 1).
- Feeding** Feeding with silage and with BLP concentrate ration takes place on this farm. The main impact of the BLP on the feeding regime has been to delay (and therefore significantly reduce) the feeding of silage by targeted feeding of the BLP ration instead. This has ensured winterages are better grazed and has also cut back significantly on the amount of silage being fed which in turn has reduced the nutrient loading on the site. BLP subsidises 25% of the cost of the ration, and also 25% of the cost of any mineral licks used on the winterage.
- Scrub control** Removal of encroaching scrub from priority habitats took place on this site in Jan/Feb. 2007. Two main treatments were employed. North of the track, close to the road, a rear-mounted drum flail was used to cut down scrub and the stumps immediately painted with glyphosphate. As the scrub was pulverised there were no brushings to collect. Below the track scrub was removed manually using chainsaws and other hand tools. Stumps were not treated due to their small diameter, the subsequent regrowth was wiped with glyphosphate in late summer 2007. Brushings were heaped in piles pending a decision on how best to deal with them. A small area of encroaching hazel was wiped with glyphosphate in late summer 2006 to test the efficacy of this method.
- Water provision** Watering facilities on this site were adequate.
- Access provision** Access for livestock through the site was greatly enhanced by the strategic removal of scrub.
- Monitoring:** A detailed monitoring programme is taking place e.g.  
Ecological & Environmental: Vegetation (quadrats), scrub regrowth, water quality sampling, soil sampling etc.  
Agricultural: forage and hay sampling, animal condition scoring, blood sampling, herd health survey, detailed information collected on grazing and feeding regimes.  
Socio-economic: the farmer is participating in the National Farm Survey which involves three annual visits from a Teagasc recorder.