



Co-funded by the  
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# Social Farming

## Definition & Overview



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# Module Objectives:

1. To define Social Farming
2. To outline the practice of Social Farming
3. To detail the benefits of Social Farming



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# Module Summary:

1. Social Farming is a service delivered by a farmer, providing the opportunity for individuals with support needs to become involved in farming in a supportive way
2. Social Farming activities are structured, meaningful and part of a typical farming week
3. Social Farming benefits the participant and the farmer



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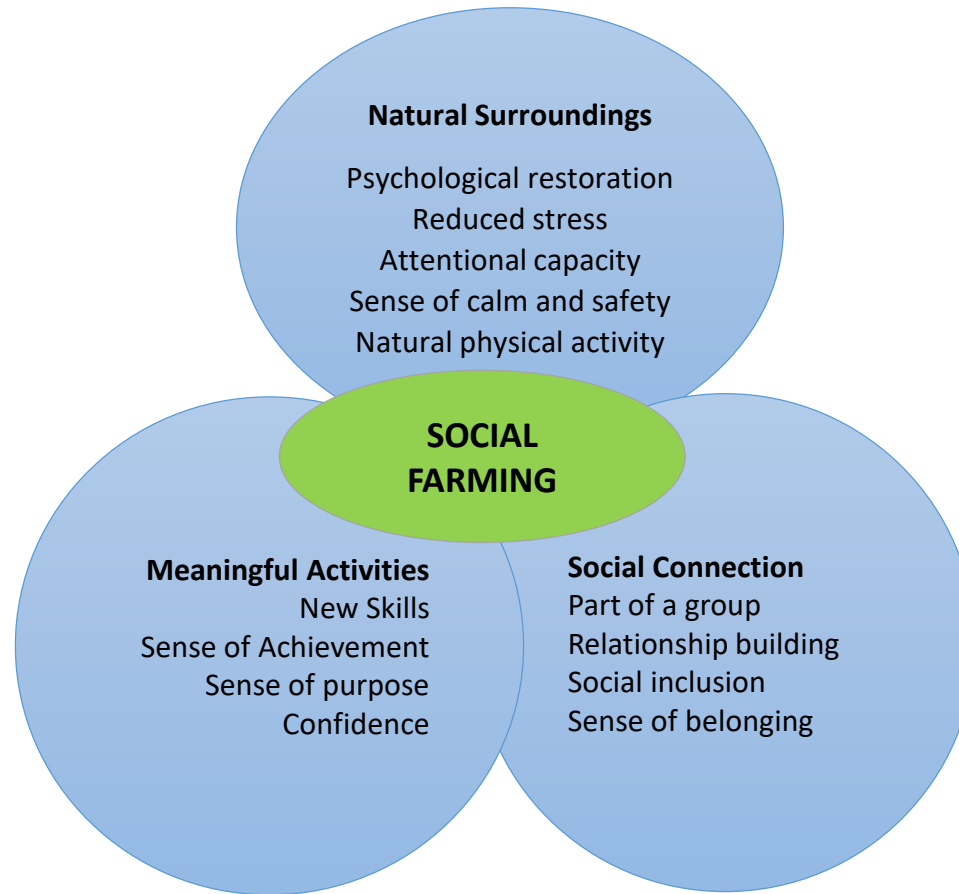


# What is Social Farming?

- Social Farming is a planned outcome focused, support placement for people on a farm using the natural assets of the people (the farmer or grower and his or her family), the place, the many activities (which are carried out on that farm) and the community around the farm to support a person to achieve some of their own chosen goals



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*Adapted from Bragg and Atkins (2016) by Social Farming Ireland 2019*



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# What is Social Farming?

- The farm is not a specialised treatment farm; rather it remains a typical working farm where people in need of support can benefit from participation in the farm's activities in a non-clinical environment
- Social Farming also creates the opportunity to reconnect farmers with their local communities through the opening up of their farms as part of the social support system of the community



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**THE PARTICIPANT**

Participates in the farm activities under the supervision of the farmer

**THE FARMER**

Provides the service; supervising and guiding the participant in the farm environment and engaging in the farm activities

**Central to the concept are:**

**THE FARM**

Socially inclusive environment where participants can engage in meaningful activities

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- For Social Farming to be successful:
  - 1. It is the participant's choice to engage**
  - 2. The farmer and the participants are supported**
- Social Farming offers individuals in need of support the opportunity to engage and contribute by choice in farming and related social activities in rural communities
- For providing the service, the farmer is paid to cover their personal input and the resources required



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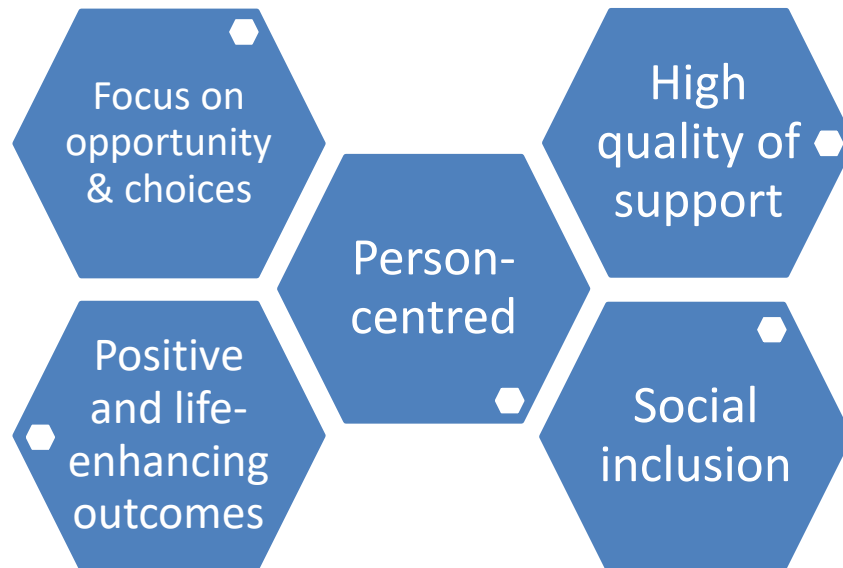
- Income from Social Farming delivery can support the sustainability of the farm
- The farm must be operational without Social Farming – Social Farming is delivered for a proportion of the typical working week
- A range of different farm sizes and enterprise types can be used for Social Farming delivery
- Farmers delivering a Social Farming service are committed to upholding the values intrinsic to the practice



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# Social Farming Values:



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# What is Social Farming?

- Social Farming is about people
- The farmers delivering a Social Farming service are committed to using their farm and their skills to improve lives
- The participants making the choice to engage are being supported in rural communities to learn, to connect, and to achieve their potential



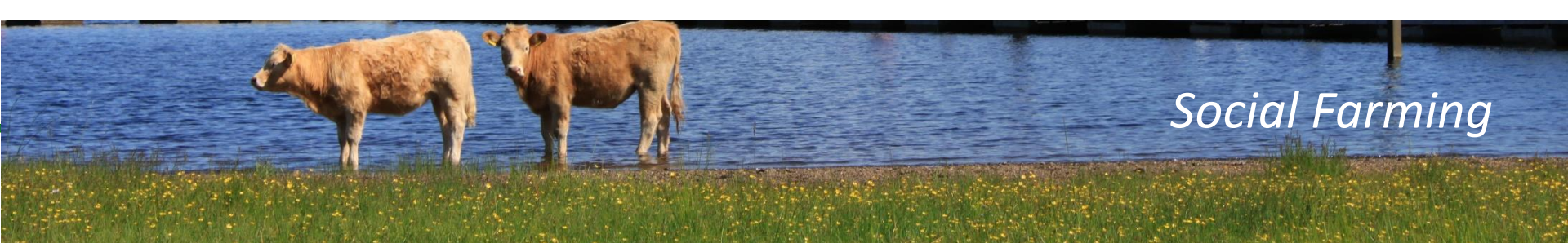
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# Recognition at EU Level

- Social Farming is an innovative approach that brings together two concepts: multipurpose farming and social services/health care at local level. It makes a contribution in the ambit of agricultural production to the well-being and the social integration of people with particular needs

**EU Economic and Social Committee (2012)**



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# Typical Social Farming Day:

- 10.00am – 3.00pm
- 3 participants: 1 farmer
- Arrival & morning routine
- Activities
- Lunch
- Activities
- Afternoon routine & leave farm





# Social Farming Activities:

## Working with animals

Feeding, grooming, health checking, clearing bedding areas, moving around the farm

## Horticulture

Planting, watering and plant care, harvesting, clearing areas for re-planting

**Meaningful**  
**Structured**  
**Seasonal**

## Maintenance

Fencing, repairs, painting

## Baking/crafts

Baking/cooking with farm produce, woodwork, art projects



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# Social Farming Activities:



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# Benefits of Social Farming:

## **PARTICIPANT:**

Social inclusion

Mental health outcomes

Physical health outcomes

Progression

## **FARMER:**

Personal development

Farm enterprise

Farm family

Wider community



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# Benefits of Social Farming:

“I have never been so happy in a long time. I am tired when I get home but it’s a nice tired. I feel like I have contributed something and that feels good”

[Social Farming participant]

“I have found it very personally rewarding. I didn’t think when I started that I would have enjoyed being involved as much as I have. It has been good for me”

[Social Farmer]



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# Benefits of Social Farming:

- A Social Farming participant benefits from being in a natural, outside environment; learns new skills; has the opportunity to care for animals and plants; develops new relationships with people; grows in confidence as they achieve and learn on the farm; have a role on the farm and a feeling of doing something worthwhile; is integrated into the local community



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# Benefits of Social Farming:

- The farmer experiences satisfaction from supporting participants to learn new skills and grow in confidence; has company when working; achieves projects/tasks that are much easier to complete with the help of enthusiastic participants; witnesses their family and community play a part in helping others to have a rewarding experience in a farm environment



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## Resources:

- Overview of Social Farming and Rural Development Policy in Selected EU Member States: <https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-static/fms/pdf/A9746FA3-0D7E-1772-5CC7-11217C8EC059.pdf>
- Supporting policies for Social Farming in Europe: Progressing Multifunctionality in Responsive Rural Areas: <http://www.umb.no/statisk/greencare/sofarbookpart1.pdf> & <http://www.umb.no/statisk/greencare/sofarbookpart2.pdf>
- Effects of Care Farms: Scientific research on the benefits of care farms for clients: [http://www.farmbuddies.org.uk/documents/Effects\\_of\\_care\\_farms\\_Elings.pdf](http://www.farmbuddies.org.uk/documents/Effects_of_care_farms_Elings.pdf)



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# Resources:

- Social Farming and Mental Health Services:  
<https://www.socialfarmingireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Social-Farming-Mental-Health-Final-Printed-Report-Web-version-no-blank-pages.pdf>
- Social Farming: Offering Personalised Choice & Value For The Health Service in Northern Ireland:  
<https://www.ruralsupport.org.uk/download/social-farming-offering-personalised-choice-value-for-the-health-service-in-northern-ireland/>



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# Training Direction:

- Module 1 introduced you to Social Farming
- Modules 2-5 will focus on different elements of Social Farming with case study examples from partner countries to support your learning
  - **Module 2: The Social Farmer's Skills (Parts 1 & 2)**
  - **Module 3: The Social Farm**
  - **Module 4: The Person on the Farm**
  - **Module 5: The Social Farm Business Plan**



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