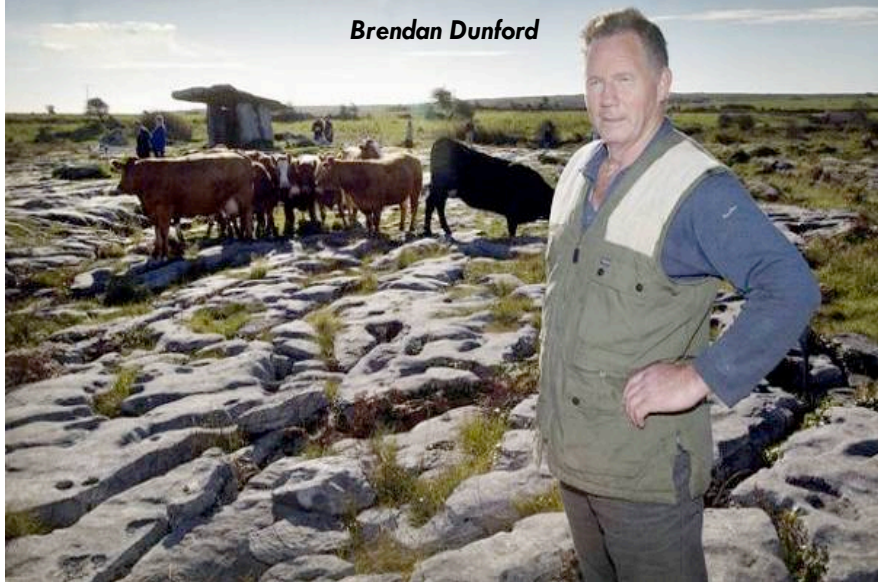


**Sustainable agriculture and preservation of environmental services
for a special European area**

Brendan Dunford

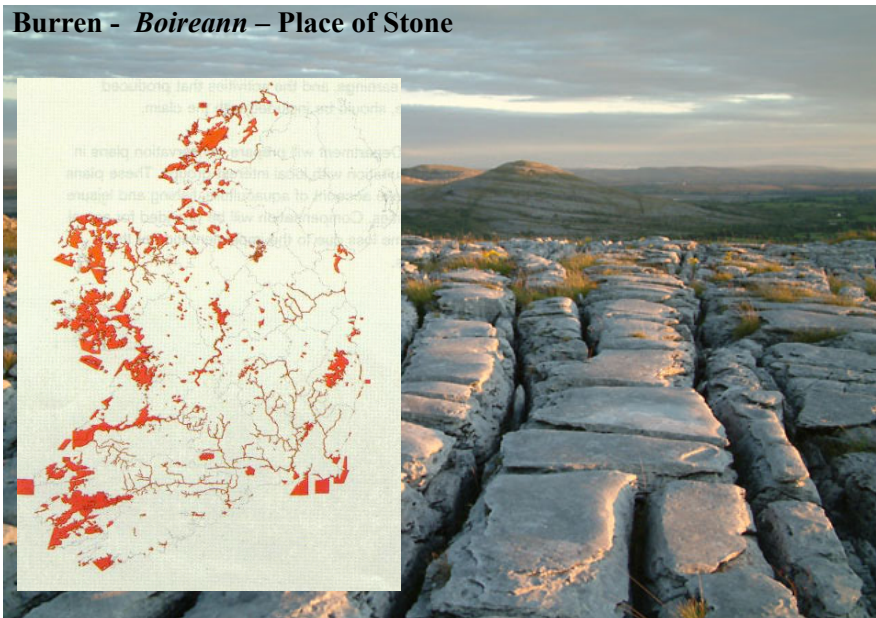


Overview:

- The Burren, *Petra fertilis*
- Farming and the Burren
- A new model of management



Burren - *Boireann* – Place of Stone



Size: c.72,000ha, c.30,000 Natura 2000 (1,500ha National Park)

Bovines, Biodiversity and the Burren

It is said that it is a country where there is not water enough to drown a man, wood enough to hang one, nor earth enough to bury one...

...yet their cattle are very fat. The grass grows in tufts of earth of two or three foot square which lies between the limestone rocks and is very sweet and nourishing - Ludlow (1651)



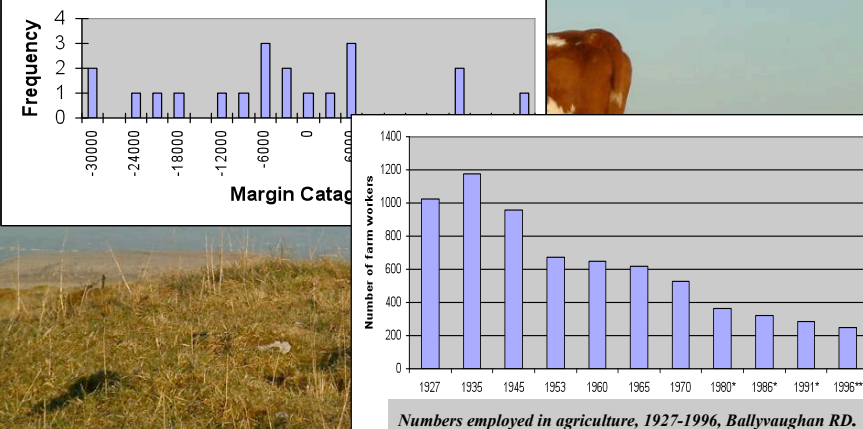
The importance of grazing (and so of stock, and of farmers):



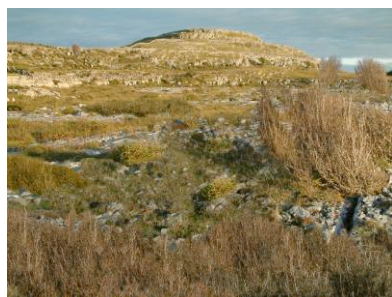
A farmed landscape (winter grazed suckler beef)
– key to high biodiversity levels

Financial Viability?

Gross Output minus Direct and Indirect Costs
Burren 20 Farms
excerpts from National Farm Survey



The main threats to N2K Priority Habitats from changes in farming



8240 - Limestone Pavements



3180 - Turloughs



6210 - Orchid Rich Grasslands

The BurrenLIFE Project – a targeted local solution

Project Budget: €2.23m, 75% from the EU LIFE Nature Fund

Partners: National Parks and Wildlife Service (€375,122)
Teagasc (€169,900), Burren IFA (€12,600)

Timeframe: February 2005 – January 2010



Objective: To develop a new model for sustainable farming on the priority habitats of the Burren.



Main Activities:

1. Engagement: creating a sense of 'ownership' of the agenda



2. On-site conservation activities



3. Research, monitoring, innovation

Calculated target grazing levels, led to an increase of 25% in grazing

Related improvement in biodiversity



Develop new feeding system



Reduction of 61% in silage feeding – improved water quality

Outputs:

High levels of engagement (88% approval rating among farmers)

Improvement in condition status of Burren habitats

Body of research to inform & justify future work

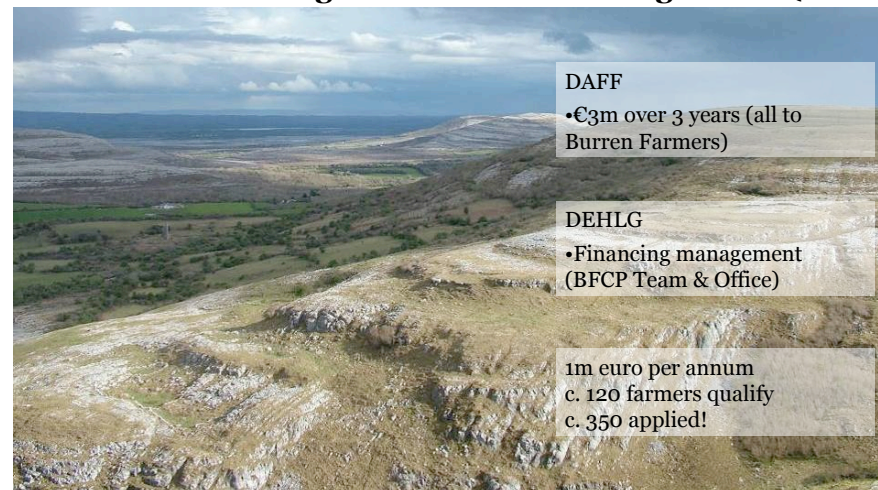


A tested, costed blueprint for farming for conservation in the Burren which can be shown to be effective in addressing environmental and heritage issues and which has the ownership and support of the local farming community and of the taxpayer.

Result: The Burren Farming for Conservation Programme



The Burren Farming for Conservation Programme (BFCP)

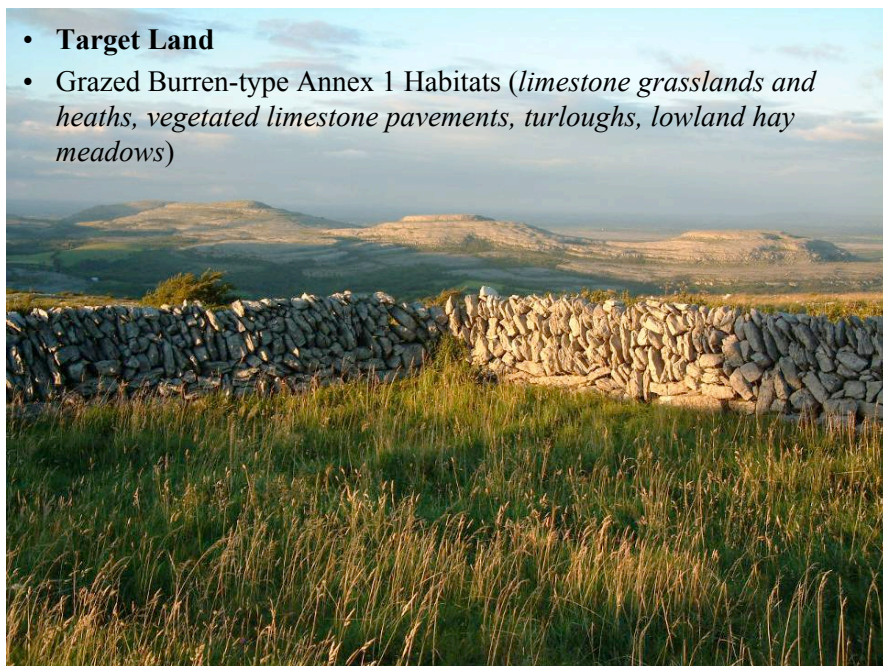


Department of
Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
An Roinn
Talmhaíochta, Iascaigh agus Bia

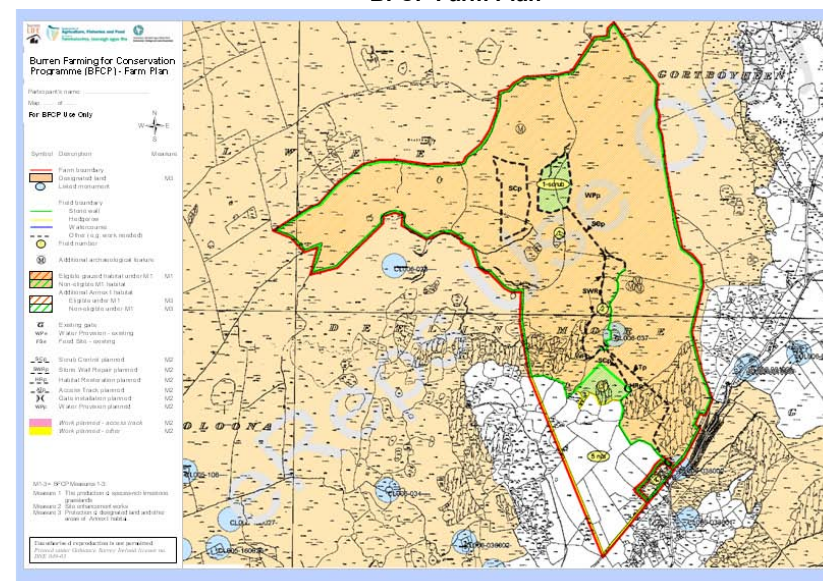


Comhaltas, Oidhreacht agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Heritage and Local Government

- **Target Land**
- Grazed Burren-type Annex 1 Habitats (*limestone grasslands and heaths, vegetated limestone pavements, turloughs, lowland hay meadows*)



BFCP Farm Plan



BURREN FARMING FOR CONSERVATION PROGRAMME (BFCP) – FARM PLAN

Participant: A Farmer C0000001 Address: Line 1, Line 2, Line 3, Co. Phone number: 065 0000000 Planner: A Planner Planner tel.: 067 0000000

Work plan sheet: 1 of 1

WORK PLANNED for 2010 (to be completed by .../.../20...) Refer to the Burren LIFE Best Practice Guides for management recommendations.

Measure 1 (M1): Production of species-rich limestone grasslands and other grazed habitats

Field no.	Pasture type	Winter grazing recommended	Late summer grazing recommended	Area (ha)	Eligible area (ha)	Additional information
1	Weak	Yes	No	50	48.5	Eligible area excludes dead scrub
2	Medium	Yes	No	7	7	Introduction of convolvulus feed recommended.
3	Strong	Yes	Yes	7.5	7.5	

Measure 2 (M2): Site enhancement works

Task	Field no(s)	Length (m)	Area (ha)	No.	Additional information
Scrub control	1	1-5	0-0.5	1	Chainsaw cut - sheep treatment
Gate installation	1-2	1-2	1-2	1	Gate 1 - 100m x 2m
Water provision	1-2	500	0-0.5	2	Gate 2 - 90m x 4m
Habitat restoration	1	<1	<1	1	Remove feeding site

Total available budget up to €

Measure 3 (M3): Protection of designated land and additional areas of Annex I habitat(s)

Field no.	Field name	Designation	Additional information	Area (ha)	Eligible area (ha)	Payment (€)
1	Rock Hill	SAC - Munster Mountains	Recreation payment under RPS	50	0	0
2	Rock Hill	SAC - Munster Mountains		2	0	0
3	Green field	SAC - Munster Mountains		2	0	0
4	Green field	None	Species-rich grassland - limestone pavement mosaic	1	1	42

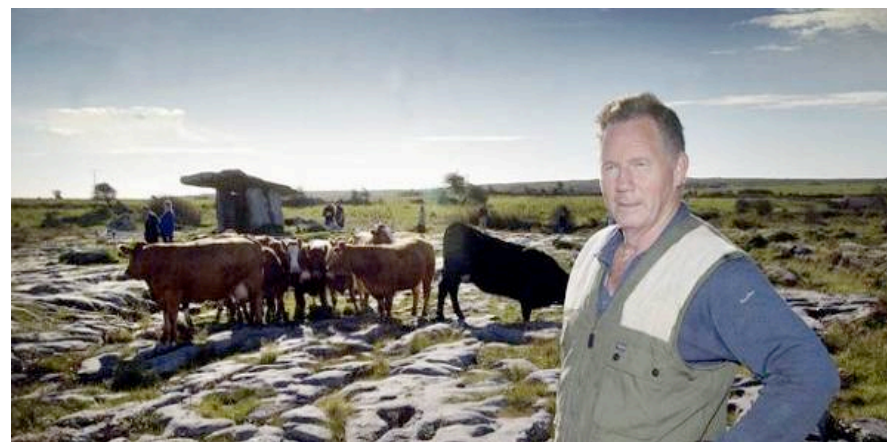
Refer to a separate sheet for a breakdown of payments. Payments will be made based on work done and as per the BFCP terms and conditions.

Participant's Declaration
I agree to carry out the work that is detailed in this Farm Plan and has been fully explained to me by my Planner. Signed: *A Farmer* Date: 27/5/10

Measure 1: Payment for condition of grassland (by-product of a suitable grazing and feeding regime)



Measure 2: Payment for work done (farmer contributes % of cost)



Our experience of working with farmers:

- Must contribute to the community (work, education, income, respect)
- Need to create a sense of ownership (build on farmers ideas, input)
- Locally-based (office, staff)
- Focus on practical actions
- Tough but fair