



# Field Exchange Report November 2022

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# 1. Executive Summary



Model Plot by Deirdre O'Mahony in collaboration with the Loy Association of Ireland. Image by Brendan Keogh

Field Exchange was born out of the desire to tackle climate change amongst the agricultural community in Ireland. It builds on the necessity to explore a way to address the urgent need to change this sector in an innovative way and safe space for the farming community to discuss and exchange concrete ideas about more sustainable farming practices.

Art and Creativity provided the ideal context for creating this safe and non-pressured way of exchanges in a farming context, on Brookfield Farm. Farmer and agricultural educator Ailbhe Gerrard collaborated with artist John Gerrard, resulting in Field Exchange - a series of farm based creative events that supported farmers to implement agricultural practices that combat climate change in the context of art and creativity. The initiative welcomed groups of 30: farmers, experts, interested public and artists coming together at exchange tables on Brookfield Farm. These exchange tables have been especially commissioned for Field Exchange to host and facilitate discussions, breaking bread together. Field Exchange presented two artworks addressing climate change and were integral to the presentation and concept behind the project. (1) A newly commissioned sculptural planting entitled



'MODEL PLOT', by Deirdre O'Mahony in collaboration with the Loy Association of Ireland by the lakeshore at Brookfield Farm. (2) A new and intimate iteration of Corn Work (Corrib) 2020 by John Gerrard was present in the Barn on a table - where Field Exchange participants met to talk and eat.

Over twelve weeks in the summer of 2022, Field Exchange invited experts each week to facilitate the discussion around a specific topic relevant to advancing sustainable agricultural practices in Ireland.

Over 500 people participated in all exchanges with participants from all over Ireland and from different farming backgrounds as well as the artistic community as well as the general public with an interest in the farming community and sustainability. 21 experts delivering exchanges over a 12 week period.



Corn Work (Corrib) at the Exchange Tables on Brookfield Farm by John Gerrard. Image by Brendan Keogh





Model Plot by Deirdre O'Mahony in association with the Loy Association on Brookfield Farm for Field Exchange. Image by Brendan Keogh



Field Exchange participants at the Exchange Table on Brookfield Farm. Image by Brendan Keogh



## 2. Introduction/background Field Exchange



Ailbhe Gerrard during Field Exchange on Brookfield Farm.

Ailbhe Gerrard has farmed for 12 years on Brookfield Farm, situated in Co. Tipperary. She is an educator with a deep interest in agriculture as a creative, holistic, regenerative, collaborative activity. Aware of the disproportionate contribution of agriculture to Ireland's emissions, amounting to 38%, Ailbhe identified a lack of opportunity for Irish farmers to meet with experts and learn about climate and biodiversity and inviting the general public into the conversation to understand the challenges the agricultural sector is facing and the opportunities that can be embraced. Conscious of this gap, Ailbhe conceived of an alternative - bringing creativity back to agriculture and facilitating a climate conscious discussion amongst the farming community through art and creativity during Field Exchange. The Climate Action fund through Creative Ireland provided an opportunity to test this approach and roll out a programme over 12 weeks on Brookfield Farm. The Field Exchange methodology involves art and agriculture, conversations, learning, eating together and developing connections - imagining an agricultural practice that can help reduce Ireland's emissions and create a forum in the agricultural sector for these conversations.

### 3. Outline of team and key participants



Field Exchange Artists Deirdre O'Mahony (left) and John Gerrard (right with Minister Catherine Martin (centre) on Brookfield Farm.

Field Exchange consisted of a collaboration between the agricultural sector and artistic community in Ireland.

## Team

### Brookfield Farm

The project was led and presented by Ailbhe Gerrard, Brookfield Farm, leading the project and rolling out the programme. The team on Brookfield Farm consisted of:

- Sean Fletcher - Production Manager and Farmer
- Caroline Normington - administration and coordination
- Alice Balachandran - Administration and Stewarding
- Michel Wilkinson - Refreshments
- Lea Dallot - agricultural exchange student from France, supporting the team



## Artists

Field Exchange presented two art works by artists:

- John Gerrard's intimate iteration of Corn Work (Corrib) at three Exchange Tables by Element of Action at the Barn at Brookfield Farm
- Deirdre O'Mahony's Model Plot with the Loy Association of Ireland on Brookfield Farm on the shores of Lough Derg

## Exchanges

The Exchanges were supported by the National Organic Training (NOTS), supporting the recruitment of experts and structuring of exchanges and expert topics.

## Co-Producers

The Project was co-produced by Ailbhe Gerrard and Culture Works

## Food

Food during the Exchanges was provided by The Night Orchard, providing locally sourced and seasonal food.

## Key Participants

Key participants in Field Exchange were on one hand delegates participating the Exchanges each week over the summer, on the other hand the experts providing knowledge exchange and expertise during the exchanges.

In total, key participants comprised of the following:

- 1 Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin, delivering the closing speech at the Harvest Feast, September 2022
- 1 Farming and Food Journalist, Ella McSweeney, mcining the Harvest Feast
- 1 First Woman, Sabina Higgins, opening Field Exchange in June 2022 283 of people registered to take part in the exchanges
- 21 experts delivered the exchanges and engaged with participants
- 160 participants at the launch of Field Exchange - 21 June, and Closing Harvest Feast on 16 September
- 240 people participated in the exchanges
- 281 people registering to take part in the exchanges

Over the summer of 2022, people got together on Brookfield Farm to take part in Field Exchange and experience and engage in the art works integrated into the Exchanges. [Table 1](#) gives an overview of the diversity of exchanges and events taking place. A diverse mix of participants took part in terms of professional background (farming and arts) as well as members of the general public who registered an interest in making a difference in their own environment – whether that was through gardening, hobby bee-keeping or food consumption just to name a few. A full breakdown of participants’ background and the potential impact of Field Exchange is discussed in [Section 5](#) below.

Overall, 21 experts delivered various exchange topics with a total of 240 participants taking part which resulted in reaching full capacity in most Field Exchanges. Experts were practitioners from different fields of sustainable agriculture and with experience in delivering and facilitating meaningful discussions. Artists Deirdre O’Mahony and John Gerrard contributed to the discussions throughout (see [Table 1](#)).

Table 1 – Events and Exchanges as part of Field Exchange 2022

Field Exchange - Exchange Topics and Experts June - September 2022			
Date	Title of Event/ Exchange	Type	Expert
21/06	Field Exchange Launch	Opening	Opening by Sabina Higgins,  Speakers included: Tania Banotti, Joy Gerrard and Ailbhe Gerrard
28/06	Everyone is Welcome - The Farm Gate is Open to All	Workshop	Hannah Quinn-Mulligan and Lisa Fingleton. Mariana Colman  Artist: Deirdre O'Mahony
05/07	Bones of the Farm - Dry Stone Wall	Practical	Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland - Michael Fearnhead and Ken Curran.  Artist: Deirdre O'Mahony
09/07	Agroforestry -Trees on the Farm - Creative Use of Trees	Practical / Workshop	Dr Jim McAdam. Artist: John Gerrard
10/07		Practical / Workshop	Joe Gowran and Niall Miller. Artist: John Gerrard
12/07	Beekeeping and Climate Change	Practical / Workshop	Aoife Nic Giolla Cuddy, Catherine Caulwell and Geraldine Byrne. Artist: Deirdre O'Mahony
19/07	Supporting Creative Agriculture - Changing the Food System in Ireland	Workshop	Andrew Chilton (Social Farming) & Anne Maher (Urban Co-Op). Artist: Deirdre O'Mahony
02/08	New Opportunities with Horticulture, Fruit and Vegetables	Workshop	Pat Fitzgerald from Beotonics. Artist: Deidre O'Mahony
09/08	Different Approaches to Dairy - Size Doesn't Matter!	Practical / Workshop	Mimi Crawford. Artist: Deirdre O'Mahony
16/08	There is No Waste - Soil fertility	Practical	Dave Beecher. Artist: Deirdre O'Mahony
23/08	Holistic Approach to livestock, grazing and farm design: Losing the 'Drive On' Mentality	Workshop	Clive Bright. Artist: Deirdre O'Mahony
30/08	A Place for All Life - Biodiversity on the Farm	Workshop / Practical	Sean O'Farrell, Farmer & Padraig Fogarty, IWT. Artist: Deirdre O'Mahony
06/09	Crops, Craft and Creativity	Practical	Gerardine Wisdom. Esther Gerrard. Philip Quinn, Stonemad
16/09	Final Gathering and Harvest Feast	Closing	Speakers included:  Catherine Martin, Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media Ella McSweeney, Ailbhe Gerrard, John Gerrard, Deirdre O'Mahony, Sean Farrell, Padraic Fogarty, Catherine Caulwell, Jim McAdam, Joanne MacMahon, Marguerita Nyhan



## 4. Public Engagement outcomes



Field Exchange Participants learning how to build a stone wall.

Field Exchange ran a series of audience engagement campaigns to raise awareness of the project and drive attendance at the Exchanges. This included a PR campaign targeting local and national print and online media as well as a digital communications strategy. The engagement is summarised by the following categories:

- Print/ Media Coverage
- Social Media
- Website

Overall, the audience engagement was very positive and successful in 1) raising awareness of Field Exchange and the Creative Climate Action Initiative and 2) driving registrations and attendance to Field Exchange.

## Print/ Media Coverage

Field Exchange achieved significant reach in online, print and radio coverage over the lifetime of the project. [Table 2](#) below summarises the reach press coverage in all those areas. Highlights included a RTE 1 Arena Interview with Artists Deirdre O'Mahony (reach: 180,000) and the Front Page Picture of the Irish Independent (reach: almost 200,000). Furthermore, an article in the Farmers' Journal featured Field Exchange. Some press clippings are highlighted in [Annex I](#).

**Table 2 – Field Exchange Print/ Media Coverage**

Channel	Date	Publication	Headline	Reach
Online	6/11/2022	irishexaminer.com	Hot 100: Our critics discuss the top picks of summer 2022	64,918
Online	5/27/2022	thatsfarming.com	'Field Exchange comes from my 12 years' experience as a farmer'	1,191
Online	3/30/2022	Image	Sustainability Champions: 8 women in Ireland building a better future	4,549
Online	6/11/2022	irishexaminer.com	The Menu: This dad says these fine whiskeys would make great Father's Day gifts	64,918
Online	3/16/2022	Visual Artists Ireland	Field Exchange   Group Exhibition at Brookfield Farm	626
Online	4/18/2022	agriland.ie	Farmer behind Field Exchange shortlisted for award	10,018
Online	6/26/2022	farmersjournal.ie	This week in photos: busy week around the country	5,262
Press	6/25/2022	Irish Farmers Journal	Boortmalt recruit only in and he's out	463,039
Press	6/22/2022	Irish Independent	New thinking: Front Page	199,581
Press	6/11/2022	Irish Examiner Weekend	THE Hot 100	90,216
Press	6/25/2022	Irish Examiner Weekend	Organic path's profits makes it a no brainer	90,216
Press	7/16/2022	Nenagh Guardian	Photos	18,920
Press	7/2/2022	Nenagh Guardian	Coolbawn farm hosts field exchanges	18,920
Press	7/2/2022	Nenagh Guardian	Our First Lady meets the lambs from Coolbawn	18,920
Press	6/25/2022	Irish Examiner Weekend	50 Irish sustainable food producers	90,216
Press	7/16/2022	Nenagh Guardian	Coolbawn Field Exchange	18,920
Press	7/2/2022	Nenagh Guardian	Down on the farm	18,920
Press	7/16/2022	Nenagh Guardian	Coolbawn Field Exchange	18,920
Press	7/2/2022	Nenagh Guardian	Our First Lady meets the lambs from Coolbawn	18,920
Press	7/16/2022	Nenagh Guardian	Coolbawn Field Exchange	18,920
Press	6/25/2022	Irish Farmers Journal NI Edition	Boortmalt recruit only in and he's out	215,954

Press	6/23/2022	Irish Examiner Farming	Sod turned on Glanbia's €200m continental cheese facility in Kilkenny	90,216
Radio	6/22/2022	RTE Radio 1	MARK O'Sullivan took this of Ailbhe Gerrard from Brookfield	180,000
Radio	6/22/2022	RTE Radio 1	Brookfield Farm a County Tipperary	180,000
Radio	6/22/2022	South East Radio FM	Monday Photograph are Ailbhe Gerrard Brookfield Farm County Tipperary with Sabina	11,829
Radio	6/22/2022	South East Radio FM	Brookfield farm just North of Nenagh in County Tipperary	11,829

Source: ACE Media PR Field Exchange

## Social Media

Field Exchange utilised existing social media channels by Brookfield Farm, creating a digital communications strategy to communicate Field Exchange across all channels: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The performance across all channels was very positive and is outlined in great detail below. The organic reach of social media posts worked very well while the paid campaign elevated the reach much further across Ireland and reached a significant amount of social media users. Digital Communication proved to be a crucial tool in continuously sharing the journey of Field Exchange and keeping the engagement with audiences.

### Organic Reach

Overall, all social media channels performed very well in reaching audiences and building up a following for the project on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. This was built on a digital communications content strategy. It is important to note that comparisons between all three channels need to be viewed with caution as different measurement metrics are used across channels by the providers.

While Twitter had an overall highest impressions, over 80,000, Facebook had a high reach (35,000) as did Instagram (45,000). In terms of audience growth, Instagram gained over 1,000 followers over the lifetime of the project compared to just over 100 on both Facebook and Twitter channels.



## Website

All project information about Field Exchange was hosted and curated on Brookfield Farms website. Throughout the project lifetime, the website was broken down as follows

- > Field Exchange Landing Page
- > About
- > Collaborators and Funders
- > Exchanges >> Booking

We looked at the period of 14 April to 22 September to analyse the website traffic. This corresponds with our Social Media campaign, from launching the project to celebrating the results of the Harvest Feast, the closing event for Field Exchange in 2022. Overall, Field Exchange had 5,136 visitors to the website and 1,056 to the booking site to secure a place on the Exchanges.

Following the final event for Field Exchange in 2022, The Harvest Feast on 16 September, the website transitioned into an archive and learning resource. This includes:

- summaries of each Field Exchange
- reference to experts and artists
- resources provided by experts in downloadable format for knowledge transfer and continued learning opportunity
- documentation in form of pictures

The archive and learning site can be access on Brookfield Farm's website

<https://www.brookfield.farm/pages/field-exchange-2022-learning-resource>

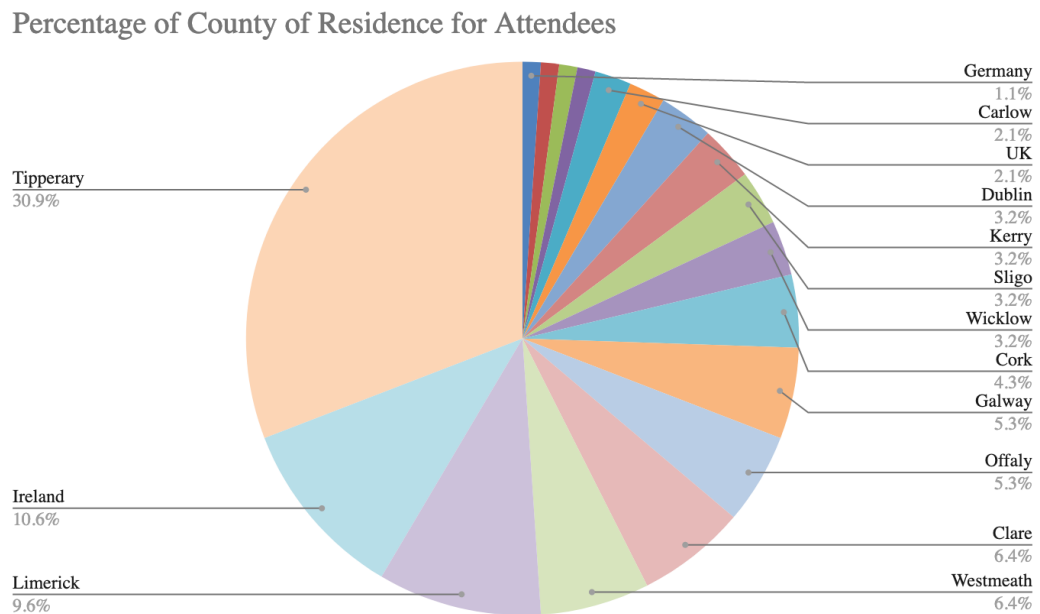
## Audience Engagement at Field Exchange - Participants

Overall, 240 people participated in Field Exchange over the 12-week period in the summer of 2022. An additional 160 delegates took part in the launch as well as the closing of the project, bringing the total of participants to 400.

As part of Field Exchange, surveys were designed by the project team and circulated at each exchange to be completed to evaluate the feedback from Participants. The aim was to get a better understanding of the audience that Field Exchange was able to engage with and interrogate the potential impact that participants had.

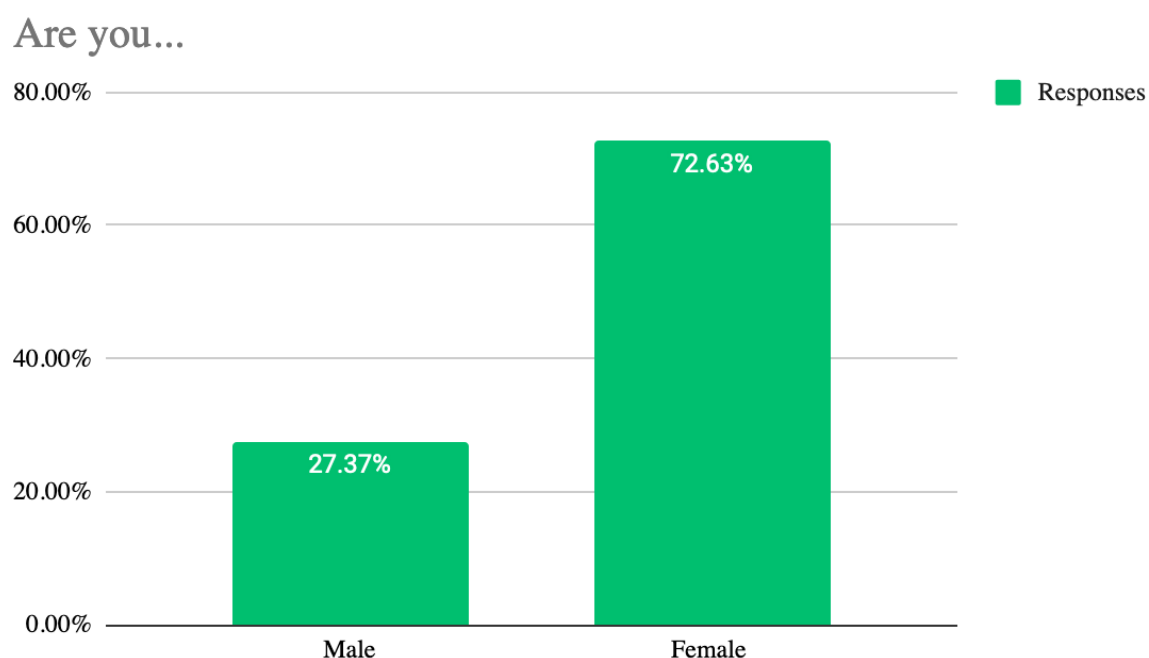
In summary, Field Exchange Participants came from all over Ireland with some international delegates attending the exchanges. The majority of participants were based locally in Co. Tipperary (31%). However, delegates also came from other counties and some even from outside of Ireland (see [Table 3](#) below). The majority of participants were female: 73% female and 27% male. See [Table 4](#).

Table 3 - Attendees at Field Exchange - Location - in %



Source: Field Exchange Evaluation (2022). Culture Works

Table 4 – Field Exchange Participants' Gender

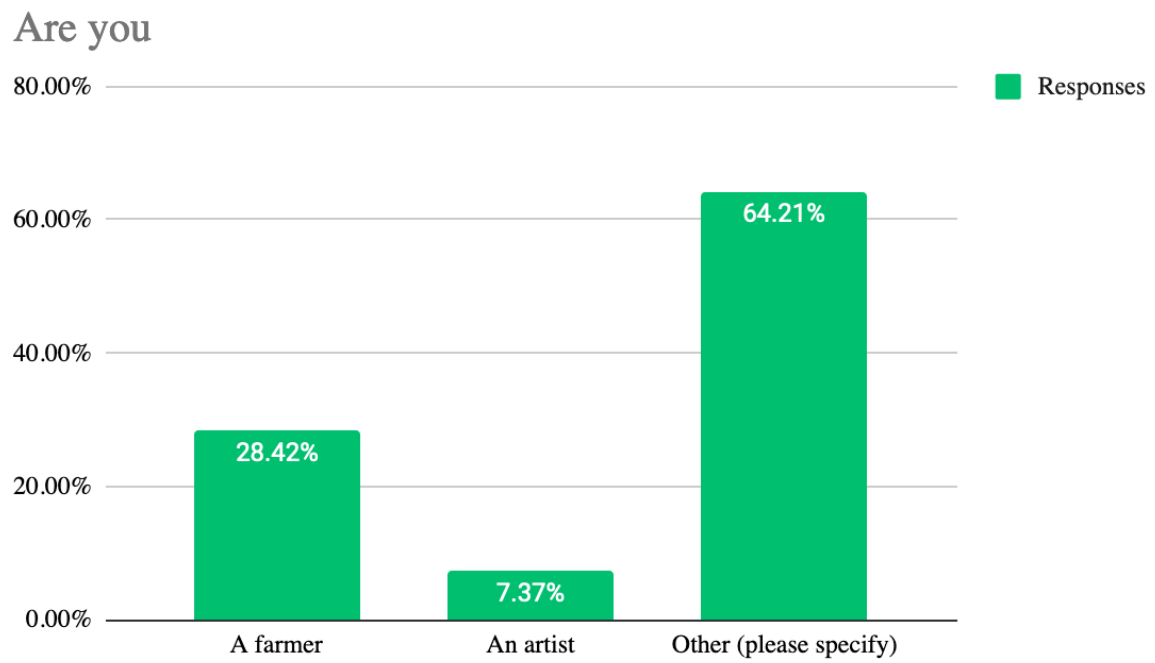


Source: Field Exchange Evaluation. Culture Works

Field Exchange was very successful in engaging with the farming community ([Table 5](#)). 28% of participants were farmers. The artistic community was also engaged, with 7% artists taking part. The majority of participants however consisted of a mix of aspiring farmers, members of the wider agricultural community (beekeepers, hobby apple grower, coming from a farming family) and people with a keen interest in improving their environment (allotment owners, gardeners) as well as researchers, chefs, educators and the wider general public.



Table 5 - Field Exchange Participants, Background



Source: Field Exchange Evaluation (2022). Culture Works

## 5. Project Evaluation



Field Exchange Participants exploring Brookfield Farm and learning about Beekeeping Methods.

Field Exchange conducted its own evaluation while at the same time the team worked very closely with the UCC team to deliver the overall programme evaluation of the Creative Climate Action Fund for Creative Ireland. A summary of findings is outlined below under the following headings:

- Engagement and Learnings
- Creativity and Climate
- Potential for behavioural change

### Engagement and Learning

The main target group for the evaluation of Field Exchange were participants to the Exchanges. Overall 240 participants engaged in the Exchanges over the summer 2022 with *one third of participants identifying as farmers* and a wider pool of participants coming from

the wider farming community (beekeepers, hobby food growers, family farming background).

The Exchanges were highly relevant to participants. Overall, *91% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that the Exchanges were relevant to their practice and/or work*. The delivery of the Exchanges - through experts, artists and conversations facilitated - was very successful. Responses to the Field Exchange Survey showed that *the discussion challenged participants to think differently about farming* (83% agree or strongly agree with this statement). The Exchanges also showed that they were *very practical and provided those that participated with knowledge and skills to apply in their work or at home* ([Table 6](#)).

Table 6 - Survey respondent from Field Exchange Participants

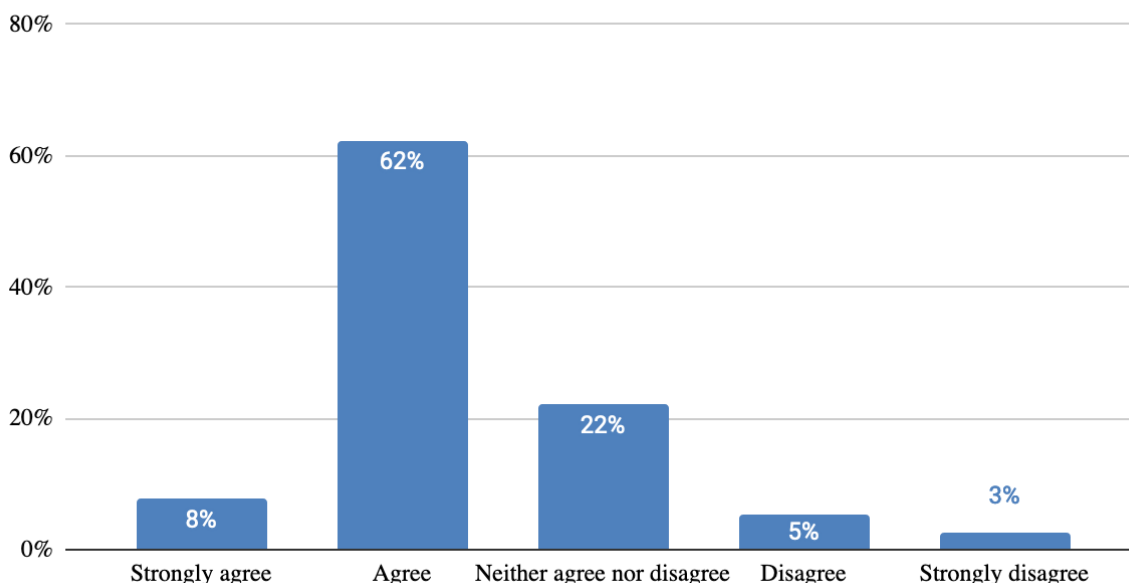
Please indicate your level of agreements with the statements listed below					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Experts delivered the Exchange to a high standard	87.37%	10.53%	2.11%	0.00%	0.00%
The conversations with others was inspiring	84.21%	13.68%	1.05%	1.05%	0.00%
The food contributed to the exchange of ideas during the lunch break	82.11%	13.68%	3.16%	1.05%	0.00%
The Exchange met my learning objectives	75.53%	20.21%	3.19%	1.06%	0.00%
The Exchange was relevant to my practice and/or work	65.22%	31.52%	3.26%	0.00%	0.00%
I can apply the skills/knowledge that I learned	61.70%	34.04%	1.06%	2.13%	1.06%
The Exchange challenged me to think differently about farming	51.06%	31.91%	15.96%	1.06%	0.00%
The Exchange challenged me to think differently about the Environment	50.00%	31.91%	15.96%	2.13%	0.00%

Source: Field Exchange Evaluation (2022). Culture Works

Field Exchanges also engaged participants in the topic of Climate Change, specifically in terms of farming and changing practices towards a more environmentally friendly way. Responses to the UCC Surveys ([Table 7](#)) show that over 60% of Field Exchange participants agree or strongly agree that they are 'more informed about climate change' after attending Field Exchange. This is a very encouraging response and outcome.

Table 7 - Impact of Field Exchange on participants' knowledge about Climate Change

Q16. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement after attending this experience: "I am more informed about climate change."



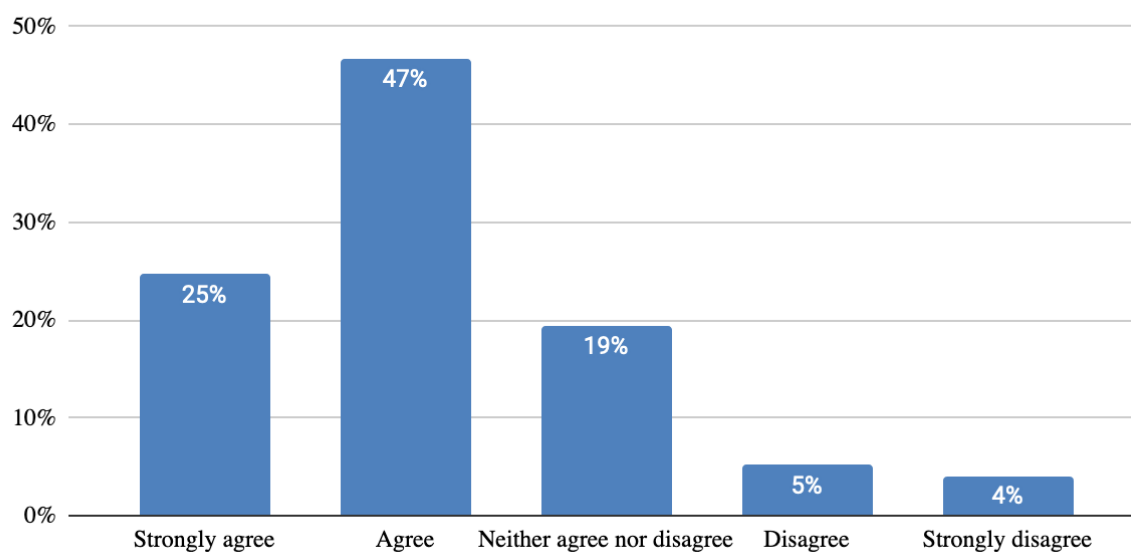
Source: UCC. Creative Ireland - Evaluation Creative Climate Action Programme

### Creativity and Climate

Creativity and changing agricultural practices were at the heart of Field Exchange. The evaluation therefore looked at exploring how participants have responded to Model Plot by Deirdre O'Mahony in collaboration with the Irish Loy Association and John Gerrard's Corn Work (Corrib). At the outset, over 70% of respondents to the UCC survey agree or strongly agree that 'the creative aspect of the project made me feel more engaged with climate action' ([Table 8](#)). It underlines the importance of discussing climate change and connecting with possible climate actions in a different and more engaging way. However, 19% of respondents neither agree or disagree with the statement that the project made them feel more engaged with climate action, while 9% disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

Table 8 - Creative Aspect of Project and Climate Change - Field Exchange Respondents

Q14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:  
 “The creative aspect of this project made me feel more engaged with climate action.”

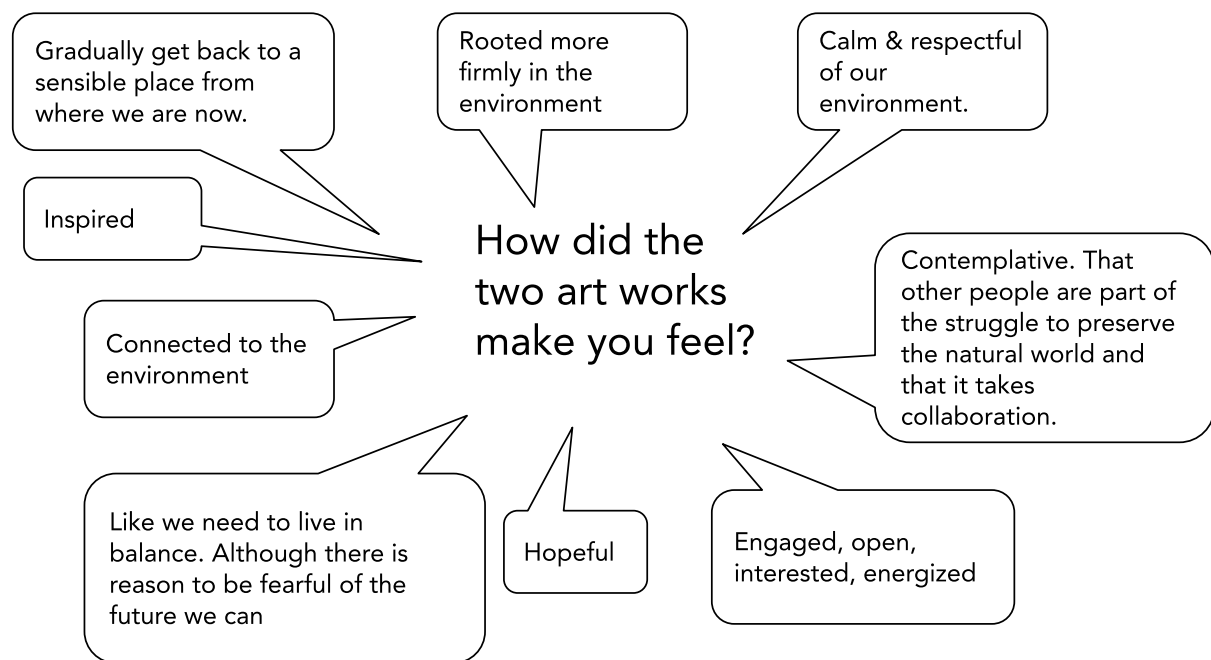


Source: UCC. Creative Ireland - Evaluation Creative Climate Action Programme

For Field Exchange it was important to look closely at the impact of the two art works that were an integral part in the presentation and engagement of participants in Field Exchange. The responses to the Field Exchange Project surveys showed that participants had an overwhelmingly positive response to both Model Plot by Deirdre O’Mahony and Corn Work (Corrib) by John Gerrard. It certainly engaged participants in the conversation of farming and the environment in a different way and created an emotional connection with it. Both art works have been shown for the first time in the context of a working farm and gave participants an opportunity to engage in a wider discussion that continued throughout the exchanges and beyond. It is encouraging to see that participants feel they have connected more with the environment, connected with nature and are positive about the challenges ahead ([Figure 1](#)). One could say it created an emotional connection and a positive and hopeful environment to discuss and tackle climate action.



Figure 1 - Field Exchange Responses to Model Plot by Deirdre O'Mahony and Corn Work (Corrib) by John Gerrard.



Source: Field Exchange Evaluation (2022). Culture Works

Specific responses to Deirdre O'Mahony's Model Plot in collaboration with the Irish Loy Association showed that participants were inspired, while responses to Corn Work (Corrib) created a connection with Brookfield Farm and the wheel of agriculture ([Table 9](#)).

Table 9 - Field Exchange Participants' Specific Response to Art Works

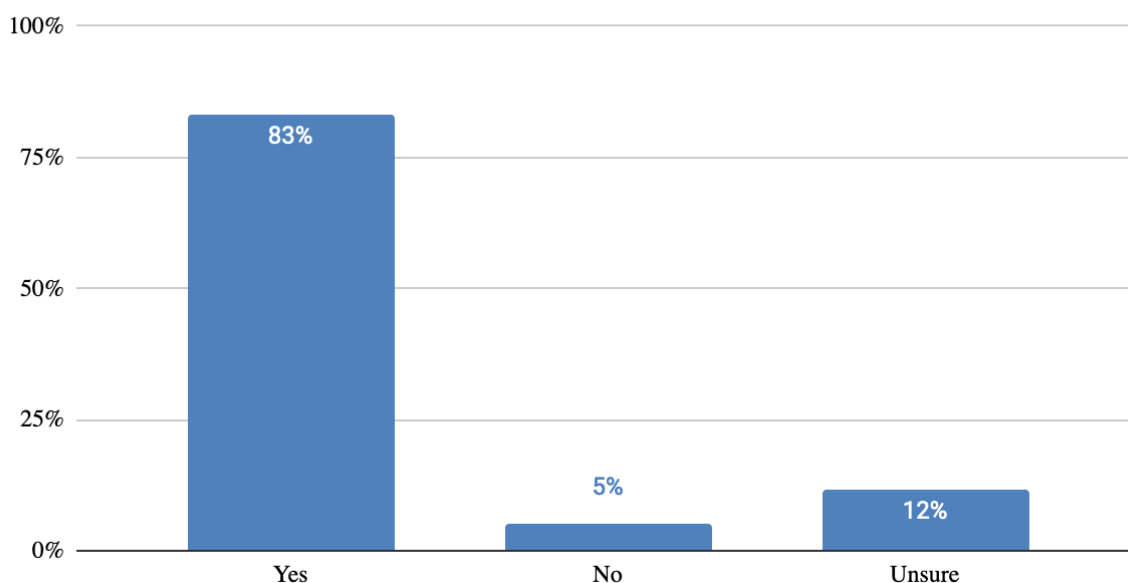
<p>Model Plot by Deirdre O'Mahony in collaboration with the Irish Loy Association</p>	<p>What did you think about when you saw Deirdre O'Mahony's Model Plot on Brookfield Farm and heard more about the art work?</p>
	<p><i>'it generated so much discussion and was one of the highlights of the day for me. it gave me lots of ideas and an appreciation of traditional and alternative methods of farming.'</i></p> <p><i>'Looking to the past to inform the future for food security and sustainability'</i></p> <p><i>'Inspired, never heard of Sanfoyne but so interesting to learn of its benefits to nearly all aspects of agriculture'</i></p>
<p>Corn Work (Corrib) John Gerrard</p>	<p>What were your impressions when you saw John Gerrard's Corn Work (Corrib) 2020?</p>
	<p><i>'Lovely connection to the farm and beautiful way to bring people together, physically through the table and in terms of interests and backgrounds'</i></p> <p><i>'That everything is connected, and evolving, and that we need to use the emergence of each season to improve on what we have, for the sake of the planet.'</i></p> <p><i>'Circular nature of land use'</i></p> <p><i>'Mesmerising and calming. A bit like the feeling I get when I sit in nature.'</i></p>

## Potential for behavioural change

Following on from the Exchanges, participants feel empowered to make changes in their practice and/ or lifestyle to address climate change. 83% of respondents to the UCC survey agree that they intend to make changes ([Table 10](#)), compared to only 5% not intending to make changes and 12% being unsure. The most often quoted 'change' that Field Exchange participants intend to address back home or at work. Overwhelmingly, 'Plant for biodiversity and / or create better green spaces' comes out as the most popular 'intention for change' in the survey (75%). This is not surprising as this answer was the most relevant one for farming on the list of possible answers. Also in the top five answers features 'reduce my household waste and recycle more' (62%), repair damaged possessions where possible instead of replacing them' (61%) and 'consider the carbon footprint of my food purchases' (60%) which again is very relevant and related to Field Exchange topics ([Table 11](#)).

Table 10- Intentions to change behaviours - Field Exchange Participants

**Q 18. Do you plan on taking action or making changes to your behaviour or lifestyle after attending this event / participating in this project?**



Source: UCC. Creative Ireland - Evaluation Creative Climate Action Programme

Table 11 - Areas of changing behaviour - Field Exchange Participants

	Q 19. If you said yes to the above question, do you plan on taking action in any of the following areas over the next 12 months? Please choose which ones.	%
1.	Plant for biodiversity and / or create better green spaces.	75%
2.	Reduce my household waste and recycle more.	62%
3.	Repair damaged possessions where possible instead of replacing them.	61%
4.	Consider the carbon footprint of my food purchases.	60%
5.	Purchase less non-essential items and consider what I really need.	58%
6.	Reduce my consumption of disposable items, e.g. plastic bags, excessive packaging.	55%
7.	Buy second-hand goods when possible rather than new.	51%
8.	For some journeys walk, cycle, take public transport or car-share instead of using my private car.	51%
9.	Buy energy efficient products when replacing my household appliances.	49%
10.	Use energy saving light bulbs.	49%
11.	Consider making dietary changes in order to consume less products which have a high carbon footprint.	49%
12.	Consider the carbon footprint of transport when planning holidays / long distance travel.	45%
13.	Make a grocery list before shopping in order to avoid food waste.	45%
14.	Be careful about my energy use at home and install smart technology to control use.	43%
15.	Take action to address water waste or flood prevention.	38%
16.	Become involved in a local environmental group.	34%
17.	Switch to an electricity supplier which uses energy from renewable sources.	32%
18.	Insulate my home to reduce my energy consumption.	31%
19.	Install solar panels in my home.	29%
20.	Buy a low-fuel or electric car.	22%
21.	Purchase a low-energy home.	10%

Source: UCC. Creative Ireland - Evaluation Creative Climate Action Programme

When looking at the specific changes that Field Exchange participants intend to implement back on their farm and/ or their home, four topics specifically stand out: Agricultural Practice, Beekeeping, Food and Knowledge Sharing ([Table 12](#)). Exchanges had a significant impact on participants to look at their planting practices on farms and in gardens. Participants have gained an understanding of their responsibility and awareness of what is possible and *'feel more knowledgeable about talking to others about climate issues and farming'*.



Table 12 - How to apply learnings from Field Exchange

As a result of participating in Field Exchange, how do you hope to change your practice in this area?	
Topic	Participants Responses
<b>Agricultural practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replant Rye Grass Fields</li> <li>Plant more diverse and environmentally friendly species</li> <li>Use less fertiliser and plant green crops to put back nitrogen naturally</li> <li>Native Tree planting</li> <li>Plant wildflowers on my land and use native plants</li> <li>Holistic planned grazing</li> <li>Be more diversified in my plantings</li> <li>Introduce more trees to the farm</li> <li>Improve my composting and be more diversified in my plantings</li> <li>Composting, planting for pollinators, green manure planting, broadleaf tree planting.</li> </ul>
<b>Beekeeping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend beekeeping Course</li> <li>Get a Hive for Beekeeping</li> <li>Continue learning about beekeeping and grow more pollinator plants</li> </ul>
<b>Food</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use what is in my surroundings, be it food or otherwise</li> <li>Buying and eating local</li> <li>Sustainable approaches to food</li> <li>Making more products from our own milk for our own consumption</li> <li>Start micro dairying</li> <li>Consider using local farmers milk to make cheese and butter</li> <li>Buy more local and seasonally</li> </ul>

<p>Knowledge sharing</p>	<p>Build knowledge and spread to others</p> <p>Talk to more people and exchange ideas and experiences</p> <p>More discussions &amp; research with husband on soil health.</p> <p>It gives me confidence and it's great to meet like minded people.</p> <p>Think more about how I farm</p>
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Source: Field Exchange Evaluation (2022). Culture Works

## 6. Field Exchange Images and Videos



The exchanges as well as art work and special events were documented through photographs and videos. All videos produced can be accessed on [Brookfield Farm's Youtube Channels](#) and the concluding Field Exchange project video: [Field Exchange Final summary](#). Images for the whole project can be accessed on <https://www.brookfield.farm/pages/field-exchange-2022-learning-resource>.





Model Plot by Deirdre O'Mahony in collaboration with the Loy Association of Ireland. Spring 2022



Model Plot by Deirdre O'Mahony in collaboration with the Loy Association of Ireland. Summer 2022



## 7. Conclusion



Breaking bread at Field Exchange's Harvest Feast on Brookfield Farm

Overall, Field Exchange was very successful in its delivery and reaching an audience in the farming communities. Discussions around changes in agricultural practices were facilitated in curated Exchanges and creative environments at Brookfield Farm. This included experts from various fields and the inclusion of artists and their art work in the Exchanges. All activities took place over the summer of 2022 - starting on 21 June and finishing on 16 September.

Field Exchange was also invited to represent the Creative Climate Action Projects at the National Ploughing championships in September 2022. The Ploughing is Europe's largest outdoor event and is attended by 300,000 people.

Field Exchange showed the power of bringing people together in a safe space to discuss and exchange ideas around difficult topics - agriculture, climate change and biodiversity. It allowed farmers and others to shift attitudes around sustainable farming and the challenges for farmers to tackle. It shifted the context for difficult conversation for participants. It is a

fact that farmers rarely have the opportunity to meet the general public in a respectful space. The diversity of participants in Field Exchange allowed for this exchange to happen.

A key result of the Field Exchange Programme was that Farmers and the public realised that the food system is a crucial factor in making significant changes in the shifting agricultural practices. Feedback from participants showed that the exchanges created a supportive and positive environment, participants were positively surprised and were eager for continuing the conversation and participating in forums.

The creativity of the artists was helping to - bringing creativity back into agriculture and allowed farmers to think differently. The presence of the artwork and artists throughout the exchanges facilitated this approach of thinking about the changes needed in agriculture in a different, creative way.

The creativity during the exchanges allowed farmers to think about creative ways to look at their land, their practices and take a more creative approach to their work and Farmers felt empowered to introduce a creative approach to their work - such as Farm Design in managing soil fertility, understanding farmland is a home for various creatures and nature as well as production space for cash crops.

# Annex

## Annex I - Selected Press Clippings

### Nenagh Guardian

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Media Source	Press	Page	46	
Circulation	6,502			
Topic	Agriculture			



## Coolbawn farm hosts field exchanges

■ Learn farm practices to combat climate change

**BROOKFIELD** Farm in collaboration with artists Deirdre O'Mahony and John Gerrard are pleased to announce that Field Exchange launched on June 21 in County Tipperary. Field Exchange is about bringing people together to support creativity, agriculture and address climate change. Brookfield Farm in Coolbawn is one of 13 projects taking place all around the country that are being funded by the Creative Climate

action fund through Creative Ireland. These projects will work with communities to empower people to make real changes about how they interact with the environment. Presented by **Brookfield** farmer and agricultural educator Ailbhe Gerrard, Field Exchange is a series of farm based creative events that will support farmers to implement agricultural practices that combat climate change.

The initiative welcomes groups of 30, farmers, experts, interested public and artists coming together at exchange tables on Brookfield Farm, facilitated by National Organic Training Skillnets. These Field Exchanges bring together art, food, and agriculture, creating opportunities for the public, artists, farmers, scientists, and experts from relevant fields to congregate and exchange ideas and tested techniques that



Pictured at the launch of Field Exchange at **Brookfield** Farm, Coolbawn were Melanie Scott (Arts Officer, Tipperary County Council), Tania Banotti (Director of Creative Ireland) and Róisín O'Grady (Heritage Officer, Tipperary County Council). PHOTO: GGHRAIN DUCE

combat climate change. The first of the Exchanges started on Tuesday of this week and the project has 12 days of exchanges over 12 weeks.

Each of the 12 events will support farmers to implement agricultural practices that help combat climate change both in the soil and above it. Exchanges include welcoming new entrants to agriculture, designing farms, including trees and dry stone walls, soil fertility, horticulture opportunities and dairying with a difference.

#### AILBHE'S VISION

Speaking about Field Exchange, Ailbhe Gerrard of **Brookfield** Farm said: "Field Exchange comes

from my 12 years experience as a farmer. I needed knowledge on how to farm to support nature within a nurturing community, integrating creativity and vision in food production. From years of discussion and research we developed Field Exchange to answer these real needs for farmers and help the public support this kind of food production. Field Exchange is a three part project linking creativity and agriculture to address climate, community and biodiversity challenges over 12 weeks June - September 2022."

The Exchanges collectively provide practical, creative and community

support to farmers and the public in moving to climate friendly agriculture and nutritious food production, learning from the one that started on Tuesday of this week (June 28) and every Tuesday thereafter from 3 pm - 6 pm until September 6.

Two artworks by renowned artists John Gerrard and Deirdre O'Mahony are sited on Brookfield Farm. The artworks respond directly to Field Exchange vision (creative agriculture) and both originate from agricultural crops. This is an unique opportunity for the public to visit and experience a beautiful regenerative farm with an escorted farm tour to the artworks

on the shores of Lough Derg. The public can experience artworks and the farm on a guided tour from the one that started on Tuesday of this week (June 28) and every Tuesday thereafter from 3 pm - 6 pm until September 6.

Open Days on July 9 and to offer a weekend opportunity for visitors to experience the artworks and farm. It is possible for groups to book a tour outside the allocated open days, contact helio@brookfieldfarm.

Booking is essential to take part in the Exchanges and for the public open days - [www.brookfieldfarm/pages/field-exchange](http://www.brookfieldfarm/pages/field-exchange)

## Irish Examiner, Front Page Image (Print edition and online)

**Irish Independent** 

Irish Independent | 22/06/2022


Media Source	Press	Page	1
Circulation	61,034		
Topic	Agriculture		

**Irish Independent** 

Thousands of families to get €240 health insurance refund



**New thinking:** Ailbhe Gerrard, of Brookfield Farm, Co Tipperary, and Sabina Higgins, wife of President Michael D Higgins, hold a pair of lambs at the launch of Field Exchange, a discussion project on climate that runs all summer and is funded by the Government's Creative Climate Action Fund. PHOTO: MARC O'SULLIVAN



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FARMERS JOURNAL

Irish Farmers Journal NI Edition | 25/06/2022

Media Source

Press

Page

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Circulation

66,041

Topic

Agriculture





Allbhe Gerrard of Brookfield Farm, Co Tipperary, and Sabina Higgins, wife of President Michael D Higgins, hold a pair of lambs at the launch of Field Exchange, a discussion project on climate that runs all summer and is funded by the Government's Creative Climate Action Fund. \ Oshran Ducle

### Boortmalt recruit only in and he's out

I was disappointed to hear that John Burgess, who joined the Boortmalt team was let go just a couple of months into the job.

John, who is originally from the UK, had been working hard to mend relationships between farmers and Boortmalt, which many will be well aware are often strained.

John had made efforts to meet farmers and build customer relations as you would in any sales role. He also made an effort to make the French malting barley price, used to create the Boortmalt harvest price, available to farmers. This is something that farmers have been calling for for some time now. For whatever reason the

heads of the company and John parted ways.

It appears Boortmalt are quite happy for the lack of transparency around price to continue.

It will be hard to fill the role, if he is to be replaced. There's a shortage of agronomists in the country at present and plenty of jobs to be filled.

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