

DERRY DUFF FARM



GENERAL INFORMATION

Location of farm	Bantry, County Cork.
Name of the farmer	Steve and Claire Collins.
Size of farm	55 Hectares.
Permanent staff	2, occasional temporary workers.
Main products of farm	Organic Blueberries, Organic Aronia Berries, Organic Dexter Beef, Free Range Chickens.

CURRENT REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE PRACTICES ON THE FARM

Farmland cultivated with RA practices	Yes.
Crops produced with RA practices	All products.
Duration of using RA practices	Since 2008.



Image 1: Steve and Dexters

Description of RA practices used in the farm

No pesticide or herbicide use on the farm. Weeding is done manually.

Clover & Multispecies swards: Clover has been sown into any swards of grass on the farm. Some herbs have also been sown into grass swards.

Riparian buffer zones to prevent pollution: Trees and shrub have been planted around the edges of several small ponds on the land that any runoff might make it way too, and these trees/shrubs aid in absorbing any runoff before it reaches the small ponds.

Blueberries are inoculated with micro-rhizomes, and blueberries are hand planted on the farm.

Agroforestry- One area of low-pasture has been planted with widely spaced walnut trees.

There is an apple orchard of about 70 -80 trees on the farm. Free range chickens inhabit and roam the orchard and are fed around the tree trunks. Therefore, scratching and keeping the radius around the trees clear of weeds, as well as providing fertilizer for the trees.

Perennial bushes like the Aronia berries are starting to be planted high up the mountain, because they start to create soil by putting their roots deep into the subsoil (1 metre deep). The roots are taking carbon and microbial matter into the clay sub-soil and generating new life

There are 3 beehives managed on the farm: farm filled with these pollinators.

Blocks off trees planted on the farm as windbreakers for the crops

Wildlife corridors throughout farm

Hedgerows on farm managed for wildlife

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Erasmus+

STARTING AND MOTIVATION BEHIND REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

Main motivation	Motivation to farm regeneratively was the original idea for the farm when purchased in 2008. Steve's goal for the farm was to make the farm more beautiful, and to do so in a way that was in harmony with the natural landscape of the hills.
Learning the RA farming practices	Steve's knowledge of RA and farming practices was entirely self-taught, through reading and learning through trial and error. As well as simple "common sense" and what was considered the most nature friendly. Steve is not from an agricultural background, but comes from a scientific background, so followed a trial-and-error method on the farm when implementing practices. Would also chat informally to other local farmers.
Did the farmer receive training?	No formal training.
Did the farmer receive financial support?	No official RA specific financial support in Ireland. However, grants are provided for being certified Organic. As well as the Single-Farm payment under EU CAP Policy. But no specific RA funding



Image 2: Aronia plants up high on hill

RESULTS OF REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

Benefits of using RA practices

Economic benefits are felt through the high quality of berries being grown. They are a unique organic product, with a signature taste that allows Derryduff to charge a high price for this premium crop product.

Areas of the mountain are being monetized through allowing the cattle to graze on such rough pastures. If not for the cattle, it would be hard to monetize such plots of land on the farm. The mountain can only support a small stocking level of cattle, and this level is respected. If there was a higher stocking level on the mountain, additional feed inputs would have to be purchased to maintain the cattle's diets.



Image 3: Overview of Derry Duff Farm with Blueberries, Aronia berries & Agroforestry

Aronia berries are now also being planted on the areas of the mountain, and this will supplement income, as well as creating new soil habitats up high on the mountain.

High level of on the farm due to diverse habitats spread across farmland, and presence of wildlife corridors.

The fact that the farm has been regenerative/organic since the start has been a huge benefit. There was no drastic transition from conventional or intensive to regenerative.

No use of pesticides/ herbicides or artificial fertilizer reduces input costs. As well as reduces veterinary input costs for cattle

Obstacles of using RA practices

Increased workload due to reliance on manual labour of weeding / hand planting etc, and no use of pesticides etc.

Weeds are controlled as well through heavy mulching, as well as an expensive practice. About 400-500 cubic meters of wood chip mulch each year is used to control weeds. This mulch has to be bought in. Steve explored producing his own mulch, but several hectares of coppice would be required to produce enough mulch annually, and this does not seem feasible to do at Derryduff currently.

Lack of RA funding

Remote location of farm results in poor access, resulting in large costs to get anything delivered to farm etc.



Image 4: Chickens grazing on young apple orchard



Image 5: Dexter Cow roaming the diverse rugged landscape

Is the farmer happy overall with RA?	Yes
Does the farmer intend to continue RA?	Yes
Does the farmer intend to introduce changes in RA methods or crops?	Absolutely, Steve views RA as the way forward for agriculture.



Image 6: Dexters grazing



Image 7: Blueberry bushes

Contacts: Website: <https://www.derryduff.ie>



Image 8: bumblebee on blueberry bush



Image 9: rows of aronia berries



Image 10: Newly planted aronia bushes and apple trees

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