HNV Farming Networks in Ireland – What we have and what we need

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What is a HNV network?

- Interconnected Groups
- Individuals and organisations
- From a range of disciplines and backgrounds
- Collaborating for the protection of HNV farming.
Why do we need them?

- Ability to achieve objectives across a range of disciplines.
- More and more groups taking ownership of the HNV farming idea.
- Being increasingly highlighted on the political agenda.
- Now a need for greater cohesion and integration between these groups – sharing, connecting and collaborating through innovative network.
What do we have?

• EFNCP continues to network between HNV farming groups.

• Research - Ideal HNV – identifying and mapping HNV areas and creating HNV networks

• Other NGO's, Farming, Nature conservation and research groups working directly with community groups.

• No platform that links all involved
The Blackstairs Farming Group
Creating their own vision

• Mission: Working towards the sustainable management and development of the Blackstairs uplands and their hinterlands using a community based partnership approach

• Objectives: To advocate for the farmer and farming community’s essential role in maintaining and enriching the built, natural and cultural heritage of the Blackstairs and the Barrow Valley.
Starting out

• The journey started by targeting National funding streams.

• First recognition and funding came from the Heritage Council.

• Provided the motivation and impetus to continue their journey.

• Showed others that they were serious and gave weight to proposals.
Building on a the foundation

- Secured funding from both Wexford and Carlow County Councils to expand on the initial habitat survey.

- Trip to the Burren and MacGillycuddy Reeks to look at other locally led initiatives and network with other farming groups.

- Secured support funding from EFNCP for the role of Coordinator.

- Strong social media presence – It’s not who you know, it’s who knows you!
Developing the partnership approach

- Important phase of engagement with farmers and local community (Combination of face to face interviews and organised field walks)

- Engagement and networking with other relevant stakeholders – NPWS, Coillte, Govt Depts, Fisheries Ireland, Teagasc, Farm Planners and advisors, etc.
Consensus through cooperation

- Networking continues between local, regional and national stakeholders.
- Local workshop groups will be established - develop appropriate measures to be included in any proposals.
- Aim to have an initial proposal for a locally led outputs based scheme prepared by end of 2015.
Adapting to change

- The group secured the initial capacity it needed but success completely depends on continued support.

- The funding landscape is ever changing but the group is confident and capable of adapting.

- As opportunities present themselves the group and the community will develop around these.
Challenges for local HNV groups

- Lack of capacity (support and professional advice for the group, its structure, organisation and direction)
- Gaining trust
- Maintaining independence and control of their own destiny
- Maintaining momentum
- Keeping motivated and confident of a successful outcome
What do we need?

• To be recognised.
• Assistance with capacity building.
• Build a culture of trust between local HNV groups and their funding sources.
• Access to expertise and advice.
• Increase the flow and transfer of knowledge.
• A network with a solid structure - enable groups to make the meaningful connections they need to make.
• Reward good networking behaviour between local groups.
How do we get there?

- **Identify HNV areas – Ideal HNV linking research to the farmer.**

- **HNV Coalition**

- **Greater commitment in RDP for targeted schemes for HNV areas.**

- **Raise general awareness and education among public.**
A vision for HNV networks in Ireland
Thank you