

DSTREAM  
NEWSLETTER

# DSTREAM (DAIRY SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH REGENERATIVE EXPERIMENTATION AND MINDSETS)



DECEMBER ISSUE '24

## An introduction to DStream



Dairy Sustainability through Regenerative Experimentation and Mindsets is a research project funded by the Environmental Protection Agency which commenced in April 2024. The project is led by Dr. Noreen Byrne (Department of Food Business and Development, Cork University Business School, and Director of the Centre for Co-operative Studies).

The core team of the project (pictured above) consists of (from L-R); Dr. Olive McCarthy (Department of Food Business and Development and Centre for Co-operative Studies), Professor Ciara Heavin (Cork University Business School), Dr. Noreen Byrne, Stephanie Marwood (Department of Food Business and Development and Centre for Co-operative Studies). UCC is the lead on this project while partnered with other organisations such as NuaFund (Elizabeth Gavin and Sharon Bearsa) and BRIDE (Donal Sheehan).





## What is DStream about?

This project is grounded in the farmer and their practices. The overall objective of DStream is to investigate the role of practices in enabling the emergence of pro-environmental and experimental mindsets amongst Irish dairy farmers. Moreover, DStream aims to assess the potential for creating momentum for self-sustaining pro-environmental behaviour at both an on-farm and landscape level. DStream provides a basis to assess the inner dimensions of the farmer and use this knowledge to influence and inform policy and initiatives in a way that goes beyond adoption rates and environmental results (which often have a temporal disconnect). The vision of DStream is to provide a strong evidence base for action towards an enabling context for a more sustainable production system in Irish dairy.

DStream focuses on dairy due to its high intensity and proportion in Ireland. The research is grounded in the farmer and their practices, aiming to create an enabling context for a more sustainable dairy production system, supported by evidence. The research questions being asked are as follows:

1. How do agri-environmental interventions and supports both enable and inhibit environmental experimentation on Irish dairy farms?
2. How can/does the design and implementation consider and facilitate experimentation with environmental practices?
3. How is on-going momentum and a mindset of emergence and ownership towards pro-environmental practices supported through this design?

Today's problem  
cannot be solved  
with today's mind

-Gustave Speth





# What we've done so far

## Our first workshop

The DStream research project team attended training on the use of the Farming with Nature (FWN) Biodiversity App in Castlelyons, Co Cork in May 2024. Participating dairy farms were mapped for biodiversity over the summer. The Farming with Nature Biodiversity (FWN) App is proving to be a useful tool for not only for mapping a biodiversity baseline on the farm, but also with the potential to act as a decision making and empowerment tool for the farmer. As was indicated by Donal Sheehan (BRIDE Project), this app, developed in 2021, has been tried and tested for the past two years, and could be used beyond the farm and at a community level to map biodiversity. Well done to the BRIDE team, Diarmuid McSweeney PhD, Tony Watson and Donal Sheehan.



## Biodiversity Mapping on Farms

During the summer we have mapped 16 dairy farms from West Cork and Waterford/Wexford. This biodiversity mapping has set a baseline of improvement for the farm's biodiversity quality and quantity. The mapping was carried out by the ecologists Mike O'Connor and William O'Halloran and supported by Tony Watson. Some initial comments from the ecologists were that all the dairy farmers were highly engaged with the process and were keen to discuss how they could further enhance biodiversity on their farms. Several farmers were carrying out interesting nature-based experimentation on their farms not linked to any scheme. Each farmer was issued with a quality and quantity score and a written report. Next stage of the project will involve in-depth interviews with a sample of the farmers.

# GET IN TOUCH WITH US



This project is funded under the EPA Research Programme 2021-2030. The EPA Research Programme is a Government of Ireland initiative funded by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. It is administered by the Environmental Protection Agency, which has the statutory function of coordinating and promoting environmental research. **DISCLAIMER:** Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the material contained in this publication, complete accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Neither the Environmental Protection Agency nor the authors accept any responsibility whatsoever for loss or damage occasioned or claimed to have been occasioned, in part or in full, as a consequence of any person acting or refraining from acting, as a result of a matter contained in this website.



This newsletter has been reviewed with an accessibility checker to ensure it is readable and accessible to all.



Email Dr. Noreen Byrne at [n.byrne@ucc.ie](mailto:n.byrne@ucc.ie) for any queries in relation to DStream



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Keep an eye out for our website to be launched in the coming weeks!