

DSTREAM (DAIRY SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH REGENERATIVE EXPERIMENTATION AND MINDSETS)



Photo: Fred Adam

OCTOBER, ISSUE '25

DStream - A Recap

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).

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.





Photo: Fred Adam

Objectives of DStream

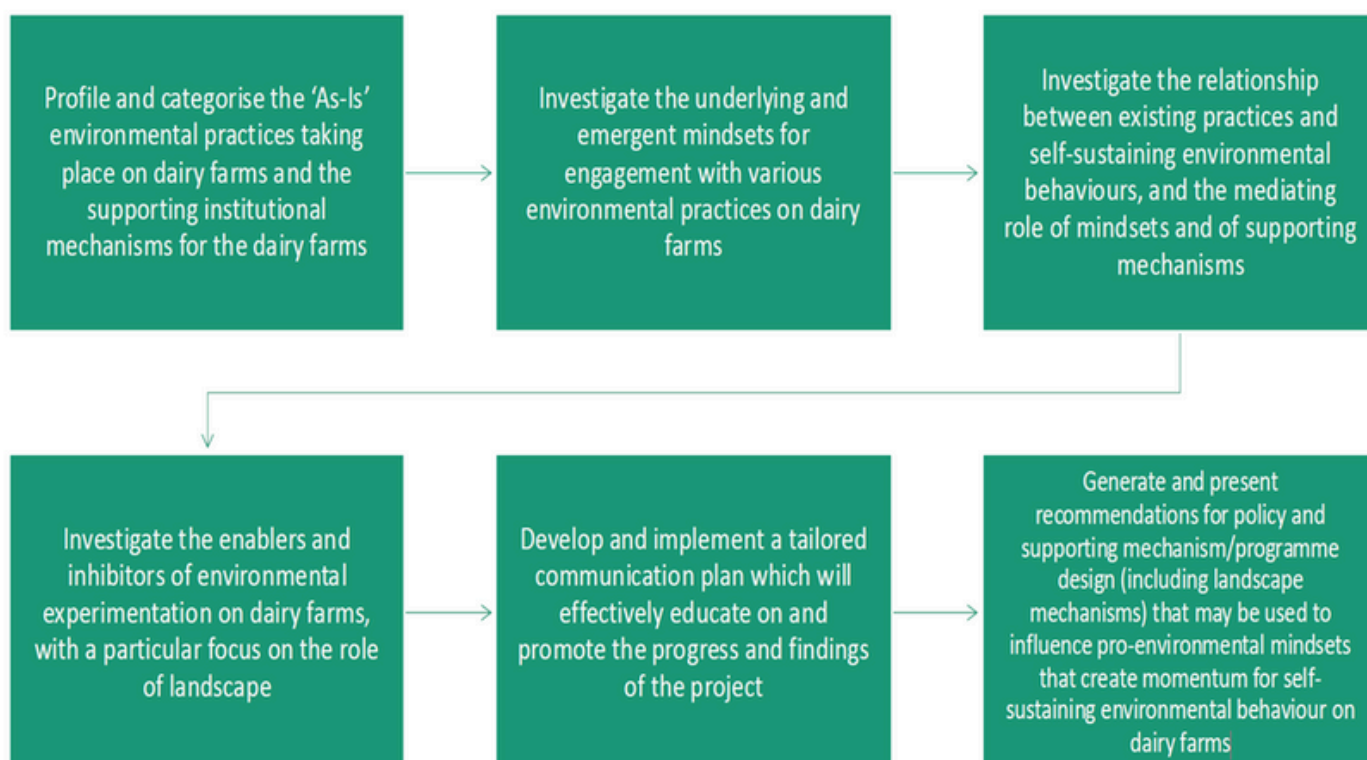




Photo: Fred Adam

Latest updates from DStream

We have carried out biodiversity mapping on 16 dairy farms from West Cork and Waterford/Wexford, with reports issued to the farmers to share the results and provide recommendations. The average biodiversity score on these farms was 13.3%, with some practices including: the use of protected urea, soil sampling, reduced fertiliser use, planting and maintaining healthy hedgerows, and planting native trees. Following this, we had also carried out interviews with these farmers, some farmer quotes are presented below.

Farmer Interviews

We carried out interviews with the dairy farmers to tease out their inhibitors and enablers of pro-environmental experimentation on their farms. Some of the following quotes capture the essence of many of these interviews:

“I can see small changes, and they’re only small changes- like they can make a big, big difference”

“When you’re walking in with the cows and things, it's always nice to see. You can see butterflies or whatever stuff land, and you know you can see there’s an ecosystem going on there”.

“Sure, I got no benefit, but I’d be hoping something else will, you know, that the farm will get a benefit, and that will protect something else”.



Photo: Fred Adam



Farm Biodiversity Walk



In mid-May 2025, we did a biodiversity farm walk on one of the mapped farms. This was lead by Donal Sheehan, BRIDE EIP and a DStream team member. Donal discussed the management of biodiversity rich hedges, hare's corners, invasive species and much more. The farm walk saw participating and non-participating farmers and non-farmers come together to discuss, learn and share all things biodiversity.

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.

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Email Dr. Noreen Byrne at n.byrne@ucc.ie for any queries in relation to DStream



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