



EIP Project Summary

Enhancing Suckler Cow Health, Welfare and Resilience in a High Nature Value Landscape

Ireland's Burren Region in Co's Clare and Galway, is a classic example of a 'High Nature Value' (HNV) farmed landscape, both because of its high biodiversity values (hosting over 70% of Ireland's native flora) and its long history of farming (over six thousand years).

If we want to sustain the Burren's biodiversity – an increasingly important repository of our native flora and fauna – and its cultural heritage, we need both grazing livestock and the farmers to manage them. Healthy livestock will mean lower costs and better profits – from market payments and payments linked to environmental performance – and a brighter future for people and place.

Unfortunately, and in spite of significant effort, expense and stress, the Burren remains a recognised hotspot for bovine tuberculosis (TB), as well as other animal health challenges (neonatal, respiratory and parasite-related diseases). These issues, both individually or collectively, can have a significant impact on animal welfare, and on the economic, social and environmental sustainability of Burren farm holdings.

While the causes are likely to be multiple and complex, blood samples from Burren cattle demonstrate consistently low levels of minerals such as Magnesium, Sodium, Copper, Zinc, Iodine and Selenium. Such low mineral levels will potentially impact on animal health and performance. There are also concerns about how management practices – e.g. around housing, feeding, watering and sourcing of livestock – may increase risk of exposure to certain diseases.

Therefore, this project aims to:

- Better understand issues relating to herd health in the Burren, in particular the impact of low mineral levels and also poor biosecurity practices;
- Take action to address shortcomings identified (particularly regarding mineral levels, animal husbandry techniques and biosecurity measures);
- Monitor the impact of these interventions over time (2 years minimum); and
- Share the lessons learned with local farmers and those in other HNV landscapes using a vet-led approach.

To achieve this, we will assemble a strong, skilled and experienced Operational Group (OG) led by HNVS Ltd., employ a part-time project co-ordinator, work with 20 monitor farms, undertake a broad range of monitoring approaches, implement changes and monitor outcomes, across a 4-year period.

Findings – in particular recommendations for best practice - will be shared with farmers in the Burren and beyond. Local farmers and vets will be heavily involved throughout the project phases in what we feel will be an innovative collaboration to addressing animal health at farm level.

One of the first steps in this project will be to identify 20 farms where we can carry out research and test solutions. This will entail a 4 year commitment from 20 local farmers but will, we hope, result in benefits for all Burren farmers, and important learnings for farmers elsewhere.



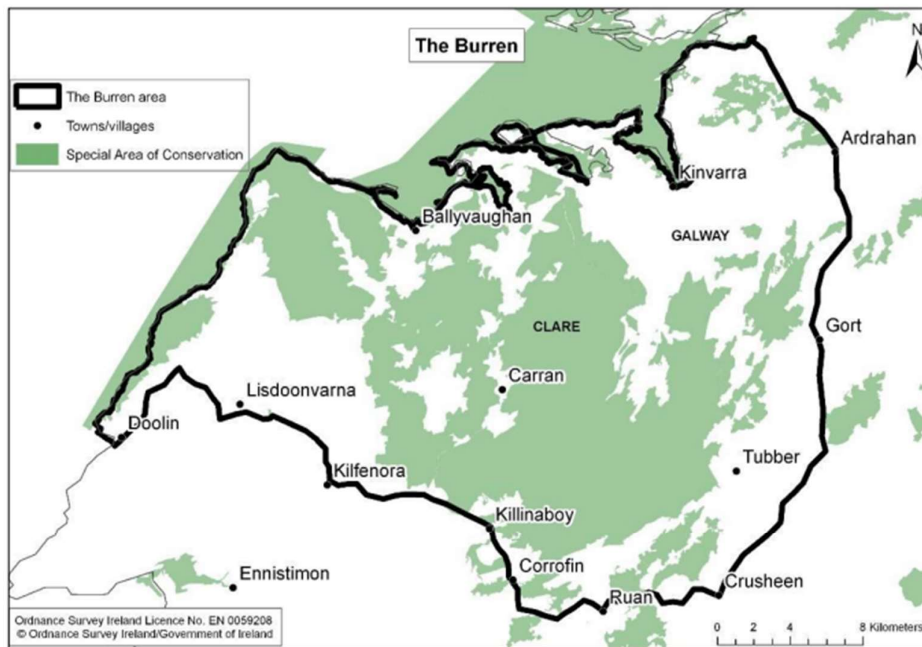
EIP Project Location and Expression of Interest

To be eligible for consideration as a Monitor Farm for the Enhancing Suckler Cow Health, Welfare and Resilience in a High Nature Value Landscape EIP, you will need to be farming winterage land within the Burren area - outlined below in black.

If you are farming winterage in this area, please text or email us with your name, telephone number and email and townland of your winterage before midnight on Sunday December 8th on 085 1790680 or info@acresburrenaran.ie.

We will contact you the following week to ask you a number of questions which will help us decide which farms can offer the most to meet the research needs of the project.

Monitoring work on our (20) case study farms will begin in January 2025.



The Burren region, as defined above, includes the following District Electoral Divisions:

Abbey	Cloghaun	Glenroe	Lisdoonvarna
Ballyeighter	Corrofin	Kilfenora	Lurraga
Beagh	Crusheen	Killeenavarra	Mountelva
Boston	Derreen	Killilagh	Muckanagh
Cahermore	Doorus	Killinaboy	Noughaval
Carran	Drumacoo	Killinny	Oughtmama
Castletaylor	Drumcreehy	Kiltartan	Rathborney
Castletown	Gleninagh	Kinvarra	Ruan



Outline of commitments between EIP project and farmers

The EIP project will commit to providing to the farmer:

- Results from 72 blood samples taken from cows in your herd (over three years)
- Results from 21 (pooled) faecal samples from cows and calves in your herd
- Results from 10 soil samples taken from lowland areas of your farm
- Results of three forage samples and one silage sample taken on your farm
- All vet costs for taking bloods and all analyses will be covered by the project
- 1 refractometer which you will be given to test colostrum
- An annual contribution of €200 each year for 4 years towards your time spent
- Subsidised cost of minerals up to a maximum of €2,000 (from 2026)
- Access to 8 hours of veterinary advice on ways to improve animal health
- Assurance that all farmer data will be managed in line with GDPR rules

The Farmer will commit to:

- Engaging fully with the project and its agents* over a four-year period (2025-2028)
- Attending 1-2 discussion group meetings per annum with other farmers
- Facilitating vets and project staff to collect the relevant monitoring data (bloods, faeces, soils, forage, fodder etc)
- Providing access to the same 4 cows over course of the 4-yr project where feasible. If a monitor animal is lost from herd, then the vet will select another of similar age & breed as replacement
- Collecting and recording data requested such as colostrum quality
- Helping with animal condition scoring
- Carrying out, or facilitating, the installation of camera traps
- Keeping accurate records as requested by the project (re. animal health and performance, supplementary feeding regimes)
- Participating in baseline and final surveys (in years 1 and 4) to be conducted by local vets
- Support broader farmer engagement initiatives and demonstration events

** to include the project co-ordinator, operational group members and vets from BurrenVets Ltd.*