

# Landscape and Environmental Services

*BurrenLIFE and Burrenbeo Projects*

**Dr. Brendan Dunford**



- 1. An introduction to 'The Burren'**
- 2. What role do farmers play in this landscape?**
- 3. Realising benefits for local communities**
- 4. Some lessons learned**



# 1. Burren – An exceptional landscape & environment

*Boireann - place of stone; Petra fertilis – fertile rock*

*Size: c.72,000ha, c.30,000 SAC, c. 1500ha National Park.*



## Landscape & geology:

*It is said that it is a country where there is not water enough to drown a man, wood enough to hang one, nor earth enough to bury them (Ludlow, 1641)*



# Glaciation



# The impact of water – a ‘karst’ landscape



**Archaeology:** an intact record in stone of 6,000 years of human habitation



*Wedge tomb (c.4,000 years old)*





'It was told that Maureen Rhue was taken by her enemies, after killing the last of her 25 husbands, and was fastened up in a hollow tree... Her red-haired ghost was reputed to haunt the long front avenue'.

***Thomas J. Westropp, 'Folklore of Clare'. Ennis, Clasp Press, 2000.***



Flora and fauna: 75% of Ireland's native plant species in <1% its area



Arctic (*Dryas octopetala*)



Mediterranean (*Neotinea intacta*)



# 23 of Ireland's 25 native Orchid species



# Culture: place where people live and make a living



**A farmed (pastoral) landscape**

**Winter grazing systems**



**The Burren-a landscape of great value, but not to be taken for granted**

**To look after our landscapes, we first need to better understand them, the processes that shape them, and the threats to them.**

**Then we need to work together – scientists, farmers, policymakers - to address these threats.**



## **2. Understanding the Burren - the role of farmers (‘ecosystem service providers’)**





# The Burren 6,000 years ago:



# Landscape management



# Sustaining Biodiversity



**Proof of a 'new' (very valuable) 'product' from farming!**

# Sustaining archaeology



# Sustaining tourism

## Agriculture



## Heritage Conservation



## Tourism



***Tourism in the Burren – A Strategic Plan’ (Brady Shipman Martin, 1994): ‘Tourism cannot stand alone, it must be part of an integrated conservation, tourism and agricultural management strategy’.***

*'There is a world in the land, a farming world of the most sophisticated complexity and the most astute and rich memory that in the next ten years will have vanished completely'.*

*John O'Donoghue, 2001*



**Producing good, safe food and clean water, helping prevent fires ...**

**...a wide range very valuable (but undervalued) goods and services**



# 3. Translating this understanding into real benefits for local communities - the example of the BurrenLIFE Project



- **Project Budget:** €2.23m, 75% from the EU LIFE Nature Fund
- **Partners:** National Parks and Wildlife Service (€375,122)  
Teagasc (€169,900), Burren IFA (€12,600)
- **Timeframe:** Feb 1st 2005 – Jan 31st 2010





## **BurrenLIFE Objective:**

To develop a new model for sustainable farming on the priority habitats of the Burren.



*8240 - Limestone Pavements*



*3180 - Turloughs*



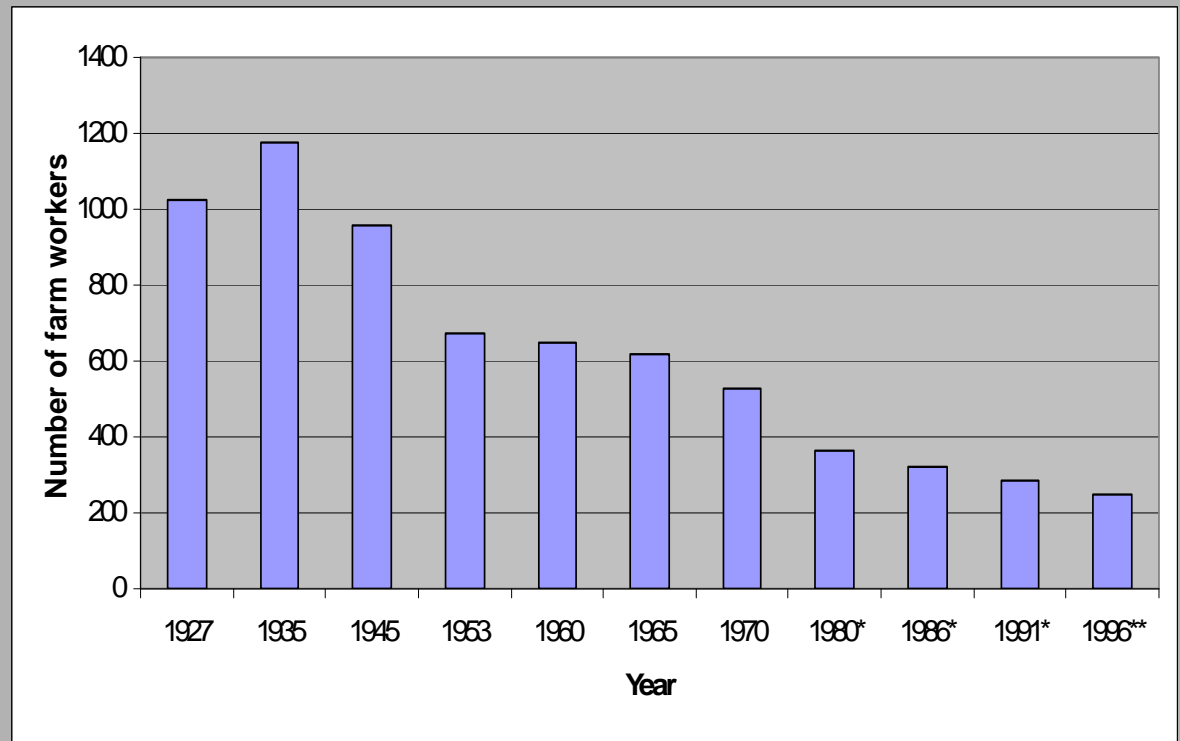
*6210 - Orchid Rich Grasslands*

# Solutions?

## Natura 2000?



**c.20% of Burren now covered in scrub!**



**Number of males employed in agriculture, 1927-1996**

## Agri-envt (REPS etc)?



**We urgently need to recognise and support the positive role of farming**

**Creating a new paradigm...**

**Engaging new partners (the environment is about all of us)**



## Applied Research – practical approach, built on local ideas

20 Monitor Farms – research on sustainable grazing systems

Result – increased grazing by 25%



# Innovation

**Result – reduced silage by 61% (650,000kgs p.a), increased grazing**



# Improving internal walls and erecting gates (15,000m of wall)



# Improving water availability and quality



# Targeted removal of encroaching scrub (c.100ha scrub, 60km of paths)





# Balancing the needs of farming and conservation



# Creating local income and employment opportunities



# Is 'farming for conservation' viable?

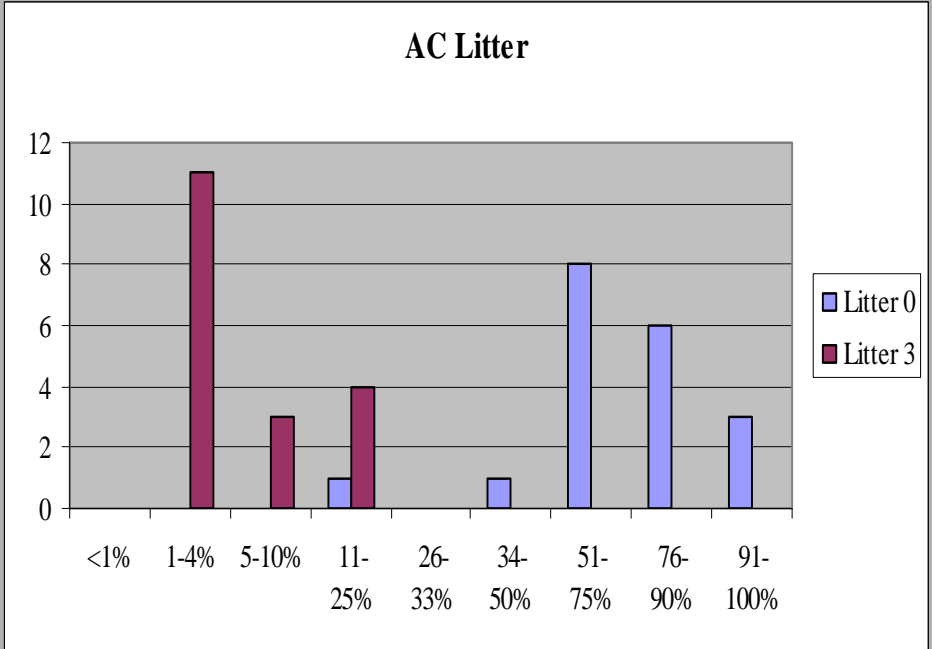
Yes if we consider the bigger picture of what is produced



According to research findings, the 'willingness to pay' for maintaining the Karst Limestone Pavements and the Orchid Rich Grasslands were estimated at €13.86 and €8.18 per person per year. Aggregate benefit: €842.42 / ha. per year.



# Monitoring – Agricultural, Environmental and Socio-economic: *Proving to the taxpayer that what we do works and that it provides good value for money*



**Output:** A tested, costed blueprint for farming for conservation in the Burren which can be proven to be effective in addressing environmental and heritage issues and which has the ownership local farmers and conservationists

# Result: New Burren Farming for Conservation Programme



## May 2010: New Payment for production of Species-rich grassland



**Better management = more  
biodiversity = more money**

**Up to €15,000 per annum**

## High Nature Value farming (HNV farming) - key principles

- Rewards farmers for **positive actions** rather than compensating them for loss of income.
- “Bottom-up” with **strong farmer input** & ownership at all levels
- Retains the **flexibility** to accommodate diversity in farm systems
- **Tiered support** structures to deliver different levels of output
- **Targeted** at the specific needs of the local/regional landscape
- Part of a broader **coherent rural policy** which addresses heritage, culture & community



# The importance of engaging with others - the story of Burrenbeo

## **The Context:**

Extraordinary Landscape;

Heritage and Communities under threat

A huge information deficit

Very little local awareness/engagement/ownership



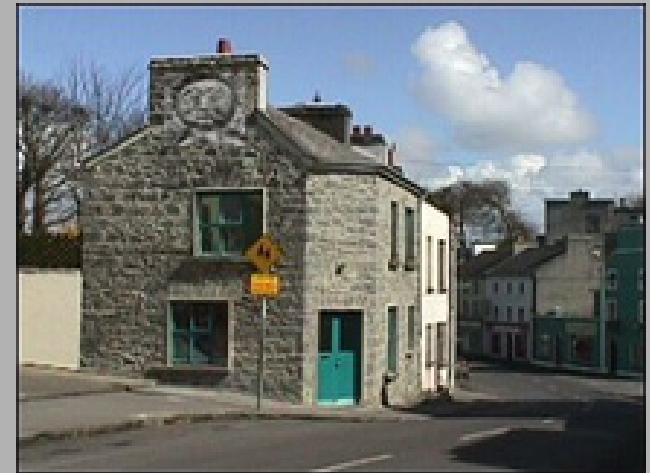
*The Burrenbeo Trust: Open your eyes to the living Burren*

[www.burrenbeo.com](http://www.burrenbeo.com)



# Burrenbeo Trust:

- **Information provision:** Burrenbeo Resource Centre, Website, CD ROM, Multilingual Fact sheets etc
- **Education:** Eco-Beo Project, CD ROM circulation to all Burren schools, Interactive quizzes on website etc
- **Research & Advocacy:** Strategic management of the Burren, research section on website
- **General :** Monthly walks and talks, media work etc





# burrenbeo



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▶ **Towns and Villages**

-  **Kinvara - Chinn Mhara - The head of the sea.** Home of the Cuckoo and Crinniu festivals. Major gateway to the Burren and home of Burrenbeo.
-  **Carran - An Carn - A heap of stones** (to identify a chiefs grave). Cusacks birthplace, in the heart of the Burren.
-  **Kilfenora - Cill an Abhraoidh - Eyebrow shaped hillside.** City of Crosses and Ceili bands.

▶ **What's New**

-  **Burrenbeo Trust Monthly Walk** is led by bird expert John Murphy on the 7th June @ 2pm
-  **This weeks news: Burren cows** hit the headlines. Free Burren talks and walks. New walking guide.
-  **Burrenbeo Trust - Your chance** to help protect Ireland's most extraordinary landscape. Next event May 21st

▶ **Featured Content**

-  See some beautiful Burren images in our Flora Gallery
-  Explore Our interactive Map of the Burren
-  Check Our Events Calendar for Upcoming Events
-  Test Your Knowledge of the Burren
-  Vote in our Online Opinion Poll



Burren Learning Zone  
http://www.burrenlearning.org/

# burrenbéo

[TimeTwister](#) | [Meadow](#) | [Ecology](#) | [Geology](#) | [Archaeology](#) | [Timeline](#) | [Map](#) | [Quiz](#)



## Burren Learning Zone ▶

### TimeTwister

Welcome to the Burren, visitor from the future! You can travel through time in our specially designed time machine and save the Burren from destruction and from the evil work of the visiting professor who is bent on turning the Burren into a mega factory complex!



PLAY

# Burrenbeo Trust Monthly Walks



# Burren Experts



## **4. Some lessons learned**

- 1. We need a good, solid basis for undertaking work (Research)**
- 2. We need to create new paradigms & partnerships (Education)**
- 3. We need to deliver results and to prove that we do (Monitoring)**



To end, a Burren story...



**Obrigado!**