

Social Farming Thematic Initiative Case Studies

1. Case study title:	Tickwood Care Farm, Shropshire
2. Member State:	United Kingdom
3. Contact details (if agreed to publish):	E-mail: edwarddug@zen.co.uk Website: n.a.

4. Short description of the case study (please insert a photograph if you have one):

Four hundred care beef and sheep farm that provides educational and other learning opportunities to people otherwise at risk: primarily prolific offenders, and children with physical/learning disabilities (what in the UK is called a 'care farm').



5. Some key words to describe the case study:

Care farm - Shropshire – West Midlands - educational visits – offenders – children with physical disabilities – children with learning disabilities – learning opportunities - City and Guilds.

6. Practical details of the social farming project/activity:

Main target group:	The care farm hosts educational visits from a broad range of clients, in particular prolific offenders and children with physical/learning disabilities.
Purpose:	These include: To provide learning opportunities for people with learning disabilities, and to prevent them from getting institutionalised
What activities are involved?	The care farm offers an unusually wide range of activities, spread around the main farm. These include gardening, animal husbandry, woodland management, coppicing, sensory/fossil trails, a forest school and wheelchair woodland walk. "Diversity is our strength," says Edward. "If people don't like gardening, then there is the space and opportunity for them to do something else."
Who started the project/activity?	Edward and Anna Dugdale.
What was the inspiration or motivation?	Edward has a background in providing housing/supported living for adults with learning disabilities. Anna trained in both forest school leadership and life coaching, and has a special interest in helping children finding their vocation.
Does anyone else support the	Working on the care farm are Edward and his wife, Anna, and a gardener and a

initiative?	farm manger (who also work on the main farm).
When was the initiative first started?	2005
What is the current status?	On-going
Number of clients:	Total of approx 150-175 client days each week
Number of days per client per week:	(i) Prolific offenders - groups of 5, three times per week; (ii) Children with physical and learning disabilities - six classes of 8-10, two or three times per week; (iii) several other ad hoc groups, eg badly behaved young children - 3-10 per session, a couple of times per week.
Working/care hours for each client per day:	
Geographical coverage:	Most clients come from Shropshire, and if not from within the West Midlands region.
Other relevant details:	Some of what the farm provides fits directly into the school curriculum, eg 7 schoolchildren are doing a City and Guilds course in Horticulture. But part of what Tickwood delivers requires thinking 'outside the box.' Explains Edward, "It's about saying, 'Let's go and try something and see if it gets people excited', and if it works we will go off in that direction. One size doesn't fit all – you have to give people different experiences."

7. Details of any agricultural/horticultural resources used:

The project takes place on the family's 400acre beef and sheep farm, and its 270 acres of woodland. The latter provides a wide range of opportunities for using with clients.

8. Financial aspects of the project/activity:

What is the main source of funding?	Edward's time is provided on a voluntary basis (see 'Weaknesses', below). He receives some funding from the Higher Level Environmental Stewardship Scheme (but no other RDP funding), and some clients' expenses are paid for by various charitable trusts.
What is the size of the budget?	
Has funding been applied for and <i>not</i> received?	Over the years Edward has tried to secure EU and other funding, eg for conversion of a redundant farm house into a support centre for difficult children - but his attempts have been unsuccessful.

9. Other important aspects of the project/activity:

These might be institutional, legal, technical, management issues etc. which are very significant for the management of the project/activity

10. Results of the project/activity:

Direct Results:	Usage of the care farm by pupils from Severndale School – who travel 20 miles each way to visit - has doubled. Parents and visitors speak about the benefits to children and others. “You can see the impact as students grow and change,” says Edward. He recounts the change in one boy, who, during 10 years at Severndale, never expressed an interest and rarely spoke. But at the farm he has slowly started to talk, first asking if he could push a wheelbarrow and recently holding a detailed 15minute conversation.
Strengths:	Edward’s commitment is one of care farm’s driving forces. “To do care farming you have to be driven by emotion - and to be persistent,” he says. “Never let the ‘red tape’ stop you from doing something you believe in.”
Weaknesses:	All of Edward’s work is entirely voluntary – he receives no payment. Getting organisations to recognise the value of the work, and pay for it, has been hard and threatens the care farm’s sustainability. Arranging supervision and transport of the children are other challenges.
Wider Benefits:	In addition to the benefits of being outside, in the fresh air, plus doing and learning about new/interesting things, Edwards says the ‘feel-good factor’ to the clients has multiplied over time.

11. Future prospects and sustainability:

The care farm continues to host and build on a range of client groups, and in the future it hopes to develop a respite home for children with learning disabilities. But while Edward’s commitment is unquestionable, he has been unable to secure support from his local council - and financial viability is a big problem. “We are not sustainable,” says Edward. “The model we are trying to develop is to get projects off the ground and then, after a few years, hope they will persuade and generate enough interest among client organisations for them to take on the funding.”

12. RDP Links:

Edward has investigated RDPE funding, but he feels it is geared towards larger applications rather than individual farmers. He also feels that 40% funding is not big enough to get big projects established, and arranging and administering match funding from different sources is “a nightmare”. Instead, he is applying for Leader funding.

13. In conclusion - lessons to pass on:

See Strengths, Weaknesses and Future Prospects, above