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GREEN HORIZONS WEBINAR SERIES

Partnering for peat

Future-proof farming through collaboration



18 SEPTEMBER 2025

16:00-17:00 CEST | 15:00-16:00 BST

WE ARE STARTING SOON



Housekeeping

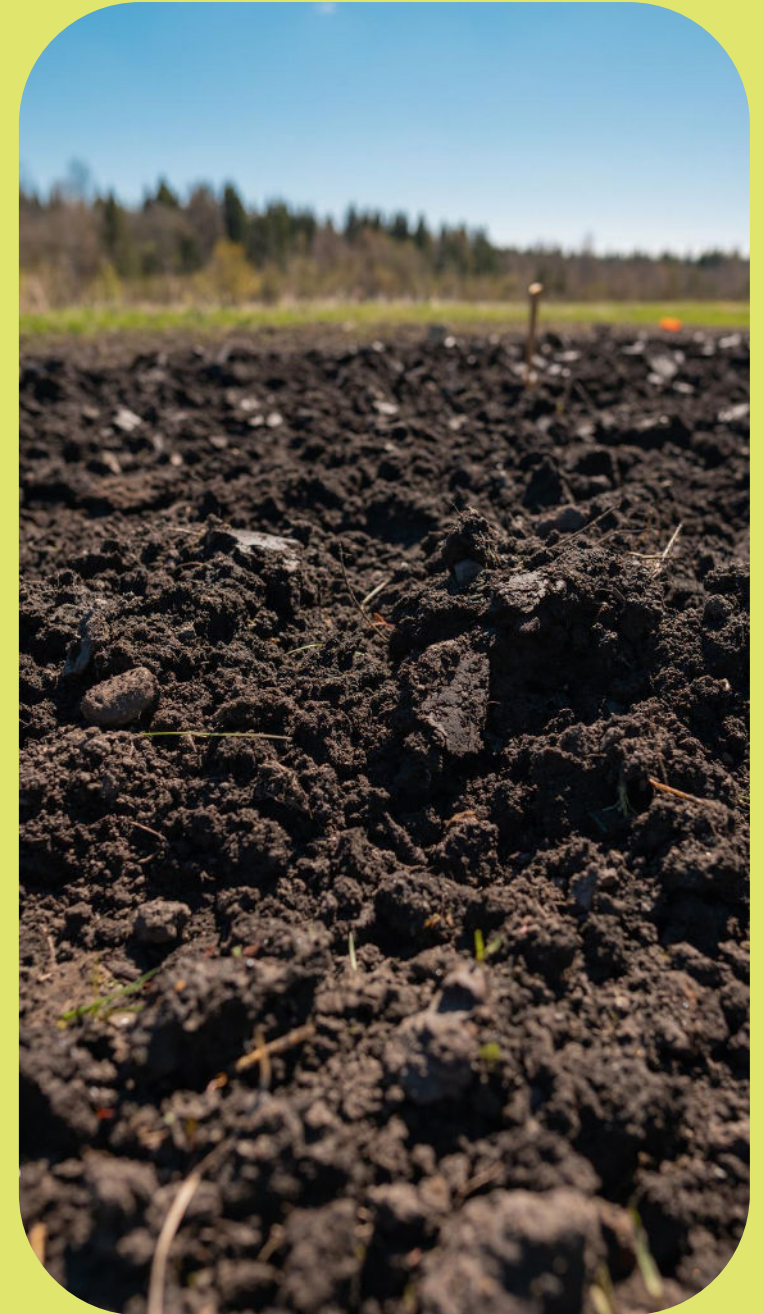
- This session is being recorded.
- Recording and slides will be available on our website afterwards.
- Questions are welcome, we will address as many as we can
- Please share your feedback with us at the end





Agenda

- Welcome
- Introduction of the Green Horizons Network
- Present 'Groene Cirkel Kaas en Bodemdaling'
- Reflections from Green Restoration Ireland
- Q&A with the audience
- Feedback and close



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An invitation: The Green Horizons Farmer Network

- European network for farmers with an innovative mindset who face barriers in adapting to climate change and reducing their environmental impact.
- Benefits:
 - Discover opportunities for collaboration, funding and participation in trials or innovation networks to help build resilience against climate change
 - Access knowledge, tools and pilot results from climate-smart agriculture projects across Europe
 - Make voices and experiences heard in Europe to shape better agricultural policy.





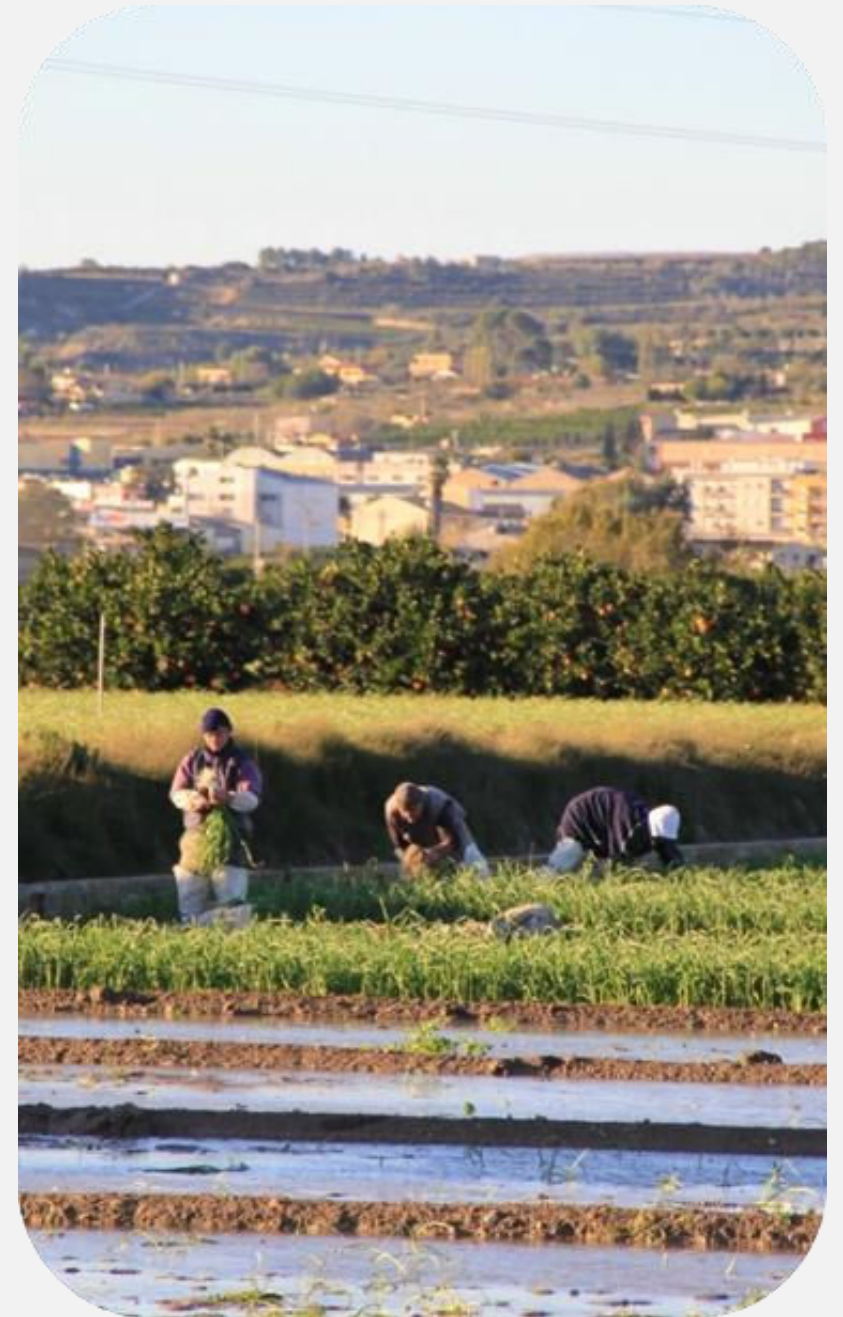
Join our network

Visit www.climate-hive.org/page/Green-Horizons or scan the QR code:



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Our upcoming webinar

Navigating the New Common Agricultural Policy

Wednesday 24 September, 16:00-17:00 CET

To register: bit.ly/GreenHorizonsSeries
or scan the QR code →





Meet today's speakers



**Cees
van den Bosch**

Climate Theme Manager,
Rabobank



**Raymond
Noordermeer**

Former CEO,
De Graafstroom



**Douglas
McMillan**

Founder and Chairperson,
Green Restoration Ireland
Cooperative



**Saskia
Visser**

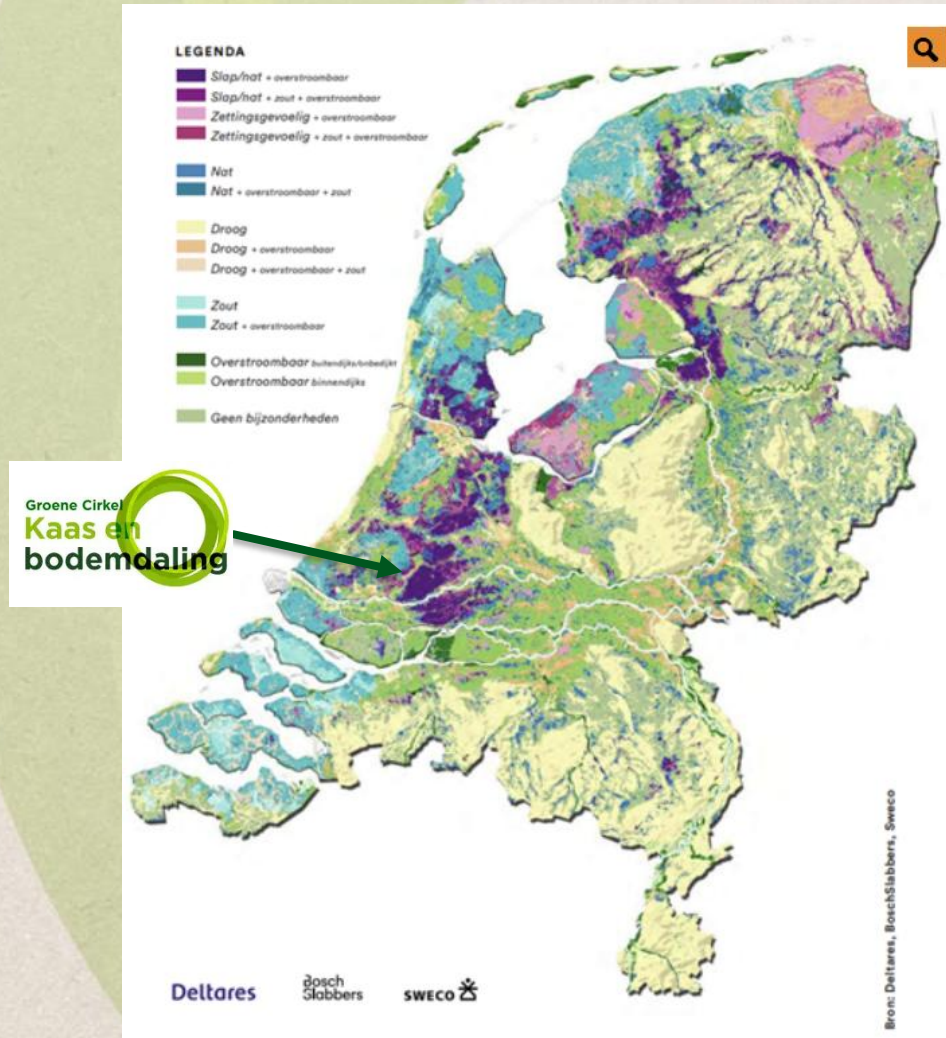
Resilient and Climate
Neutral Regions Cluster
Lead, Climate KIC
Moderator

Making impact with local action learning!

Green Circles Cheese and Landsubsidence

WHAT IS
GREEN CIRCLES?

Based in "The Green Heart"



Why Green Circles?

- Increasing social needs in an overcrowded area
- Environmental boundaries, like nitrogen
- Pressure on rural areas. Increasing (price) competition for available (agricultural) land: urbanisation, industrialisation, nature and recreation
- Dairy farming earning capacity is heavily under pressure
- Citizens wants sustainable, healthy and local nutrition

Ambition Green Circles

Develop future-proof agriculture, find a solution for landsubsidence, restoring biodiversity in the green heart and a water system that can withstand the expected climate change

Partners: Zuivelfabriek De Graafstroom, de zuivelcoöperatie Deltamilk, Waterschap Rivierenland, Rabobank, de Provincie Zuid-Holland en Wageningen University & Research (WUR) and Naturalis.

Assignment Green Circels

Project goals

- Find integral solutions to limit subsidence, conservation and restoring of biodiversity and preserving and strengthening the merit of dairy farming in the Dutch peatlands

Results

- Identification and substantiation of (potential) action packages combatting landsubsidence, strengthening biodiversity and increasing earning capacity of the farmers
- An approach which is scalable to other (peatland) areas in the Netherlands

Financed by network partners and local government subsidies

Approach

- System-area analysis
- Developing workshops
- Data collection, pilots, monitoring systems, learning experiences
- Economic analysis of sustainable measures



Principles

- Focus on simple and smart measures that are in line with current dairy farming practices
- Including sufficient awards: From cost effective to true value!
- Voluntary participation but not without obligation: long term relations and agreements.
- Safe learning environment: Learning by doing!
- Partnership: We need each other. Principles are equality and cross border cooperation.

Workshops Alblasserwaard Vijfherenlanden

- Groups of farmers from the region
- Discuss, develop ideas and actions to reach the objectives of a futureproof economy and nature
- Offer for local governments from farmers individually or as a group



Action plans

- Biodiverse ditches
- Climate robust water management
- Better usage of manure and healthy soil
- Emission reduction



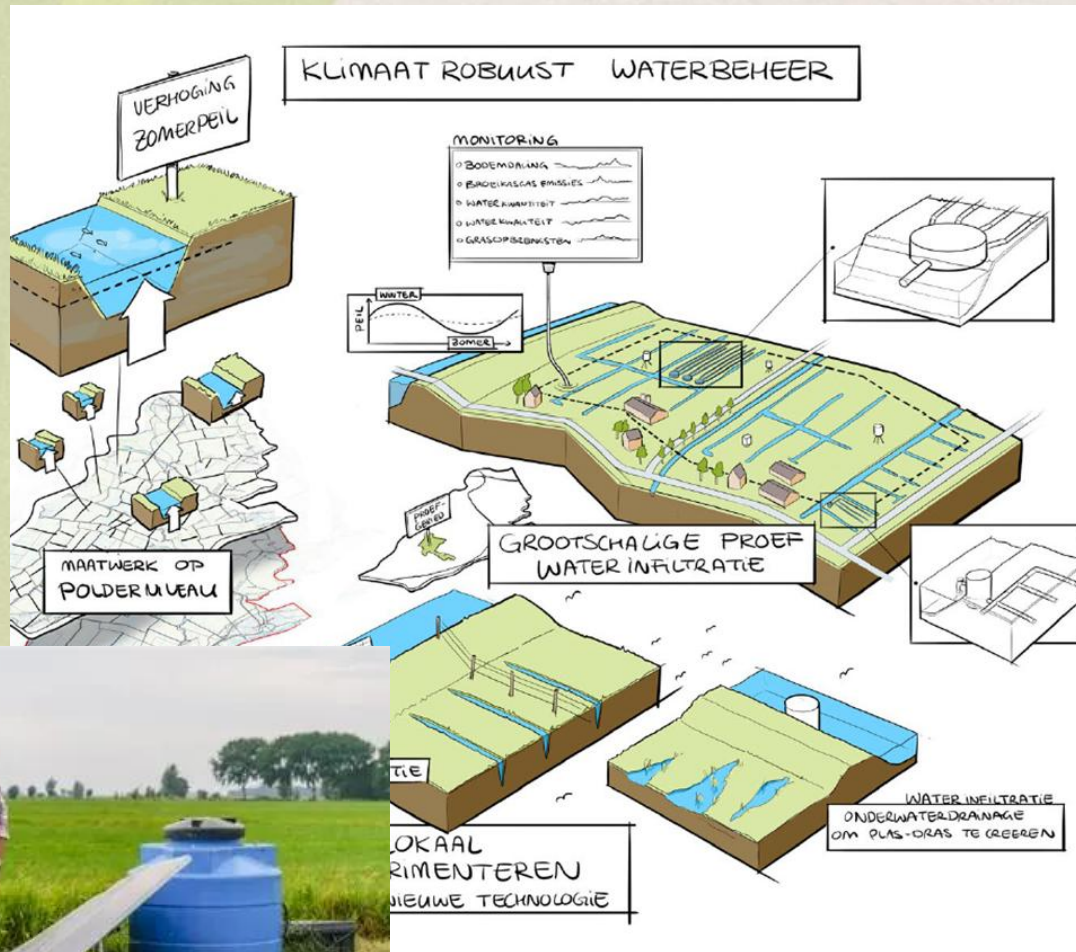
Op weg naar een New Deal tussen boer en samenleving

Melkveehouderij in Alblasserwaard-Vijfheerenlanden



WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

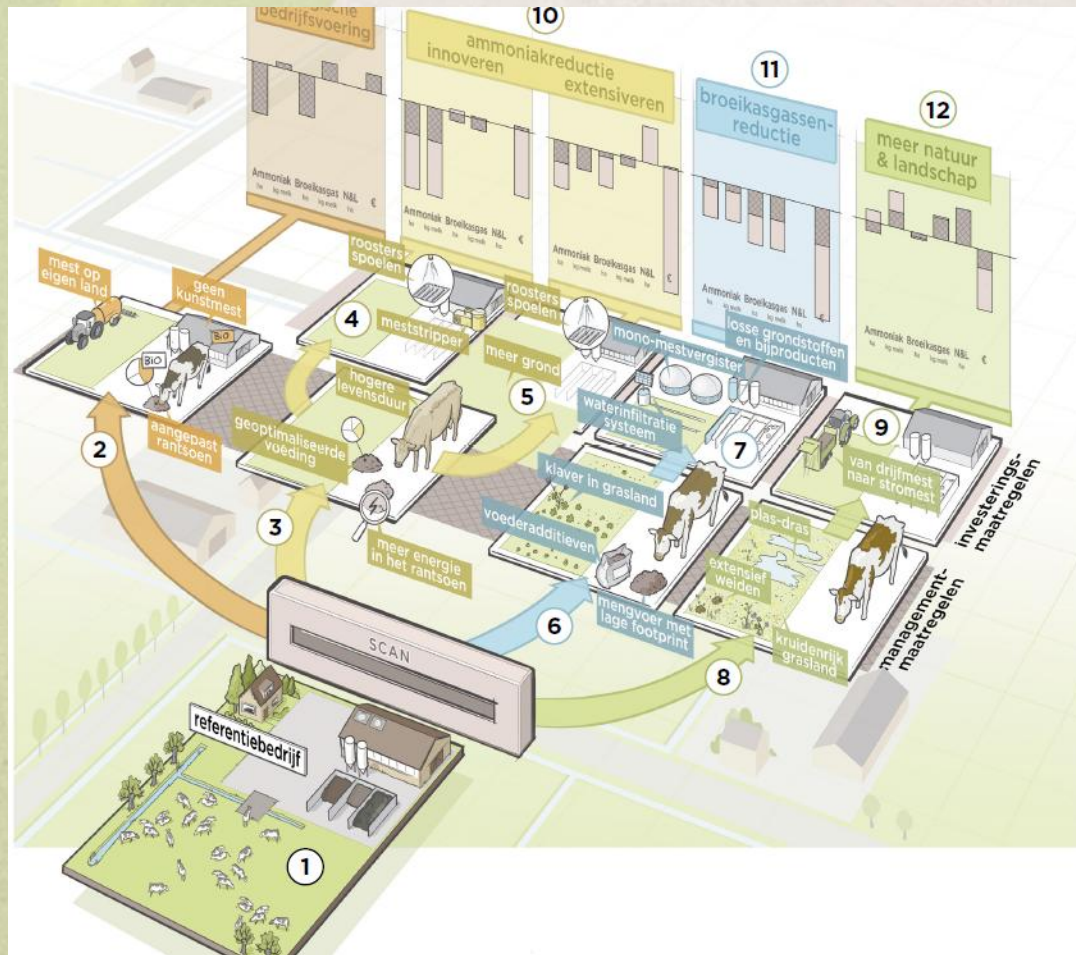
Climate robust water management



Lessons Learned

- Huge reduction potential
- Successful pilots
- Scaling opportunities like carbon credits and subsidies are still limited

Emission reduction



Lessons learned

- Great tool
- Insights based on reference farms
- Conversation starter!
 - Farmer engagement
 - Towards fair incentives

Thank you for your attention





PEATLANDS
for Prosperity

Peatland Farming in Ireland

Dr. Doug McMillan
General Manager, GRI Cooperative



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag
an Aontas Eorpach

Co-funded by the
European Union



Tionól Réigiúnach an
Oirthir agus Lár Tíre
Eastern and Midland
Regional Assembly



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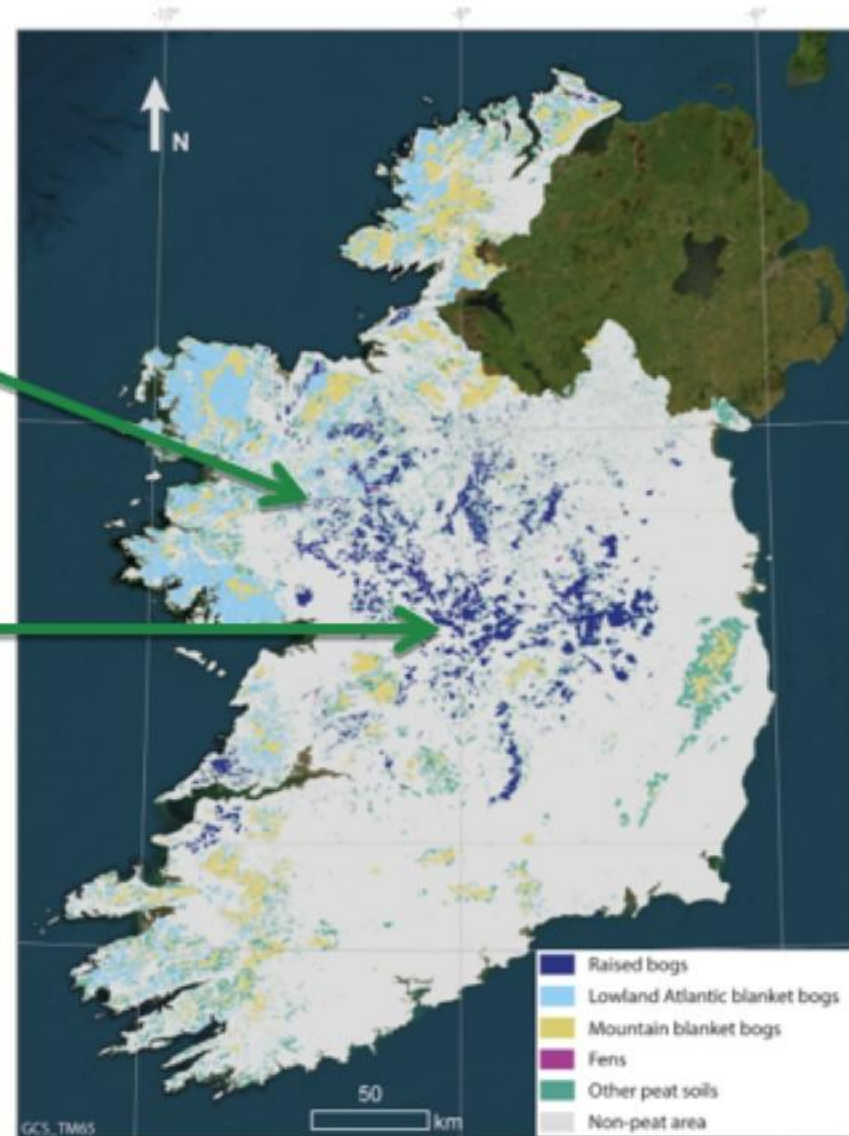
government supporting communities



Green Restoration
IRELAND

Irish Context

GRI Initial
focus areas



- 1.66 M ha store 2.2 billion tonnes = **75%** of our soil carbon
- 85% damaged / degraded
- 340,000 ha peat grasslands
- Circa 100,000 ha deep drained >50 cm
- Emitting 30 tCO₂e /ha/year
- Annual total about 4Mt CO₂e
- (Approx. 10k ha arable)

Green Restoration Ireland Cooperative

- GRI a non-profit cooperative
- **Mission**: Future-proof farming by developing income streams for innovative farm practices (e.g. Paludiculture, NbS, water quality etc.) and on-farm habitat restoration
- Farmer-focused - prioritize farmer (& peatland community) engagement





Green Restoration Ireland Cooperative



- Past Projects: Farm Carbon EIP
- Whole-farm Plans - voluntary
- Successful pilots - First increases in water tables on agricultural peat grasslands
- Ireland's first two Paludiculture farms
- Current Projects: **Peatlands for Prosperity**, Smart Carbon Farming, Mayo Bogs Project, **Farm Carbon Transitions**, Life SUPER EU
- Open events for measures, workshops, farm walks & expert contributions
- School visits and competitions
- Baselineing of carbon, biodiversity and water storage





Dutch-Irish Differences

- Irish farms a mix of mineral and peat soils
- Include other non-agricultural peatland habitats i.e. degraded bog, cutover, plantation forestry etc
- Farmers less aware of land subsidence issue (also carbon storage, Paludiculture, water pollution)
- Water management infrastructure = ditches
- Little expertise in landscape-level water management infrastructure
- No mandated water levels
- Water level management '*stalemate*'



GRI Approaches

- Awareness raising / comms – water table management (not rewetting), carbon storage, other options
- *Lighthouse* farm work has proven the ‘principle’ for multiple *high-value*, ‘*peatland-friendly*’ crops at demonstration and sub-commercial scale
 - 1. Wet grassland systems: Continued livestock production at higher water tables
 - 2. High value crops for small areas
- Whole Farm Plans - voluntary selection of measures e.g. solar pumps, Paludiculture, pond creation etc





3-Zone Solution: Landscape-Level Mosaic



- Irish (raised bog) peatlands typically exist in 3 concentric zones:
 - **Zone 1:** *Semi-intact core* (50,000 ha);
 - **Zone 2:** *Cutover middle ring* (120,000 ha) - Post-extraction abandoned areas;
 - **Zone 3:** *Agricultural outer ring* (80,000 ha) - Converted to grassland - Gradual transition potential with partial rewetting
- Restore Zone 2 '**wastelands**' with ***tailored, habitat-appropriate*** paludiculture solutions simultaneously restores productivity AND hydrological conditions needed to protect Zone 1
- *Restore & protect by producing*
- Partial water level rise in pastures

PEATLANDS
for Prosperity

The Regan Farm Paludiculture Showroom is trialling new crops for peatland agriculture or wet agriculture. Paludiculture is a new form of agriculture which involves farming peat soils with high water tables to rehabilitate the peat and prevent the peat wastage and subsidence that results in high levels of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The Peatlands for Prosperity project funded by the Government of Ireland and the EU Just Transition Fund is funding this work and showcasing suitable new crop options to other peatland farmers for their agricultural peatlands or abandoned cutover lands. This follows on from the work of the Farm Carbon EU, which aimed to reduce carbon emissions from peat grasslands.

Paludiculture Crops

- 1. Strawberries, Raspberries, Blackberries, Raspberries & Raspberries
- 2. Soft-fruit trees (intercropped with water-cress)
- 3. Cereals
- 4. Black Chokeberry, Oregon & Malt
- 5. Wheat & other vegetable crops
- 6. Grasses & other vegetable crops
- 7. Strawberries & other crops
- 8. Floating Sweet-grass

Paludiculture Farming Plot:
American Sweetgum, Sweet Birchwood, Swamp Cane, Black Peat, Alder, Alder

REWET Wells:
UL/Regan research project for groundwater monitoring of rewet peat pastures

Peat dams



Key Tools: Paludiculture ‘Showroom’ & ‘Landscape’ Farms





GRI Approaches

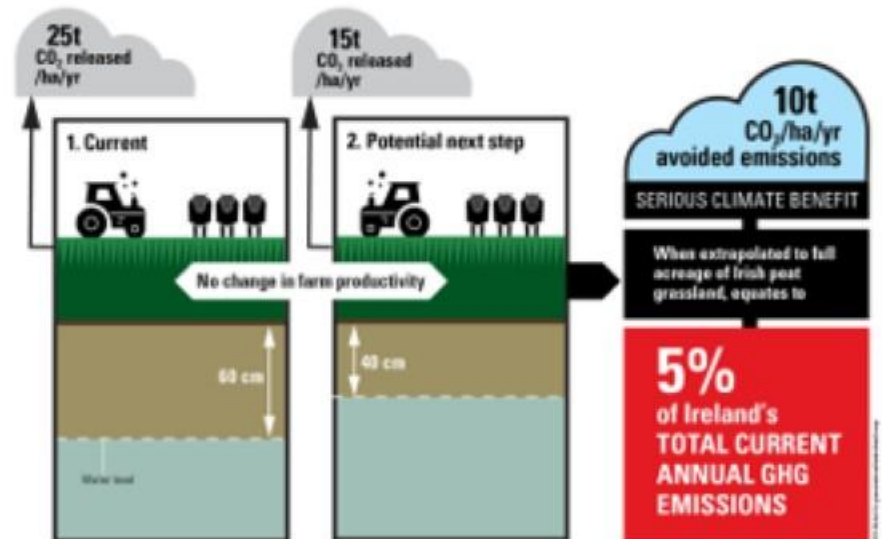
- Culturally aligned
- Need income to support transition
- Measures address carbon and other ecosystem services
- Looking for integrated carbon footprint with biodiversity, water quality and supply with community involvement
- Farm group carbon projects
- Green financing
- Focusing on viable business cases
- Added value produce





Dutch-Irish Similarities

- Similar big peatland challenges: emissions, biodiversity loss, water pollution
- Competition for land and farming livelihoods
- Citizens want sustainable, healthy, local food
- Need income to support transition
- Viable business cases
- Green financing
- Need to go landscape-level (overcome adjacency)



Thank You For Joining Us



Dr. Doug McMillan

General Manager

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Ltd

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Let's Stay Connected



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Thank you for joining!

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STAY UP TO DATE

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📢 Join the Green Horizons network: www.climate-hive.org/page/Green-Horizons