

# MAgrSc Innovation Support Programme 2017-2019

## *An Evaluation of the Future Role of and Support for Practical Learning Hosts*

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# Study Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

- To define the learning conditions of Level 5 Work Practice & Level 6 Work Practice
- To develop an evaluation process to determine if learning conditions are achieved

# Study Methodology

## Survey:

- All Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture students across all agricultural colleges
- Host farmers

## Focus groups:

- 6 PLP Co-ordinators
- Host farmers

## Secondary Data:

- 752 PLP supervisor visit reports and student PLP reports

# Progress to date (Since Jan 2018)

- Coded and currently analysing 752 PLP visit and student reports from 2016 and 2017 (Pilot project - Kildalton College)
- Developed and piloted a survey of current Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture students across all six colleges
- Completed a survey of n=341 Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture students of four agricultural colleges

# Findings to Date

## Post PLP Level 5 Student Survey:

$n = 341$

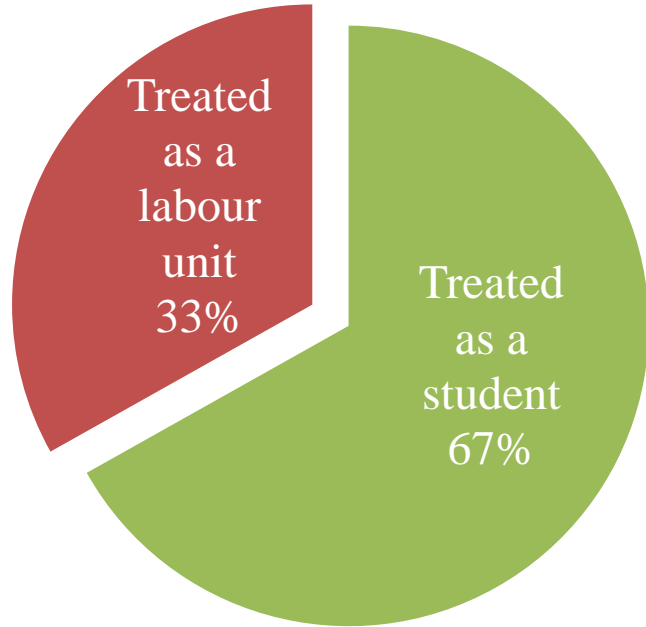
Total Responses

### Responses from:

1. Kildalton Agricultural College,
2. Clonakilty Agricultural College,
3. Ballyhaise Agricultural College,
4. Pallaskenry Salesian Agricultural College

*\*\*Analysis does not include responses from Gurteen Agricultural College or Mountbellow Franciscan Agricultural College as no responses were submitted at the time of analysis*

# Satisfaction of student with their host farmer



➤ 113 respondents feel they were “treated as a labour unit” by their host farmer

➤ Almost 15% of respondents were not fully satisfied with their host farmer

➤ 18.47% of respondents believe their host was only “somewhat interested”, “not so interested” or “not at all interested” in helping them learn about farming

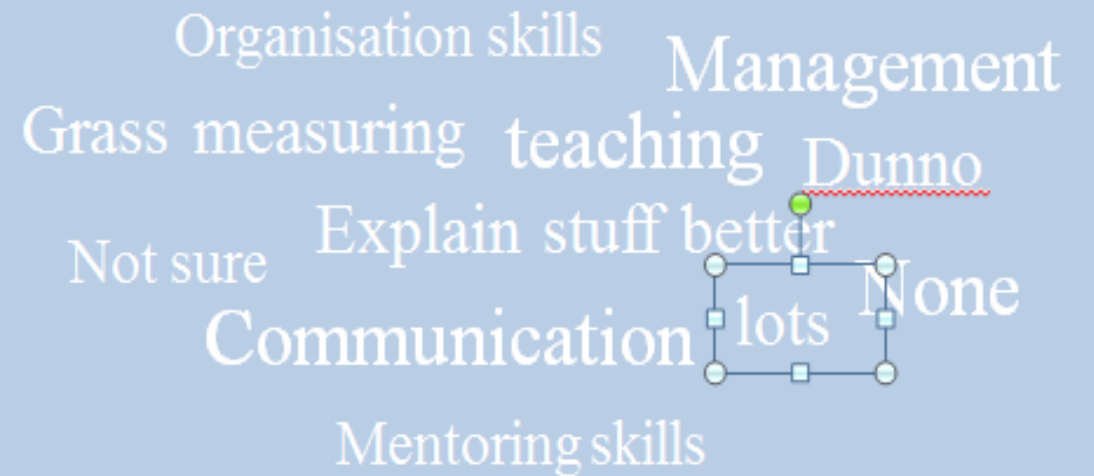
➤ 46 students (28%) would not recommend their host farm to a friend or family member

# Host skills and training

➤ 19% of respondents believe their hosts need additional training

➤ Almost 1/5 of students believe their hosts ability to give clear instructions and communicate knowledge was below average

Organisation skills      Management  
Grass measuring      teaching      Dunno  
Not sure      Explain stuff better  
Communication      lots      None  
Mentoring skills



# Working conditions

➤ 82.99% of students worked more than 35 hours per week

➤ Over 60% working between 8 and 10 hours per day

➤ 21.41% working over 11 hours per day or more

➤ Average €10 per hour

➤ 15.54% paid minimum wage of €9.55 or less

➤ 7% were not paid for their overtime



# Conclusion

- Some excellent host farmers
- Significant amount of host farmers who need additional support and training in order to give the student the best possible learning experience
- Key issues:
  - Some students working long hours
  - Rate of pay
  - Role of the host – Interest, communication, patience
  - Students satisfaction with host- student or labour unit?

# Issues/Problems arising

- Extremely large study- needs to be defined and narrowed and title adjusted accordingly

# Advisory/Education work (Jan – June 2018)

- Teaching:
  - Distance Education students- Principles of Agriculture module; Soils and the Environment module
- PLP supervisor visits- WIT, CIT and Kildalton students
- Completing Level 6 Teaching Strategies course in WIT
- Scribing for exams, assessing beef and machinery practical assessments and assessing drystock PLP presentations
- Participated during the Leadership Challenge Day, Agri Aware and Kildalton College Open Day

# Schedule of Activities (Work Plan)

## June- September 2018

- Continue literature review
- Complete focus group with PLP co-ordinators
- Complete survey with host farmers

## October- December 2018

- Analysis of PLP co-ordinators focus group
- Complete focus group with hosts

## January- March 2019

- Analysis of host farmer focus groups
- Write up of thesis

## March- June 2019

- Complete write up of thesis and submission