

Context:

- EIP-Agri approach to Rural Development
 - Focused on localised challenges
 - Multi-actor knowledge exchange between an Operational Group
- Farming Rathcroghan Project EIP (2019 – 2023)
 - Aims to improve socio-economic circumstances of farming community
 - Archaeology vs Farming vs Agri-tourism
- Farmer participants perspective?

Objectives

Gain a greater understanding of farmer participants:

- Characteristics
- Knowledge
- Attitudes
- Influences
- Needs

To help their farming & participation in the EIP



Key Findings

- Participants similar to that of West of Ireland
 - Most are drystock farming (97%), with holdings between 50-100 acres (46%), aged 40-60 years (69%) & part-time farming (74%)
- Main reason for farming – Family tradition (mean ranking of 1.46)
- Most effective learning about Rathcroghan occurred at a young age
 - Primary school, family members & neighbours
- Positives & negatives of farming in Rathcroghan
 - Respect for archaeology & folklore
 - Restrictions & bureaucracy
- Ag. Advisors - 1st port of call & strongest influence on farming decisions
- 95% of participants were positive about EIP
 - Potential opportunities
 - Apprehensive nonetheless that EIP will revert to top-down approach
- Awareness of different role compared to previous AES
 - Sense of confidence
- Farming & Rathcroghan preservation are a prerequisite to tourism
- Financial incentive necessary, but short sighted
 - Need for development of a sustainable livelihood option for younger generation

Implications of study

- Very strong emotional attachment to Rathcroghan, farming & family tradition
- Nature of EIP approach appeals to participants'
 - Preference towards Knowledge exchange vs knowledge transfer of a preconceived idea
- Coordination & communication essential between Operational Group
- Participants' are the limiting factor in EIP's success
- Opportunities for Ag. Extension services
 - Farmer led research & Joint Programme collaborations with EIPs'
- Imperative role of Ag. Advisor skillset in an EIP – facilitator, knowledge mediator & Innovation broker