



Diversification as a Route to Resilience

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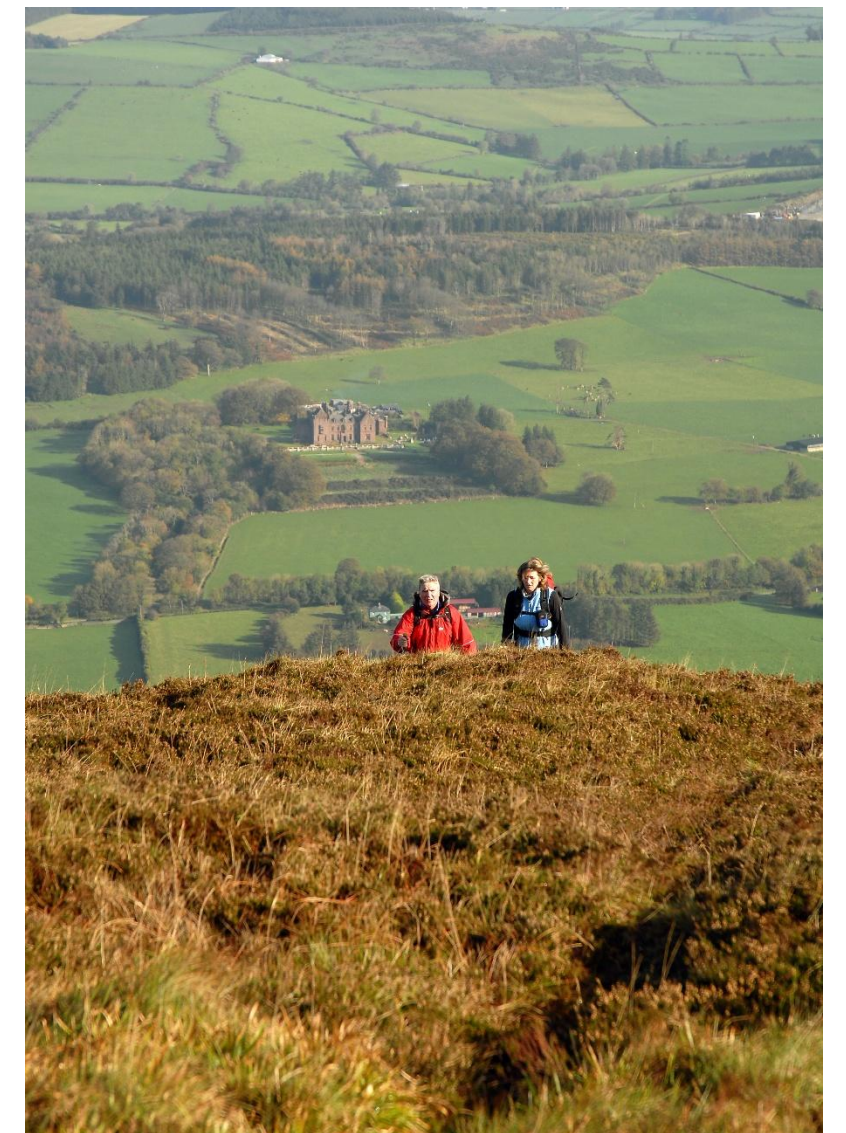
Welcome!



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Why Now?

- The Irish agricultural landscape faces significant challenges, including low income and profitability for many farm enterprises - diversification has emerged as a vital strategy
- Many Irish farming businesses have already diversified, and the trend shows no sign of halting
- Diversification also creates jobs, boosts local and national economies, and can increase job satisfaction and community spirit



The Range of Options

- Land-based - organic farming, forestry, speciality crops, flower cultivation, viticulture, PYO
- Tourism & hospitality - farm stays/B&Bs, glamping, shepherd's huts (renting at €100–200/night), wedding venues, wellbeing tourism, maize mazes
- Food & drink - meat boxes, farmers' markets, vending machines (direct milk sales), artisan drinks
- Services & other - equine livery, pet boarding, social farming, farm/forest schools, rural skills courses, storage units, office space, renewable energy





Getting Started - The Critical Success Factors

- Start with a family resource audit - skills, equipment, buildings, location suitability
- Follow your passions and examine your true motives for diversifying
- Assess the enterprise - compatibility with location, skills and competition
- Start small and scale up - many successful farm tourism ventures began simple then grew by reinvesting
- Know your customer and consider social media over conventional marketing
- Involve the whole family - respect different viewpoints and set a decision-making deadline
- Common pitfalls to avoid - not doing comprehensive research, under-budgeting, neglecting the core farm business, and not securing buy-in from key stakeholders



The Practical Realities

- Planning permission (change of use of farm buildings often requires full permission)
- Legal structure and insurance/liability
- Tax considerations (income tax, VAT, CGT, and impacts on Agricultural/Business Relief)
- Food regulations if producing food (FSAI, DAFM)
- Financial planning - business plans, market research, stress-tested budgets



Supports Available to You

- Teagasc Options Programme - free workshops covering everything from assessing your enterprise to business planning and grant aid, with guest farmers who have successfully diversified, farm walks, and mentoring to complete a business plan
- LEADER funding via Local Development Companies - grants, training, and networking
- Local Enterprise Offices - advice, mentorship, training and financial supports for non-core-farming enterprises
- The Branching Out guide itself as a take-home resource



Thank You
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Now it's over to you

10 minutes - discuss in groups of four or five

- 1- What is one realistic way a farm could create additional income?
- 2- What might prevent it from happening?
- 3- What practical support would help ?
- 4- What could be the first small step?

Followed by group feedback

