



TÁ ÁTHAS ORAINN AN DARA NUACHTLITIR Ó ARANLIFE A CHUR AR FÁIL DAOIBH. Sa nuachtlitir seo táimid bhur gcoinneáil ar an eolas faoin obair atá á dhéanamh faoin togra agus ag léiriú imeachtaí a bheidh ag tarlú. Bheadh fáilte ag foireann AranLIFE roimh aiseolas faoin nuachtlitir nó faoi ghné ar bith de thogra AranLIFE.

WELCOME TO THE FIRST NEWSLETTER OF THE ARANLIFE PROJECT. This newsletter is to keep you informed of the work going on within the project and to highlight any events that will be occurring. The AranLIFE project team welcomes any feedback about the newsletter or regarding any aspect of the AranLIFE project.



Aran
LIFE



Togra AranLIFE

Is togra taispeána é AranLIFE atá á fheidhmiú ar thrí Oileán Árann ar feadh tréimhse 4 bliana ó 2014-2017. Faoin togra féachtar le dea-nósanna bainistiú caomhantais fheirmeoirí áitiúla na suíomh ainmnithe Natura 2000 ar na trí oileán a fhorbairt agus a léiriú (gnáthóga flóra agus fána atá faoi chosaint de bharr a dtábhacht Eorpach). Díríonn an togra ar ghníomhaíochtaí feirmeoireachta ar na hoileáin taobh istigh de na suíomh ainmnithe Natura.

Nasctar meascán maith gnéithe faoin tionscadal. Ina measc:

- Túsfeidhmiú an togra (m.sh. roghnú na bhfeirmeacha)
- Ag déanamh na ngníomhaíochtaí fisiciúla ar an talamh (m.sh glanadh scrobarnaí)
- Ag soláthar infreastruchtúr buan uisce

Tá gnéithe eile a chlúdaítear faoin togra, ina measc seo tá monatóireacht ar thionchar na ngníomhaíochtaí seo i gcomhthéacs na talmhaíochta, an chomhshaoil agus na socheacnamaíochta. Is cuid mhór d'obair an togra é bheith ag scaipeadh eolais ar an bpobal i gcoitinne, ag leibhéal náisiúnta agus idirnáisiúnta, faoin obair reatha agus faoi thorthaí an tionscadail agus a bheith ag aimsiú fianaise faoi thábhacht an chórais talmhaíochta maidir le flóra ar leith na nOileán a chosaint.

Táthar ag súil gur bunús a bheidh sna ceachtanna a fhoghlaimítear le linn an tionscadail do bhainistíocht buan ar ghnáthóga Oileán Árann amach anseo, i bhfoirm tacaíochta cuí a bheadh riachtanach le gnóthachain an togra a chothú, faoi pholasaithe agus cláir náisiúnta cuí.

The AranLIFE Project

The AranLIFE project is a demonstration project that will operate on the three Aran Islands over a 4-year period from 2014-2017. It will seek to develop and demonstrate the best conservation management practices of local farmers on the designated Natura 2000 sites of the three islands (protected habitats for flora and fauna of European importance). The project will focus on farming activities on the islands within the Natura designated sites.

The project combines several different elements. These include

- The initial implementation of the project (e.g. the selection of the farms)
- Completing the physical actions on the ground (e.g. scrub removal)
- The provision of a sustainable water infrastructure

Other elements of the project include monitoring the impact of these actions from an agricultural, environmental and socio-economic context. Informing the general public both at a national and international level of the ongoing work, communicating the project results and providing evidence of the importance of the agricultural system in protecting the Islands' unique flora, forms a significant part of the project work.

It is hoped that the lessons learnt during the project can form the basis of the sustainable management of the habitats of the Aran Islands into the future, through appropriate support measures required to sustain the project's achievements, under relevant national policies and programmes.

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Dul chun cinn go dtí seo Progress so far

10km de róidíní glanta
10km of breen cleared



40 heicteár scrobarnach faoi smacht
40 hectares of scrub controlled



15 coimeádán uisce déanta
15 new water features installed



Ag Glanadh Scrobarnaí Scrub Clearance

Lá Taispeána glanadh scrobarnaí in Inis Meáin
Scrub clearing demonstration day on Inis Meáin

Eagraíodh dhá lá taispeána in Inis Meáin agus in Inis Oírr le deireanas faoin mbealach is fearr le scrobarnach a choinneáil siar agus na cineálacha éagsúla innealra is feiliúnaí dó seo. Ceapadh, go ginearálta, gurbh é an diogálaí fáil le lann frithingeach ab fhearr, go háirithe do dhriseacha, mar gurbh fhéidir dul sách gar do na cláiocha leis gan na clocha a bhualadh. Ní raibh aon uirlis amháin ann a bheadh sásúil i chuide áit agus theastaigh roinnt uirlisí láimhe freisin.

The project recently held two demonstration days on Inis Meáin and Inis Oírr on the best methods of scrub control and the different types of machinery most suitable. The general consensus was that the hedge trimmer with reciprocating blade was the best choice particularly for briars as it allowed close access to walls and there were no issues with striking stones. No one implement was suitable for every site and a range of hand tools were also required.

Dul chun cinn Beithígh Cattle Performance

Bíonn cuid mhaith mianraí in easnamh sa bhfásra a itheann beostoc mar chuid dá mbeathú ar na hoileáin de bharr draenáil nádúrtha na talún agus ní bhíonn deis cheart ag cothaithe greamú sa talamh. Mar thoradh air seo d'fhéadfadh nach mbeadh na hainmhithe chomh maith agus a d'fhéadfaidís a bheith ó thaobh breisiú beomheáchain agus go mbeadh deacrachtaí torthúlachta sna ba. Leis na heaspaí seo a chur ina gceart teastaíonn méid áirithe d'fhorlíonadh bia i bhfoirm bólas mianrach, líreacán mianrach nó dlúthbhia. Le teacht suas leis an leigheas is fearr air seo tá sé tábhachtach na mianraí a bhíonn in easnamh agus a dteastaíonn níos mó díobh a fháil amach ar dtús. Le bliain go leith anuas, le linn an tséasúir fáis, bhí an togra AranLIFE ag bailiú samplaí foráiste ar roinnt feirmeacha sna hoileáin. Léirigh anailís orthu seo gurbh iad na heaspaí is mó a bhí sa bhfásra ná na mianraí Cóbal, Seilíniam, Copair agus Fosfar ach go raibh neart Cailciam, Maignéisiam, Sóidiam, Clóiríd agus Sulfair ann. Déanadh tástáil fola ar 90 beithíoch éagsúil le teacht ar leibhéal na mianraí áirithe seo sna beithígh féin agus cuireadh i gcomórtas iad leis na leibhéil molta de na mianraí éagsúla seo. Bhí easpa Cóbal, Seilíniam agus Copair i gcuid mhaith de na beithígh agus roinnt eile acu díreach os cionn an leibhéil molta. Níor léirigh torthaí an togra samplála aon easpa Fosfair orthu rud a thaispeánann go bhfuil Fosfar á fháil acu ar bhealaí eile nó nach dtugann samplaí fola léamh cruinn ar leibhéal Fosfair na n-ainmhithe.



Thionól AranLIFE ceardlann in Inis Mór féachaint le teacht ar an mbealach ab fhearr le déileáil leis seo, bunaithe ar an eolas a bhí faighte acu, agus bhí saineolaí cothaitheach ón eagraíocht Teagasc, comhairleoir talmhaíochta áitiúil Theagasc mar aon le tréidlianna, foireann an togra agus feirmeoirí áitiúla i láthair ag an gceardlann. Ag éirí as seo féachfaidh AranLIFE i mbliana ar fhorlíonadh mianrach do roinnt feirmeacha atá páirteach sa togra. Ar chuid de na rudaí seo, tá go n-úsáidfead bólais cuí (táibléid beaga a chuirfead i gcóras díleá na n-ainmhithe agus a scaoilfidh amach na mianraí riachtanacha go mall), líreacáin mhianracha chúí agus roinnt forlíonadh bia déanta ceann ar aghaidh le freastal ar riachtanais bheostoc an oileáin. Ní fhéadfar é seo a dhéanamh i gcás chuile fheirm, mar gheall ar an gcostas agus an méid ama a theastódh leis na modhanna a mheas, mar sin piocfar feirmeacha atá feiliúnach bunaithe ar roinnt gnéithe. Cuideoidh na torthaí áfach le gach feirmeoir cur le dul chun cinn na n-ainmhithe ar a bhfeirm.



The free draining nature of land on the islands means there is a poor capacity to bind nutrients leading to a vegetation that is deficient in many minerals which forms part of the livestock's diet. This can lead to poor animal performance reflected in poor live weight gains and fertility problems in cows. Correcting these deficiencies means some level of supplementation either in the form of mineral boluses, mineral licks or concentrate feed. To ensure best efficiency it is important first to identify which minerals are deficient and require additional input. Over the last 18 months the AranLIFE project have been taking forage samples throughout the growing season on a number of farms throughout the islands. Analysis of these indicate that the main deficiencies are with the minerals Cobalt, Selenium, Copper and Phosphorous whilst levels for minerals such as Calcium, Magnesium, Sodium, Chloride and Sulphur were all at more than adequate levels within the vegetation. To gauge the levels of these minerals within the animal, over 90 different

Sa mbliain atá romhainn breathnóidh AranLIFE ar roinnt bealaí le déileáil leis an easpa mianraí sa mbeostoc

Over the next year, AranLIFE will be looking at a range of methods to correct mineral deficiencies in livestock

cattle were blood sampled and the blood analysed and compared against recommended levels for different minerals. The deficiencies in Cobalt, Selenium and Copper were identified in many of the livestock with others being just above the recommended level. Deficiencies in Phosphorus were not identified in the sampling project suggesting the animals are obtaining Phosphorus in other ways or the blood sampling is not a true reflection of the animals Phosphorus levels.

Using the information obtained, AranLIFE held a workshop on Inis Mór attended by a nutritional expert from Teagasc, including the local Teagasc agricultural advisor, veterinary surgeons, the project team and local farmers to identify the best course of action based on the information available. As a result this year AranLIFE will look at a mineral supplementation on a number of farms within the project. This will include the use of suitable boluses (small tablets placed in the animals' digestive system which slowly release the required minerals), use of suitable mineral licks and some meal supplementation using a ration developed to meet livestock requirements on the island. We will not be able to complete this work on all farms due to cost and the time required to evaluate the methods, therefore we will be selecting suitable farms based on a range of factors, however the results will help all farmers to maximise animal performance on the farm.

Ag Meá na mBeithíoch Weighing Cattle

I ndiaidh don Ollamh Gerry Boyle, Stiúrthóir Theagasc, cuairt a thabhairt ar na hoileáin i Samhain 2014 chuir Teagasc scála meáchain iniompartha ar fáil agus bhí deis ag feirmeoirí Oileán Árann na beithígh a mheáchan den chéad uair. Tá sé tábhachtach na beithígh a mheá le go bhfeictear cén chaoi a bhfuil siad ag déanamh agus féadfar ansin iad a cur i gcomórtas le córais agus ceantair eile. Beidh an togra AranLIFE in ann an éagsúlacht speiceas sna féara difríocht a cheangal le dul chun cinn sna hainmhithe.

Aran Island farmers got an opportunity to weigh cattle for the first time thanks to portable weighing scales provided by Teagasc after their director Professor Gerry Boyle visited the islands in November 2014. Weighing cattle is an important management tool in measuring cattle performance which allows comparisons with other systems and areas. The AranLIFE project can then relate species diversity of different grasslands with animal performance.



Ag Roinnt an Eolais agus na torthaí leis an bPobal Public Awareness and Dissemination of results

Áiríonn príomhobair AranLIFE an obair leis na feirmeoirí rannpháirteacha ach is cuid mhór freisin den togra é eolas a scaipeadh agus an pobal a chur ar an eolas faoi chomh tábhachtach agus atá sé na gnáthóga ar leith atá in Oileáin Árann a choinneáil agus a chaomhnú. Tá clár imeachtaí oideachais ar bun le grúpaí éagsúla ar nós feirmeoirí na n-oileán, páistí áitiúla scoile, an pobal áitiúil go ginearálta agus an pobal níos leithne, náisiúnta agus idirnáisiúnta le go mbeidh tuiscint, meas agus teagmháil níos mó ann leis an togra AranLIFE.

The core concrete work of AranLIFE involves working with the participant farmers but a key component of the project is disseminating information and raising public awareness of the importance of maintaining and conserving the unique habitats which are on the Aran Islands. In order to enhance understanding, appreciation and engagement with the AranLIFE project a programme of educational events is ongoing with various groups such as the islands' farmers, local schoolchildren, the broader local community, and the wider national and international public.

IMEACHTAÍ EILE OTHER EVENTS

Comhdháil Bithéagsúlachta Theagasc Teagasc Biodiversity Conference

Tionóladh an Chomhdháil Bithéagsúlachta i bPort Laoise i mí Dheireadh Fómhair. Tá tábhacht ar leith leis an gcomhdháil seo don togra AranLIFE mar, ag comhdháil 2011, nuair a chuir Patrick McGurn cás an togra i láthair d'éirigh leis tacaíocht go leor dár bpáirtmhaoinitheoirí a fháil. Bhí páirt mhór ag foireann AranLIFE i gcomhdháil na bliana seo *Farmland Conservation with 2020 Vision*. Chuir Amanda Brown páipéar i láthair faoin teideal *Investigating the Composition and Management of Calcareous Grasslands on the Aran Islands* agus thug Louise Duignan ceann freisin lena cur i láthair gearr agus póstaer a léirigh cuid dá cuid oibre agus torthaí go dtí seo.

Teagasc Biodiversity Conference was held in Portlaoise in October. This conference is of particular importance to the AranLIFE project because at the last conference in 2011, Patrick McGurn presented the case for the project and gained the support of many of our co-funders. This year's conference entitled, *Farmland Conservation with 2020 Vision*, was well represented by the AranLIFE team, Amanda Browne presented a paper entitled *Investigating the Composition and Management of Calcareous Grasslands on the Aran Islands*, and Louise Duignan presented a short presentation and a poster of some of her work and findings to date.



Clár Oideachais Educational Programme

Scoláirí as Coláiste Naomh Eoin, Inis Meáin, ag cur i láthair 'Cleachtais feirmeoireachta Oileán Árann' do scoláirí agus múinteoirí Scoil Náisiúnta an Chairn, Co. an Chláir

Students from Colaiste Naomh Eoin, Inis Meáin, presenting 'The farming practices of the Aran Islands' to students and teachers of Carron National School, County Clare

Thug AranLIFE cuairt ar bhunscoileanna na n-oileán i Meitheamh 2015. Trí chur i láthair agus turais taobh amuigh tugadh forléiriú ginearálta do na páistí scoile faoi céard atá i gceist sa togra AranLIFE. Bhí an t-ádh orainn leis na laethanta breátha gréine a fuairéamar agus muid in ann turas taobh amuigh a dhéanamh le chaon scoil acu agus eolas faoi chuid de na plandaí gleoite faoi bhláth ag an am a roinnt leo. Ar cheann dár bpríomhthéamaí bhí go dtabharfaí léiriú ar, agus go gcuirfí béim ar thábhacht bithéagsúlachta na n-oileán agus go gcuirfí in iúl chomh tábhachtach agus atá sé go gcaomhnófaí agus go gcosnófaí na gnáthóga ardspeisialta seo.

I bhFómhar 2015 d'oibrigh AranLIFE le Scoil Náisiúnta Inis Meáin agus Coláiste Naomh Eoin agus thug cuairt ar Scoil Náisiúnta an Chairn sa mBoirinn i gCo. an Chláir mar chuid d'Fhéile Beathú Geimhridh na Boirne. Thug na scoileanna cur i láthair iontach ar chleachtais fheirmeoireachta a gceantair féin agus phléigh na cosúlachtaí agus éagsúlachtaí idir an dá áit. Táimid ag súil go mór le cuairt Scoil Náisiúnta an Chairn ar Inis Meáin ag deireadh an Earraigh/tús an tSamhraidh i mbliana.

Mar chuid den Fhéile Cloch bhliantúil a bhíonn in Inis Oírr chuile Mheán Fómhair thug an togra AranLIFE cur i láthair faoin togra agus dhéan siúlóid faoi threoir leo siúd ar theastaigh sin uathu. D'oibrigh an fhoireann freisin le hollscoileanna cuairte ar nós Ollscoil Mhá Nuad, Ollscoil Luimnigh agus Ollscoil Kansas. Bhí laethanta eolais freisin againn le pobail fheirmeoireachta ar oileáin eile, ar nós Inis Bó Finne, agus le linn an tsamhraidh, fuairéamar deis an scéal a scaipeadh faoi AranLIFE, an Clár LIFE agus áilleacht Oileán Árann a thaispeáint don Phríomh-Aire Corsacach.

Tabharfaidh foireann AranLIFE cuairt ar bhunscoileanna agus meánscoileanna gach oileán sna míonna seo romhainn. Bheadh an-suim againn cloisteáil faoi thuairimí nó obair ar thograí a bhainfeadh le tionscadail AranLIFE agus le curaclam na scoile agus a dhéanfadh do scoil in éineacht le AranLIFE. Ná biodh aon drogall oraibh gaoch ar oifig AranLIFE le haon tuairimí a bheadh agaibh a phlé linn.

AranLIFE visited primary schools on each island in June 2015. Presentations and field trips gave an introductory overview to the schoolchildren explaining what the AranLIFE project is about. We were fortunate enough that we got beautiful sunny days which enabled a field-trip with each school to identify some of the many beautiful plants that were in flower at the time. One of the main themes was to illustrate and highlight the importance of the biodiversity on the islands and also the significance of protecting and conserving these special priority habitats.

In Autumn 2015 AranLIFE worked with Scoil Náisiúnta Inis Meáin and Coláiste Naomh Eoin and visited Carron National School, the Burren, Co. Clare as part of the Burren Winterage School Festival. The schools gave fantastic presentations on the farming practices in each area and discussed the similarities and differences in both places. We are looking forward to a visit from Carron National School to Inis Meáin in late Spring / early Summer this year.

As part of the annual Stonewall Festival which takes place on Inis Oírr each September the AranLIFE project team gave a presentation on the project and a guided walk with interested parties. The team has also worked with visiting universities such as University of Maynooth, University of Limerick and Kansas University. We have also had information days with other island farming communities such as Inishbofin and during the summer we got an opportunity to spread the word about AranLIFE, the LIFE programme and share the beauty of the Aran Islands with the Corsican Prime Minister.

The AranLIFE team will be visiting all the primary and secondary schools on each island over the coming months. We would be very interested in hearing any ideas or project work related to the AranLIFE project and school curriculum which your school would like to undertake in conjunction with AranLIFE. Please feel free to contact the AranLIFE office to discuss any ideas you may have.



Gráinne Ní Chonghaile, AranLIFE ag treorú turas taobh amuigh le Scoil Náisiúnta Rónáin, Inis Mór

Gráinne Ní Chonghaile, AranLIFE leading a field trip with Scoil Náisiúnta Rónáin, Inis Mór

AranLIFE sa nuacht

AranLIFE in the news



Coinníonn foireann AranLIFE an pobal ar an eolas faoina rudaí a fhaigheann siad amach agus faoin obair atá ar bun acu trí nuashonrú rialta ar ár suíomh gréasáin www.aranlife.ie agus chomh maith leis sin trí mheáin sóisialta éagsúla ar nós Facebook agus Twitter. Tá feachtas faoin togra AranLIFE ag méadú de réir a chéile agus trácht déanta air i gcuid mhaith meán go dtí seo. Bhí sé ina mhír ar chlár 'Morning Ireland' agus Nuacht RTÉ i nDeireadh Fómhair 2015. Ag tús Eanáir na bliana seo, ar an gclár teilifíse 'Nationwide', labhair bainisteoir an togra Patrick McGurn faoi Inis Oírr sa tsraith clár faoina 3 oileán, inár labhair sé le Mary Kennedy faoin togra agus an obair atá ag dul leis. Bhí dhá leathanach bhreá faoin togra sa 'Farming Independent' freisin in Eanáir 2016. D'éirigh thar barr leis an leabhrán 'Plandaí Feirme' a d'fhoilsigh AranLIFE anuraidh agus an-bhualadh uirthi agus faoi láthair táimid ag cur leabhráin faoi éin agus féileacáin le chéile agus súil againn iad a chur i gcló go luath. Tá DVD á dhéanamh freisin ag an bhfoireann agus beidh sé seo críochnaithe an chéad bhliain eile.

The AranLIFE team keeps the public up to date with findings and ongoing works through continually updating our website www.aranlife.ie and also through various social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter. Awareness of the AranLIFE project is continuing to grow and has featured in many different media outlets to date. In October 2015 the project featured on Morning Ireland and RTE News and in early January of this year the AranLIFE project manager, Patrick McGurn, featured in the Inis Oírr programme of a series of Nationwide episodes which were filmed on all 3 Aran Islands, where he discussed the project and related ongoing works with Mary Kennedy. There was also a fantastic 2 page-spread about the project in the Farming Independent in January 2016. Following the huge success and high demand for the flora booklet 'Plants of the Farm' produced by AranLIFE last year, we are currently collating a bird booklet and butterfly booklet, which we hope to have printed very soon. The team are also in the process of producing a DVD which will be finalised next year.

Trialacha Machair

Machair trials



Áiteanna trialacha machair in Inis Meáin
Machair trial sites on Inis Meáin

Tá monatóireacht ar bun ar thionchar úsáid na feamainne ar mhachair le go n-oibreofar amach cén toradh a bhíonn aige ar fhásra, ó thaobh na gcineálacha plandaí a fhásann ann agus olltáirgeacht. Breathnaíonn torthaí thús na bliana go maith, le tionchar dearfach ag an bhfeamainn go háirithe ar áiteanna loma gan mórán fásra. Tá an fheamainn go maith ó thaobh ábhar orgánach a chur sa bhfód, rud a chuidíonn leis greim a choinneáil ar uisce agus cothaithigh. Is gnáthóg le tábhacht idirnáisiúnta é Machair ach, tá speiceas an-neamhchoitianta seilide freisin ann (Vertigo angustior- seilide rinseach béalchaol) agus tá an machair in Inis Mór an-tábhachtach don speiceas seo. Mar chuid de na trialacha feamainne táimid ag scrúdú tionchar (má tá ann) leasú feamainne ar an seilide an-neamhchoitianta seo. Leanfar leis an obair seo i 2016.

The impact of the application of seaweed on machair is being monitored to establish the response of the vegetation in terms of type of plants that grow and the total yield. The results from earlier in the year are quite promising with seaweed having a positive impact particularly on bare areas where there is little vegetation. The seaweed is effective at adding organic matter to the soil which helps its water and nutrient retention capacity. As well as being a habitat of international importance, Machair is also home to a very rare species of snail (Narrow-mouthed whorl snail Vertigo angustior) and the machair at Inis Mór is an important site for this species. As part of the seaweed trials, we are examining the affect (if any) of the seaweed applications on this rare snail. This work will continue in 2016.

Clár um Mhonatóireacht Éiceolaíochta

Ecological Monitoring Programme

Leanadh leis an monatóireacht éiceolaíoch ar na trí oileán ó Bhealtaine go Meán Fómhair 2015. Díríonn méid áirithe den obair mhonatóireachta ar anailísiú na ngnáthóg éagsúil féir atá ar fheirmeacha uilig AranLIFE chomh maith le scrúdú a dhéanamh ar na cúiseanna atá leis an éagsúlacht seo. Cé gurb é an príomhgnáthóg féaraigh ar fud na n-oileán ná féarach tirim, cailcreach speiceas-shaibhir bíonn difríochtaí go leor ann a d'fhéadfadh teacht as gnéithe ar nós doimhneacht na hithreach, am innilte (innilt samhraidh nó geimhridh), déine na hinnilte nó bainistiú roimhe sin. Faoi dheireadh an togra tá súil againn bheith cinnte faoi na gnéithe bainistíochta agus ithreach a chuidíonn le fás an fhéaraigh speiceas-shaibhir seo ina bhfuil magairíní go fairsing, féarach a gheobhadh ardcóir i scéim chomhshaoil talmhaíochta faoi cheannas áitiúil agus bunaithe ar aschur.

Ecological monitoring continued throughout the three islands during the months from May to September 2015. Monitoring work partly focuses on analysing the diversity of grassland habitats that occur throughout the Aran LIFE farms as well as examining the reasons behind the variation. Although species-rich, dry, calcareous grassland is the main grassland habitat throughout the islands many variations occur which may be due to a range of factors such as soil depth, grazing time (whether summer or winter grazed), grazing intensity or past management. By the end of the project we hope to be able to pinpoint the management and soil factors which contribute to producing a species-rich / orchid-rich grassland which would receive a high score in an output based locally led agri-environment scheme.



Obair mhonatóireachta – ag breathnú ar athfhás scrobarnach agus raithní i ndiaidh a ngearradh

Monitoring work looking at the regrowth of scrub and bracken following cutting

Mar chuid den obair mhonatóireachta táthar freisin ag scrúdú athfhás scrobarnaí agus raithní i ndiaidh dóibh a bheith gearradh siar ar na trí oileán. Athfhásfaidh scrobarnach i gcónaí i ndiaidh an chéad ghearradh, ach teastaíonn é choinneáil gearrtha le linn an tsamhraidh chun é a choinneáil siar tuilleadh. Tá cúpla suíomh samplach againn ina bhfuil muid ag scrúdú an chaoi a n-oibríonn cóireálacha éagsúla ar fhás scrobarnach. Ní bheifear go deo in ann fáil réidh ar fad leis an scrobarnach as na buailte agus teastóidh bainistiú leanúnach uaidh chun é a choinneáil faoi smacht agus, faoi dheireadh an togra, beimid in ann treoir a thabhairt faoin gcaoi is fearr le é smachtú ar na hoileáin. Bíonn raitheach le gearradh faoi dhó sa mbliain chun é choinneáil siar (ag tús an Mheithimh ar dtús agus arís 6 seachtaine ina dhiaidh sin) agus ní mór é seo a dhéanamh chuile bhliain má bhíonn sé ag fás arís. D'oibrigh sé seo go maith i roinnt áiteanna a bhí clúdaithe le raitheach agus beifear ag coinneáil súil ghéar air sa mbliain atá ag teacht.

Monitoring work also continues on examining the regrowth of scrub and bracken following cutting on the three islands. Regrowth of scrub will always occur following the initial cutting, however re-cutting during the summer months is necessary to set the regrowth back further. We have a number of sample sites where we are examining the effects of varying treatments on scrub growth. Scrub will never be completely removed from fields and constant management will be required to keep it in check and by the end of the project we will be able to provide guidance on the optimum scrub control strategy for the islands. Bracken requires two annual cuttings (once in early June and then again 6 weeks later) to set it back, and this treatment needs to be repeated on an annual basis if regrowth occurs. This treatment has worked well on some bracken infested sites and will be monitored closely in the coming year.

NUASHONRÚ UPDATE

Ó Louise Duignan, scoláire PhD AranLIFE, faoina cuid oibre i gcomhar le Teagasc - IT Shligigh/Comhaltacht Walsh

From AranLIFE PhD student, Louise Duignan, and Teagasc - IT Sligo/Walsh Fellowship work



Is féidir le feirmeoirí breisiú beomheáchain ainmhithe a fheabhsú ar an gcostas is lú ach freastal ar riachtanais cothaitheach na mbeithíoch ag an am ceart den bhliain. I gcás féara dian-bhainistithe ar chóras beathú geimhridh sadhlais, téann feirmeoirí de réir eolas eolaíoch a léiríonn an chaoi leis an soláthar féir agus sadhlais a mheaitseáil le riachtanais cothaitheach an bheostoic. Déanann na feirmeoirí anailís ar an bhforáiste leis an easpa cothaitheach a oibriú amach agus, bunaithe ar an anailís sin, tugann aon bheathú breise atá riachtanach dá dtréad. Níl an t-eolas seo ar fáil áfach d'fhéara speiceas-shaibhir Oileán Árann. Mar sin cén luach beathaithe atá sa mbeathú geimhridh ar Oileán Árann agus cé mhéad beathú breise a theastaíonn do leibhéal ar leith cruthachtála sna beithígh?

Le bliain anuas bhí mise ag tomhas fás an fhéir ar na trí oileán lena luach cothaithe a fháil amach. Is féidir caighdeán cothaitheach an fhéir a dhéanamh amach ach na leibhéil garbhphróitéin, snáithíní agus mianraí atá ann a thomhas. De réir mar a fhásann an foráiste méadaíonn an méid ábhar tirim agus snáithíní a bhíonn ann agus laghaíonn an tiúchan próitéin a bhíonn ann. Mar, mar atá a fhios agaibh, bíonn luach beathaithe níos ísle don bheostoc sa bhféar geimhridh a fhásann i gcaitheamh na bliana ná sa bhféar úr Earraigh. Is é an rud gur mian liomsa a fháil amach ná ag cén pointe go mbíonn luach beathaithe an fhéir geimhridh chomh híseal agus go gcuireann as do chomh maith agus a dhéanann ainmhithe agus ag cén t-am ar cheart féar tirim, cnónna cothaithe nó líreacáin mhianracha a thabhairt dóibh? Táim ag súil leanúint orm ag tomhas caighdeán na bhféarach éagsúil i 2017 le go mbeidh léargas iomlán ag AranLIFE air seo.

In éineacht leis seo tá súil agam fáil amach faoin tionchar a bhíonn ag na córais éagsúla bainistíochta ar chomhdhéanamh agus ar luach cothaithe an fhoráiste. Tá féara speiceas-shaibhir Oileán Árann ag brath ar chórais innilte a choinneáil suas a áiríonn innilt rothlach. D'fhéadfadh an córas a bheith difriúil ó fheirm go feirm áfach agus táimse ag iarraidh fáil amach an dtagann cineálacha éagsúla féaraigh as cineálacha éagsúla innilte.

Le teacht ar na freagraí seo ceanglóidh mé torthaí an chaighdeáin foráiste le taifead bainistiú innilte na bhfeirmeoirí agus speiceas éagsúil na bhféarach. Chuige seo déanfaidh mé suirbhé ar phaistí plandaí an fhásra féaraigh le linn míonna an tsamhraidh. Casfaidh mé le feirmeoirí freisin le fáil amach faoin gcóras innilte rothlach atá siad féin ag úsáid. Beidh an t-eolas seo úsáideach don togra AranLIFE chun dea-chleachtais a fhorbairt sna polasaithe amach anseo le go gcoinneofar an saibhreas speiceas plandaí sna féara agus le go mbeidh fáil ar leibhéal maith costéifeachtach feidhmiú ainmhithe bunaithe ar eolaíocht agus eolas áitiúil.

Beidh mé freisin ag tabhairt cuairt ar roinnt d'fheirmeoirí AranLIFE agus mé ag tabhairt faoi shuirbhé ginearálta agus socheacnamaíochta le tuairim a fháil faoi céard a cheapann feirmeoirí de na polasaithe talmhaíochta reatha, den sonrú LSC agus de thograí ar nós AranLIFE mar chreat do chlár amach anseo.

Más mian leat gné ar bith den obair atá idir lámha agam a phlé seol r-phost chugam ag an seoladh thíos nó buail bleid orm má fheiceann tú ar an oileán mé.
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Úsáidtear imfhálú innilte inaistrithe le fás bliantúil an fhéir i gcineálacha éagsúla féarach ar Oileán Árann a thomhas

Moveable grazing exclosures are used to measure annual grass growth in a variety of grassland types found on the Aran Islands



Gearrtar samplaí foráiste taobh istigh i gcearnóg adhmaid 0.25m², triomaítear in oigheann iad agus meáitear iad le teacht ar an ábhar tirim in aghaidh an heicteár

Forage samples are cut from within a 0.25m² wooden quadrat, oven-dried and weighed to determine dry matter yield per hectare.

Meeting the nutritional needs of cattle at the right time of the year allows farmers to improve animal live weight gain at the lowest cost. For intensively managed grasslands on a silage winter-feeding system, there is scientific information enabling farmers to match grass and silage supply to the nutritional requirements of the livestock. Farmers do this by using forage analysis information that highlights nutrient deficiencies and then supplement their herd with additional feed based on this analysis. However, such information does not exist for the species-rich grasslands of the Aran Islands. So what is the feed value of winterage on the Aran Islands and how much supplementation is required for a particular level of cattle performance?

Over the last year I have been measuring grass growth to determine its nutritional content across the three islands. Grass nutritional quality can be determined by measuring levels of crude protein, fibre and mineral concentrations. As the forage matures, its dry matter and fibre content increases, whilst the protein content declines. Thus, as you are aware, winterage grass that has been growing all year has a lower feeding value for livestock than fresh spring grass. What I hope to determine is at what point is the feeding value of the winterage grass so low that it's affecting animal performance and when should additional hay, concentrate nuts or mineral licks be introduced? I hope to continue to measure the quality of different grasslands throughout 2017 so the AranLIFE project will have a complete picture.

Linked to this, I hope to see how the different management regimes affect the composition and nutrient value of the forage. Species-rich grasslands on the Aran Islands are dependent on the continuation of the grazing systems which includes rotational grazing. However the system can vary from farm to farm and I want to find out if different grazing regimes create different grassland types..

To answer these questions I will combine the results on forage quality with farmer management grazing records and the different species that occur in the grasslands. To do this I will undertake a survey of grassland vegetation communities during the summer months. I also will meet with farmers to learn about their individual rotational grazing systems. The AranLIFE project will be able use this information to develop best practices for future policies that help maintain plant-species richness in grasslands and a good cost-effective level of animal performance based on science and local knowledge.

Finally I will be also visiting a selection of AranLIFE farmers to carry out a socio-economic and general survey to get an idea of what farmers think of present agricultural policy, SAC designations and projects like the AranLIFE as a framework for future programmes.

If you would like to discuss any aspects of the work I am involved in, I can be contacted directly by email below or when you see me on the island have a chat with me.
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Cuairt ar an mBoirinn Burren Visit

Thug feirmeoirí as na trí oileán cuairt ar fheirmeacha i gceantar na Boirne le deireanas. Bhí an clár 'LIFE' ar siúl sa mBoirinn freisin idir 2003 agus 2008 agus d'oibrigh le 20 feirmeoir ar réimse gníomhaíochtaí. Mar thoradh air seo cuireadh tús le clár Feirmeoireacht Chaomhnaithe sa Bhoirinn ar 167 feirm. Fuair an clár seo moladh ar fud na hEorpa mar bheart comhshaoil talmhaíochta dea-dheartha faoina bhfaigheann feirmeoirí cúiteamh bunaithe ar an gcaighdeán comhshaoil ina gcuid buailte. Tá sé bunaithe ar chóras scórála, le 10 ar an scór is airde agus ag fáil na híocaíochta is mó. Bhí suim ag feirmeoirí Árainn anseo agus chonaic céard a theastódh sna buailte acu féin le scór ard a fháil.

Ba deis iontach a bhí freisin ann le breathnú ar roinnt den obair a bhí déanta sa Bhoirinn ar struchtúir uisce, go mór mór coimeádáin gar d'fhuaráin. D'fheilfeadh roinnt de na tuairimí seo na hoileáin.

A group of farmers from the three islands recently visited farms in the Burren area. The Burren also had a LIFE programme running from 2003 to 2008 working with 20 farmers on a range of actions. The results of the LIFE programme led to the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme on 167 farms. This programme has been lauded throughout Europe as a well-designed agri-environment measure which rewards farmers in relation to the environmental quality of their fields. It is based on a scoring system with 10 being the highest score and receiving the highest payment. The Aran farmers found this interesting and could see what would be needed on their own fields to reach the higher scores.

It was also a great opportunity to look at some of the work carried out in the Burren on water features, particularly catchments at springs. Some of these ideas are suitable for the islands.

Fáil ar Chonraitheoirí Contractor Availability

Tá roinnt conraitheoirí sásta scrobarnach a ghlanadh do na rannpháirtithe nach mbeadh in ann é a dhéanamh iad féin. Glaoigh ar an oifig más mian leat sonraí na gconraitheoirí seo a fháil.

There are a number of contractors willing to carry out scrub control for participants who may not be able to complete it all themselves. Contact the project office if you wish to get details of contractors willing to carry out work.

Cuairteoirí Visitors

Is gné thábhachtach den togra AranLIFE é léiriú a thabhairt do phobal níos leithne ar an Meas ar an Dúlra (MD) i gcórais talmhaíochta na n-oileán agus teagmhálacha a chruthú le ceantair eile MD agus le taighdeoirí ar fud na hÉireann agus na hEorpa. Thug meascán cuairteoirí as chuile aicme den saol cuairt orainn le dhá bhliain anuas le breathnú ar an togra, - comhlachtaí Rialtais, Ollscoileanna taobh istigh agus amuigh d'Éirinn, Eagraíochtaí Comhshaoil agus feirmeoirí. Le deireanas freisin thug feirmeoirí ó cheantar aolchloiche Chontae Fhear Manach, feirmeoirí as Inis Bó Finne, Cliara, An tOileán Mór agus Árainn Mhór cuairt ar na hoileáin leis an togra a phlé le foireann an togra agus le feirmeoirí na n-oileán. Ba deis mhaith a bhí ann do na feirmeoirí leis an obair a bhí déanta sna hoileáin a fheiceáil agus féachaint an n-oibreodh tograí den chineál céanna ina gcórais fheirmeoireachta féin.

An important aspect of the AranLIFE project is to highlight the High Nature Value (HNV) of the agricultural system on the islands to a wider audience and to build up contacts with other HNV areas and researchers throughout Ireland and Europe. Over the past two years we have had a range of visitors looking at the project, coming from all walks of life, Government bodies, Universities within and outside Ireland, Environmental Organisations and farmers. Recently farmers from the limestone area in County Fermanagh, farmers from Inishbofin, Clare Island, Bere Island and Arranmore visited the islands to discuss the project with the project team and island farmers. This was a good opportunity for the farmers to see the work completed on the islands and seeing how similar projects might work within their farming system.

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Comhairle Chontae na Galímhíne
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