



A Fresh Start to the Year: Joint Co-Creation Event



Photo credits: Laura Rodriguez

A SOILCRATES–Ireland joint co-creation session was held at Doon Social Farm on Saturday 24 January 2026. Over 40 participants attended this event from Counties Clare, Limerick and Tipperary, featuring several presentations and active participation from farmers.

The agenda included a presentation from Dr. Lena Madden, who spoke about the SOILCRATES initiative and other funded farm soil health funded projects; presentations from our partners Cloughjordan Community Farm, Ballyhoura Development, and Loop Head Together on their current work and the supports available to farmers in the area; and contributions from Dr. Marie Taylor, TUS Sustainable Development Research Institute and Douglas McMillan, Green Restoration Ireland outlining their activities and farming development initiatives.

Dr. Lena Madden introduced the SOILCRATES Ireland Living Lab, outlining its objectives, governance approach and opportunities for farmer engagement. She also presented several projects funded under the first call and invited attendees to participate in the SOILCRATES General Assembly taking place in late May.

Sarah Davidson and Davie Philip from Cloughjordan Community Farm provided an overview of their farming activities, highlighting both production and community-focused initiatives. The presentation also emphasised ongoing collaboration with partner organisations and outlined the farm's future plans.



Funded by
the European Union

Rhiannon Laubach from Ballyhoura Development introduced their work supporting rural and agricultural communities, including a 5 year vision for farm development in the region. They highlighted available supports such as the Rural Social Scheme and invited attendees to an upcoming information session on farm succession.

Dr. Marie Taylor of the TUS Sustainable Development Research Institute outlined her involvement in a range of EU-funded projects, with a growing focus on regenerative agriculture. She presented the Agretain Project, which aims to combine the efforts of universities and, research institutes and social actors to develop new teaching methods and learning material in the field of market gardening. Dr. Taylor also introduced a new Level 5 regenerative agriculture course offered by TUS.

Dr. Douglas McMillan, General Manager of Green Restoration Ireland Cooperative Society, discussed carbon farming and paludiculture in Ireland. He introduced initiatives including the Peatlands for Prosperity project and the Farm Carbon EIP, which support farmers in developing long-term, ten-year transition strategies.

Brendan Molloy from Loop Head Together presented an overview of agricultural activity on the Loop Head Peninsula and the objectives of the SCEENE European Innovation Partnership which aims to improve soil health and water quality. The presentation also included an overview of the biochar process to be used in the production of biochar-based fertilisers.

A round-table discussion was also part of the event, where attendees had the opportunity to discuss sustainability and environmental measures currently being implemented on Irish farms. There was a strong emphasis on sharing best practices. During the round table discussions, there was an opportunity for participants to discuss the future governance of the SOILCRATES Ireland Living Lab.

Many thanks to Marian Clarke and staff at Doon Social Farm for providing lunch (consisting mostly home-grown produce); and organising an informative guided tour of the social farm. And many thanks to our Living Lab partners Cloughjordan Community Farm, Loop Head Together, Kraken seeds T/A Wild Atlantic Hemp, and Ballyhoura Development for their assistance in the organisation of this event.





Contact
 SOILCRATES- Ireland
www.soilcratesireland.ie
info@soilcratesireland.ie



Funded by
 the European Union