

# National Farming for Nature Award 2018 Nomination form

Your (nominator) name

**First:** Donal

**Surname:** Murphy

**Your organisation:** NPWS

**Your position:** Ranger

**Your email:** Donal@npws.ie

**Your phone:** 087 55555555

Your nomination (the farmer)

**Name of Farmer:** John O'Brien

**Telephone:** 087 7777777

**Townland Area:** Corofin

**County:** Co.Clare

**I think this farmer deserves national recognition for his/her work in farming for nature because:**

*(try and be concise - use 200-500 words max - and be as relevant as possible to the award criteria):*

Joe loves nature, often talking about the wildlife on his land – birds and butterflies, flowers and insects – and ever keen to learn more. He is also very interested in local heritage and has a great store of knowledge about monuments on and off his farm, as well as placenames and stories handed down from previous generations. He is a genuine enthusiast, always asking questions and attending local heritage events with his family, keen to learn more.

Well respected among his peers, Joe is a full-time suckler beef farmer, producing excellent weanlings from his herd of 40 continental cross cows on 150 acres of good quality land. Joe's family have been farming in this area for at least six generations and today he farms the land with his wife Mary and their three school-going children. He is very involved in the local community – particularly active in his local IFA group and in the GAA.

Joe's farm borders the river Fergus and contains a significant area of wet grassland, as well as some very productive dry limestone grassland. Though its not a SAC, it is a haven for plant and birdlife. While the wetland areas present a challenge, Joe treats them as an integral part of his farming system, grazing them in late summer as flooding conditions allow and resting during winter when they act a haven for wintering wildfowl.

In 2011 I helped Joe get a small grant from the Heritage Council to install some bird hides on his land so that people could view the rich biodiversity on his land. This was the beginning of a whole new chapter in Joe's life as a farmer as he was able to share his knowledge with the public and in exchange learn from them. He now does occasional farm walks for visitors and in 2015 Joe and Mary opened a small Air B&B business from the house. In Joe's words 'its been great to meet so many new people, to learn so much from them and in turn help them understand more about farming and where our food comes from. It's also nice to be able to make a few more euros for the family'.

**If possible, please upload (1-5) photo(s) of the farmer/farm which you feel captures how this farmer 'farms for nature':**

- **Caption 1:** Suckler herd amongst native flowers.
- **Caption 2:** Farmer, Jo O'Brien

