

# frs Network news

## FRS Farm Relief Launch Research Report on the Outlook of External Farm Labour Support in Ireland



Pictured at the launch of the FRS Research Report on the Outlook of External Farm Labour Support in Ireland are L to R: Colin Donnery, Group CEO, Jane Marks, Marketing Manager, Francis Fitzgerald, NCFRS Chairman, Donal Slattery, Deputy CEO, FRS Network.

Throughout the latter part of 2022 FRS Farm Relief conducted research with farmers and farm workers to gauge the outlook of external farm labour support in Ireland.

External labour is part of the life blood of Irish farming. Over more recent years its importance has grown significantly, but unfortunately there is tight supply of farm workers in the market to service the increasing demand.

We wanted to address this issue and commissioned the most comprehensive analysis ever undertaken of the views of farmers and farm workers on the topic of external farm labour in Ireland. Taking the views of over 600 farmers and workers the results are eye opening – reaffirming many of the commonly held perceptions but also shedding light on many issues of note for the entire sector.

As this survey highlights, a significant majority of farmers have experienced difficulties securing sufficient labour for their farms this year.

Unfortunately this situation is unlikely to improve in the short term. The rise to near full employment in the country, coupled with rising costs across the

economy will have serious implications for the market and ultimately will be felt by farms across Ireland.

FRS Farm Relief has recently announced our efforts to grow our workforce of farm operators by 300 over the course of the next 12 months and we hope this will help alleviate some of the pressure on the farms we work with.

With 6 out of 10 farmers already feeling the pressure on their work/life balance and one in three unwilling to recommend farming as a lifestyle to their families and friends, these are clearly challenging times for Irish farming.

However, if these challenges are going to be addressed then there will have to be concerted action from the Government to increase the supply of farm labour and to ensure there is sufficient labour available for farms all over Ireland.

Our report gained a huge amount of publicity in the media including RTE News.

**Key insights of the report follow on page 2 and the research report is available at [frsfarmrelief.ie/news](http://frsfarmrelief.ie/news)**



**A message from our Chairman, Francis Fitzgerald.**

2022 proved to be another successful year for FRS Network. It was great to see normality resume post-Covid with the return of in person events, training, shows, and award ceremonies.

The information gathered from the FRS Farm Relief research conducted with farmers and farm workers has provided valuable insights into farm labour support in Ireland. Undoubtedly this information will have true value going forward into 2023.

2022 saw many highs within the business. Herdwatch announced exciting news in November of a multi-million investment backed by Renuit Capital Partners. This investment is set to take the company to new levels enabling them to further grow internationally with FRS Network remaining as significant shareholders. Along with this, it is great to see normal times resuming with the uptake in training courses after Covid-19 as FRS Training delivered training to almost 25,000 people in 2022.

FRS Recruitment also produced their 2022 Employment Insights Report, whilst adding to their award collection as they took home 'Best Online Agency' award for the third year in a row at the Employment & Recruitment Federation Awards, along with winning Midlands 103 Customer Service Award for 'Best Recruitment Agency' 2022, amongst others.

As we bid farewell to Peter Byrne, who had been our CEO for the past 42 years, we welcomed Colin Donnery to take over the reigns. Notably, there has been many great achievements this year throughout all business divisions under our new leadership.

Thank you to each and every one of our employees for your continuous commitment and dedication to FRS and to all our customers for your support and custom. I would also like to mention a thank you to the board for all their support throughout the year. Looking forward to seeing what lies ahead in 2023.

**Best wishes for 2023,  
Francis Fitzgerald,  
NCFRS Chairman.**

# Key Insights from the Research Report on the Outlook of External Farm Labour Support in Ireland

## FARMERS ATTITUDES & PRIORITIES

### Pessimism among farmers



**6 in 10** agree that they have a poor life balance due to workload



**8 in 10** feel the green agenda will **negatively** affect their farm viability



**Over 1 in 3** would not recommend farming as a lifestyle to a family or a friend

### Sourcing Labour



**7 in 10** Find it hard to find labour with the skills they require for their farm

### Top 2 Advantages of using External labour supplier

- Insurance cover
- Employee tax obligations covered

### Future External Labour Demand



**In Milking, yard work and hoof care services**  
39% expect labour need to increase over the next 3 years (51% remain static)

### Top Priorities for Farmers

- Confidence**  
safe hands to look after the farm
- Certainty**  
peak time labour access
- Capability**  
access to qualified/vetted labour, access to skilled supports

## FARM WORKERS ATTITUDES & PRIORITIES

### Positivity among farm workers



**9 in 10** proud to work in farming



**85%** say flexible working hours are important to them



**7 in 8** prefer an outdoor job to an office job



**8 in 10** want to see a clear pathway of progression



**3 in 4** see a career in farming as attractive



**2 in 3** believe farming can be a high risk job from a health & Safety point of view



**9 in 10** want local work close to home

### Top Priorities for Workers

- Clarity**  
of their earnings from the start
- Convenience**  
of local work close to home
- Flexibility**  
in the hours worked, with year-round work stability



FRS Network collaborated with the Roscrea Hospice raising €2,000 in funds for the charity through the tea station at the National Ploughing Championships and an office coffee morning. Pictured at FRS Network head office in Roscrea at the presentation of these funds to the Hospice are: L to R: Jane Marks, FRS Network, Carmel Moloney, FRS Network, Colin Donnery, FRS Network, Anthony Bourke, Hospice and Ramsey Nolan, Hospice.

## Recruitment Drive for 300+ New Farm Workers

FRS Farm Relief launched a recruitment drive at the ploughing to hire 300+ new farm workers to meet the expected growth in demand over the next 9 months.

With a current workforce of more than 1,200 farm operators, who support more than 5,000 farms across the country there are a mix of full-time and part-time jobs available with a particular focus on hiring more milkers as well as general farm workers.



Farm Recruitment Team pictured with Farmer Phil (back centre) and Colette McNerney, Head of Operations, FRS Farm Relief (right of back centre) at Ploughing '22.



L to R: Gerard Malone (Waterford), Niall Dervan (N.Tipp,Offaly,Laois),Rachel Rogers (Kerry), Graham Keane (Cork), Liam O'Rourke (Limerick & N.Cork), James Sheridan (Cavan & N.East) at Ploughing '22.

# FRS Fencing News

This year the EU Commission updated the Biocidal Product Regulations concerning the use of creosote and creosote-treated timber. As a result, creosote will be prohibited for use on fencing timbers and will only be permitted to treat timber used for utility poles and railway sleepers.

The Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine, who are responsible for the implementation of the Biocidal Regulations in Ireland, have set the date of the 30th April 2023 as the last day creosote treated fencing material can be placed on the market in Ireland. From this date it will be prohibited to place creosote product or any creosote treated timber on the market for use in agricultural/equine fencing.

For many years creosote treatment has been the most popular treatment for agricultural fencing and the change will have a significant effect on the farming sector in Ireland. FRS Fencing staff are on hand to guide our customers through this change. Customers who wish to purchase creosote treated timber are advised to contact their local FRS office as products will be subject to availability while stocks last.

FRS Fencing will endeavour to provide the best possible quality alternatives for our customers in 2023. Currently there are several quality alternative fencing products available that will suit a wide range of fencing needs. These include copper oil-based treatments, Incised & Kiln Dried Tanalith timber, steel posts along with plastic posts. The wide variety of alternatives will ensure continuous supply of high-quality fencing systems to our customers.



L to R: Gordon Kingston (Cork), Robert Birney (N.Tipp, Offaly, Laois), Pat Clarke (Cavan & N.East), Delacy Byrne (Roscrea), John Stapleton (Roscrea), Damien O'Dowd (Cavan & N.East).

All alternative options will have long-lasting warranties and are suitable for grant fencing. FRS Fencing will continue to source durable and robust fencing systems which are an ideal solution for Irish agriculture and equine fencing.

With over 40 years' experience, FRS Fencing pride ourselves on providing a wide range of high-quality fencing systems to our customers. For more information on any of our fencing products, contact your local FRS Fencing store on [frsfencing.ie/contact-us](http://frsfencing.ie/contact-us).

## Pillar of the Co-operative Movement, Jim Maguire, Receives Plunkett Award



Jim Maguire, recipient of the Plunkett Award for Co-operative Endeavour (centre) with L to R Donal Slattery, Deputy CEO; Siobhan Dooley, Chief Financial Officer and Colin Donnery, Group CEO, FRS Network

We are delighted to congratulate Jim Maguire, former Chairman of National Co-operative Farm Relief Services (NCFRS), on being awarded the ICOS Plunkett Award.

The Plunkett Award is the premier honorary award made by ICOS annually. Chosen from a shortlist of distinguished nominees, it is presented to one individual each year who is regarded as having made an outstanding lifelong contribution to the co-operative movement in Ireland.

Congratulations to Jim on your achievements that led to this award and thank you for your contribution to FRS.

## James O'Donnell Appointed as President of ICOS



Pictured Above: James O'Donnell and Francis Fitzgerald.

FRS Network Chairman Francis Fitzgerald made a presentation to James O'Donnell, current National Co-op Farm Relief Services (NCFRS) board member, following his recent appointment as President of the Irish Co-Operative Society (ICOS). James has been a board member of National Co-op Farm Relief Services since 2005 and is currently Chairman of South Tipperary Farm Relief Services. He has served as Vice-President of ICOS for the past 4 years representing NCFRS.

Commenting on the award, FRS Network Group CEO Colin Donnery said "We wish James great success in his new role as President of ICOS in what is undoubtedly a time of change for the agricultural industry and are honoured to have him represent the FRS organisation at the highest level in the co-operative sector."

# Herdwatch News

## The Great Climb - 'The Herd for Ukraine'

On the 3rd of June 2022, twenty-five team members of Herdwatch set off to climb the Devil's Bit in Tipperary to raise money and stand with our friends and colleagues in the Ukraine. The cause was close to home for the team as some members of the Herdwatch team are based in Ukraine. Resultantly, their Irish friends and colleagues wanted to raise funds in recognition of the difficulties they are experiencing at present.

After the event the funds raised were donated to Chernobyl Children International who are actively supporting people in Ukraine. Adi Roche, founder and CEO of Chernobyl Children International, came to Roscrea on June 22nd for a symbolic presentation of the funds.

On the same day, Roscrea local hero Henry Deane, along with 2 members of "Roscrea Chernobyl Lifeline", Andrew Walsh and John Hastings, handed over a cheque for €5,000 to Adi Roche for their role in helping those affected by the Chernobyl disaster - in addition to the Herdwatch donation.

Speaking following the climb, Fabien Peyaud, CEO, said, "I am very grateful to the Herdwatch team and all the generous donors, including many farmers and FRS colleagues, who supported this initiative. We managed to raise over €10,000 for a very worthy cause. We hope we will be able to provide further support to our friends and colleagues in whatever way we can."



Above: Herdwatch donation to Chernobyl Children International who are supporting people in Ukraine.

## Flockwatch joins the Herd

In March 2022, Flockwatch was launched as a dedicated app for sheep farmers allowing them to track flock performance and health individually or in groups in one app. With Flockwatch, sheep farmers now have an app at their fingertips which will allow rapid capture of lambing, breeding, weighing, medicines records and more. The Flockwatch app will highlight the best and worst performing ewes in order to make better decisions for the following season.

To date the app has been a great success for the team and is now live in multiple continents. November 2022 marked the launch of Flockwatch in the US, Canada, NZ and Australia.



Above: Fabien Peyaud, Herdwatch, Co-founder and CEO.

## Multi-million Investment for Herdwatch

To top off an excellent year for the Herdwatch team, at the end of November, Herdwatch secured a multi-million-euro investment backed by Renatus Capital Partners. Founding members FRS Network and Fabien Peyaud (Co-founder and CEO), will remain significant shareholders.

Currently Herdwatch operates with a team of 60 people with plans to increase this to 80 over the next two years to support international growth. The FRS IT, Finance, Payroll, Marketing, HR and Reception teams have supported Herdwatch tremendously over the years and a huge thank you must go to them also for all of their hard work.

The investment will allow Herdwatch to build upon the groundwork that has been laid since its inception, and further its role in its global dominance as the market leader in Farm Software solutions.



### Dan O'Riordan retires after 40+ years

Above: NCFRS bid farewell to long standing FRS Fencing Manager, Dan O'Riordan, at the NCFRS AGM on Dec 14th as he retires from FRS after 40+ years of outstanding service. L to R: Francis Fitzgerald, Donal Slattery, Dan O'Riordan, Siobhan Dooley and Colin Donnery.

### Standing with Ukraine

In March, across the FRS offices we stood with Ukraine in support of our fellow colleagues currently in Ukraine and with those who have worked with FRS in the past. We made a donation of €20,000 to the Red Cross efforts that help deliver life-saving food and hygiene supplies to impacted families across the Ukraine.



Above: In Kanturk, Cork, standing in solidarity with the Ukraine. L to R: Pat O'Sullivan, Mike Carroll, Dan O'Riordan and Rose McCarthy.

Left: Colleagues at FRS head quarters in Roscrea, Co. Tipperary stand with the Ukraine flag in solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

# FRS Training News

**2022 saw a return to normality for FRS Training. Demand for training was strong throughout the second half of the year in particular, as life and businesses returned to post-Covid normality. FRS Training delivered training to almost 25,000 people in 2022 across the certified and contracted training divisions.**

In May, Minister Martin Heydon launched Farm Family CPD on the Daniel's Family Farm in South Kilkenny. Farm Family CPD will develop online safety training for everyone above 12 years of age who lives and works on a farm. This new initiative offers free health and safety training to different groups of people at risk on Irish farms (12-16 year olds, adults, >65 year olds and employees). Funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, FRS Training in association with farm family representatives, HSA, Teagasc, FBD, IFA and FRS Network will go live with five farm safety courses in early 2023. Register your family's interest at [www.farmfamilycpd.ie](http://www.farmfamilycpd.ie) to avail of the training and all updates.

In August, Farm Safety Live returned to the Tullamore Show. FRS Training tutors demonstrated safe livestock and machinery practices to large numbers throughout the day with a record attendance at the show. The event benefited from a double Ministerial launch with Ministers McConalogue and Heydon getting events under way.

Looking forward to 2023, demand for certified training in the land based agriculture, horticulture and forestry sectors is expected to remain strong and FRS Training will build on 2022's on-going work to meet demand for new courses which supports the sustainability of these key sectors.



At the launch of Farm Family CPD are L to R: Peter Slattery, FRS Training and Farm Family CPD Project Manager, Bryan Daniels, Farm Family Representative, Edel McEvoy, IFA, Alice Doyle, IFA, Minister of State Martin Heydon, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ciaran Roche, FBD, John McNamara, Teagasc, Bernadette O'Connor, Farm Family CPD Project Coordinator, Pat Griffin, HSA, and Jim Dockery, FRS Network.



At Farm Safety Live at the Tullamore Show are L to R: Colin Donnelly, Group CEO, FRS Network, Martin Heydon, Minister for State, Charlie McConalogue, Minister for Agriculture Food and Marine, Peter Slattery, Manager, FRS Training.

## Successful year for Turas Nua

**Turas Nua experienced another strong year despite continued uncertainty in the labour market. The company continues to support thousands of people with upskilling, training, guidance, and sustainable employment opportunities through its network of employers across the country.**

A major testament to Turas Nua's success is in its winning of the new Intreo Partner NES (National Employment Services) contract, which will see the company continuing to provide its world class support to individuals across our local communities for many years to come. 2022 also saw Turas Nua successfully secure the LAES contract for Laois and Offaly. This contract sees Turas Nua provide a pivotal service working with long term unemployed people in the region.

Turas Nua saw a return of clients to offices this year, and while staff had adapted well to the remote working requirements, clients now benefit from their face-to-face support once again. In May, the company was able to return to our annual Staff Appreciation Day, with teams from each of the offices enjoying a well-deserved celebration of their success.

In August, Turas Nua was awarded with ISO certification, owing to the high-level, quality service it provides. Along with this and our new Intreo Partner NES contract, staff have undergone various training throughout the year, and are well positioned to tackle 2023 and beyond!



Above: Turas Nua team come together for service training.

# FRS Recruitment News

## Developing Great Teams in the New World of Work: FRS Recruitment Event

FRS Recruitment, in conjunction with Stratis Consulting, hosted our first in-person event on 25 May titled: Developing Great Teams in the New World of Work. Our new GAAGO Home Truths campaign in partnership with the GAA was also launched at this event. The event was appropriately held at Croke Park, a fit setting for a day that also provided a platform for discussions around recruitment in an ever-changing Irish employment market. On the day there were insightful discussions from the panel and guest speakers, including Peter Cosgrove, MD of Futurewise, Denis Curran of IDA, Prof Ian Robertson, Psychology Professor at Trinity College Dublin, Brid Stack of Sydney Giants and Cork LGFA, Shane O’Sullivan of Inspiring Excellence, Brendan McGinty of Stratis Consulting and Peter McKenna, Commercial Director of GAA. The event was MC’d by Susan Hayes-Culleton, MD at the Hayes Culleton Group, and was a huge success with plans to hold another such event in 2023.

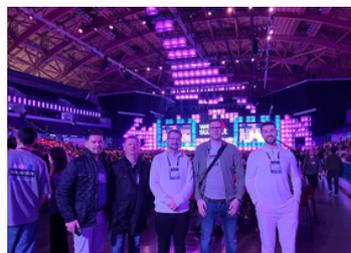
FRS Recruitment also launched our Employment Insights Report. This insight report provided in depth reviews on the changing trends and patterns of Irish workers and employers.

### Awards Season

FRS Recruitment had a very successful year on the awards front. In total the business won 'Best Agency Online' for the third year running at the Employment & Recruitment Federation Awards, 'Best Recruitment Agency' of the year at the Midlands 103 Customer Service Award, 'Best Newcomer' at the European Sponsorship Association Awards for our '70 mins of Home' campaign (fending off powerhouses like Vodafone and McLaren F1) and more recently winning Ireland’s 'Best Recruitment Agency' by EU Business News.



Erin Whittle, FRS Recruitment, Sam Driver, FRS Recruitment, and Alex Lyons, Bunker Technology (award sponsor) at the Employment & Recruitment Federation Awards.



Members of the FRS Recruitment IT Team pictured at Web Summit, Portugal.



Peter McKenna, GAA Commercial Director, Brid Stack, Sydney Giants and Cork LGFA, Colin Donnery, Group CEO, FRS Network, Lynne McCormack, General Manager, FRS Recruitment pictured in Croke Park at FRS Recruitment event.

## Supporting Damien Dempsey's 2022 Christmas song

FRS Recruitment has a long standing relationship with the Irish community abroad through our 'Ireland is Hiring' campaign which began in 2018 and more recently through our sponsorship of GAAGO which has been ongoing since 2020.

We are proud to be involved and to support Damien Dempsey's 2022 Christmas song 'Fáilte Abhaile' (Welcome Home) which calls on Irish people living abroad to come home while raising vital money for Focus Ireland.

## Return to Events

All at FRS Recruitment were delighted to return to events post-Covid. Representatives from the Recruitment team travelled both far and wide this year to attend events, including The Business Show in the Aviva Stadium, MTU Kerry Careers Fair, Tech Connect Conference at the RDS Dublin, while our Healthcare division and IT team attended Expomedics & the Web Summit, both held in Portugal. It was great meeting so many new and existing clients and candidates again.

# Get the Shifts rebrand to WrkWrk

**In September 2022, Get The Shifts revealed our rebrand to WrkWrk. Under the new brand, WrkWrk aim to bring in 4,000 additional temporary workers each month, as well as 500 new placements. Along with this we expect to move into foreign markets, beginning in 2023.**

Speaking about the rebrand, Lynne McCormack, General Manager of FRS Recruitment said, "We are very excited about WrkWrk and what it means for the future of flexible, temporary staffing. Since we acquired the business last year we have seen it continue to grow and flourish and now we hope to bring the capabilities provided by WrkWrk to an even wider, international audience.

That was the driving force behind our decision to launch this new brand, giving the business a name that will appeal in foreign markets by adding a more universal dimension to our profile. WrkWrk is a unique name that we expect will become the go-to solution for employers and workers when it comes to shift work across Ireland, and hopefully beyond, in the very near future."

