Project Title: The impact of Social Farming placement(s) on an individual's occupational functioning and quality of life.

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Keywords: Health Promotion, Social Farming, Health and Wellbeing, Occupational functioning, Quality of Life.

Project Summary: Social Farming offers people who are socially, physically, mentally or intellectually disadvantaged the opportunity to spend time on a farm in a healthy, supportive and inclusive environment. The growing body of national and international research on Social Farming has highlighted that it has significant potential to enhance the health and wellbeing of individuals and that these benefits exist across multiple dimensions of functioning and well-being. The national Social Farming Ireland team has been a key driver of research nationally. To date, the majority of this research has involved qualitative semi-structured interviews with participants who are availing of mental health services and their supporting health professionals. The prevalence of mental health difficulties is growing at both international/national level and it is estimated that up to 1 in 4 people will experience some level of mental illness at some point in their lives (WHO, 2017). The key strategies underpinning mental health service provision in Ireland promote the provision of accessible, community-based specialist services. However, a significant gap in the current body of knowledge is the need for clinically focused quantitative data which identifies the health outcomes for this cohort. The proposed research would address this gap and would determine the impact of Social Farming on an individual's occupational functioning and quality of life.

Research question: What are the quantifiable health benefits and outcomes for service users of mental health services nationwide, who avail of Social Farming supports?

> **Aim:** The aim of this research is to assess the impact of social farming supports on an individual's occupational functioning and quality of life. Two client-centred, reliable and validated outcome tools will be used to complete assessments at baseline, at the end of the placement and three months post completion.

Objectives:

- To assess each participant's occupational performance in domains such as: self-care, productivity, motivation for occupation, pattern of occupation, communication and interaction skills, process skills, motor skills at two intervals during their social farming placement and once post completion. Previously validated tools such as the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure/the Model of Human Occupation Screening Tool (MOHOST)/36 point RAND scale have been deemed as suitable tools and are widely used in this discipline.

- Examine the experiences of participants and enable them to document their own journey in social farming through the use of innovative methodological approaches.

Candidate Qualifications/Requirements:

Applications are invited from candidates with at least a 2:1 level 8 B.Sc Hon degree in Occupational Therapy or equivalent. Applicants should be eligible to register with CORU or HCPC. Full driver's licence and access to car. Please note there will be a requirement to travel to Social Farms around Ireland.