



Embrace FARM

Support After Injury & Loss



Final Project Report



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



'The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development: Europe
investing in rural areas'.



***“Those we love don’t go away.
They walk beside us everyday.
Unseen, Unheard but always near
Still loved, Still missed and very dear”.***



Table of Contents

Foreword	4
Executive Summary	5
Introduction / Project Background.....	5
Project Objectives.....	7
Vision and Values of the Encircle Programme	8
Project Methodology.....	9
How the Encircle Programme Works.....	16
The Team	17
Key Performance Indicators / Baseline Data	19
Case Studies.....	25
Project Communication and Dissemination	27
Final Conference	30
Impacts.....	36
Value for Money / Financial Plan	39
Project Findings	40
Keys Learnings / Lessons Learnt	41
Recommendations	42
Conclusions	46
Appendices.....	47
Appendix 1 – Copy of Information Pack.....	47
Appendix 2 – Copy of Branding Guidelines	48
Appendix 3 – Copy of Final Conference agenda.	49
Appendix 4 - Copy of Final Conference Report.....	50
Appendix 5 – Copy of Questionnaires used in post project evaluation survey.	77
Appendix 6 - Copy of Evaluation Report by Dr. Maria Feeney	85
Appendix 7 – Copy of Feedback letter from Clinical Supervisor	106



Foreword

Foreword by Mr. Martin Heydon, Minister of State with responsibility for Research and Development, Farm Safety, and New Market Development.

Since its inception, Embrace FARM has provided such an important service to the farming community supporting families impacted by all types of serious and sudden traumas on farms in Ireland.

The Embrace FARM Encircle programme is one of eight European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs) that I have supported around the country focusing on farm safety, health and wellbeing. The idea behind the EIPs is that they enable farmers and experts to collaborate on innovative approaches to address challenges on Irish farms. I am confident that they are identifying potential solutions and important learnings which can be used more widely by the farming community.

The title of this EIP is very appropriate - Encircle – as the work in supporting families is all encompassing. Fatal and life changing incidents have devastating impacts on farm families. It is impossible to imagine the sheer magnitude of what it means for those involved and the irreplaceable loss to that farm, that family or that community.

That is why it is so important to support those farm families who are mourning the loss of a loved one or who are impacted by a family member with a serious life changing injury. From the findings in this report it is clear that the Embrace FARM Encircle project had a clear vision of its objectives from the outset.

The strength of the project is in the team of project partners - IFAC, Agricultural Solicitors, Agricultural Consultants Association, Rural Support and the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention who came together to formulate the 'Encircle' Programme. It utilises and builds on Embrace FARM's existing knowledge and experience and that of its project partners to support farm families facing a sudden traumatic incident.

Not only is a family trying to cope with the loss of a loved one or a farmer who is incapacitated, but they are also faced with the practical issue of continuing to run a farm and the challenges around family finances and legal issues.

The Encircle programme has been to the fore in dealing with those many and varied issues and those who have availed of the service found people there ready and able to put them on the necessary path.

Executive Summary

The Embrace FARM Encircle Programme is a programme that offers support and assistance (both emotional and practical) to farm families and communities who have experienced trauma by way of a serious injury or sudden death on the family farm. It does so by giving them information and a single, coordinated point of contact to access local professionals and peer to peer supports. Prior to the Encircle Programme, there was no such set of structured supports available for families impacted by sudden trauma (fatal or near miss) on the farm. The Encircle Programme was formulated, developed and led by Embrace FARM in collaboration with Operational Group members, Irish Farm Accounts Co-operative Society Limited (IFAC), Agricultural Solicitors, Agricultural Consultants Association (ACA), Rural Support and the Health Service Executive (HSE) National Office for Suicide Prevention. The Encircle Programme received funding for its initial 12 months from the European Innovation Partnerships (EIP- Agri.) Unit of the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine as part of their Farm Safety, Health and Well-being strand of development. Following this there was an initial extension approved in November 2022 to cover the period January to June 2023 and a final timeline extension with supporting budget was approved in June 2023 to cover from July to December 2023. The reason for both extensions was to enable the Encircle Programme to continue to support Farm Families engaging with its services. Since its inception and with the assistance of this funding, the Encircle Programme has supported 159 farm families who had experienced injury or loss.

Introduction / Project Background

Farming is the most dangerous occupation in high-income countries worldwide. In Ireland, fatalities on farms account for nearly half of all fatal workplace incidents in Ireland. However, farmers only represent 6% of the workforce¹. Over 208 lives have been lost in work related accidents in agriculture between 2011-2020². In addition to fatal accidents, the Teagasc National Farm Survey identified that a further four thousand five hundred and twenty-three (4,523) accidents occurred on Irish farms in 2020. These are just the reported figures. It is widely believed that these numbers are in fact higher. There is also trauma resulting from suspected suicide attempts. According to the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention, 6% of deaths by suicide between 2015-2018 were among farmers and agricultural workers³. The farm is the most common workplace for males over 65 years to suffer fatality or life-threatening injury. Of the 208 lives lost on farms between 2011-2020, the majority of the victims were male (94%) and aged 65 years or older (51%)¹. Serious illness, injury, or death at work also has knock-on psychological, social, and economic effects on the impacted farm family, close friends and local

¹ [gov.ie - Farm Safety \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

² [annual review of workplace injuries illnesses and fatalities 20202021.pdf \(hsa.ie\)](#)

³ [NOSP Briefing on Suicide Figures - HSE.ie](#)

communities. The toll and impact this has on farm families and communities is largely immeasurable.

One of these 208 lives lost was Liam Rohan, a farmer, husband, father and grandfather. Liam lost his life on his family farm in 2012. In the weeks and months that followed, his son and daughter in law Brian and Norma Rohan came to realise that there were no set of supports available to help families like theirs in the aftermath of a tragic farm accident. The couple set about addressing this and in 2014, Embrace FARM Accident Support Network known as Embrace FARM was set up by Brian and Norma Rohan. Their aim was to support other families who had lost loved ones to a farm accident or who survived a serious farm accident. In that year they arranged a Remembrance Service to acknowledge all those who have lost their lives on farms across the 32 counties of Ireland and to show all those surviving family members that they are not alone in their journey of grief, loss and trauma. This Remembrance Service is now a very well attended annual event in June of each year.

Over the years there have been many excellent initiatives and programmes dealing with accident prevention and farm safety education, however, Embrace FARM felt there was a huge gap and need for co-ordinated services and support for farm families in the aftermath of a sudden trauma. Therefore, in 2021, Embrace FARM, in conjunction with operational group members IFAC, Agricultural Solicitors, Agricultural Consultants Association, Rural Support and the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention came together to formulate the ‘Encircle’ Programme. This programme, coming from the personal learned experiences of Brian and Normal Rohan and their family aims to “Support Farm Families through Loss” and in doing so addresses the gap outlined above by providing a single point of contact with access to centralised professional, practical and technical supports for the farming sector in the aftermath of a farm fatality or major trauma accident.

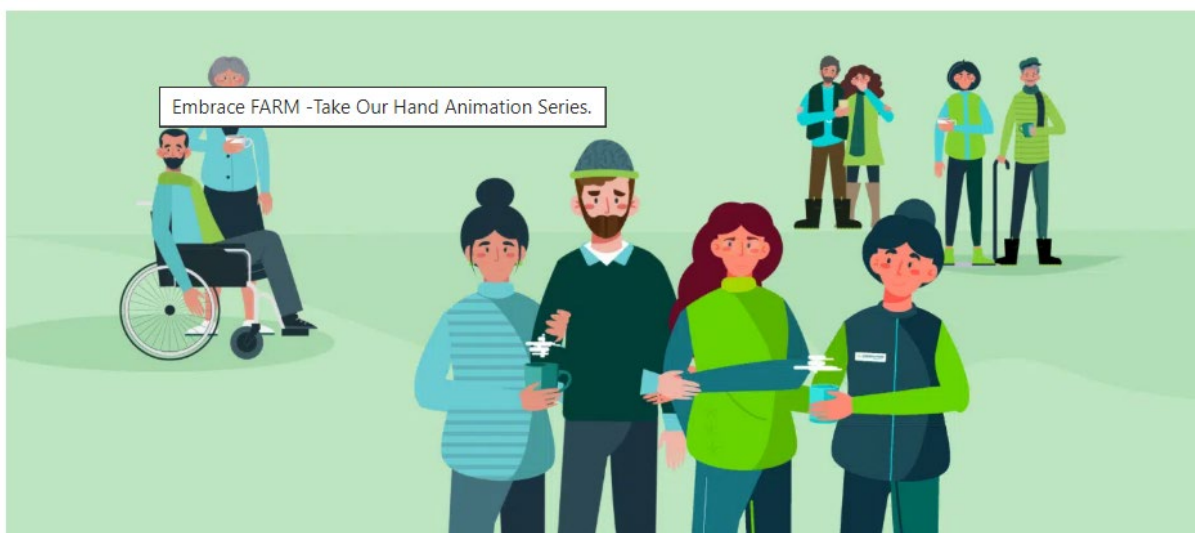


Figure 1 - Encircle Programme - Take Our Hand Animation Series.

Project Objectives

The Encircle programme aims to address the gap in services by providing a structured single point of contact who will signpost relevant local professional and peer-to-peer supports to families and communities affected by sudden trauma on farms. The programme set out six objectives as follows:

Objective 1: Establish a network of Regional Support Hubs (see figure 2) where farm families can access a range of services to help them through the aftermath of their sudden trauma.

Objective 2 : Receive feedback, improve, and seek to scale the supports for farm families in a phased way.

Objective 3 : To continually provide a sustainable model of peer support and professional support for the farm families.

Objective 4: Ensure public awareness of the Encircle Project.

Objective 5: Advocate on behalf of and influence policies which affect the farm families.

Objective 6: Operate to the highest standards of governance.



Figure 2. Regional Hubs in Ireland.

Vision and Values of the Encircle Programme

The vision of Embrace FARM has always been to offer a caring, supportive, non-judgemental community for all those affected by farm accidents and traumas. Within Embrace FARM, the Encircle programme provides emotional and practical support and information to all those affected by farm accidents or tragedies. Encircle welcomes farm families no matter how recent this was or where they are located in the country.

It supports farm families who are experiencing loss through:

- Farm accidents.
- Suspected suicide, sudden trauma or fatal illness.
- Survivors from a farm accident with serious injury.

The focus is on assisting the emotional well-being of farm families through their loss and signposting and providing the practical support and information they may require on this journey.

The five values of the Encircle programmes are as follows;

- Safety
- Support
- Compassion
- One step at a time
- Hope



Safety

Those availing of this service will feel safe – the environment created will centre on non-judgemental relationships which are based on trust, approachability, and openness.



Support

We want those who are availing of our service to know that they are not alone, they can take our hand, they are part of a community. We are here to walk every step of their journey with them.



Compassion

Our goal is to recognise their suffering and needs and to provide the correct guidance at the right time.

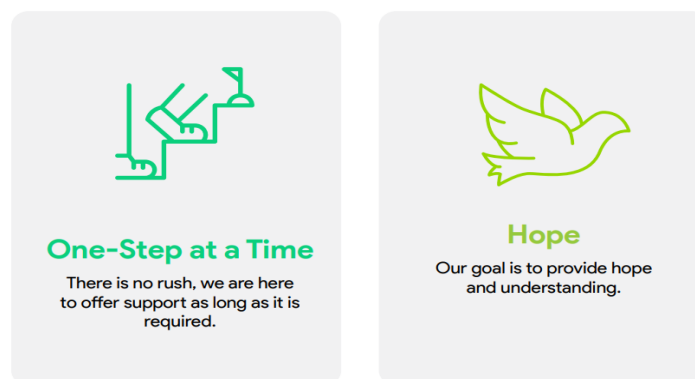


Figure 3: The Five Values of the Encircle Programme⁴.

Project Methodology

The Encircle Programme aims to address the gap in rural services by providing a structured, single point of contact access to local professional and peer to peer supports to families and communities affected by sudden trauma on farm. The project was led by the General Manager and Business Development Manager from Embrace FARM and supported by Operational Group members. To implement this project, the methodology undertaken comprised of a mixed method approach based on both quantitative and qualitative methods. Furthermore an evaluation of the programme was also undertaken in December 2023 using two self-administered online questionnaires delivered to each group via the Survey Monkey platform (see appendix 5). The purpose of this evaluation was to obtain an overview of the Encircle programme from the perspectives of two key groups: (1) those who contacted Encircle programme for support following injury or loss and (2) the service providers to the Encircle Programme (e.g. counsellors, financial advisors) to inform and improve future delivery of our services (see appendix 6 for copy of evaluation report).

Encircle Programme Implementation Methodology:

There were four main aspects involved in the implementation of the project, these are set out below.

1. Set up and Governance.

To begin with, the project established an Operational Group (OG) to oversee the management and evaluation of the programme. This Group is composed of nine (9) members who each brought different skillsets and expertise to develop, guide and evaluate the project throughout its duration (see Table A). The multi actor group included a representative from Embrace FARM, from farm families and those with specific expertise in this area including professionals in the areas of counselling and bereavement

⁴ [Encircle Programme Brand Guidelines \(see appendix 2\)](#)

as well as specialist legal and financial services. All members of the operational group were also part of the steering group for the management of the project. Embrace FARM was the lead project Co-ordinator of Encircle programme with responsibility for overall financial management and the management of the programme coordinator and financial administrator. Regular meetings between the OG members as well as a separate meeting with the project management team of NuaFund took place throughout the project. Comprehensive statistics from the CRM system as well as analytics from the various print and social media campaigns were also continuously tracked for Key Performance Indicators (KPI) measurement each month. As a further governance measure specialist external professional advice was engaged to provide guidance on clinical support to the Programme Co-ordinator as well as advising and providing supervision on the planning and delivery of literature for the Encircle Programme. At all times there was a clear focus on producing a document which contained meaningful, professional and safe guidance and support for the intended audience.

Embrace FARM (Lead Member) Norma Rohan - Member Representative for Embrace FARM Catherine Collins - Member Representative for Embrace FARM
Angela Hogan - Group Representative for farm families directly affected by trauma (Service User).
Veronica Morris - CEO, Rural Support, Northern Ireland. Group Representative for Services to Farmers in Northern Ireland.
Aisling Meehan - Group Representative for Agricultural Solicitors
Tom Canning - Group Representative for Agriculture Consultants Association
Sarah Woods - Group Representative for the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention. – Note: Ciaran Austin replaced Sarah Woods after the programme was launched.

Table A: Members of the Operational Group

2. Implementation (including promotion activities and public relations (PR))

An initial kick-off meeting was held in January 2022 to set out the details regarding implementation of the project. Details on how the milestones set out in the project application document including set up (recruitment, CRM system, process) as well as updates on impending milestones such as PR activity and launch and website details were discussed. The KPIs and Risk Management table were also considered in this meeting. A regular meeting for the implementation phase was put in place.

An overview of the **project deliverables** and **milestones** are provided in Table B below (note edited to reflect approved project extensions).

Deliverable No.	Name	WP	Lead	Due date
D3.1	Project website	WP3	Case coordinator	M4
D3.2	Promotional videos	WP3	General Manager	M7
D2.3, D2.6	Workshops (for review)	WP2	Case coordinator	M8, M10
D3.4	Final conference	WP3	General Manager	M15
D4.3	Final report	WP4	Case coordinator	M18
Milestone No.	Name	Work Package	Due Date	Means of verification
M4.1	Steering group meeting	WP 4	M1, M3, M6, M9, M12	Meeting minutes
M4.2	Quarterly invoice and report	WP4	M3, M6, M9, M12	Invoice and expenses report; brief technical report
M1.2	Regional hub 1 & 2 set-up	WP1	M4	Hub supports in place
M2.2	Regional hub 3 set up	WP 2	M6	Hub supports in place
M2.4	Regional hub 4 set up	WP 2	M8	Hub supports in place
M2.5	Regional hub 5 set up	WP2	M9	Hub supports in place
M3.4	Final conference	WP3	M15	Conference takes place

Table B: Project deliverables and milestones

3. Supporting activities Set-up and Governance:

To begin with the project took a number of steps to establish the structures and staffing needed to roll out the activities required. The key steps were:

- The office set up was initiated and completed in early 2022. All milestones relating to this were met and all deliverables achieved on time (WP1). In January 2022, a new **programme co Ordinator was hired** and subsequently started. In February 2023, a new part time Financial Administrator was hired.

- During quarter 1, 2022 a new **CRM system** was sourced (“**Mindmyclient**”), purchased and implemented. One of the initial tasks of the new programme coordinator was to transition all existing data relating to Farm Families affected by trauma over to the new system, together with all the current data relating to new contacts from affected farm families. This system was also integrated with the information generated by the Embrace FARM website. In the future, this data bank will be able to provide, for the first time, an invaluable source of centralised data relating to trauma on farms (fatal, suicide, near misses, life changing accidents) and those affected by it. This will be one of the key outputs and legacy of this project.
- Advertisements inviting expressions of interest from professionals including counsellors / legal / financial and succession planning to be part of the Encircle programme support structure were placed in q1 2022. Following a good response to this, all shortlisted applicants were all met with and the team of counsellors, solicitors, agri finance and succession planning and legal representatives were selected. Once the contract and insurance details for successful applicants were completed, the team to support the planned Regional Hubs was established.
- Over the course of 2022, there was 100% achievement of our planned Regional Hub set-up. The project uses a hybrid hub system across the country that can either meet local needs with local expertise or provide access to online expertise where a local contact isn’t available. Overall, this means that any of the supports can be provided to families across the country, therefore meeting our project goal of providing full nationwide support by ensuring that Farm Families could access these from any part of the country (see figure.4). These had representative mentors from each of the Operational Group members i.e., legal advisor, Agri advisor, financial consultants and counsellors. This process also included identifying the scope of service provision (e.g., areas covered, response times), associated costs, time to be spent, expected liaison with the Case Coordinator (reporting on activities without disclosing personal information).

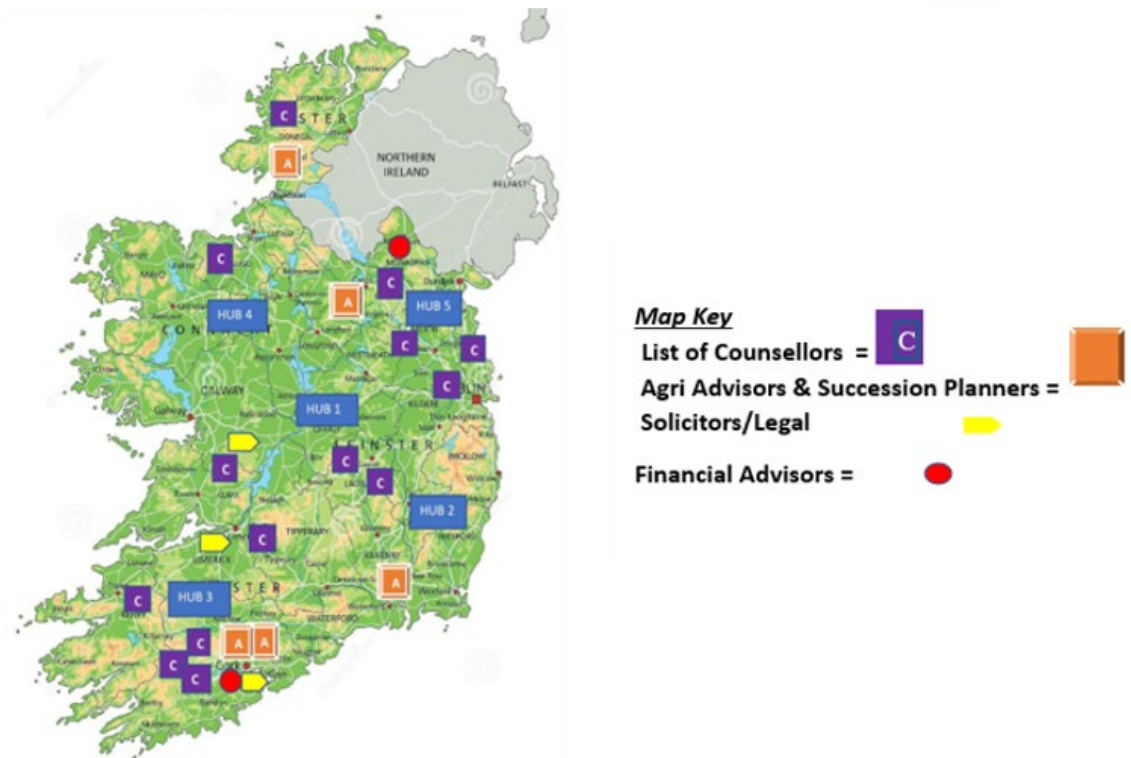


Figure 4: Regional / Online Hub Breakdown

- As part of the set-up planning and designing, process mapping (quality management) of the different steps, interactions, operational and administrative element were mapped out. Software was used support this to ensure there is a record and track of each case file and its status. This enabled a thorough monitoring, data collection, analysis of services provided and areas to be addressed. This also supported risk management for each case.
- It was critical to ensure that information on new service would be available to Farm Families. A comprehensive Information pack (see appendix 1) was designed and printed for use by Farm Families. On engagement with the service now, each new family receives this comprehensive pack containing all the information pertaining to the supports provided.
- An external company was engaged to assist with Public Relations (PR) and branding. A new website page together with key messages relating to the Encircle programme was developed (see appendix 2 for sample branding guidelines). This new webpage was housed within the main Embrace FARM page. A PR campaign was also devised together with new branding, a new logo and tag line. Promotional material (photographs, promotional video, written content) to use in the programme launch was captured in early April 2022 when the full Operational Group met in person at the Rohan family farm for a media production day (see Image 1). **On April 27th,2022 the Encircle Project was officially launched across all social media platforms.**



Image 1: Members of the Operations Group on the Rohan Family Farm.

Source: Farmers Journal.

Key campaigns and events promoted through social media included "Take Our Hand" campaign, the Encircle final Conference event and the Annual Remembrance Service in June. These events all resulted in key spikes in the social and regular media reach and engagement. Paid for advertising in traditional print media was also used to promote the Encircle programme and other social media platforms such as LinkedIn and X (Twitter) were used to reach wider audiences.

Date / Main Campaign	Social Media	Media (all other)
January - March <i>Take Our Hand</i>	335.1k reach	761.6k reach
April – May <i>Encircle Final Conference</i>	8,632 reach (inc X (Twitter)) 871 profile visits (FB / IG)	577.4k (print) 118,163 (online)
May – July (early) <i>Remembrance Service</i>	67,277 reach (inc. paid ads) 3,306 profile visits (FB / IG)	2.1m (print) 37,530 (Online) 376.6k (radio and broadcast)

Table C: Key events Media and Social Media Reach: January – June 2023

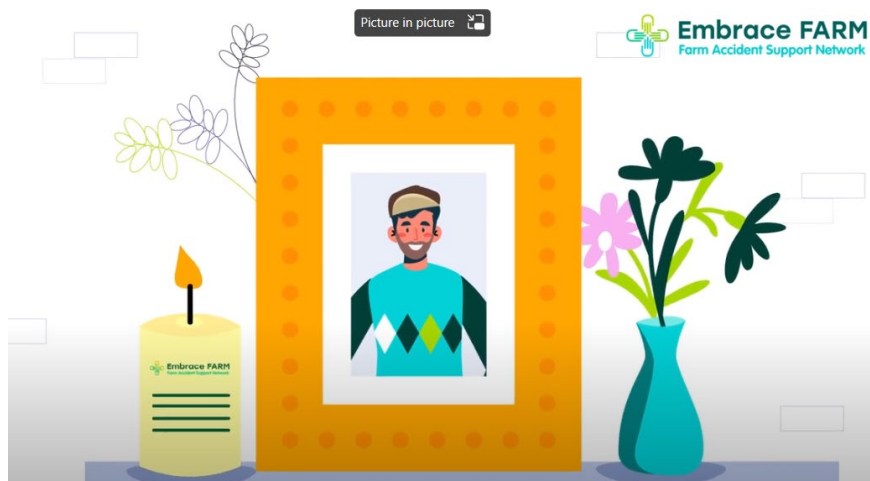


Figure 5: Sample Image from Animation Campaign which can be accessed via this QR code



4. Evaluation of Programme (Post Project)

In December 2023, detailed feedback was sought from two key user groups of the programme namely the farming families and the professional service providers. Their valuable input provides us with valuable information in terms of assessing the effectiveness of the programme. It informs our understanding of the programmes impact in the lives of our farming families and informs lessons learned. Gaining insights and understanding the experiences of both groups with the programme was very important for us. Feedback on the programmes' impact together with participants and service providers engagement levels and involvement is crucial for informing future service delivery and dissemination and communication strategies.

Two short self-administered online questionnaires were designed using the Survey Monkey platform for each group. The participants' questionnaire contained fifteen (15) items (see Appendix 5 edited) and the service provider questionnaire contained seven (7) items (see Appendix 5). A link to the questionnaires was emailed to all participants and service providers of the programme on 12th December 2023. To ensure confidentiality, and in keeping with GDPR, the link was emailed by the researcher to the Encircle Programme team who then emailed both groups.

Twenty-two (22) participants responded to the questionnaire, ten of these made incomplete submissions, thus representing a completion rate of 55% for those who completed each item on the questionnaire. There are 42 registered providers on the Encircle Programme, fifteen (15) responded to the online questionnaire (a completion



rate of 72%). Analyses were conducted separately for both groups. Overall, both groups were very satisfied with the details of our programme. All participants of the programme expressed their full satisfaction and appreciation of the Encircle Programme and the services it provides. The Service providers also indicated very positive interactions with the programme. The full results together with the questionnaires used are contained in appendix 5 and 6.

How the Encircle Programme Works

1. The farm family or individual makes contact with Embrace FARM.
2. Embrace FARM will provide a listening ear and share what support services are available to the farm family / individual.
3. Embrace FARM will send out a detailed information pack along with the Embrace FARM remembrance candle.
4. A fortnight after the initial contact, Embrace FARM will follow up with the farm family.
5. Supports are offered and provided to suit the unique needs of the farm family.
6. Embrace FARM will continue to liaise with the farm family as they receive their emotional and practical supports.



The Team



Image 2: Members of the Encircle Project Team from L to R: Caroline Redmond, Norma Rohan and Catherine Kenneally.



Norma Rohan – General Manager

Married to dairy farmer Brian Rohan – Co-Founder and Chairperson of Embrace FARM. Norma’s earlier life was spent working in manufacturing quality and supply chain industry. Brian and Norma married in 2011 and their first child Julie was born on the 13th of June 2012. When Julie was six days old Brian’s father was involved in an accident on their farm which left him on life support for three days. The life support was turned off on 22nd June 2012. This started their journey, as a Farming Family into grief, trauma and loss. About a year and half later they decided to hold a remembrance service for those killed and injured on the farms of Ireland. There began Embrace FARM with the very first National Remembrance service on 26th June 2014. Embrace FARM is now officially registered as a charity to support farm families affected by serious injury and sudden death when and how they need it most. Norma is General Manager, responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of Embrace FARM including the Encircle Project.

Catherine Kenneally – Business Development Manager

Catherine Kenneally (nee Collins) has profound knowledge of strategic and operational management and has been working in the hospitality, tourism, Agri and local community & voluntary sectors over the past 20 years. Bringing her qualities as a life coach and facilitator into all interactions ensures the people she assists are helped in every way possible and always with great love and compassion. Catherine has worked with Brian and Norma Rohan in Embrace FARM since 2018 in helping develop the charity and supporting the families it represents.

Caroline Redmond - Programme Co Ordinator

Caroline grew up visiting her grandparents farm near Rathoe. Here began her understanding of farming life and the challenges that come with it. With a background in supporting families in the areas of loss and bereavement for over ten years she holds a Level 9 Certificate in Children and Loss Bereavement Studies with the RCSI and the Irish Hospice Foundation in addition to an Honours Degree in Early Childcare and a Certificate in Counselling and Psychotherapy. Caroline brings a soft, gentle and nurturing presence when helping facilitate the support groups within Embrace FARM. Whether this is a kind word at the right moment to a spouse who is grieving the loss of her husband in a farm accident or providing a guiding light to an adult child who has lost a parent in a farm accident in the past, Caroline is a vital and cherished part of the Embrace FARM Team.

Alma Jordan – Communications Support

From Kildare, author and social entrepreneur, Alma Jordan founded the award-winning social enterprise, AgriKids which aims to engage, educate and empower children to be farm safety ambassadors. Alma’s unique approach to farm safety education has seen her work alongside Embrace FARM over the years through various collaborative campaigns. Her insight and skillset in the areas of communications and project management as well as her passion for rural safety and development has aided Embrace FARM in adopting new comms strategies and create new resources to support our families. Alma holds

degrees in both Business and Media Management as well as a HND in Radio Journalism and production.

Margaret Greene – Finance Administrator

Margaret Greene, a Laois native, joined the team in February 2022. Margaret brings valuable experience to the team having worked as a Management Accountant across different industries such as media, Housing, Manufacturing and Construction. She attended college in Carlow IT before relocating to London for a number of years. During her time in London she built up her experience in accounts and gained a greater appreciation of diversity. She also gained valuable experience in learning how manage internal and external customer satisfaction. Margaret has also spent time volunteering at local primary level for the NPC (National Parents Council).



Image 3: Members of the Embrace FARM team at the Encircle Programme Final Conference. L to R: Brian Rohan, Margaret Greene, Catherine Kenneally, Caroline Redmond, Alma Jodan and Norma Rohan pictured at the Encircle Project Final Conference.

Key Performance Indicators / Baseline Data

As this was a new service, there was no existing baseline data to compare against. However the Encircle programme identified a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as a means to measure the impact of the project. For each KPI, a baseline was set at zero and a consistent method to track and measure was discussed and decided on. These together with the overall measurements are set out in the table below (Table D).

At the outset, this project aimed to collect data relating to cases of sudden trauma on farms either from direct contact with the project or through awareness within the

community. The project met its aim of tracking each case by the ‘type of trauma’ a family has experienced, and the number of people affected by this. This data is held securely and confidentially on the projects CRM system. As there is a lack of reliable data on sudden trauma on farms in Ireland, this data as collected by the Encircle provides an invaluable source and is a key output of the project. This data may be used to benchmark the caseload and to support future policy and decision making around rural supports. It can also help educate and inform supports from agri-businesses towards farmers across the country. Using this data, Encircle can continue to advocate on behalf of the affected farm families and make the reality of affected communities more visible and potentially support the sustainability of the Encircle programme.

Numbers affected by farm accidents	Numbers assisted by project (of the 100 people the project hopes to support)
1. Number of individuals directly impacted.	60%
2. Number of family members directly impacted.	20%
3. Number of people in the local community affected i.e., close friends, neighbours or extended family affected by the fatal accident or sudden trauma.	10%
4. Number of people indirectly affected i.e., local Agri Businesses the deceased may have supported or supplied to.	10%
Other KPIs	
5. Increase Public Awareness of what An Meitheal Feirme provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Number of website visits per quarter ✓ Number of published press articles (online/print) per quarter (Impacts 1, 2 & 5) 	20% increase 20% increase
6. Increase in community of support (Impact 1)	500% increase in support across Ireland
7. Reduction in agriculture-related accidents (Impact 2)	3% decrease (during the project)
8. Increase in empathy and support (Impact 3)	200%
9. Increase in policy influence and support (Impact 4)	100%

10. Increase in advocacy efforts on behalf of farm families of sudden trauma (Impact 8)	100%
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Table D: Key Performance Indicators

Updates on KPIs as of December 31st, 2023.

- **KPI #1, #2:** As of December 31st, 2023, over **159 farm families** have been supported since the launch of the Encircle programme.
- **KPI #3, #4: Extended Farming Community and Advisors-** Over 260 Farm Organisation Forums, Farmers’ Marts, Agricultural Show Organisers, Farm Organisation Processors have been engaged with and presented with information on the key supports the Encircle Programmes provides. In turn, this provides these key stakeholders with information and knowledge to inform and direct affected families as and when needed.
- **KPI #5: Raising Awareness on what the Encircle Programme does.** Baseline of 0 at project start. Through comprehensive planning and delivery across both traditional and social media channels by project end on December 31, 2023, the following statistics apply;
 - **317** Media Placements, articles and Radio and TV interviews
 - **7,000,283** Reach across national publications, all media
 - **6,131,560** Reach across regional publications
 - **5.4k** web page views
 - **1.7k** web users
 - Over **606,402** hits to Facebook page
 - **25,633** LinkedIn views
 - **115,763** on Instagram
 - **105,410** on X (formerly Twitter).

Collectively, these contributed to raising awareness of the programme, the strong online presence can be demonstrated by the fact that 40% of participants learned about the programme from online sources.⁵

⁵ Feeney, M. 2024. *Embrace FARM Encircle Programme Evaluation Report*

Learning about the Encircle Programme came from multiple sources

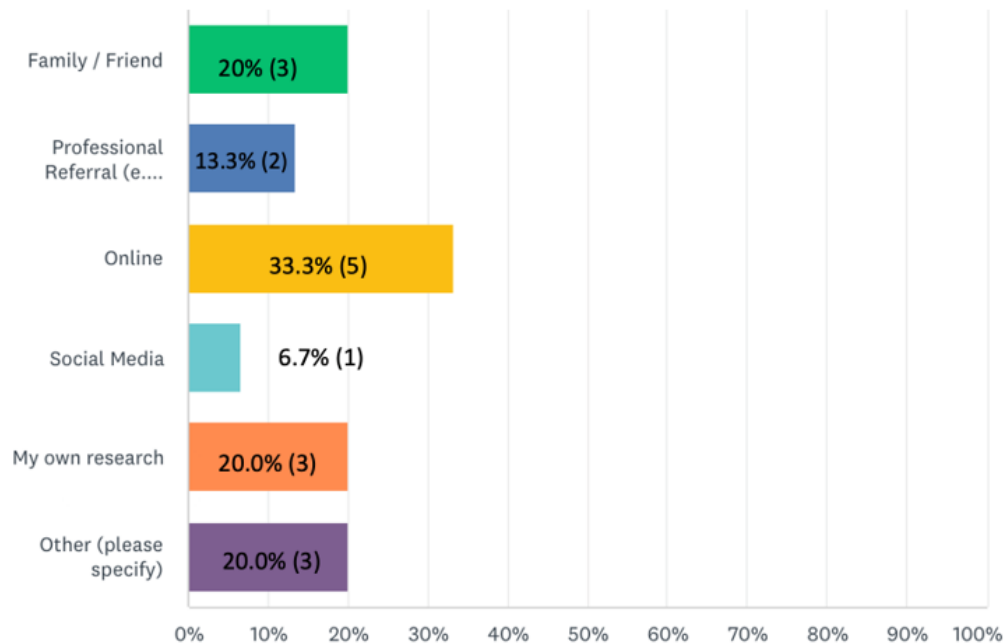


Figure 6: How did you learn about the Embrace FARM Encircle Programme?

- KPI#6:** The community of support has increased in line with expected target of 500% through the establishment of 5 Regional Hubs across the country ensuring there is full coverage for all farm families regardless of where in the country they may be based.
- KPI #7: Reduction in agriculture related accidents.**
 During the Encircle programme there were 12 reported farm accident fatalities in agriculture in 2022, and 9 fatalities in 2023. Although there is a moderate reduction in this, the Encircle programme have shown there is growing necessity to support farm families coping with other forms of sudden death, particularly suspected suicide or sudden medical events.

KPI #8: Increase in Empathy and Support. To measure this intangible KPI, the team sought ongoing feedback from the farm families throughout the project. The feedback has been used with permission in the word clouds below. These words from the farming families themselves are a good indicator of the high levels of empathy and support farm families have felt following their engagement with the Encircle Programme. In addition to this ongoing feedback an evaluation of the programme with farming families was conducted at the end of the project. Again, this feedback demonstrates the powerful impact the programme had on those who engaged with it. There was 100% satisfaction with the Encircle Programme and services. According to the participants the most valuable aspect of the Encircle Programme is the emotional support offered. It is clear that the various ways through which people feel emotionally supported (see figure 7)–



Figure 7: Participants were asked to use one word to describe their interaction with/support received from the Encircle Programme.

Very kind, supportive and helpful. Gentle as you need to be in the first few weeks following a tragedy.

Very welcoming, empathetic and friendly, and very willing to offer support and help.

I felt very supported and grateful for their guidance. I then received a pack in the post which contained a beautiful candle and booklet with further information. I felt instant relief that I was not alone.

I felt I had the weight lifted off my shoulders. It was a relief to talk to someone who understood.

One person noted that they had emailed Embrace FARM and explained "...Prompt response. Needs met instantly".

Figure 8: Direct Quotes from participants of the Encircle Programme to demonstrate achievement of #KPI 8⁵.

KPI #9, #10: Increase in Policy Support and Advocacy on behalf of Farm Families. Our team continuously advocated for the services and support offered by the Encircle programme throughout the full project time frame.

⁶ Feeney, M. 2024. Embrace FARM Encircle Programme Evaluation Report

- In 2022, members of the team met with **MEP Colm Markey** at the Castleblaney Agricultural Show in July. Following this conversation with Colm, further information on the project and funding was sent to him.
- A similar email was sent to **MEP Maria Walsh** again following a conversation with her on the project. Maria Walshe subsequently went on to use Embrace FARM and the work of the Encircle programme in her thesis submission as part of her Masters in Masters of Agricultural Extension and Innovation with UCD. Maria also attended the final conference in person in April 2023.
- Brian and Norma Rohan met with the **Minister for Agriculture**, Food and the Marine, **Charlie McConalogue** and **Minister of State** in the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) with Special Responsibility for Research and Development, Farm Safety, and New Market Development, **Martin Heydon** at the Tullamore Show in August where she had the opportunity to discuss the project and the work being carried out by the Encircle programme.
- In addition, Embrace FARM had a presence at the Ploughing Championships in September 2022 and 2023 where Norma Rohan took part in a panel discussion with **MEP Chris McManus** on farm safety, its impact and advocated the benefits of the Encircle Programme (2022).
- Members of the Encircle programme attended the **Women in Agriculture** Conference in October 2022 and 2023. They continued to promote and advocate for the programme there and spoke with the **then Taoiseach Michéal Martin** and **Minister for Justice at the time Helen McEntee**.
- During the course of the project, the team members through Embrace FARM are participating in the EU Safe Habitus project Strengthening Farm Health and Safety Knowledge Innovation Systems.
- The final conference which brought together key stakeholders from government, industry, farming representatives and media was used to discuss and disseminate findings as well continuing advocacy efforts by engaging and informing policymakers and other influential figures.

Case Studies

While the KPIs statistics and data can provide a view of the success of the programme the true value and impact of this project can be seen by the difference it has made in the day to day lives of those people who engaged with the project. Our experience tells us that the grieving process does not follow a singular route or easily fit into a specific period. The timelines for contacting and engaging with our services is not linear and will vary for each case. For example, we may provide initial support to individuals and families and recommend that they follow up with more specialised counselling and support services, however in many cases, individuals may not be ready for this next step for several months or even longer. When these individuals are ready to take further steps, we want to be there to continue to support them. During the course of this project over 159 families have been supported.

The Project implementation team have highlighted the following case studies to demonstrate the practical consequences and impacts of the Encircle programme on the day to day lives of those farm families that have engaged with the service. This qualitative information is based on actual case studies of families helped during the project timeline. Names and other identification details have been changed to protect the anonymity of the families.

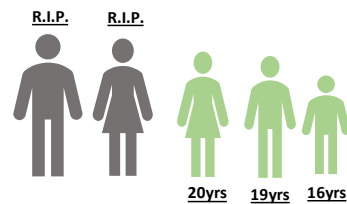


Case Study – Family who lost both their Mother and Father

A neighbour of a family made contact with Embrace FARM looking for support for a young family. His wife is a trustee for this family farm and she is looking for legal advice also.

Background

There are three young people in this family, who lost their dad to suicide 3 years ago and lost their mum to cancer this year. The three children are aged 20yrs, 19yrs, and 16yrs of age. There has been a long legal battle regarding the family farm and this has caused a lot of stress for this family along with the tragic loss of both parents.



Current Issues

On initial conversation with the neighbour it was explained what supports we can offer both his wife as trustee and for the young people in the family and if they would like me to visit them at home to go through the different types of supports. I spoke with the young people at their home, listening and providing support as they told their story of losing both parents and now being left on their own to run the farm, and explained the counselling supports and practical supports we can offer.

Supports

- I explained the different types of supports we offer to families
- A referral was made for legal guidance for the neighbour who is trustee to this family's farm.
- A home visit to the family was arranged, a referral for financial guidance was made.
- Supports are on-going for this family

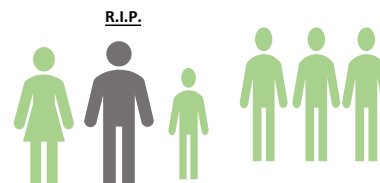
Case Study – Family who lost a husband from a Sudden Illness



Betty made contact with Embrace FARM just days after losing her husband, looking for support.

Background

Betty lost her husband in 2023 from a cancer diagnosis, they have 3 adult sons and one 17yr old son. They have a dairy farm. Betty does not have any idea on how to run a farm and her adult children don't live near her.



Current Issues

Betty is concerned about how she will cope with milking the cows and the daily running of the farm, she can't even grieve as these issues are immediate and causing such stress on her at present. She does not have any experience of the running of the farm so is feeling overwhelmed with making decisions regarding the family farm.

Supports

- I explained the different types of supports we offer to families
- Information pack and candles sent out with follow up call arranged for week later
- On follow up call Betty asked if she could get counselling for herself and her children, she also asked if she could avail of practical supports to discuss options regarding the family farm to get guidance on what options were out there for her to help with these current concerns which are causing a lot of stress and worry at this time for her. A referral has been made for legal support and guidance for Betty and her family along with counselling support for both herself and her children
- Support is on-going

Project Communication and Dissemination

Outreach is a key component of Encircle Programme's work and the team has always recognised that effective communication and dissemination of the Encircle Programme was critical to raise awareness and increase visibility and uptake of the new programme. At the outset to ensure a strong communication and dissemination plan was delivered, a tailored communications strategy was planned and devised in conjunction with an external communications expert. Input from the steering group was also sought and incorporated.

Components of this Communications strategy included having:

- A significant launch event about what the Encircle Programme is and what it does. This online launch was planned for April 27th, 2022.
- Communication with the regional hubs and introductions to the mentor teams in each location was made available through the website. Planning and information about both stage 1 and stage 2 supports is also visible through the webpage dedicated to the [Encircle Programme](#)
- Targeted and regular traditional print media and social media campaigns in addition to connecting with relevant multiple groups and organisations across the country during the course of the project was planned for.
- Targeted online ad. campaign called "TAKE OUR HAND".

To ensure that the Encircle programme reached its target groups and stakeholders, it was essential to have clear messaging and a comprehensive listing of all stakeholders in the rollout of this strategy. An information pack was designed and includes an information leaflet for each of the following;

1. Family bereavement support
2. Supporting someone recently bereaved
3. Supporting a child who has lost a parent/sibling
4. The Encircle Programme
5. Survivor support – peer to peer
6. Loss of a spouse
7. Losing a child
8. Practical support
9. Understanding grief
10. Family.

During the course of the project, the Encircle Programme engaged with a diverse and comprehensive range of groups and stakeholders to raise awareness of the programme. These included:

- Farmers
- Farm Families
- Local Community

- Cooperatives
- Agricultural Colleges
- Agricultural Consultants ((Feirm Ground, Agricultural Consultants Association (ACA) & Teagasc))
- Schools - through age-appropriate education initiatives – e.g., Agri-kids
- Press – specifically agriculture sector.
- Industry e.g., Irish Farmers’ Association (IFA), Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association (ICMA), Irish Co-operative Organisation Society (ICOS).
- Macra Na Feirme

In addition, targeted awareness campaigns were also carried out with specific stakeholders. These groups included farm organisation forums, farmers’ marts, agricultural shows, farm organization processors. Each Garda division across the country have received an information pack. In addition, going forward our information booklet will now be included with the community policing toolkit where all the community policing can access and reference Awareness was also raised with HSE suicide prevention officers, coroners, hospital chaplains, funeral homes so they in turn could signpost the services to those who may need it.

To date, there have been more than 18,000 dissemination engagements with these groups about the Encircle Programme (see Table E for full breakdown).

Dissemination of information to organisations about the Encircle Programme		
#	Organisation	Number of Communications issued
1	Farm Organisation processors	82
2	Charities	29
3	Farm Marts	56
4	Farm Organisation Agri. Shows	115
5	HSE Suicide Prevention Officers	29
6	Coroners	38
7	Funeral Homes	234
8	Hospital Chaplains	19
9	Farm Org. Forums	9
10	PPN Network	31
11	An Garda Siochana	17500
	TOTAL	18142

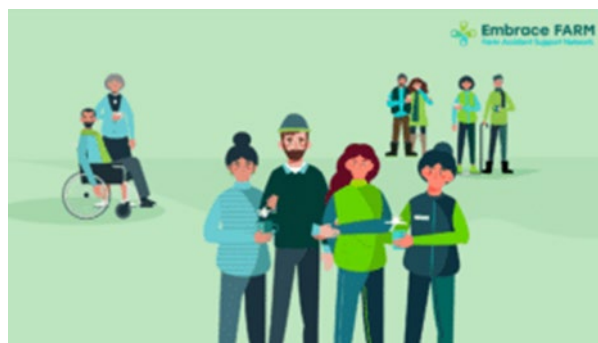
Table E: Dissemination engagements to key stakeholders.

Dissemination and Communication Highlights

One of the highlights of the Encircle Programme Communications strategy was the **TAKE OUR HAND Campaign** which ran in early 2023. As interest and uptake of the Encircle

Programme grew, it became necessary to communicate the various ways the programme can support a Farm Family. To further educate and promote the aims of the Encircle Programme an animation based social media campaign was designed and launched. This #TakeOurHand campaign aims to remind affected farm families of the supports available, no matter where they are on their journey after a sudden death or trauma on farm. In late 2022, in conjunction with the PR and Marketing Team engaged for the Encircle Programme, a series of animations were created to tell the story of some of the farm families who have been supported by the work of Embrace FARM. There were 6 animations in full, each 1 minute in length and these ran as part of a dedicated digital and press campaign called #takeourhand from January until April 2023. The animation shorts were also used to great effect as part of the final conference in April 2023. This campaign can be viewed by hovering your phone camera over the QR code below or on the website.

As part of the KPIs, the results of this campaign in terms of reach were tracked. Based on the high page reach of both pages, it is clear that the objective of increasing awareness was achieved. Observing the figures, there were regular spikes showing the effect that the video series and social advertising had on page reach. The Facebook page reach was 864.1% higher than the 3 months prior to the campaign.



#TakeOurHand #WeRememberYou

Dissemination of project outcomes and lessons learned took place towards the end of the project. The main event around this was the **FINAL CONFERENCE** which is set out in detail in the next section of this report. In addition, there was an end of year event held in the Midlands Hotel Portlaoise in December 2023.. While this event did focus on the **FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE ENCIRCLE PROGRAMME**, it also provided an opportunity to disseminate the key messages around project outcomes and lessons learnt to a targeted and select audience. The Encircle team plan to continue to disseminate and promote the Encircle Project after the official end date of programme on December 31, 2023. It is essential that lessons learned from this project are built on, that knowledge is transferred and spread as wide as possible to reach a much bigger cohort of families and communities than is currently the case.

Date / Main Campaign	Social Media	Media (all other)
January – March <i>Take Our Hand</i>	335.1k reach	761.6k reach
April – May <i>Encircle Final Conference</i>	8,632 reach (inc Twitter) 871 profile visits (FB / IG)	577.4k (print) 118,163 (online)
May – July (early) <i>Remembrance Service</i>	67,277 reach (inc. paid ads) 3,306 profile visits (FB / IG)	2.1m (print) 37,530 (Online) 376.6k (radio and broadcast)

Table F: Media and Social Media Reach of 3 key events 2023 : January – June 2023

Final Conference⁷

This took place on April 27th, 2023, in Tullamore Court Hotel. Compered by Ciaran Mullooly, the purpose of the final conference was to present an overview of the programme’s work to date to professional stakeholders and present opportunities to stakeholders who may be interested in supporting the Encircle Programme. With that in mind, the panellists were carefully selected so that the conference would meet the following objectives:

- Understand the social, cultural and economic impacts of sudden loss and injury within farm families and communities.
- Identify how the Agri-Business Sector can support and is supported by these impacts.
- Identify opportunities and actions which can be taken forward across sectors to build a community of support for all those affected.

⁷ Embrace FARM Encircle Programme Final Report – June 2023, Author Marie Feeney



Image 4: Ciaran Mullooly addressing the Final Conference – April 2023

The conference was a resounding success with a majority of delegates reporting that they were very satisfied. A diverse group of stakeholders were in attendance representing various different agricultural, research, policy, health and support groups, all of whom were interested to learn about the Encircle Programme and, how they may support it. In total 71 delegates registered for the conference and 60 attended the event in-person in Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

Professional Sector Represented (n=23)		Diversity of Affiliation within the 'Other Category (n= 17 respondents. Some respondents represented two sectors, both responses are noted)	
DAFM	4.4% (1)	University/Research (4)	Communications (1)
Health Services	4.4% (1)	EIP (2)	Church (1)
Agri Agency	4.4% (1)	Bereavement Support (2)	Board Member (1)
Media	-	Suicide Bereavement (1)	Illegible & blank response (2)
Banking/Financial	8.7% (3)	Macra na Feirme (2)	
Agri Food	4.4% (1)	Agricultural College/Education (2)	
Other	73.9% 17	Counsellor (1)	

Most stakeholders learned about the conference via direct email from the Encircle programme team or through their workplace thus demonstrating the success of the Encircle programme targeted email campaign. Delegates expressed a definite willingness and commitment to collaborate to further support Embrace FARM’s work, whether it was to help raise awareness about Embrace FARM by having links on their website or by linking in with Embrace FARM and the Encircle programme to offer a service to



compliment the current service provision. Following up on such opportunities will serve as a key strategic unit of work for Embrace FARM in the coming months.

Delegates also felt that the Encircle Programme conference served as a valuable learning experience. Based on data that has emerged, it is clear that the Encircle Programme conference was deemed to be an important professional educational forum – both in terms of what motivated delegates to attend and what interested them most about the event. What the professional audience found interesting at this event will help Embrace FARM and the Encircle Programme plan effectively for future events when catering to this important group. The panel discussion format with powerful personal stories was very well received by this audience. This success can easily be modelled at future events. It is important for Embrace FARM and the Encircle Programme to know what key messages professionals took away with them following the conference.

The data demonstrates that the following four key messages were the ones taken away by stakeholders on the day.

- Embrace FARM is there to help.
- Embrace FARM and its Encircle programme needs to be supported by industry.
- The Encircle Programme needs long-term funding.
- Ongoing communication is required to ensure that potential stakeholders and wider society are fully aware of the support that the Encircle Programme provides.

<u>Facebook</u>	<u>Instagram</u>	<u>Twitter</u>
Page reach – 7,686 Profile visits – 773.	Page reach- 934 Profile visits- 98. New followers – 19	Number of tweets- 33 Tweet Impressions- 11.6k New followers- 11
<u>Online Media- 118,163</u>		
<u>Print Media</u>		
<u>Irish Independent Farming</u> Reach- 199.6k	<u>Irish Examiner Farming</u> Reach- 90.2k	<u>Laois Nationalist</u> Reach- 10.2k
<u>Dungarvan Observer</u> Reach- 29.1k	<u>Connacht Tribune</u> Reach- 60.2k	<u>Tullamore Tribune</u> Reach- 30.3k
<u>Farm Week</u> Reach- 17.5k	<u>Irish Farmers Monthly</u> Reach- 121.4k	<u>Nenagh Guardian</u> Reach- 18.9k

Table G: Social Media and Print Media Statistics and Reach following Final Conference

The conference highlighted the overall value of the Encircle Programme. The data clearly demonstrates that it is highly regarded by stakeholders, and they are willing to support



it, but they too see an absolute need for long-term funding to ringfence the Encircle Programme's future. Stakeholders believe that the Encircle Programme is a unique and invaluable support structure for those who need it most and it is imperative that it continues. Significant opportunity exists for Embrace FARM to respond to the multiple offers of support from stakeholders who wish to collaborate to enrich the programme's current service offering and ultimately help ensure its future viability.

Other Events

Annual Remembrance Service – June of each year.

The 9th and 10th Annual Ecumenical Remembrance Service organised by Embrace FARM was held on the last Sunday in June in 2022 and 2023 at the Most Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Abbeylax, Co. Laois. The Services were livestreamed on the day and subsequently broadcast on RTE. In 2022 an additional 35,000 viewed this. Again there was a significant spike in visitors to social media pages, the following table (Table H) gives details of audience figures and reach through both online and print media.



Image 5: Communication on the Annual Remembrance Ceremony

<p>Facebook Profile visits- 3,082. New followers- 12 Page reach – 28,370</p>	<p>Instagram Profile visits – 224. New Followers- 32 Page reach- 12,467</p>	<p>Twitter Tweet impression- 8,078 New followers- 9 Twitter mentions- 39.</p>	<p>LinkedIn Post impressions- 1,612. Page impressions- 1,681 Reposts – 12</p>
<p>Social Media advertising Reach – 16,750 Engagement – 7,136</p>	<p>Print Media Belfast Newsletter – Reach- 50.6k Laois Nationalist - Reach- 10.2k Leinster Express – Reach- 24.1k Farm Week – Reach- 17.5k Irish Farmers Journal Northern Ireland – Reach- 216k Irish Farmers Journal – Reach- 364.4k Leinster Express - Reach- 24.1k Irish Farmers Journal Northern Ireland – Reach- 216k</p>	<p>Radio & Broadcast Media RTÉ One – Viewing figures – 37,300. RTÉ Radio 1 – Sunday Worship – Reach- 180k WLR FM- Reach – 12.8k Ocean FM- Reach – 25.4k</p>	

<p><u>Online - 37,530</u></p>	<p>Irish Farmers Journal - Reach- 364.4k Leinster Express - Reach- 24.1k Irish Independent Farming – Reach- 199.6k Tullamore Tribune – Reach- 30.3k Westmeath Independent – Reach- 22.5k The Nenagh Guardian – Reach- 18.9k Farm Week – Reach- 17.5k Irish Farmers Journal - Reach- 364.4k Belfast Newsletter – Reach- 50.6k Laois Nationalist – Reach- 10.2k Leinster Express – Reach- 24.1k Kilkenny People – Reach- 30.8k Meath Chronicle – Reach- 30.2k</p>	<p>KFM – Reach – 12.7k Midlands 103 – Reach – 24.4k WLR FM – Reach – 12.8k KCLR FM – Reach – 14.2k Northern Sound – Reach – 27.2k TippFM – Reach – 15.6k KCLR FM – Reach – 14.2k</p>
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Table H: Social Media and Print Media Stats. And Reach following Annual Remembrance Day.

Children’s bereavement workshops

In October, the Encircle Programme team hosted families for a residential bereavement weekend with a specific focus on children’s grief. This children’s bereavement workshop included bonding activities in Castlecomer Discovery Park where a special remembrance service for children missing their loved ones was held. It was very moving for the team to facilitate the process of the families getting to know each other and start to support each other.

Joint Webinar

In November 2023, Embrace FARM, HUGG (Healing Untold Grief Groups) and IHF (Irish Hospice Foundation) jointly held a webinar providing psychoeducation and information of support services to 90 registered attendees of the farming community. The focus of the webinar was to let the farming community know about the supports of both HUGG and Embrace FARM when a sudden and traumatic death happens.

Christmas Packs

In December, a Christmas card with a Remembrance Ornament was sent to each family, Christmas is a particularly difficult time and this communication serves to acknowledge and remind that the Encircle Programme is available to provide support if needed. A summary update on the highlights of the Programme in that year was also included to further disseminate the key messages and continuously raise awareness.

Impacts

At the outset of the project, one the main impacts envisaged was the provision of a centralised community of supports for families in the aftermath of a farm accident or suspected suicide. With the launch and implementation of the Encircle Programme this has been achieved. Working with a network of over **42 counsellors and specialist advisors**, support for affected families is now available through a single point of contact to any farming family in the country that needs support. Since the project began there has been over **159 farming families supported**. In total over **500 hours of counselling** to those who needed it has been delivered. In addition over **40 meetings** with tailored specialist services such as Agri. Financial support, legal services and agri advisors have also been arranged and delivered. **8 home visits** have been conducted and **157 individual phone calls** with the Programme Co Ordinator have taken place.

Through ongoing communication and targeted advertising of its services, there has been increased awareness of the Encircle Programme and the types of supports it provides. Over **18000 dissemination activities** targeted at both farming communities and services supporting farming families have been carried out. The Encircle Programme has also provided ongoing **employment for 1.5** additional local jobs.

Overall it is clear that securing the EIP-AGRI funding to deliver the Encircle Programme had a transformative impact in terms of how Embrace FARM can position and provide services aswell as having a transformative impact on the supported farm families themselves. This was very clearly evidenced by both ongoing feedback during the project and also through our evaluation survey completed at the end of the project.

The following tables outlines our envisaged impacts at the outset of the project and the summary update on how each one was achieved.

Impact	<i>Description</i>
1	A centralised community of supports for families in the aftermath of a farm accident or suspected suicide on a farm. It will enable the agricultural and health sectors to work collaboratively together to achieve this. It will also empower local communities to understand their role and contribution to supporting the local farm family. The rollout on a regional basis will bring these services closer to communities and farm families affected. It will also increase the visibility of the supports open to them.
Result	Achieved. Verified by KPI # 1-4.
2	Increased awareness of farm safety, health, and wellbeing resulting in a reduction in agriculture-related accidents. Agriculture accounts for 6% of the workforce, yet accounts for more than half of workplace fatalities happening on farms around Ireland. Encircle hopes to contribute to a significant decrease in this ratio.

Impact	Description
Result	Achieved. Verified by KPI # 5, 7.
3	Increased empathy and emotional support to farm families including recognising their personal experience following the traumatic event and the consequences it has left on their lives.
Result	Achieved. Verified by KPI #8. See also appendix 6 on results of evaluation survey.
4	Recognition in a national bereavement policy, and policy for suicide prevention of the unique experiences and challenges of people and families in the farming community.
Result	Ongoing. KPI #9,10 During the project duration, the team have met with Pieta House and established ongoing information sharing and referrals. The team also set up and fostered collaborative relationships with the Health Executive service (HSE), Irish Hospice Foundation and Rural Support Northern Ireland. Embrace FARM is also member of <u>Safe Habitus</u> EU project group which aims to strengthen farming health and safety knowledge in Europe.
5	Reducing the stigma for getting help, the aftermath of a farm accident or sudden trauma on a farm can mean people will feel very emotional in seeking support to help them move forward and come to terms with what has happened. The Encircle Programme aims to have that support structure in place, so people know help is there immediately when they need it.
Result	Achieved. KPI # 1-4
6	A sustainable model of supports with a long term future for the Encircle Programme model. This aspect of farm safety, health and wellbeing is not currently served by a sustainable resource. The plan to initiate sustainable mechanisms and sources of funding which can be complementary to the overall model and regional hubs. This will help to ensure the viability and accessibility of help available to farm families and other stakeholders.
Result	Ongoing. While additional funding has been secured for 2024, the question of a sustainable funding model remains a long term issue.
7	Improved wholistic and collaborative approach for professional services that interact with farm families. The nature of the context in which these professional services are approached and needed is highly sensitive and

Impact	Description
	needs a focused and empathetic approach to ensure the farm families are properly supported and cared for. This model can contribute to ensuring a consistent and well run service is provided when these services are approached and asked for help.
Result	Achieved. KPI # 1-4.
8	Increased advocacy on behalf of farm families and impact on all public policy which affects farm families. This can take many forms but some can include cross departmental effects (e.g. DAFM, Dept of Health); Advocacy across all public policies which may have a link to the health and wellbeing of farm families encountering these sudden traumas, including prevention measures ; The need to articulate messages for farm families, ensuring their voices are heard; replying to consultations on public policy and campaigning for the rights/needs of farm families, which may include disability support for farm accident survivors.
Result	Ongoing, KPI # 9, 10

Value for Money / Financial Plan

The project carefully planned and efficiently used its budget to accomplish its goals in a cost-effective manner, maximising resources to achieve all planned objectives within budget. During the course of the project, the Encircle Programme supported over 159 families at a cost of €2,610 per family. However, the true value of this programme, as evidenced by feedback received during and after the project through our evaluation surveys, lies in the immeasurable impacts and significant positive changes it has brought to the everyday lives of the supported families. They have been provided with connection and somewhere to turn to in their darkest days.

Project Costs	Spent or accrued as of Dec. 30th 2023
Totals	Total Paid
Personnel Costs	€85,761.56
Travel	€7,539.62
Other Direct Costs	€113.20
Administration Costs	€163,758.07
Implementation Costs	€158,113.99
Total Costs	€415,286.44

Project Findings

- Prior to this project, there was an evident gap in research around the impact of trauma in farming families. Throughout the project, a substantial amount of knowledge and information has now been gathered and documented regarding the challenges confronting farming families in the aftermath of sudden loss and serious injury. One of the first tasks of the Encircle Programme was to transition and integrate all existing data relating to Farm Families affected by trauma over to a new CRM system. For the first time there is now a bank of centralised data (autonomised) relating to trauma on farms (fatal, suicide, near misses, life changing accidents) and those affected by it. This information can be used to provide a more accurate and realistic picture of the challenges and concerns facing the affected families. This in turn can also be used to inform policy as well as identify trends and key issues such as the legal implications, succession issues, financial impacts and health and wellbeing impacts among affected families.
- Targeted dissemination and awareness campaigns have led to increased awareness on the issues that arise following farm accidents and sudden traumas on farms among the wider agricultural and health sectors as well as the wider community. This enables these groups to better understand and support affected families.
- During the project, the Encircle Programme team has actively engaged with and collaborated with support services and organisations to further enhance the services provided to affected farming families.
- During the project and through engagement with affected families, the Encircle programme have identified a growing necessity to support farm families coping with other forms of sudden death, particularly suspected suicide or sudden medical events.
- Information gathered from the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) can assist on a wider level in the development of resources and associated policies applicable but not limited to the Department of Health, Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, Department of Rural Development and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. These policy inputs can range across a number of areas such as (bereavement, depression in farmers, health and safety, social innovation (social outlets for farmers, farm families etc)

Keys Learnings / Lessons Learnt

Effective use of lessons learned will serve to continually improve the service offering, and general learnings which can also be used to inform future policy and practice in the area of mental health, safety and wellbeing as well as practical support. Throughout the project and based on our post project evaluation survey findings, we have consistently sought and integrated feedback to improve our programme. Furthermore, once the project has ended, we intend to continue to use the project outcomes to improve services and better support all key stakeholders.

Our experience tells us that the grieving process does not follow a singular route or easily fit into a specific period. The timelines for contacting and engaging with our services is not linear and will vary for each case for example, we may provide initial support to individuals and families and recommend that they follow up with more specialised counselling and support services, however in many cases, individuals may not be ready for this next step for several months or even longer. When these individuals are ready to take further steps, we need to be there to continue to support them. Long term funding is essential to continue the provision of services and support to farm families and individuals affected by trauma on farms.

In December we conducted a post project evaluation. The objective of post-project evaluation was to gain insight on the Encircle Programme from perspectives of two key groups: (1) individuals seeking support following injury or loss, and (2) Service providers involved in the programme (such as counsellors and financial advisors). It was very important to us to understand both groups' experiences, engagement levels, and any areas for programme improvement. Participant feedback from group number one indicated a high level of satisfaction with the programme, which was very encouraging and gratifying to receive. However, there were some suggestions for increased awareness about the Encircle Programme. While raising public awareness has always been an important aspect of our work, there is a continuous need to expand outreach across various social media platforms as the majority of participants learned about the programme through online channels.

This feedback was reiterated by group number two the service providers who indicated that more awareness needs to be raised about what the Encircle Programme and Embrace FARM do. They advised that a presence needs to be maintained a presence at agri related public events with follow up in print and social media. There was also feedback from the service providers that they would like to meet their peers to both strengthen their own collegiality and their commitment to the Encircle Programme clients. The outcomes of these meetings could be used to inform future offerings.

Recommendations

Based on our experience in implementing this project, we have identified a number of key areas which are critical to continuing the work of this project in providing supports to farm families affected by sudden injury and loss.

Funding / Financial Sustainability

Since the inception of Encircle, we have well exceeded our original target and are now supporting over 159 farming families. Based on experience and direct feedback, we know that this programme is making a very real, positive difference in the lives of those we are supporting. We feel a duty of care to ensure the support to these individuals and families as well as new families who contact us on a weekly basis will be continued beyond this project end date. Feedback from our final conference and post project evaluation survey clearly demonstrates that it is highly regarded by stakeholders, and they are willing to support it, but they too see an absolute need for long-term funding to ringfence the Encircle Programme's future. While funding was secured from the Department to fund the programme in 2024, longer-term future funding for the ongoing provision of our services remains an issue.

Recommendation: Provide long-term, multi-year funding framework to continue and improve the support to the Encircle Programme families

Funding Support and collaboration with Industry / Social Impact Investors and EU Sources .

- Seek and assess potential collaborations with industry. to engage with and get support from **industry**. For the Encircle Programme, this could mean attaining key expertise and exposure as well as additional investment and sponsorship to fund our services in the longer term. For prospective industry partners, this could enhance their public image as socially responsible organisations.
- Reaching out to influential individuals or **social impact investors** in our industry who wish to be associated with our cause. Their support and association can help highlight our message and attract either financial contributions and / or using their influence to advocate for our cause on a broader scale.
- Engage with **European counterparts** and seek ways to bring more EU spotlight on this issue with a view to attracting public EU funding, but also investment from big corporations who operate across the EU. The Encircle programme is a scalable model that can be adapted and implemented in other countries addressing similar challenges across the EU. By engaging with our European counterparts we can



further highlight the issues facing affected farming families which can help to secure future funding and investment.

Recommendation: Reach out and engage with key stakeholder, Industry, EU Partners and influential individuals or social impact investors to attract investment / sponsorship continue to promote and raise awareness of the Encircle Programme.

Recording of Data

According to a report by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), farmers face a significantly higher fatality rate compared to other occupations, yet official farm accident figures often underestimate the true extent of these incidents. Accurate data on farm accidents and suicides is crucial for informed decision-making and ensuring appropriate support. While the Encircle Programme has made progress in providing accurate data, there are still gaps, including inconsistencies in recording sudden deaths, a lack of standardised guidelines and inconsistencies between different coroners and between counties.

Recommendation: Improve accuracy of data recording. Provision of standardised guidelines.

Communication

Effective communication is crucial for the continual success of the Encircle Programme, with a specific focus on clear messaging, stakeholder engagement, and maximizing outreach efforts through our digital marketing channels;

Clear Messaging

- The Encircle Programme now provides support for all types of sudden death and injuries affecting a farm family. Previously, Embrace FARM had supported families impacted by farm accident-only experiences. We would never want any farm family to feel there are limits around what we do or that they are alone. Therefore, an ongoing key task is to clearly define, communicate, and raise awareness among stakeholders about our core mission, namely, to support farm families after injury and loss without limiting support to just farm accidents only cases. With this wide-ranging reach of support, it makes sense for the public message to be reflected in a more encompassing tagline – “The Encircle Programme is here to help”.

Recommendation: Continue to clearly define and communicate what the Encircle Programme offers.

Engage with key stakeholders to support communication efforts.

- Based on the feedback during the project and from the final conference an opportunity exists to avail of support from interested stakeholders who are willing to “raise awareness” and “spread the message” about the work of the Encircle Programme. The willingness of these stakeholders presents significant potential for Encircle to expand its network further and provide another avenue for raising awareness of the program's benefits for affected farming families.

Recommendation: Leverage stakeholders to raise awareness.

Using digital marketing tools/means to further spread the message.

- Throughout the project, digital media tools and social media platforms were utilised cost effectively to raise awareness, to educate and to disseminate information. Feedback has indicated that online and social media channels are the primary means through which our services and programs are recognised⁸. Therefore, it is essential that we continue to expand and optimise our digital marketing efforts to promote our services and raise awareness. This includes engaging with our audience through various digital platforms, creating engaging and meaningful content and promoting our services with our intended audience.

Recommendation: Increased use of digital marketing platforms

Training

As a key contact of all farming families, Agri Representatives should receive increased support to better assist those affected by trauma. The Encircle Programme team is perfectly placed to deliver this training potentially leading to additional revenue streams for the programme.

Recommendation: Provide and deliver training for key stakeholders such as agri reps to better support affected families.

Peer to peer meeting with Service Providers

Following feedback gained from Service providers during post project evaluation survey regular debriefing session among service providers who support the Encircle Programme should be arranged. This would provide a safe professional debriefing space where service providers could meet their peers and where further feedback and suggestions from these key stakeholders could be used to continuously improve the offering and supports that the Encircle Programme provides.

Recommendation: Regular review meeting bringing together service providers to be arranged.

⁸ Feeney, M. 2024. *Embrace FARM Encircle Programme Evaluation Report*.



National Showcase Event

The establishment of a national showcase event, held annually or bi-annually, aimed at highlighting the successes and impact of the Encircle program would be progressive next step. This event could serve as a platform to raise awareness, showcase case studies, present new findings and data and discuss best practices in supporting farm families affected by trauma. Additionally, the event would offer sponsorship opportunities, providing a means to further support the programme in the long term.

Recommendation: Establish annual or biannual event to showcase work, raise awareness, and attract sponsorship.

Research

At time of writing there is an application pending with the Teagasc 'Walsh Fellowship' to engage a PHD student to carry out research "Shouldering the Burden: Understanding the economic and social impacts of sudden farm deaths and traumatic injuries on farm enterprises, families and communities". As farming is recognised as a dangerous occupation with high levels of both fatal and non-fatal injuries there has been much research focusing on understanding occupational risks and developing preventive actions however there is a gap in research around understanding economic and social impacts of deaths and injuries for farming families and communities. This research and subsequent findings help address that gap and would support a better understanding of the impacts of injury and death on farm households, and how they can be supported during these difficult periods.

Recommendation: Further research to address gaps on understanding economic and social impacts of deaths and injuries for farming families and communities

Conclusions

This Encircle Programme was designed to address the gap in services for those affected by sudden trauma on the family farm. Over the course of the project term, the Encircle Programme has demonstrated that it is a unique and invaluable support structure for those who need it most.

Key “take away” messages from this project are:

- ❖ Embrace Farms` Encircle programme is there to help;
- ❖ This needs to be supported by industry;
- ❖ The Encircle Programme needs long-term funding;
- ❖ It is very important to maintain **ongoing communication** to ensure that potential stakeholders and wider society are fully aware of the Encircle Programme and the supports that it provides. The ultimate goal is to raise awareness of the programme among all farming families and their wider circle of farming contacts, so that they can access the programme if ever needed.

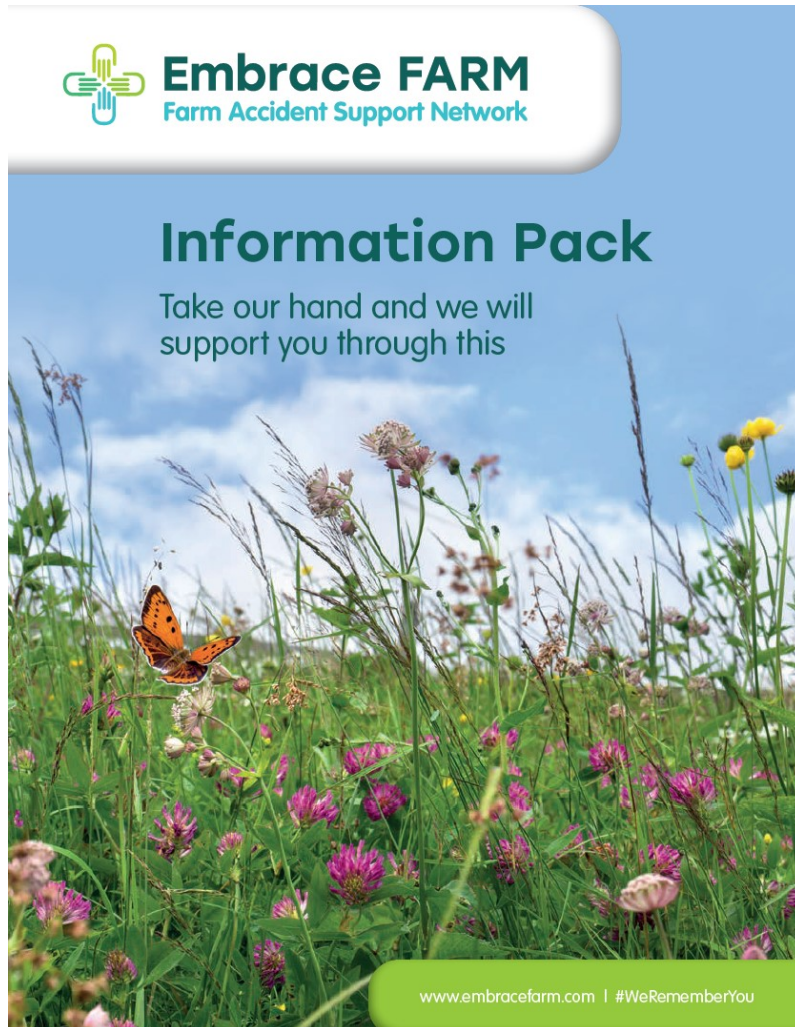
Data from the final conference as well as anecdotal evidence highlights that the programme is highly regarded by stakeholders, and they are willing to support it, but they too see an absolute need for long-term funding to ringfence the Encircle Programme's future.

In conclusion, the Encircle project has successfully achieved all of its objectives outlined at the beginning to support farm families in the aftermath of sudden trauma. Through the implementation of the Encircle Programme, farm families can now access a comprehensive range of services and supports tailored to their needs via a single, structured point of contact. Throughout the project's duration the Encircle Programme has consistently monitored its services and actively sought feedback to continuously inform and improve its services. Through advocacy efforts and initiation of campaigns to raise public awareness, Encircle seeks to actively influence and inform policymakers and policies and to continuously advocate on behalf of affected farm families. Lastly, the Encircle Programme operates with the highest standards of governance, ensuring transparency and accountability in all its activities.

Looking ahead, the Encircle Programme remains committed to supporting affected farm families through the provision of a centralised set of structured supports available to any farm family anywhere in the country who may need them.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Copy of Information Pack



Appendix 2 – Copy of Branding Guidelines



Contents

Section 1 Core Messages at the Heart of Encircle

Introduction	04
Using the Guidelines	05
Our Values	06
Our Story	08

Section 2 Brand Guidelines

The Logo	10
The Icon	11
Logo Versions	12
Logo Spacing	13
Colour Palette	14
Logo Sizes	15
Typography	16
Brand Restrictions	17
Imagery	18

Section 3 Visual Presentation of Brand

Display Materials	20
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Glossary

Terms	22
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Appendix 3 – Copy of Final Conference agenda



Compere
Ciaran Mullooly

The Encircle Conference

“Supporting farm families through loss”
Building a community of support
within the Agri-Industry

27th April 2023 | Tullamore Court Hotel, Co. Offaly|
10am – 1pm



Keynote speaker
Martin Heydon TD



AGENDA

09:30	Registration	
10:00	Welcome & Introduction	Ciaran Mullooly
10:05	Keynote Address	Minister Martin Heydon, TD
10:15	The Encircle Programme – One Year On'	Norma Rohan, Embrace FARM
10:25	Around the Kitchen Table - 'Hear their Stories'	
	<i>Chaired by: Martin Heydon TD</i>	
	Encircle Programme Co-Ordinator, Caroline Redmond, Business Mentor, Gearoid Condon and Psychotherapist Brian Holohan speak about the *families and cases they have met as part of the Encircle Programme.	
	<i>*All identities remain anonymous to protect our families.</i>	
11:00	Q&A	
11:15	Break	
11:45	BEYOND THE FARM GATE - 'Continuing to meet their needs'.	
	<i>Chaired by: Liz Gavin, Eur Digital Village</i>	
	Panel: Anne Kinsella (Agricultural Economics - Teagasc) / Amii McKeever (Editor - Irish Country Living) / Theresa Roche (Vice Chair - IFA Farm Family & Social Affairs Committee)	
	Building a community of support for farm families affected by loss and the impact and importance of programmes such as Encircle to the continued wellbeing of farm families in Ireland.	
12:30	Q&A	
12:45	Final Acknowledgements– 'Take our Hand'.	Brian Rohan, Embrace FARM
12:55	Launch new Embrace FARM tagline	Brian & Norma Rohan
13:00	Lunch	

Thank you for your attendance.

Don't forget to fill out your event questionnaire & participate in the 'Walkabout Survey



Appendix 4 - Copy of Final Conference Report



Embrace FARM Encircle Programme Conference

Tullamore Court Hotel – Thursday, 27th April 2023

Event Evaluation Report
Strengthening the Encircle Programme and Securing its Future



Author: Dr Maria Feeney

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	2
The Embrace FARM Encircle Programme	3
Embrace FARM Begins - 2014.....	3
Embrace FARM Evolves	4
The Encircle Programme 2022-2023	5
The Campaigns Continue – Securing The Encircle Programme’s Future.....	6
Methodology	8
The Evaluation	9
The Encircle Programme Conference - A Successful Event	9
Diverse Delegates	9
Communication with the Professional Sector	10
A strong email invitation campaign.....	10
Stakeholders will help with communication/raising awareness	11
A Learning Opportunity – why people attended the Encircle Programme Conference	12
Evaluating success - what interested delegates most?	13
The most important take away messages.....	15
How Embrace FARM can support stakeholders.....	20
Additional feedback for future events.....	21
Summary	22
Bibliography	24
Appendix 1	25

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to extend her sincerest thanks to the Embrace FARM team – Catherine Kenneally, Norma Rohan, Alma Jordan, and Caroline Redmond, for their assistance and contributions with this research.

The Embrace FARM Encircle Programme

Embrace FARM Begins- 2014

After the loss of his father, Liam Rohan, in a farm accident in 2012, Brian Rohan and his wife Norma established Embrace FARM in 2014 with a view to supporting other families who had lost loved ones to a farm accident. They also support those who survived a farm accident and in 2017 Embrace FARM obtained its charity status.

To support those who are bereaved, Embrace FARM hosts meetings for those affected by the loss of a loved one and caters to the unique needs of different groups such as spouses' support weekends, and meetings that centre on the needs of children who have lost a parent/sibling. Embrace FARM supports those who have survived a farm accident through their survivors' gatherings which are facilitated by professional counsellors. Since 2014, they have supported 405 farm families¹.

Over the past decade, Embrace FARM's work and public engagement has grown and accelerated. One of the first events they hosted was a Remembrance Service in Portlaoise and this has now become an important annual event. In 2019, it launched its *#WeRememberYou* social media campaign ahead of the service that year and this continues.

Since 2014, Embrace FARM has actively participated in agricultural shows, events and embarked on numerous campaigns, including farm safety ones, to raise awareness about their work. Key participants in these efforts have been the bereaved families and survivors of farm accidents themselves. Their personal stories reflect the raw and heart-breaking reality of the aftermath of injury and trauma on Ireland's farms. Those stories also serve to demonstrate why Embrace FARM's work, to build a community of support, is so important for responding to such acute and complex human suffering.

Furthermore, they also advocate and lobby to raise awareness, primarily through engagement with other organisations, and have previously hosted their own national conference in April 2019 in partnership with Rural Support, Northern Ireland and the Farm Safety Foundation, UK reflecting a multi-jurisdiction approach.

¹ Embrace FARM (2023) *10 Years of Support* Pamphlet.



Over the years the charity's remit has grown and diversified in response to greater and more complex needs among those who have sought help. The charity's evolution prompted a re-thinking of their 'tagline' to ensure a clear message was communicated, specifically that it would embrace all who needed its support. In 2023, *Embrace FARM – Farm Accident Support Network* became *Embrace FARM – Support After Injury & Loss*. This ensures greater awareness around its core mission: to support farm families after injury and loss without limiting support to farm accident-only experiences. This important development was noted by the Embrace FARM team in recent research discussions.

We have now moved into supporting all types of sudden death and injuries affecting a farm family, so it was important for us to ensure that we communicated that message to all. Rethinking how we pitched ourselves and communicating that to farm families was really important. We have witnessed the various different ways injury and loss have affected farm families over the years, so it was necessary to demonstrate that we are here to support them with whatever help we can offer – we knew that limiting our message to those affected by farm accidents was no longer reflecting the ways in which we worked and we never want any farm family to feel there are limits around what we do or that they are alone. We now have this wide-ranging reach of support, so it made sense for that to be the public message reflected in a more encompassing tagline. We are delighted this change has been so well received. (Embrace FARM Team)

Similarly, the development of Embrace FARM in this way was noted by some stakeholders as being the most interesting aspect of Encircle Programme conference in Tullamore, in April 2023. When describing the most interesting aspect of the day, they said

That Embrace is now...more than just people affected by farm accidents (1)

Witnessing your achievement as an organisation (9)

The progression of Embrace and the service it brings (17)

The extent to which Embrace FARM has been able to support those in need is fully realised through the work of the Encircle Programme.

The Encircle Programme 2022-2023

Partnering with other organisations to serve the needs of those in rural Ireland who need help was a sensible and strategic step forward for Embrace FARM and it emerged in the form of the *Encircle Programme* in association with members from IFAC², Agricultural Solicitors, Agricultural Consultants Association, the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention and Rural Support in Northern Ireland.

The programme's development was further supported by the fact that in 2020, farm safety was officially written into a ministerial brief, with Minister of State at DAFM, [Martin Heydon](#), being the first Minister to have state responsibility for farm safety. This was a brief that was clearly being taken seriously after many years of dedicated farm safety campaigns.

The aim of the Encircle Programme is to support farm families in the aftermath of a sudden accident or trauma on the family farm. Primarily, it

... aims to address the gap in rural services by providing a structured, single point of contact access to local professional and peer to peer supports to families and communities affected by sudden trauma on farms.³

Crucially, the Encircle Programme⁴ was one of several projects that have been funded through the *European Innovation Partnerships Initiative (EIP-Agri)* in response to an open call for proposals that sought to address challenges around farm health, safety and well-being. The EIP is co-funded by the EU Commission and the Irish Government as part of Ireland's Rural Development Programme through the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM).

Essentially, the EIP initiative involves a range of stakeholders (farmers, advisors, researchers, NGOs etc) coming together in what are termed 'Operational Groups' to trial innovative solutions that the Group themselves have developed. There is a wide range of EIP Operational Groups already in existence under Ireland's RDP, but this is the first call for proposals which specifically targets farm health, safety and wellbeing.⁵

The Encircle Programme received €300,000 in funding through the EIP-AGRI initiative. This funding has ensured that Embrace FARM could offer key services to those in need. The team explained how the funding has impacted on their ability to provide support.

We would not have been able to set up our one-to-one practical and emotional supports that the Encircle Programme offers farm families without the funding the EIP-AGRI initiative gave to us. (Embrace FARM Team)

² Ifac is Ireland's farming, food, and agri-business specialist professional service firm. We are an award-winning employer and one of Ireland's Top Ten Accountancy firms operating from more than 30 regional offices across Ireland. Source: [IFAC Ireland](#), 2023.

³ Embrace FARM Information Brochure: *The Encircle Programme. 2022.*

⁴ In the original submission to the EIP-Agri call, the Encircle Programme was named An Meitheal Feirme Project. It was renamed the Encircle Programme to better reflect its purpose and to ensure more accurate alignment to Embrace FARM's work.

⁵ Press Release: [Minister of State Heydon announces successful farm health, safety and wellbeing projects under the European Innovation Partnership \(EIP\) initiative.](#) Government of Ireland: Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, 23rd July 2021.

Interestingly, one delegate who attended the conference in Tullamore explained that witnessing ...*what the DAFM funding through EIP allowed you to achieve (15)* was the most interesting aspect of the Encircle Programme conference. It is clear that securing the EIP-AGRI funding had a transformative impact in terms of how Embrace FARM was now positioned to deliver services.

Since the Encircle Programme was launched on 27th April 2022, it has supported 101 farm families across the Republic of Ireland with the average cost of supporting a farm family being €2,165⁶.

The Campaigns Continue – Securing The Encircle Programme’s Future

Outreach is a key component of Embrace FARM’s work. The charity engages in targeted media and social media campaigns in addition to connecting with multiple groups and organisations across the country whose own missions are relevant to Embrace FARM and vice versa. There have been more than 18,000 dissemination engagements about the Encircle Programme⁷. The following groups represent a sample of those who Embrace FARM have engaged with about the programme:

Charities | Farm Organisation Forums | Hospital Chaplins | Farmers’ Marts | Agricultural Shows | HSE Suicide Prevention Officers | Coroners | Funeral Homes | Farm Organisation Processors | An Garda Síochána | PPN

Furthermore, the stories of those affected by injury and loss on the farm are reflected in a new campaign #TakeOurHand – a series of [six short, animated videos](#) documenting six individual stories and how those people were supported by the Embrace FARM Encircle Programme. The campaign also serves to remind those affected that unconditional support is available – there is no time limit on access to, and provision of, support and this is in direct response to the highly complex and individual nature of each person’s assessment of need. Each video was played at the Encircle Programme conference and the initiative was highly commended.

In a panel discussion, facilitated by Minister Martin Heydon, delegates were told by Ms. Caroline Redmond, the Encircle Programme Coordinator, that some of those affected by injury and loss may not be immediately ready to engage with services and may instead re-engage several months after their traumatic episode of injury or loss. The programme is highly unique with three critically important aspects to its work:

- (1) Service provision is led by the individual’s need – there is no ‘one size fits all’ schedule of provision.
- (2) There is an ongoing and long-term need for the programme as evidenced by the fact that, tragically, two people died on Irish farms since the Encircle Programme conference was held on 27th April 2023. Provisional data for 2022, indicates that there

⁶ Embrace FARM Information Brochure: *The Encircle Programme. 2022.*

⁷ Embrace FARM (2023) *10 Years of Support* Pamphlet.

were 12 fatal farm accidents⁸ – reflecting an average of one every month. Given that these 12 reflect 50% of all workplace accidents in 2022 demonstrates that farming still remains the most dangerous occupation and that is without considering the number of farming-related injury. As long as injuries and death occur on Irish farms, the support that Embrace FARM offer will be required.

- (3) There is room for more engagement and collaboration across organisations. A definite willingness to partner with Embrace FARM was evident from the data generated in the evaluation. Multiple opportunities exist for charities, industry and other organisations to work together to identify how best to structure support services.

These realities demonstrate why the future of the Encircle Programme ought to be ringfenced in terms of securing long-term funding. In fact, this was noted by delegates in some of their responses. Moreover, the silence was palpable in the conference room when Caroline Redmond spoke about her experience of providing the initial support to those who call the Encircle Programme to seek help. The Encircle Programme is invaluable. It is impossible to quantify in monetary terms the value of listening, caring and supporting a person who has been left devastated and traumatised following injury or loss. The importance of sustaining the Encircle Programme cannot be underestimated and evaluating opportunities for potential collaboration with key stakeholders is central to ensuring its future viability.

By undertaking an evaluation of the Encircle Programme conference in Tullamore, Embrace FARM sought to learn from professional stakeholders about new partnership opportunities and how it may diversify, or indeed strengthen, the programmes current service offerings. This is in keeping with the key objectives that were outlined for the event:

- Understand the social, cultural and economic impacts of sudden loss and injury within farm families and communities.
- Identify how the Agri-Business Sector can support and is supported by these impacts.
- Identify opportunities and actions which can be taken forward across sectors to build a community of support for all those affected.

The following report evaluates stakeholders’ feedback about the conference and provides an overview of those objectives and will assist Embrace FARM going forward with its broad, diverse and necessary remit.

⁸ Teagasc, 2023. [Fatal Farm Accident Occurrence, 2022](#). Press Release: 4th January 2023.

Methodology

Evaluating the event and how the Agri-Business sector can support the work of the Embrace FARM Encircle Programme were examined by using two key methodological components; one quantitative and one qualitative.

1. The Embrace FARM team and Maria Feeney designed a short, 9-item, self-administered questionnaire for delegates to complete while attending the event in Tullamore. Each delegate received a copy of the questionnaire in their conference pack. Delegates were invited to complete the questionnaire at the end of the event and completed questionnaires were then collected by the Embrace FARM team. A total of 22 completed questionnaires were collected.

Follow-up participation: Some delegates did not attend the entire event. After the event, the Embrace FARM team sent an email to all delegates with a video recording of the event. A link to an online version of the evaluation questionnaire, hosted on the Survey Monkey platform, was included with the email. Delegates, who did not complete the questionnaire at Tullamore, were invited to complete the online questionnaire. A total of 3 online contributions were registered, two of which were entirely incomplete, and these were not included in the analysis. A total valid sample of 23 questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 38%.

2. A 'Walk Around' survey was designed to offer delegates to opportunity to provide input throughout the day. Six 'picture boards' were placed in the room and each one asked a different question. A set of 'post-it' notes were placed at each board. Using the 'post-it' notes and the pens provided, delegates were invited to write a short response to the question on the board. These responses would provide a qualitative data set to compliment questionnaire data. The six questions are listed in Table 1 below along with the number of responses they received.

3.

Picture Board/Question	No. of responses
1 What additional supports could Embrace FARM provide to individuals affected by sudden death or injury within the farm family?	3
2 What fundraising ideas might work for Embrace FARM?	8
3 What areas of Embrace FARMS's work are you familiar with?	10
4 How can Embrace FARM support you when working with a farm family dealing with injury or bereavement?	11
5 Based on your own professional experience, what else can Embrace FARM do to increase awareness of their work?	10
6 What can you or your organisation do to help continue the work of Embrace FARM?	11

The Evaluation

The Encircle Programme Conference - A Successful Event

A wonderful event. Thank you! (7)

The conference was very interesting and informative. It also provided optimism for the farm families in need of support that there will be better days ahead (4)

Overall, the Encircle Programme conference was successful. 95.7% of delegates were satisfied with (1) the overall event and (2) the venue. The overwhelming majority were “very satisfied” with both. This is in keeping with similar ratings at previous Embrace FARM events and reflects the high quality of the events that are hosted and the high-calibre speakers they attract.

Diverse Delegates

A diverse group of stakeholders attended the event in Tullamore. A total of 71 delegates registered for the conference and 60 attended the event in-person, in Tullamore. Twenty-three responded with details of their professional sector.

Professional Sector Represented (n=23)		Diversity of Affiliation within the ‘Other Category (n= 17 respondents. Some respondents represented two sectors, both responses are noted)	
DAFM	4.4% (1)	University/Research (4)	Communications (1)
Health Services	4.4% (1)	EIP (2)	Church (1)
Agri Agency	4.4% (1)	Bereavement Support (2)	Board Member (1)
Media	-	Suicide Bereavement (1)	Illegible & blank response (2)
Banking/Financial	8.7% (3)	Macra na Feirme (2)	
Agri Food	4.4% (1)	Agricultural College/Education (2)	
Other	73.9% 17	Counsellor (1)	

Delegates’ diversity was further reflected in an examination of the Walkabout Survey responses to Picture Board 3: What areas of Embrace FARMS’s work are you familiar with? Ten delegates offered contributions. Interestingly, two delegates noted that they had little to no familiarity with Embrace FARM’s work prior to the Encircle Programme event

Only became aware when our charity (was) invited to attend. But very glad to know about you now.

Wasn't aware of service overall. But really good.

Conversely, another delegate explained that they were familiar with “*Most of it. You are doing a fantastic job!*”.

The responses of six delegates demonstrated familiarity with key aspects of Embrace FARM's work – counselling, and emotional, financial and legal support.

Practical Support

Emotional support services

Financial, legal, emotional support

One to one, peer to peer counselling

Counselling

Support: listening, financial, legal

Irrespective of their level of prior knowledge of Embrace FARM's work, delegates recognised how valuable the day was:

Learnt so much today! Amazing supports available! Well done.

Given how well received and satisfied a diverse group of stakeholders were with the Encircle Programme event, it demonstrates how powerful the ‘Embrace story’ and the charity's work are and how the team may be able to acquire significant stakeholder reach, and buy-in, beyond its current following with a targeted communication campaign.

Communication with the Professional Sector

Communication is key. Embrace FARM initiated a very targeted email campaign to stakeholders. A diverse range, representing various groups, were targeted, registered and attended. Interestingly, stakeholders are willing to assist Embrace FARM with their communication to help raise awareness about the Encircle Programme and the various range of support services that are on offer to those in need. This offer of support from stakeholders has the potential to be very beneficial for Embrace FARM going forward.

A strong email invitation campaign

22 delegates provided detail about how they heard about the event in Tullamore. The following table illustrates the most common communication channel documented in their responses. One delegate offered more than one reply (e.g. Email and Social Media), both are recorded separately. Responses were organised thematically.

The most common way in which delegates learned about the conference was via email/invitation from Embrace FARM followed by ‘Work’ – some delegates learned about it through colleagues or were asked to attend by a colleague as noted by some:

(Support Group X) received an invitation to attend and as I’m based in the Midlands, I was asked to attend by our Chairperson. (23)

Through a colleague who received an invitation to attend the event (15)

Communication Channel	Frequency of response
Email/Invitation	10
Work	5
Social Media	2
Other: (e.g. EventBrite, Word of Mouth, Online, Network, Ag. College, EIP)	6

Given that this event was specifically aimed at the professional sector it is unsurprising that email/invitation and work were the main channels through which delegates learned about the conference thus demonstrating that Embrace FARM led a successful, targeted email campaign whereby 68.1% of respondents attended Tullamore as a result of direct emails to professionals.

Stakeholders will help with communication/raising awareness

An opportunity exists for Embrace FARM to avail of support from stakeholders who are willing to “spread awareness” and “spread the message” about the work Embrace FARM and the Encircle Programme do. As part of the Walkaround Survey, several delegates offered this opportunity in response to Picture Board 6 – *What can you/your organisation do to help continue the work of Embrace FARM?* with another delegate offering to post links to Embrace FARM/Encircle Programme on their organisation’s own website. There were also several calls for an increased use of social media. Perhaps it will be beneficial for Embrace FARM to review its communications strategy in this regard going forward. Given the ‘reach’ some organisations may have, it may prove successful for Embrace FARM to produce a monthly piece of social media content for circulation among its professional network with the understanding that each organisation re-post or send to their followers on a targeted email campaign. Stakeholders’ willingness in this regard offers enormous opportunity for Embrace FARM to extend its network even further.

A Learning Opportunity – why people attended the Encircle Programme Conference

23 respondents explained why they attend the Encircle Conference. Responses were organised thematically as can be seen in the following table. Unsurprisingly, the most frequently cited response, explaining the key motivator of why people attended the event was that they simply wanted to learn.

Reasons for attending		Sample responses
To Learn	47.2% (11)	All detailed below
To support	13.0% (3)	<i>The idea of supporting family farms who (are) impacted by/on farm-related incidents (13)</i>
Networking	8.7% (2)	<i>Networking (18)</i>
Embrace Farm's work	8.7% (2)	<i>The work that Embrace carry out (20)</i> <i>The subject (2)</i>
Agricultural College-related	8.7% (2)	<i>Concern about wellbeing in Ag. College. My father died in a farm accident (7)</i> <i>Embrace have come to talk at (Ag. College). Students always...help raise funds (6)</i>
Miscellaneous	21.7% (5)	<i>I work in a similar service and would love to work together going forward (5)</i> <i>The structure of the event (Panel Discussions) (10)</i> <i>What can I do to make a difference (11)</i> <i>The bereavement support element (12)</i> <i>Connection to farming knowledge of the need for this service (17)</i>

A clear professional appetite to learn more about the work Embrace FARM do exists with almost half of respondents (47.8% / 11) noting a response that related to learning about Embrace FARM and/or the Encircle Programme, as is evidenced by the responses below.

Opportunity to learn and network (1)

To support and learn about the work of Embrace FARM (3)

To hear (about how) the Encircle EIP delivered its services and the future needs of the Embrace FARM series (4)

The subject matter and learning opportunity (8)

Learning about Embrace (14)

I am involved in another EIP project...& have a particular interest in farmer health and wellbeing & involved in research in this area. Wanted to learn more about your EIP project (15)

Learning more about Embrace FARM (16)

Learn more about the work and impact of Embrace FARM (21)

To learn and support Embrace FARM (22)

Think it's important for all bereavement support services to know about each other and the work they do (23)

SUMMARY FINDING : Based on data that has emerged, it is clear that the Encircle Programme conference was deemed to be an important professional educational forum – both in terms of what motivated delegates to attend and what interested them most about the event.

Evaluating success- what interested delegates most?

All 23 respondents offered explanations about what interested them most about the event. Responses are organised thematically. As with responses to other items, some respondents reported more than one explanation, each of which were examined individually. The following table provides an overview of the response themes.

Aspects of the event that were most interesting to delegates	
Stories/Panels	39.1% (9)
Support services	30.4% (7)
Learning	17.4% (4)
Embrace FARM's Progression	17.4% (4)
The reality of Embrace FARMS's work	17.4% (4)

As with other events that Embrace FARM have hosted or attended, the power of the personal story is to the fore. Nine delegates referred to "stories" (5), the panel discussions (3) or "talks" (1) in their responses thus reflecting how impactful this aspect of communicating to all audiences is for Embrace FARM. The following quotes demonstrate the ways in which respondents considered this part of the day.

Caroline Redmond's stories (3)

...Telling stories and consequences the family might face (13)

Personal stories, service offered (14)

Impacts – real stories, wider implications, future opportunities (21)

Learning the stories and networking (22)

It was very well put together, with mixtures of talks, videos, audience interaction and printed info (23)

Panel discussions (18), Panels, Networks (19), The panel discussions (20)

Support/service was the second most frequently cited interesting aspect of the event. Seven delegates noted “support” or “service” in their responses. It is clear, once again, that the event served as an important educational forum for professionals to learn about the support services offered by Embrace FARM’s work through the Encircle Programme.

The type of support offered (2)

Bereavement support information (5)

The idea of peer-to-peer support for family members. (13)

The practical and applied focus of support (10)

...service offered (14)

Four respondents (17.4%) made specific reference to “learning” (12, 22) or the opportunity to “learn more” (6) or “gain more knowledge” (16) about various aspects of the work that Embrace FARM and the Encircle Programme do and the support on offer. This then provides opportunity for delegates, and/or their organisations, to learn about how they can “...make contacts to have a closer relationship (6) in order to support the work of the Encircle Programme. It would appear that building professional networks and supporting the Encircle programme was easily facilitated on the day given “The amount of organisations attending with the same ‘objective” (11) which one delegate found most interesting.

Respondents were also asked about what interested them least about the event. Only nine individuals responded to this item on the questionnaire. Three responded with positive responses such as “Nothing! It was a great event. Lovely format” (15), “All was relevant” (22), “It was all very good” (23). Two more replied with “None” (4) and “Nothing” (12). A further two simply wrote “n/a” (non-applicable). Two people responded as follows⁹:

⁹ Note: It is likely that these comments from respondents #11 and #13 are to be read in a positive way as a continuation/extension of their positive responses to the previous item which asked about what interested them most. Both delegates reported being “satisfied” (11) and “very satisfied” with the overall event. In the case of delegate #13, who represented the Agri Food, they found the most interesting aspect of the event to be “The idea of peer-to-peer support of family members. Telling stories and consequences that the family might face”.

The sincerity of some organisations on their role in supporting Embrace FARM (11)

*** The idea of supporting those who might need support (13)*

SUMMARY FINDING: What the professional audience found interesting at this event will help Embrace FARM and the Encircle Programme plan effectively for future events when catering to this important group. The panel discussion format with powerful personal stories was a very well received model by this audience. This success can easily be modelled at future events.

The most important take away messages

Significant thought and effort is invested at the planning stage of events when considering what key message we want our audience to take away with them after the event. Delegates were asked to respond to this very question. 21 delegates responded to this item. Their responses are organised thematically and an overview is provided in the following table.

The Encircle Programme Conference's most important take away message	
Embrace FARM is there to help	23.8% (5)
Need and Opportunity for Stakeholder support and collaboration	23.8% (5)
Need for Funding/Ongoing funding	23.8% (5)
Ongoing need for communicate support/raise awareness	19.0% (4)
Misc.	19.0% (4)

Embrace FARM is there to help

That Embrace is there to help (20)

That Embrace FARM are there to help farm families when needed after loss or injury (23)

How much support is available within Embrace for grieving farm families (16)

Signposting to Embrace (14)

It is then, likely that their above comment *"** The idea of supporting those who might need support"* is a follow-on from their idea that peer-to-peer support of family members is an interesting one.

My father-in-law is a farmer as are many of my friends and neighbours so having knowledge of Embrace is very important (12)

Need and Opportunity for Stakeholder support and collaboration

That there are lots of stakeholders interested in working together to provide more support (1)

There's more work to be done but the opportunities are there + people are listening! (8)

Need for industry to support Embrace (10)

The Embrace FARM Encircle Programme needs to be supported (15)

That organisations should work together (19)

Need for Funding/Ongoing funding

The Encircle Programme is officially-funded through the European Innovation Project (EIP) Agri initiative. The funding is distributed through DAFM. An enormous amount of work has been achieved through the Encircle Programme as a result of it being funded. In order for families affected by loss and injury to continue receiving support, ongoing funding is crucial. In fact, it needs to be guaranteed in the long-term so as to facilitate strategic planning and development. Five respondents noted the issue of funding as being the key take-away message from the event.

Need for a long-term plan when it comes to funding (4)

The need for lobbying for core funding to survive. The need for continued work relies on this. (9)

Is there going to be funding to keep you going? (11)

Need for continuous funding (14)

Future funding (21)

Securing funding is a taxing affair for almost all charities. Significant time is spent engaging in funding applications and fundraising efforts. Embrace FARM is no different. The EIP-AGRI funding was a most welcome success and offered time, space and resources to implement and operationalise the Encircle Programme. Funding like this offers more than just financial security, it offers piece of mind to organisations who can engage in future strategic development plans. When funding like this is not guaranteed it creates uncertainty about future continuity and development. Consequently, fundraising efforts are often top of mind for charities and often some are more resourced than others to undertake such tasks. For

example, well-known national charities can often benefit from events like the Women's Mini Marathon where the 'masses' sign up. Other charities, whose cause captures the nation (e.g. Pieta House's Darkness Into Light campaign), can command official support from partners such as *Electric Ireland*, and then enormous public participation. Just last month, Pieta House raised almost €4 million euro after 100,000 people participated in their Darkness Into Light campaign through participant fees, donations, corporate sponsorship and trading activity. Few charities are able to stage such events at this scale and then benefit financially from the outpouring of public generosity.

As part of the Walkabout Survey, eight delegates offered fundraising suggestions for Embrace Farm.

Work with marts to organise events

Tractor runs – they also provide awareness as well as fundraising

Link with Vintage Clubs

Educational awareness / Mart campaign series

Cycle

Tractor runs, donations

Social Media – Tik Tok involvement for younger farmers

Farm Waste Recycling | Drop-in Coffee/Tea morning | Walk ... creative and demonstrates network support

However, it is important to note that current cost of living crisis in Ireland presents a major challenge for all charities and non-profits as they experience significant reductions in donations.

Ongoing need to communicate support/raise awareness

Stakeholders who responded to the questionnaire reported a definite need to communicate the message that support for those in need is available. This reflects why an event like the Encircle Programme conference serves as an important professional education forum. Moreover, it also serves to ensure more strategic collaboration between stakeholders.

Create more awareness and deliver on promises of support to people in need (6)

We need to be more fully aware in society of the supports and issues (7)

Communication of supports available to family impacted (13)

Communicate...how to empower wider community to help (21)

To spread the word to colleagues and AGS (22)

Data from the Walkabout Survey's Picture Board 5: What can Embrace Farm do to increase awareness? also supports this thematic finding of a need for greater awareness. Ten delegates offered contributions. Three individuals suggested "more" and "strong" social media. However, more suggested that Embrace FARM ought to engage in the type of activity that involves being on site rather than simply online – in workplaces, schools/education settings, and community centres. Given that some delegates were unfamiliar with Embrace FARM's work prior to the Encircle Programme conference, it is unsurprising that some delegates' suggestions reflect the regular type of activity that Embrace FARM have always engaged in. Nonetheless, it is interesting that a diverse group of stakeholder still called for in-person engagement as evidenced by the following responses.

Available to come to talk to groups or professionals work to support service. Maybe you do!

...hold public meetings, visit ag. Colleges, attend farm organisation meetings

Make schools aware of your organisation if students are impacted

...presence in education settings

Connect (with) Family Resource Centres, Community Centres, Community Nurses, Health Boards

Engage more with youth organisations

Sharing their support with advisors to inform their clients

Work with organisations to promote services

This data was further supported by an additional suggestion offered by one delegate in the final item of the questionnaire in terms of how Embrace FARM could increase their awareness.

Linking in with other bereavement support groups like IHF, Anam Cara, Hugg, ALLF, Bereavement Networks etc. would be good to get your name & information out to more people (12)

Another interesting way of increasing awareness was highlighted by another delegate whose response was interesting in the context of a 'changing Ireland' as reported in recent 2022 census data; specifically, the decline in those identifying as Catholic and the fact that 14% of

the population now identify as having “No Religion”¹⁰. This delegate suggested that one way for Embrace FARM to increase awareness ought to be:

Engaging with Churches – Priests, Ministers, Bishops. As first points of contact at a death, they should be fully aware of Embrace for referral.

This is a very valid suggestion particularly in the context of the rural communities Embrace FARM serves. Despite the recent demographic changes as reported in the 2022 Census, counties typically considered ‘rural’ (Mayo, Galway, Roscommon, Offaly, Kilkenny and Tipperary) had a greater proportion of Catholics than more ‘urban’ ones, and the county with one of the lowest proportions of those identifying as having “No Religion”, was Monaghan. Historically, the farming community always was, and continues to be, a faith-observant one. And given that the Embrace FARM’s annual Remembrance Service is held in such high esteem, and indeed highly attended, demonstrates the relevance of this delegates suggestion for Embrace FARM to increase awareness of its work through an accessible, respected and relevant channel.

Outside of the four main themes identified in delegates’ responses to their takeaway messages (Embrace FARM is there to help, It needs to be supported, The Encircle Programme requires long-term funding & Ongoing communication is needed to raise awareness), four individuals offered diverse responses in terms of what was their most important take away message from the day. These responses could not be thematically organised and are as follows:

The need to provide farm labour relief (and maybe before an accident as well). (2)

Open ended support is needed (3)

Supporting family members to bring up their own story (13)

More work needs to be done on the impact of sudden death/injury on the farm family (15)

SUMMARY FINDING: It is important for Embrace FARM and the Encircle Programme to know what key messages professionals will take away with them following the Encircle Programme conference. The data demonstrates that the following four key messages were taken away by stakeholders on the day.

- Embrace FARM is there to help.
- It needs to be supported by industry.
- The Encircle Programme needs to be funded long-term.

¹⁰ Census of Population 2022 – Summary Results. Central Statistics Office, 30th May 2023. <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpsr/censusofpopulation2022-summaryresults/migrationanddiversity/>

- Ongoing communication is required to ensure that potential stakeholders and wider society are fully aware of the support that the Encircle Programme provides.

How Embrace FARM can support stakeholders

As part of the Walkabout Survey, Picture Board 4 asked delegates how Embrace FARM could support them when they work with a farm family dealing with injury and bereavement. Eleven delegates offered responses. The most frequently cited support was the provision of guidance and information. The response below demonstrates a need for guidance and information in relation to grief/bereavement, leaflets, workshops and training. Some identified knowing about a personal story/real-life example as a way of learning how to help and support others while others explained that information and guidance around how to “approach” a situation where help was required. There was also an acknowledgement that learning about the Encircle Programme’s point of contact “really helps”. Two delegates offered contributions relating to the provision of services with one suggesting Embrace FARMS’s services should link in with those of the Teagasc Bereavement services while another, representing an Agricultural College, suggested Embrace FARM be available to consult with if a student is “facing grief”. It is interesting to learn how best Embrace FARM can support their professional stakeholders from the

Guidance and information

Provide a direction for those who have suffered a loss

Providing guidance

Provide guidance on certain situations, give real life examples of how people dealt with injuries or bereavements

The point of contact & awareness created today really helps. Guidance on approach when see issue

Information leaflets, workshops, training

Back up information

Sharing stories of live(d) experience

Service provision

Add more supports and services to that delivered by the Teagasc Bereavement Service

Consult when we have a student facing grief (Ag. College)

Great work done in such a short time. Re support for farm families grieving - it might be an idea for all farming organisations to come together & look at setting up either a "Farmers Group" akin to "Men's Shed" groups where these groups could be contacted when a family is going through loss, that these organisations can be contacted to help & send workers to help them on the farm for a number of weeks/months. These "support farming members" could be a "Community Employment Scheme" specific to farming communities (16)

Miscellaneous

Help them to feel no shame of bringing stories

Hands on farm help

Additional feedback for future events

The final item on the questionnaire invited delegates to offer any additional comments. Three responses were relevant for planning future events. Two offered feedback about the event in Tullamore

The lighting of the 4 candles at the beginning was a very powerful touch. (23)

The photographer was extremely distracting. No need for all the flashes, standing in front of people + volume of pictures surely. But that's the only issue. A wonderful event. Thank you! (7)

While another suggested having "speakers/family who have survived accidents" (2). While these contributions are valuable ones, of critical relevance for planning future events is to recognise and build on the success of this one – specifically keeping the personal story element and the panel discussion format.

Summary

Since the Encircle Programme was awarded funding in 2021, enormous effort was undertaken by the team at Embrace FARM to operationalise service provision to those most in need. Embrace FARM are acutely aware of the complexity of people's needs after trauma and loss on the family farm.

The purpose of the conference was to present an overview of the programme's work to date to professional stakeholders and present opportunities to stakeholders who may be interested in supporting the Encircle Programme. With that in mind, the panellists were carefully selected so that the conference would meet the following objectives; to

- Understand the social, cultural and economic impacts of sudden loss and injury within farm families and communities.
- Identify how the Agri-Business Sector can support and is supported by these impacts.
- Identify opportunities and actions which can be taken forward across sectors to build a community of support for all those affected.

The conference was a resounding success with a majority of delegates reporting that they were very satisfied.

A diverse group of stakeholders were in attendance representing various different agricultural, research, policy, health and support groups, all of whom were interested to learn about the Encircle Programme and, how they may support it. Interestingly, some delegates were unfamiliar with Embrace FARM and their work while others were very familiar and knew about all the support available to those in need. Most stakeholder learned about the conference via direct email from Embrace FARM or through their workplace thus demonstrating the success of Embrace FARM's targeted email campaign.

Delegates expressed a definite willingness and commitment to collaborate to further support Embrace FARM's work, whether it was to help raise awareness about Embrace FARM by having links on their website or by linking in with Embrace FARM to offer a service to compliment the current service provision. Following-up on such opportunities will serve as a key strategic unit of work for Embrace FARM in the coming months.

Delegates also felt that the Encircle Programme conference served as a valuable learning experience. Based on data that has emerged, it is clear that the Encircle Programme conference was deemed to be an important professional educational forum – both in terms of what motivated delegates to attend and what interested them most about the event. What the professional audience found interesting at this event will help Embrace FARM and the Encircle Programme plan effectively for future events when catering to this important group. The panel discussion format with powerful personal stories was very well received by this audience. This success can easily be modelled at future events.

It is important for Embrace FARM and the Encircle Programme to know what key messages professionals took away with them following the conference. The data demonstrates that the following four key messages were the ones taken away by stakeholders on the day.

- Embrace FARM is there to help.
- Embrace FARM needs to be supported by industry.
- The Encircle Programme needs long-term funding.
- Ongoing communication is required to ensure that potential stakeholders and wider society are fully aware of the support that the Encircle Programme provides.

The conference highlighted the value of the Embrace FARM Encircle Programme. The data clearly demonstrates that it is highly regarded by stakeholders, and they are willing to support it, but they too see an absolute need for long-term funding to ringfence the Encircle Programme's future. The way in which Embrace FARM support those affected by injury, trauma, grief and loss did not go unnoticed with one delegate noting how "caring people came across in their approach". Stakeholders believe that the Encircle Programme is a unique and invaluable support structure for those who need it most and it is imperative that it continues. Significant opportunity exists for Embrace FARM to respond to the multiple offers of support from stakeholders who wish to collaborate to enrich the programme's current service offering and ultimately help ensure its future viability.

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Appendix 1: Walkabout Survey Picture Board Question and responses

Walkabout Survey Picture Board Question and responses
<p>1 What additional supports could Embrace FARM provide to individuals affected by sudden death or injury within the farm family? (3)</p> <p><i>Links to MABS or other financial supports</i></p> <p><i>If not doing it at the moment – checking-in with families every few months to see how they are, if they need anything else</i></p> <p><i>Collaboration with HUGG suicide bereavement support</i></p>
<p>2 What fundraising ideas might work for Embrace FARM? (8)</p> <p><i>Work with marts to organise events</i></p> <p><i>Tractor runs – they also provide awareness as well as fundraising</i></p> <p><i>Link with Vintage Clubs</i></p> <p><i>Educational awareness / Mart campaign series</i></p> <p><i>Cycle</i></p> <p><i>Tractor runs, donations</i></p> <p><i>Social Media – Tik Tok involvement for younger farmers</i></p> <p><i>Farm Waste Recycling Drop-in Coffee/Tea morning Walk ... creative and demonstrates network support</i></p>
<p>3 What areas of Embrace FARMS's work are you familiar with? (10)</p> <p><i>Most of it. You are doing a fantastic job!</i></p> <p><i>Practical Support</i></p> <p><i>Only became aware when our charity (was) invited to attend. But very glad to know about you now.</i></p> <p><i>Wasn't aware of service overall. But really good.</i></p> <p><i>Emotional support services</i></p>

Financial, legal, emotional support

One to one, peer to peer counselling

Counselling

Support: listening, financial, legal

Learnt so much today! Amazing supports available! Well done.

4 How can Embrace FARM support you when working with a farm family dealing with injury or bereavement? (11)

Sharing stories of live(d) experience

Provide a direction for those who have suffered a loss

Hands on farm help

Information leaflets, workshops, training

Add more supports and services to that delivered by the Teagasc Bereavement Service

Consult when we have a student facing grief (Ag. College)

The point of contact & awareness created today really helps. Guidance on approach when see issue.

Back up information

Providing guidance

Provide guidance on certain situations, give real life examples of how people dealt with injuries or bereavements

Help them to feel no shame of bringing stories

5 Based on your own professional experience, what else can Embrace FARM do to increase awareness of their work? (10)

Sharing their support with advisors to inform their clients

More use of social media & general media, hold public meetings, visit ag. Colleges, attend farm organisation meetings

Available to come to talk to groups or professionals work to support service. Maybe you do!

Make schools aware of your organisation if students are impacted

Continue to have a strong social media presence & presence in education settings

Work with organisations to promote services

Connect (with) Family Resource Centres, Community Centres, Community Nurses, Health Boards

Engaging with Churches – Priests, Ministers, Bishops. As first points of contact at a death, they should be fully aware of Embrace for referral

Engage more with youth organisations

More social media!

6 What can you or your organisation do to help continue the work of Embrace FARM? (11)

Build improved linkages to build on support

Spread awareness

Spread awareness. We're an Ag. College & could host talks & fundraising

Spread awareness through member meetings, media and social media etc.

Create awareness and support on the ground & promote

Include links to Encircle on our website

Advertising locally. Telling/informing friends, families, colleagues

Promoting family members engagement in using/participation in your support

Spread the message

Fundraise

Webinars & share stories learn & share

Appendix 5 – Copy of Questionnaires used in post project evaluation survey.



Embrace FARM Encircle Programme Participants' Evaluation. December 2023

The Encircle Programme has reached an important milestone and is undertaking an evaluation of the services it has provided since 2022 as part of a final report about the programme.

You are invited to anonymously share your experiences of engaging with the Encircle Programme. We would be very grateful if you would take a few minutes to reflect on your experience of engagement with the Encircle Programme and complete this short questionnaire. Learning from you in this way will help us plan for ongoing support provision. It may also help us strengthen our current schedule of supports or even consider new ways of offering support.

**Thank you,
The Embrace FARM Team**

1. I understand that this is an evaluation survey.

I understand that no personal identifiers/data about me (e.g. name, address) will be collected by Embrace FARM.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that my responses will remain anonymous.

I consent to participate in this evaluation survey.

Yes

No



Embrace FARM Encircle Programme Participants' Evaluation. December 2023

2. How did you learn about the Embrace FARM Encircle Programme?

- Family / Friend
- Professional Referral (e.g. from a doctor / solicitor)
- Online
- Social Media
- My own research
- Other (please specify)

3. Had you any knowledge of the Encircle Programme prior to calling Embrace FARM?

- Yes
- No

4. Please indicate your reason for connecting with the Embrace FARM Encircle Programme? (Please tick one of the following)

- To seek support following injury
- To seek support following loss

5. Q4 (a). When you made your first call to Embrace FARM, do you feel you were offered the correct support at that time?

- Yes
- No

Q4 (b). Please explain

6. Briefly describe your experience of your first call to Embrace FARM.

7. Please indicate what support services were offered to you. Tick as many as apply.

- General Information
- Legal Guidance
- Agri Business Support
- Financial Consultant Support
- Counselling
- Other (please specify)

8. Reflecting on your overall experience, how satisfied are you with the support provided to you through the Encircle Programme?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Please explain

9. Did you avail of any of the additional professional services offered to you (e.g. Legal, Agri-Business Support, Financial, Counselling)?

- Yes
- No



Embrace FARM Encircle Programme Participants' Evaluation. December 2023

10. Reflecting on your overall experience, how satisfied are you with the **professional services** provided to you through the Encircle Programme (e.g. Legal, Agri-Business Support, Financial, Counselling)?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Please explain

11. How satisfied you are with **the professionals** you engaged with as part of the Encircle Programme.

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Please explain



Embrace FARM Encircle Programme Participants' Evaluation. December 2023

12. In your opinion, what was the most valuable aspect of the Encircle Programme?

13. If you had one word to describe your interaction with / the support you received from Embrace FARM, what would that word be ?

14. Based on your experience of the Encircle Programme, are there any other ways it could be enhanced/strengthened?

15. Is there anything else you feel is important for us to know?



Embrace FARM Encircle Programme Service Providers' Evaluation

The Encircle Programme has reached an important milestone and is undertaking an evaluation of the services it has provided since 2022 as part of a final report about the programme.

You are invited to anonymously share your experiences of being a service provider on the Encircle Programme. We would be very grateful if you would take a few minutes to reflect on your experience of engagement with the Encircle Programme and complete this short questionnaire. Learning from you in this way will help us plan for ongoing support provision. It may also help us strengthen our current schedule of supports or even consider new ways of offering support.

1. I understand that this is an evaluation survey.

I understand that no personal identifiers/data about me (e.g. name, address, institutional affiliation) will be collected by Embrace FARM.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that my responses will remain anonymous.

I consent to participate in this evaluation survey.

Yes

No



Embrace FARM Encircle Programme Service Providers' Evaluation

2. What services do you provide?

- Legal
- Agri-Advisory
- Financial
- Counselling
- Other (please specify)

3. Please tell us about your experience of being a service provider on the Encircle Programme?

4. Based on your experience, does an Encircle Programme client differ to your 'typical' client?

- Yes
- No

If 'Yes', in what way? Please explain.

5. Are there any other supports you require in order to continue engaging with the Encircle Programme?

Yes

No

Please explain

6. Based on your experience of supporting those who have been referred to you by the Encircle Programme, please rate how important the programme is?

Extremely important

Not so important

Very important

Not at all important

Somewhat important

Please tell us why you rate the programme in this way.

7. Based on your experience, are there any ways in which we could strengthen the programme?

Appendix 6 - Copy of Evaluation Report by Dr. Maria Feeney



Embrace FARM Encircle Programme Evaluation

January 2024



Author: Dr Maria Feeney

Citation: Feeney, M. 2024. *Embrace FARM Encircle Programme Evaluation Report*.

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Table of Contents

RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH.....	4
METHODOLOGY	4
PART 1: ENCIRCLE PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS	5
THE ENCIRCLE PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS	5
PART 1: LEARNING ABOUT EMBRACE FARM AND THE ENCIRCLE PROGRAMME	5
PART 2: INITIAL ENGAGEMENT WITH EMBRACE FARM.....	6
2.1 ACCESSING SUPPORT	7
2.2 THE FIRST CALL – “FANTASTIC SUPPORT”	7
PART 3: SUPPORTS OFFERED THROUGH THE ENCIRCLE PROGRAMME.....	8
MOST VALUABLE ASPECT OF THE ENCIRCLE PROGRAMME	10
DESCRIBING THEIR INTERACTION WITH/SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM EMBRACE FARM	11
STRENGTHENING THE ENCIRCLE PROGRAMME	12
PART 2 – ENCIRCLE PROGRAMME SERVICE PROVIDERS.....	14
PART 1: THE ENCIRCLE PROGRAMME SERVICE PROVIDERS.....	14
PART 2: SERVICE PROVIDERS’ EXPERIENCES OF THE ENCIRCLE PROGRAMME - <i>POSITIVE, PROFESSIONAL, WARM, CARING AND EXTREMELY IMPORTANT</i>	15
2.1 OVERALL EXPERIENCE	15
2.2 HOW IMPORTANT IS THE ENCIRCLE PROGRAMME?	16
PART 3: MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE ENCIRCLE PROGRAMME SERVICE PROVIDERS AND PARTICIPANTS	18
3.1 THE ENCIRCLE PROGRAMME CLIENT	18
3.2 ASSESSING PROVIDERS’ NEEDS.....	19
PART 4: STRENGTHENING THE ENCIRCLE PROGRAMME – SERVICE PROVIDERS’ RECOMMENDATIONS	19

Encircle Programme Evaluation – January 2024

Rationale for research

This is the first evaluation undertaken of the Encircle Programme since it became operational in 2022. Its findings form an important part of the programme's final report that is required to be submitted to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM).

The purpose of the evaluation was to obtain an overview of the Encircle programme from the perspectives of two key groups: (1) those who contacted Embrace Farm for support following injury or loss and (2) the Service Providers to the Encircle Programme (e.g. Counsellor, Financial Advisor).

It was important to understand both groups' experiences of the programme; how they engaged with, or were involved in, the programme and also to explore if the programme could be strengthened or developed in any way.

Methodology

Two short self-administered online questionnaires were designed using the Survey Monkey platform for each group. The participants' questionnaire contained fifteen (15) items (see Appendix 1) and the service provider questionnaire contained seven (7) items (see Appendix 2). A link to the questionnaires was emailed to all participants and service providers of the programme on 12th December 2023. To ensure confidentiality, and in keeping with GDPR, the link was emailed by the researcher to the Embrace FARM team who then emailed both groups. A reminder was emailed to both groups one week later which coincided with the Christmas holidays.

Since 2022, the Encircle Programme has supported approximately 140 people/families who experienced injury or loss. It is important to note that this is a vulnerable group who have experience trauma in the form of injury or loss in the farm family. These are very individual experiences and there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach in terms of how support is offered. Moreover, reaching out for support can be a difficult experience with many people unsure about the type of support they may be looking for and what services may be available to them. This reality is reflected by the way people engaged with the Encircle Programme and the supports they availed of. The level of support varied with some only making a first call to Embrace FARM and availing only of the information pack that was sent to them via post. Another cohort availed of additional support services such as counselling, or financial or legal advice. Twenty-two (n= 22) participants responded to the questionnaire, ten of these made incomplete submissions, thus representing a completion rate of 55% for those who completed each item on the questionnaire.

There are 42 registered providers on the Encircle Programme, fifteen (n= 15) responded to the online questionnaire. Analyses were conducted separately for both groups.

PART 1: Encircle Programme Participants

The Encircle Programme Participants

This group represents those who contacted Embrace FARM for support following injury or loss. The majority of respondents sought support following loss (80%, n= 12), 20% (n= 3) sought support following an injury.

KEY FINDINGS:

Reporting Success – 100% Satisfaction with the Encircle Programme, the services it provides and the professional service providers

Participants were asked to explain how satisfied they were with the Encircle Programme (Very satisfied, Satisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied). Fifteen responded (n= 15). 93.3% (14) reported being very satisfied and one was satisfied (6.7%).

100% (n= 10) were “very satisfied” with the support services offered to them and with the professionals they engaged with.

Part 1: Learning about Embrace FARM and the Encircle Programme

Learning about the Encircle Programme came from multiple sources

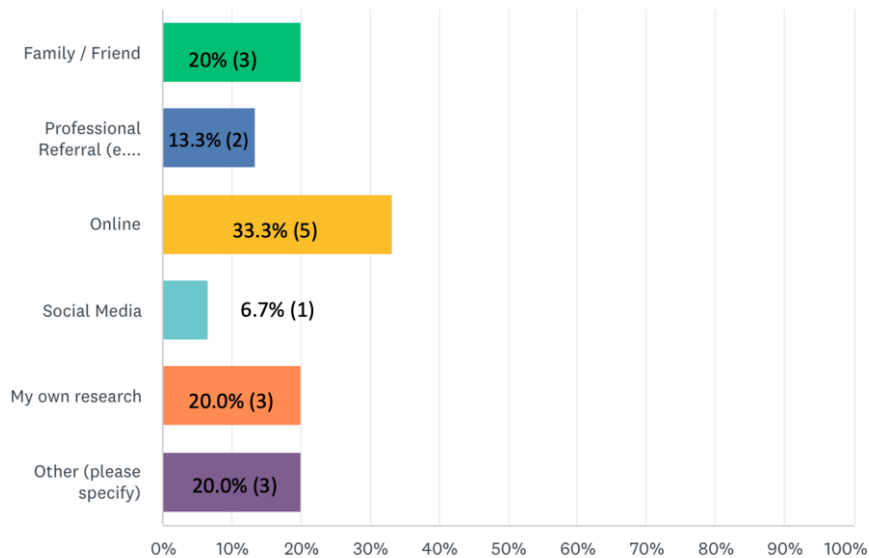


Figure 1: How did you learn about the Embrace FARM Encircle Programme?

Fifteen participants (n= 15) responded to this item (Q2) on the questionnaire. The majority learned about the programme online.

Source of information about the Encircle Programme – ‘Other’	%
<i>I saw an ad in the Farmers’ Journal (17)</i>	20.0 (3)
<i>Embrace team showed up to our home house the day after the farm accident (4)</i>	
<i>St. James’ Hospital (3)</i>	

Little knowledge existed about the Encircle Programme prior to calling Embrace FARM

A small few respondents had any knowledge of the Encircle Programme prior to contacting Embrace FARM. Fifteen people responded to this item on the questionnaire (Q3). Only three (n= 3, 20%) reported that they had knowledge of the Encircle programme prior to calling Embrace FARM.

Part 2: Initial Engagement with Embrace FARM

2.1 Accessing Support

All respondents were offered the correct support when they first contacted Embrace FARM

An important finding from the evaluation is that **all respondents (100%, n= 15) felt they were offered the correct support when they first called Embrace FARM.** This is a reassuring finding for the Embrace FARM team to know that the model of initial engagement with the Encircle Programme is so well received by those who call the service.

Nine of those that responded offered additional details that shed light on why people believed they received the correct support. The following comments illustrate the way in which people felt support was given when they first contacted Embrace FARM. Knowing that support was there and what types of supports were available in addition to being listened to, were highlighted. Embrace FARM and the Encircle Programme emerge as a key pillar of support for those in need.

The support and information and understanding was fantastic. (19)

Very obliging caring and offering of support was excellent (13)

Offered support (12)

Explained how the Encircle Programme worked and the different stages and when I might need the supports on offer (2)

Any issue I had was met - legal support as well as emotional (11)

I had a very helpful and supportive conversation to begin with, where I was given sympathies and I was listened to. I was given information on how Embrace could help us as a young family. (17)

I was allowed to talk freely. I felt that I was listened to. Reassured by the person who answered the call. (15)

The Embrace Team especially Caroline were absolutely amazing and basically held our hands in the first few weeks after our brother's farm accident (4)

Only ones I could reach out to at an extremely difficult time so incredibly helpful. (3)

2.2 The First Call – “fantastic support”

The Embrace FARM team have been supporting farm families in Ireland following life-changing injury, loss, tragedy and trauma for ten years. Those experiences have demonstrated that in the aftermath of injury and loss, individuals and families can feel completely overwhelmed and distraught in addition to feeling burdened by legal and financial worries. It can be an incredibly challenging, traumatic and uncertain time with many unable to advocate for themselves or recognise their own suffering. Consequently, many are unable to identify the help that they may need. Indeed, making that first call can be a very challenging and

overwhelming task. The Encircle Programme Stakeholders' Conference in April 2023, learned from Caroline Redmond, the Programme Coordinator, that even when a person makes the first call, they may not actually be ready to engage in a conversation at that time, while another person may be willing to accept multiple forms of support, thus demonstrating enormous variance in spectrum of need that the Encircle Programme tries to support.

Twelve respondents offered further detail about their experiences of making the first call to Embrace FARM. All responses were positive. Just over half of the respondents (58.3%, n= 7) used the words "support", "supportive" or "supported" in their responses. Two explained that the first call was a source of "relief" because they believed that the person at Embrace FARM understood their circumstances and they were not alone. Others noted that the call was "helpful", "friendly", "empathetic" and "excellent" (7).

Supportive (19)

Help and support were offered (12)

Very supportive and compassionate (2)

Fantastic support (3)

Very kind, supportive and helpful. Gentle as you need to be in the first few weeks following a tragedy. (4)

Very welcoming, empathetic and friendly, and very willing to offer support and help (14)

I felt very supported and grateful for their guidance. I then received a pack in the post which contained a beautiful candle and booklet with further information. I felt instant relief that I was not alone. (17)

I felt I had the weight lifted off my shoulders. It was a relief to talk to someone who understood. (15)

Very pleasant and helpful (20)

It was very informative and a very helpful and friendly call (18)

One person noted that they had emailed Embrace FARM and explained "...Prompt response. Needs met instantly" (11).

Part 3: Supports offered through the Encircle Programme

Question 7 asked participants to note what supports services were offered to them when they called Embrace FARM. Fourteen people offered responses with many listing multiple supports. Figure 2 illustrates the services offered to those seeking support after injury or loss.

It is important to remember that supports offered are based on a case-by-case basis given a person's individual circumstances. It is unsurprising that almost all noted counselling since the overwhelming majority of participants called Embrace FARM for support following loss.

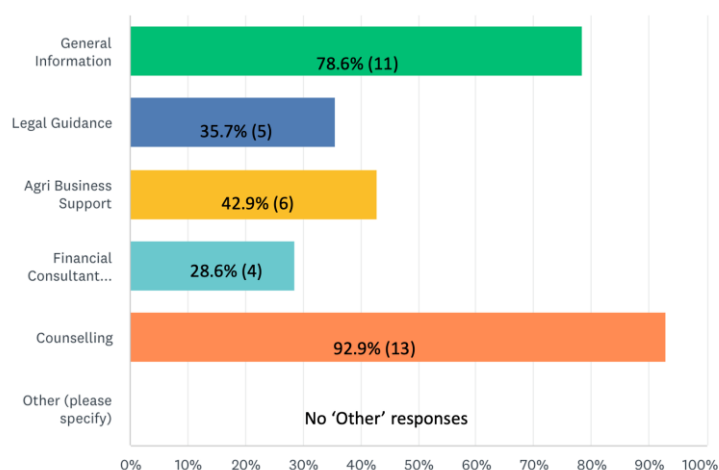


Figure 2: Support services offered to those who called Embrace FARM

Availing of Additional Supports

Additional supports are offered to individuals who call Embrace FARM to seek support following injury and loss. These supports are: Legal, Agri-Business Support, Financial, and Counselling.

In response to Q9, on the questionnaire, two-thirds of respondents (66.7%, 10) availed of additional supports through the Encircle Programme following the initial first call to Embrace FARM and all respondents (100%) reported being "very satisfied" with the services provided to them.

Two individuals offered detail explaining why they were "very satisfied"

So badly needed as (it) helped to put a perspective on things, helped to cope (3)

My case is complex and...seek additional support in the legal area (11)

Similarly, all respondents (100%, 10) reported being 'very satisfied' with the professionals they engaged with as part of the Encircle Programme with two offering the additional comments

The counselling was very good, professional...understanding of rural backgrounds & very flexible. (8)

Would be lost without the help we got. (3)

Most Valuable Aspect of the Encircle Programme

Twelve (n= 12) respondents offered insight into what they believed to be the most valuable aspect of the Encircle Programme. While this represents a small data set, nonetheless, the data is in keeping with the positive feedback that has been offered to the Embrace FARM Encircle Programme team. It is telling that all responses relate to the emotional support that is offered by the programme – legal, financial or agri-advisory services were not specifically mentioned in any of the respondents' comments. It is clear that the various ways through which people feel emotionally supported – “knowing” the support is there/guarantee of support, Counselling, Bereavement support, and peer-support - are invaluable.

Guarantee of Support – “knowing” the services are there

To know that there is this service for people (18)

Knowing that there was someone out there that understood, that knows the process and can give advice. (2)

The support in knowing that you are not alone during a very difficult and challenging time. (14)

The guaranteed support. (9)

To have support at a time of trauma (12)

The physical presence of support that was needed in the early days. (4)

Counselling

The counselling (20)

Counselling for my daughter (11)

Counselling (3)

Bereavement Support

Bereavement support (13)

To be able to talk freely. To process the stages of grief. (15)

Peer Support

Meeting people with the same experience, spending time as a family together and having conversations with people who understand.. Their support is invaluable. (17)

Describing their interaction with/support received from Embrace FARM

Participants were asked to use one word to describe their interaction with/support received from Embrace FARM. The following words were used by twelve (n= 12) participants and were assembled into a Word Cloud for visual impact.

Excellent (x3) Supported Valuable Care Understood Kindness Exceptional Uplifting Comforting and 'Willingness To Help In Any Way'



Strengthening the Encircle Programme

An important element of this evaluation was to understand if any aspect of the Encircle Programme could be enhanced or strengthened based on the participants' experiences of engagement with the programme. Eight individuals offered details which are briefly outlined.

Three individuals suggested that **there ought to be more awareness about Embrace FARM and the Encircle Programme**. Raising public awareness has always been an important aspect of Embrace FARM's work. Strategic marketing campaigns have also been undertaken in recent years (e.g. #WeRememberYou) in an attempt to reach even greater numbers of the public across multiple social media channels. It is important to note, however, that given Embrace FARM's small size, it is limited compared to other larger charities (e.g. Irish Cancer Society, Pieta House) to embark on large-scale, nationwide public awareness and media campaigns.

Talk to transition students by Embrace to highlight the Encircle Programme (15)

Make it more aware (12)

Creating more awareness of the Embrace organisation. We never heard of Embrace until my brother was killed. Would be invaluable for creating awareness regarding Farm safety and awareness. (4)

Finally, three other respondents offered the following comments:

In my situation legally I would love to see an advocacy service for minors when in a legal situation. My daughter, a minor, is the sole beneficiary of her father's will and a professional to represent her wishes in court would be huge. There is an advocacy service in Ireland but only if there are custody issues not this area. (11)

We have just started on our journey this year, and I feel like we can pick up the phone and ask advice at any time. In the coming years I am sure we will benefit more from the counselling and legal, financial advice available to us. (17)

More of the same for others (3)

One respondent simply wrote “No” (2) while another expressed similar sentiments when they noted *I really don't think so. You are absolutely brilliant already. (14).*

Question 16 on the questionnaire also hoped to offer opportunity for respondents to provide any other feedback that may be relevant for Embrace FARM to know going forward. Seven people offered responses. Two respondents did not feel there was anything else to know: one simply reported “No” (2) while another wrote *Not that I can think of right now. (14).*

Two had specific suggestions pertaining to (1) the legal process and (2) an idea for Government.

If the legal service offered could review cases that are already active to see from an agri view all is being covered as not all solicitors have agri background And maybe accompanying you on your journey. I have a solicitor but he's not up on the agri side of things and just lend a hand in dealing with the legal side I'm exhausted from it all (11)

To lobby the government on setting up a Health and Safety area specific for farms. Grants and awareness campaigns regarding farm safety. As occurred with the construction industry. Too many farming families have suffered incredible losses in the last 10 years. (4)

A further three expressed their thanks to Embrace FARM:

Just that you all are very much appreciated. Thank you for all you do. (17)

Just to say thank you. Definitely I feel it was the best decision I made to pick up the phone, to speak to Embrace. (15)

Forever grateful for Embrace and their help (3)

Part 2 – Encircle Programme Service Providers

Embrace FARM has partnered with members from IFAC¹, Agricultural Solicitors, Agricultural Consultants Association, the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention and Rural Support in Northern Ireland, to deliver the Encircle Programme.

The programme has 42 service providers in five regions/hubs across Ireland (North West, North East, South West, South East and the Midlands). They specialise in: Counselling, Legal, Financial, and Agri-Advisory services.

The Embrace FARM Encircle Programme team engages with individuals and families who have called the service to seek support. Based on their individual needs, they are referred to the Service Providers for additional support. The Encircle Programme team serves as a single point of contact through which access to local support services can be arranged for those in need.

As we have seen in Part 1, all participants who availed of additional support services were “very satisfied” with the services and the service providers. Part 2 of the report evaluates the experiences of the service providers themselves. It also seeks to explore if the Encircle Programme can be strengthened or developed in any way based on their professional experiences working with Encircle Programme participants/clients.

Part 1: The Encircle Programme Service Providers

Fifteen service providers responded to the short online questionnaire (see Appendix 2). A completion rate of 72% was recorded. All types of service providers were represented in the respondents’ sample as seen in Figure 3 below. The Agri-Advisor also identified as “Other” and described their services as “*Facilitating farm and business succession discussions.*”(7). For the purposes of the analysis, they are recorded as Agri-Advisor.

¹ Ifac is Ireland's farming, food, and agri-business specialist professional service firm. We are an award-winning employer and one of Ireland's Top Ten Accountancy firms operating from more than 30 regional offices across Ireland. Source: [IFAC Ireland](#), 2023.

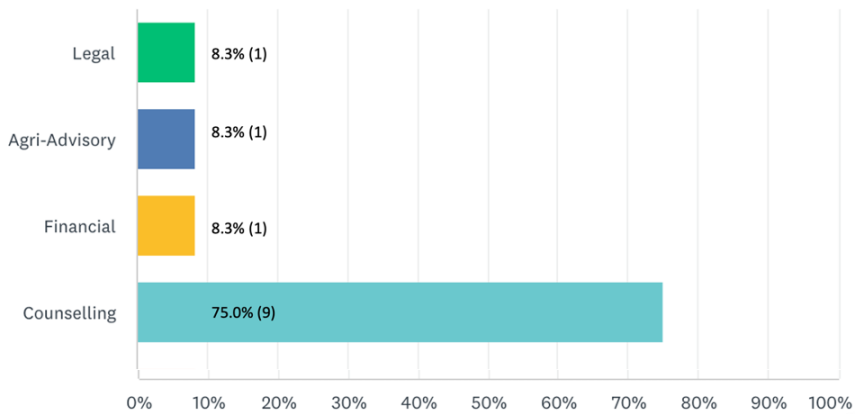


Figure 3: Encircle Programme Service Providers' Professions

Part 2: Service Providers' Experiences of the Encircle Programme - *Positive, professional, warm, caring and extremely important*

2.1 Overall Experience

Twelve service providers provided details about their experiences of the Encircle Programme. One simply noted "I am a Counsellor/Psychotherapist" (6, Counsellor). Eleven (n= 11) offered specific comments about their experiences. Nine (81.8%) detailed positive experiences while two (Financial Advisor and Counsellor) described "limited" experiences but this appears to be related to having only supported a small number of clients.

Positive experiences (9)

Nine service providers detailed positive experiences. They described a simple, quick and easy process of engagement with the Encircle Programme. Communication with the Embrace FARM team was described as "excellent" and "great". Service Providers appear to have been provided with information in timely manner testament to the programme being "well organised" and "efficient" with one also noting that they were paid in a "prompt and efficient" manner. Moreover the Embrace FARM team were noted as being "professional" and "caring" and responsive and open to Service Providers ideas and concerns.

Positive from feedback from service users. Confidentiality is at the core of our service and equally with the team of Embrace farm. (7, Agri-Advisor)

It has been very positive. All information was presented very clearly and timely. Easy to facilitate the service users. Prompt and efficient payment. (9, Legal)

Positive (15, Counsellor)

Very positive experience so far, excellent communication and procedures and policies clearly outlined prior to working as a service provider. (14, Counsellor)

The process to have clients booked in with counsellors is simple and quick. The request to have counsellors complete forms as part of being in the program can be tedious. (13 Counsellor)

I have found Embrace Farm to be efficient, professional and caring. I am happy to continue to work together. (13, Counsellor)

Just started but have found everything to be well organised with great communication. (8, Counsellor)

Good, fair and respectful (3, Counsellor)

It appears to be very well run with a lot of effort put into good practice when it comes to referrals and confidentiality. My experience of liaising with the service has been open, efficient, warm, friendly and professional. When I had a concern and offered feedback it was received with an openness and willingness to continue to work on improving. It sounds like there has been great work done up to now and there are intentions to continue with this. (2, Counsellor)

Limited experiences (2)

Two service providers used the word “limited” to describe their experience of the Encircle Programme and associated this with the small number of clients they have supported.

Limited - the two referrals were already clients and getting service. (4, Financial)

I have limited experience of being a provider on the Encircle Programme as I have only seen 1 client for Embrace. It was too early in their grief and trauma for counselling (even gentle supportive counselling) so I only saw the client for 2 sessions with a view to seeing them again if they feel they would like to pick up the remaining sessions again. Trauma-work entails more than the provided few sessions and I do not feel this is ethical. Also, it took longer than the contracted 30-day payment terms to receive the fee for the sessions. (1, Counsellor)

2.2 How Important is the Encircle Programme?

100% of Service Providers reported it as being Very/Extremely Important

The Embrace FARM team were also interested to learn from Service Providers about how important they felt the Encircle Programme is. Eleven Service Providers responded and all 11 (100%) reported that the programme is either “Very Important” (45.4%, 5) or “Extremely Important”(54.6%, 6).

Seven Service Providers (n= 7) offered additional comments to explain why they felt the programme was so important. The Encircle Programme is a very/extremely important one because it supports a vulnerable group who may not ordinarily seek counselling support but who are also burdened in relation to highly-complex tax and legal issues at a time of personal loss.

It is imperative the programme is supported to continue. There is no other outlet available for these especially vulnerable service users. They have to navigate complex legal, tax and practical issues while at the same time trying to grieve for a loved one and also support family. The effects are for a lifetime. All service users spoke to the immense benefit they got from use of the programme and finally being felt understood. (9, Legal Service Provider)

The programme assists people that would otherwise not available of counselling services. (8, Counsellor)

Similarly two respondents also made specific reference to the vulnerabilities associated with the farming community such as the isolation affecting the farmer/farm family for explaining why the Encircle Programme is extremely important. Given that the Encircle Programme specifically meets the needs of this cohort means it is well placed to offer “great support” to underserved farm families.

Farmers and their family are remote and isolated and with small communities it can be hard to share personal details so this services offers great support in a confidential space. (15, Counsellor)

Farming can be isolating work and emotional distress needs a platform to engage and express the issues that an individual is coping with. I feel the services that Embrace Farm provide are extremely important so that emotional distress is not passed down intergenerationally. (14, Counsellor)

Two other respondents noted that the Encircle Programme was very/extremely important because it is there when the client is “ready” to engage. This lends itself to the important fact that there is no one-size-fits-all approach with the Encircle Programme. Services are offered on a case-by-case basis where each person’s individual needs are assessed. Participants do not have to meet any time-bound criteria to avail of services. They simply engage when they feel ready.

From the clients experience it's the last port of call reaching out to the Encircle programme. The awareness of the programme generally evolves slowly even years following a tragedy. When the client is ready the service is at hand to give the supports. (7, Agri-Advisor)

As with all counselling services, some people are not ready for the service provided. But when it begins to work then it becomes very important to the client. (10, Counsellor)

One Service Provider was complimentary in their comments about the Encircle Programme when they explained

It seems to be a wonderful offering pooling supports and resources together for people in the farming community to avail of. (2, Counsellor)

Part 3: Meeting the needs of the Encircle Programme Service Providers and Participants

The Embrace FARM team wanted to understand if they were adequately meeting the needs of their Service Providers and Participants. Understanding the Service Providers' professional perspectives was important in this regard not only for understanding their role and if they required additional support from the Embrace FARM team but also for providing their professional insights about their clients and aspects of the Encircle Programme.

3.1 The Encircle Programme Client

Service Providers were asked if their Encircle Programme clients differed to their "typical" clients. A total of eleven (n= 11) service providers responded to this item on the questionnaire (Q4). 8 (72.7%) reported "No" with just over a quarter (27.3%, 3) reporting that their Encircle clients differed to their 'typical' clients. Four respondents provided additional details to explain their response. One Counsellor explained "I have yet to get some clients" (6).

Three Service Providers explained why they felt their Encircle Programme clients differed to their 'typical' client. What they describe are the complex and nuanced needs of farm families following loss: "trauma", feelings of "aloneness", "the reality of big decisions" and uncertainty.

Yes, they are predominantly widows / widowers who have experienced sudden loss / trauma and quite often conflict. While our typical client are farmers and landowners, they wouldn't necessarily have the emotional baggage, for want of a better phrase, that the Encircle client has to deal with. (9, Legal Service Provider)

Yes, in that their loss / grief is generally known to the public and while initially local support is given in every form possible this generosity does wane and slowly fades and stops. The reality of the aloneness does come. Steeped with all the mixed emotions and secondly faced with the reality of big decisions which must be made pertaining to the family and the farm. Navigating these decisions and discussions knowing they are alone, alone as a parent, alone as the asset owner. The suddenness of the aloneness adds to the complexity for clarity of thought and occasionally a vision of the future.(7, Agri-Advisor)

I've only had one client and this client might have been "different" because they were referred along with other family members referred to other therapists. The client didn't know that the service was funded and offered payment at the end. I believe the client didn't return because a) it might have been too soon (after an incident) and b) the

client wasn't sure what to expect and only came because people said it might help. (2, Counsellor)

3.2 Assessing Providers' Needs

Encircle Programme Service Providers are (1) adequately resourced and (2) would welcome the opportunity to meet other providers along with the Embrace FARM team

Service Providers were asked "Are there any other supports you require in order to continue engaging with the Encircle Programme?". Eleven responded to this item with 10 (90.9%) reporting "No". A Counsellor explained that "Everything is going smoothly." (10) while another noted

I don't "need" any other supports but a get-together involving peer support or group supervision once or twice a year might help therapists to have more of an understanding of Embrace and how it works along with having more connection with other therapists working with Embrace always with professional and personal development. (2, Counsellor)

Similar sentiments were expressed by the Agri-Advisor who reported 'Yes' – there are additional supports they require. They explained

An occasional debriefing session perhaps once per half year with other service providers who support the Encircle Programme. A safe professional debriefing space.

It is interesting to note that those who are supporting Encircle Programme participants/clients would also benefit for the opportunity to meet their peers. Setting up this type of meeting is a relatively easy task for the Embrace FARM team to undertake in 2024.

Commented [RH1]: Recommendation section

Part 4: Strengthening the Encircle Programme – Service Providers' Recommendations

An opportunity to learn about how to strengthen the Encircle Programme going forward was addressed by item 7 on the questionnaire when Service Providers were asked if anything could be done more effectively on the Encircle Programme.

We learned the following key points earlier in this report: (1) that counselling sessions should not be limited, (2) that all clients being referred to the additional services should be aware that there is no monetary cost to them and (3) that Service Providers would benefit from the occasional opportunity to meet their Encircle Programme peers at an event organised by Embrace FARM.

Eleven Service Providers (n= 11) responded with comments with one person reporting "No", that they saw no need for anything to be done differently because

...I feel that Embrace Farm provide a good much-needed service and have good support systems in place for everyone involved. (10, Counsellor)

Another did not make any suggestion about how things could be done differently because they noted that they are “Still learning about the organisation.” (8, Counsellor) while another simply paid a compliment and wrote “Keep up good work.” (4, Counsellor)

Eight respondents offered different ideas about how things could be improved on the Encircle Programme. Four Service Providers felt **more awareness needs to be raised about what Embrace FARM does** and the services it offers while another four gave various ways that the **administration/operations of the programme could be strengthened** such as increasing counselling sessions and offering training/information sessions.

Raise Awareness about Embrace FARM and the Encircle Programme

Promotion of its services particularly in the aftermath of a suicide in the farming community. (14, Counsellor)

Try to get the word out more - still a lot of people unaware of its existence but naturally because it is still relatively in its infancy. (9, Legal Service Provider)

Maintaining a presence at all Agri related public events. The occasional feature on both print and social media are paramount especially in advance of the annual Mass which is televised are also poignant to the public awareness which strengthens the overall Encircle programme. (7, Agri-Advisor)

Raise the profile through likes of Farmers Alliance IFAC Farmers Boards and other IFA associates Farmers Journal. (3, Counsellor)

Administration/Operations of the Encircle Programme

Collect stats (15, Counsellor)

Including invoice numbers to payments made to make tracking payments an easier process. (13, Counsellor)

Increase the number of sessions provided for trauma cases. It is unethical to work with trauma within the limitations of 8 sessions. It is like opening a 'Pandora's Box' for the client without sufficient time to support and facilitate ethical work. (1, Counsellor)

If resources and funding allowed, maybe some facilitated training or information events could be offered such as Suicide Awareness, Stress and Anxiety Management, Burnout Prevention, Parenting etc. (2, Counsellor)

The Service Providers emerge as a supportive, professional and caring group. They are acutely aware of the complex needs of their clients and understand that they are a vulnerable group. They have suggested pragmatic ways that the Encircle Programme can be strengthened going forward. They have also expressed a wish to meet their peers which would only strengthen their own collegiality and their commitment to the Encircle Programme clients.

Appendix 1: Encircle Programme Participant Questionnaire (see PDFs)

Appendix 2: Encircle Programme Service Provider Questionnaire

Appendix 7 – Copy of Feedback letter from Clinical Supervisor

Can you please provide an outline of your role based on the above over during your time of working on the Encircle Programme?

My role included providing support and clinical supervision to the programme co-ordinator. I provided guidance on clinical support including at times identifying other required services. I advised and provided supervision for the planning and delivering literature for the Encircle Programme, with a clear focus on producing a document which contained meaningful, professional and safe guidance and support.

Can you please provide us with any ongoing considerations or concerns you have about the programme as it is being developed into its next phase?

This programme will require ongoing clinical supervision for the co-ordinator and all therapists. Regular auditing of the growth and changing needs of the service users as this programme and charity continues to grow. This is necessary for any organisation after initial set up. The growth and success of the charity is a testament to this need.

Please give your overall conclusion of this programme and any other suggestions you feel would be beneficial for feedback at this time.

Regular and mandatory supervision is required for all counsellors and this requirement should be included in all counsellor contracts of engagement.

This programme has and continues to provide immense support for service users of Embrace Farm.

I wish them continued success and good wishes in their work.

Margaret Bowen.

BSc, MSc, MIACP.

Encircle Programme Feedback September 2023.