



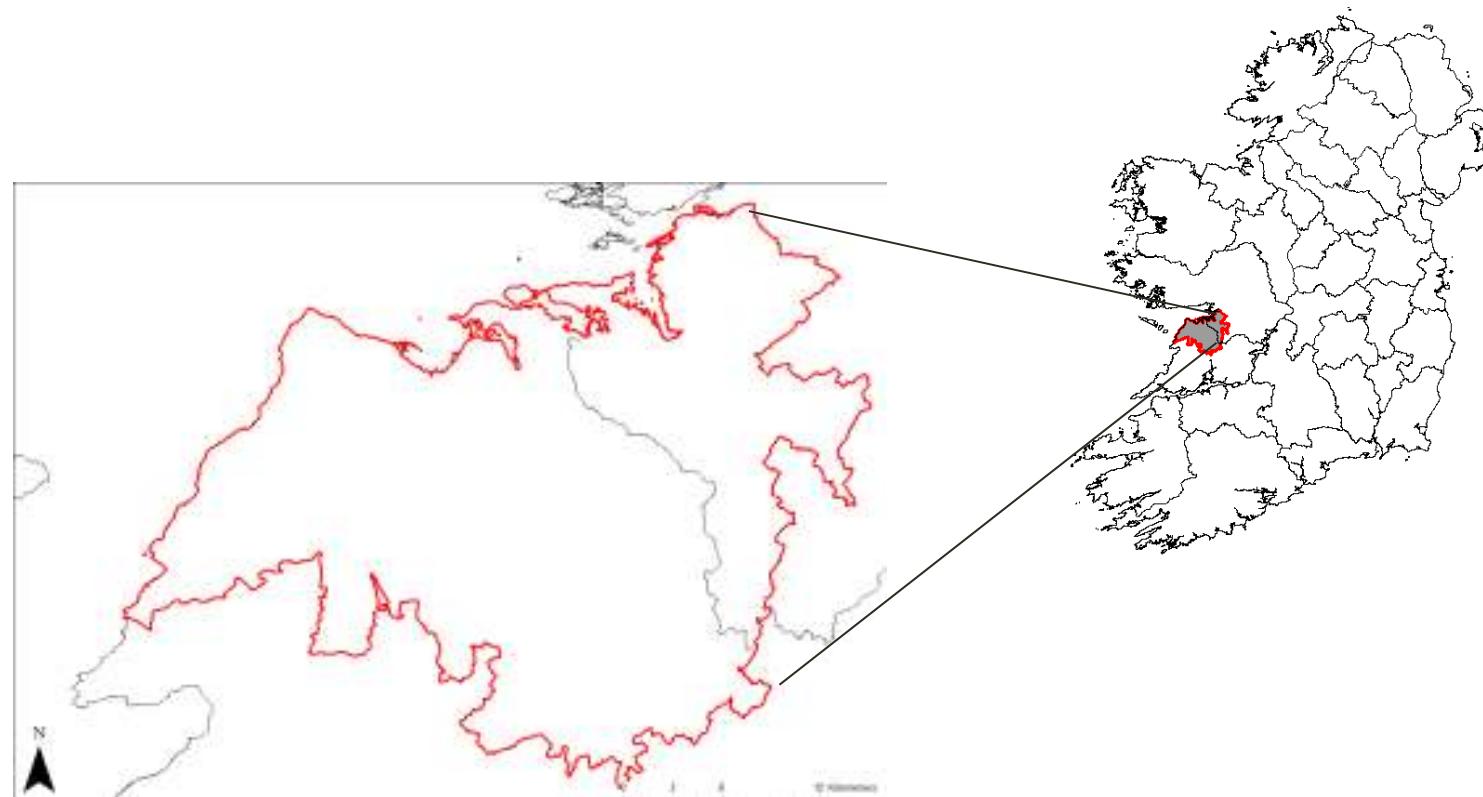
THE BURREN: LOCAL PROBLEMS, LOCAL RESPONSE, LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Michael Davoren

THE BURREN

The Burren is a unique karst limestone landscape in the west of Ireland

It covers around 720km²



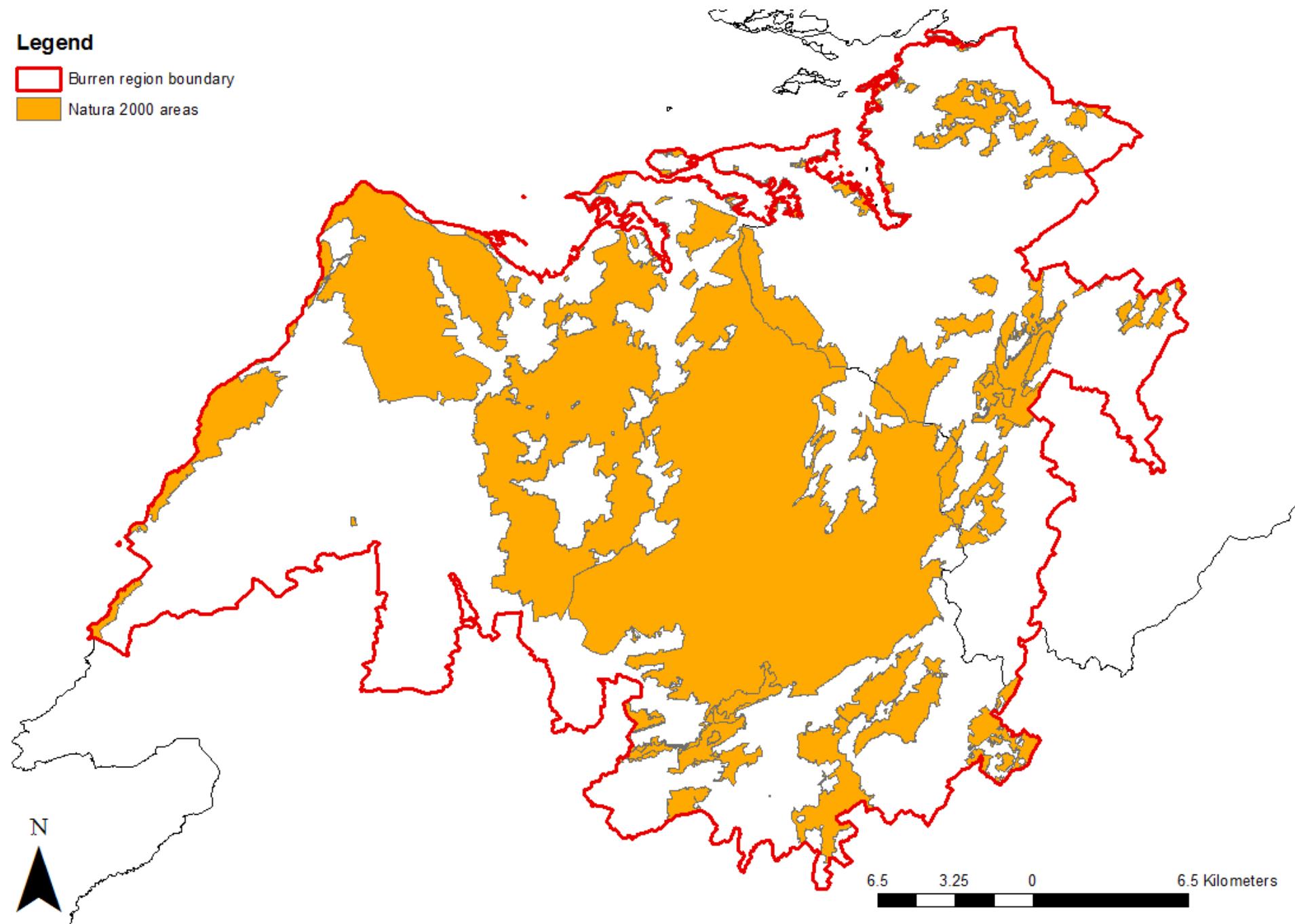






Legend

- Burren region boundary
- Natura 2000 areas



BIODIVERSITY AND AGRICULTURE

The biodiversity of this area is integrally linked to the management of the farms

Not least because of a system of winter grazing in the Burren uplands

Cattle are outwintered on 'winterages'

Benefitted to flora of those areas as kept scrub under control

Labour intensive practice that young farmers were moving away from



BIODIVERSITY AND AGRICULTURE

Suckler and beef production is the dominant farm type. Some dairy and sheep farming also occurs

Suckler Herds



Beef Steers



Conventional & Organic



Dairy Herds



Cattle & Sheep

Agri-environment: The Rural Environment Protection Scheme



Nutrient management, tidy up farm and yard, stock-proof boundaries...



...and to review the role of agriculture in the Burren and so refine the scheme



Undergrazing/Abandonment

HC Report, 2007: Scrub levels currently 15-20%, increasing c. 1% per annum

Intensification, specialisation, mechanisation..



Developing and implementing best practice for access provision...



Improving water supply



Restoring internal walls



Targeted removal of encroaching scrub



Herbicide wiping



Pulling



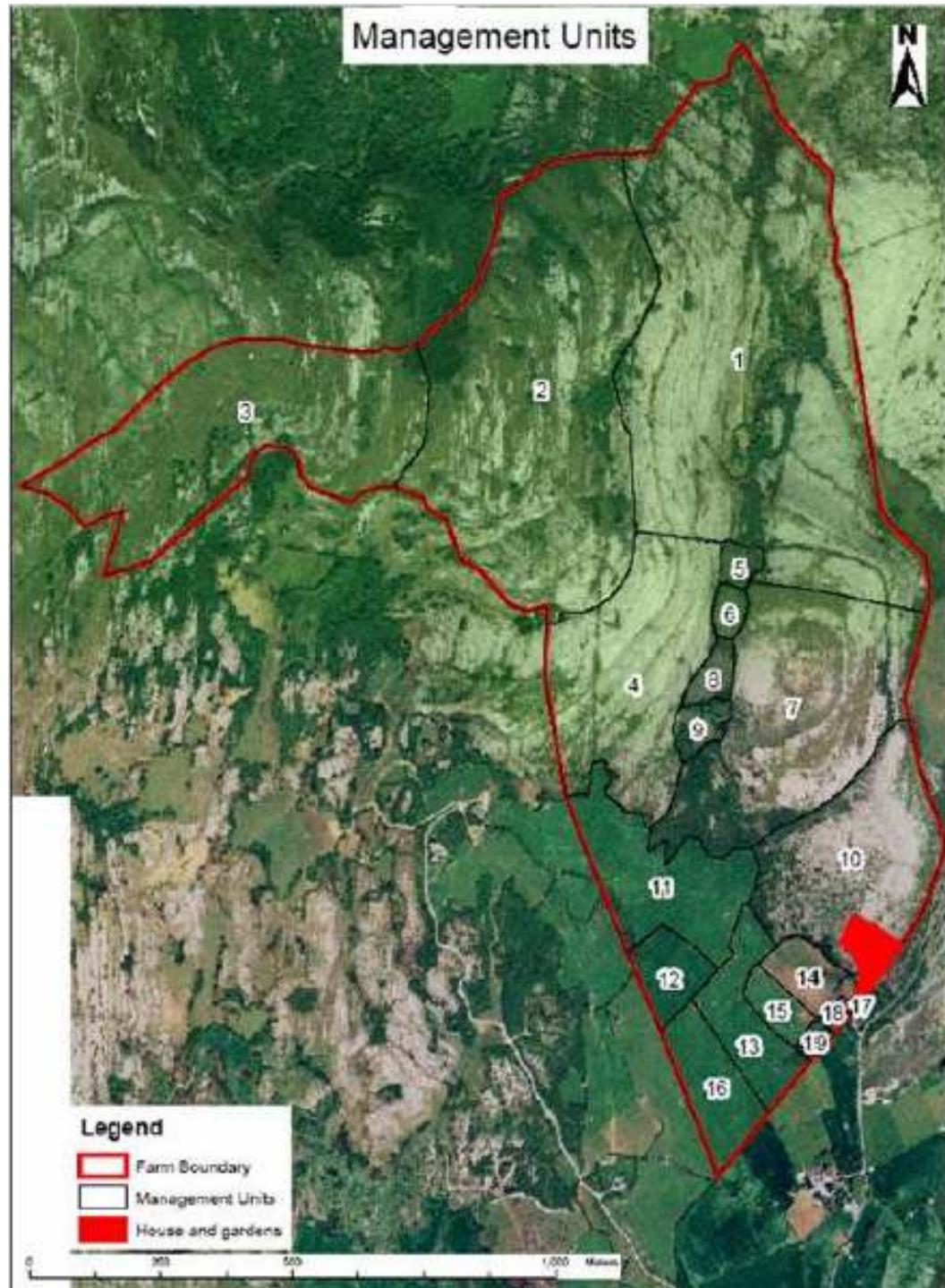
Brush-cutter





Promoting sustainable grazing systems - flexible, not prescriptive (using 'grazing days' per field)





e.g.

Field 1: 700 GDs (0.10 LU/ha)
Field 2: 1800 GDs (0.35 LU/ha)
Field 3: 1400 GDs (0.45 LU/ha)

1,800 GDs equals 32 cows for 2 months, 16 cows for 4 months ...anytime between Sept & April (incl.). Light, late summer grazing also allowed at c.25% of the winter stocking rates.

Grazing at these targets levels minimises feeding costs while keeping the winterage in best conservation *and* agricultural condition: **A double dividend!**

Sustainable feeding solutions - Relevant, Practical alternatives







KEY PRINCIPLES OF BURREN SCHEME

Open to all farmers: targets Natura 2000 sites and undesignated areas of Annex 1 habitat.

Programme participation voluntary but competitive

Payments calculated on the basis of work done

Farmers contribute to the cost of any capital works on their land.

Rewards past positive management and incentivises improvement in habitat quality.



KEY INNOVATIONS



<u>Per hectare payment</u>	<u>Class 10</u>	<u>Class 9</u>	<u>Class 8</u>	<u>Class 7</u>	<u>Class 6</u>	<u>Class 5</u>	<u>Class 4</u>	<u>Class 3</u>	<u>Less than Class 3</u>
0 – 40 hectares	€100	€90	€80	€70	€60	€50	€40	€30	Nil
40-80 hectares	€50	€45	€40	€35	€30	€25	€20	€15	Nil
80-120 hectares	€25	€22.50	€20	€17.50	€15	€12.5	€10	€7.5	Nil

The Impact of all Project Actions are Monitored:

Agricultural (Bloods, conditions, forage, fodder, etc)

Environmental (Water, soils, ecology, scrub treatments etc)

Socio-economic (Income, costs, time etc)



The future custodians of the Burren... ...fostering pride & ownership

