

Norma Dinneen

Bó Rua Farm



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The high-quality milk produced by the Montbéliarde cows grazing on the lush pastures of Bó Rua Farm is the foundation for a range of award-winning farmhouse cheeses. Located in Ballynoe, Co. Cork, Bó Rua Farm has been in the Dinneen family for generations. The farm's name comes from the Montbéliarde breed, affectionately known as the "red cows" or *Bó Rua* in Irish. This breed is celebrated for the excellence of its milk and its deep connection to traditional cheese-making practices. Norma's return to farming reflects her strong ties to rural life, where her passion for food, sustainability, and community converge.

Norma, an electrical engineer by profession, made the leap into entrepreneurship after over a decade in multinational roles. Driven by a desire to return to her family's farming roots, she saw an opportunity to combine her passion for food with her technical skills. With a bursary from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), Norma returned to University College Cork (UCC) to study Specialty Food Production. She furthered her expertise through professional cheese-making training at Teagasc and the School of Artisan Food. Drawing on both her engineering background and newfound knowledge, she developed innovative cheese recipes for Bó Rua Farm. Norma also qualified as a farmer with Teagasc graduate certificates in agriculture and farm management.

In 2018, with support from LEADER and the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), Bó Rua Farm built and launched a state-of-the-art cheese dairy on the farm, marking the official launch of their farmhouse cheese range. This new facility allowed the Dinneens to scale production and expand the availability of their award-winning cheeses to a national market. Since then, Bó Rua Farm's cheeses have garnered numerous accolades, including multiple *Great Taste stars* and *Blas na hÉireann* medals. The farm was also named *Best Small Producer* at the prestigious Irish Quality Food and Drink Awards. Tom and Norma were jointly recognized as the Irish Independent's *'Farmer of the Year' Rising Star*, and in 2024, Bó Rua Farm received the RDS Sustainable Rural Enterprise Award, further highlighting their commitment to sustainable practices.

The family aspect of Bó Rua Farm is central to its success. Norma and her husband, Tom, combine their skills to build a sustainable future for the farm. While Norma focuses on cheese production and innovation, Tom's expertise in farming ensures the smooth running of daily operations.

As an entrepreneur who returned to her agricultural roots, Norma values her involvement with ACORNS, where she connects with other inspiring businesswomen. Sales of Bó Rua Farm's cheese continue to grow, and the Dinneens have ambitious plans to make Bó Rua Farm one of Ireland's most beloved farmhouse cheese brands.

Providing early stage female entrepreneurs, living in rural Ireland, with the knowledge, support and networking opportunities to meet and even exceed their current aspirations.



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