

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 of its award-winning farmhouse cheeses. Located in Ballynoe, Co. Cork, the farm has been in the Dinneen family for generations. Its name comes from the Montbéliarde breed, affectionately known as the *Bó Rua* or “red cow” in Irish, renowned for the quality of its milk and its long association with traditional cheesemaking.

Norma Dinneen's return to farming reflects her strong ties to rural life, where her passion for food, sustainability and community come together. An electrical engineer by profession, she built a successful career in multinational engineering and commercial project management, most recently as Commercial Project Manager at Ornua's Kerrygold Park. Inspired to return to her family farm, Norma combined her technical expertise with a growing passion for artisan food production.

With a bursary from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, she studied Specialty Food Production at University College Cork before completing professional cheesemaking training with Teagasc and the School of Artisan Food. She also qualified in agriculture and farm management through Teagasc, equipping her with the skills to develop innovative cheese recipes while helping shape the future of the family farm.

In 2018, with support from LEADER and the Local Enterprise Office, Bó Rua Farm opened a state-of-the-art on-farm cheese dairy, launching its farmhouse cheese range. Since then, the business has grown steadily, earning Great Taste awards every year since 2020, multiple Blas na hÉireann medals, the award for Best Small Producer at the prestigious Irish Quality Food and Drink Awards, and the 2024 RDS Sustainable Rural Enterprise Award. Norma and her husband, Tom, were also recognised as the *Irish Independent Farmer* of the Year Rising Stars.

Family remains at the heart of the business, with Norma leading cheese production and innovation while Tom oversees the farming operation.

Norma credits the ACORNS programme with providing valuable support and a network of like-minded women entrepreneurs. As demand for Bó Rua Farm's cheeses continues to grow, she and Tom are focused on building one of Ireland's leading farmhouse cheese brands while remaining true to their commitment to quality, sustainability and family farming.

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