



**IRISH RARE BREEDS  
CONFERENCE 2019  
16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> May  
Mulranny Park Hotel**



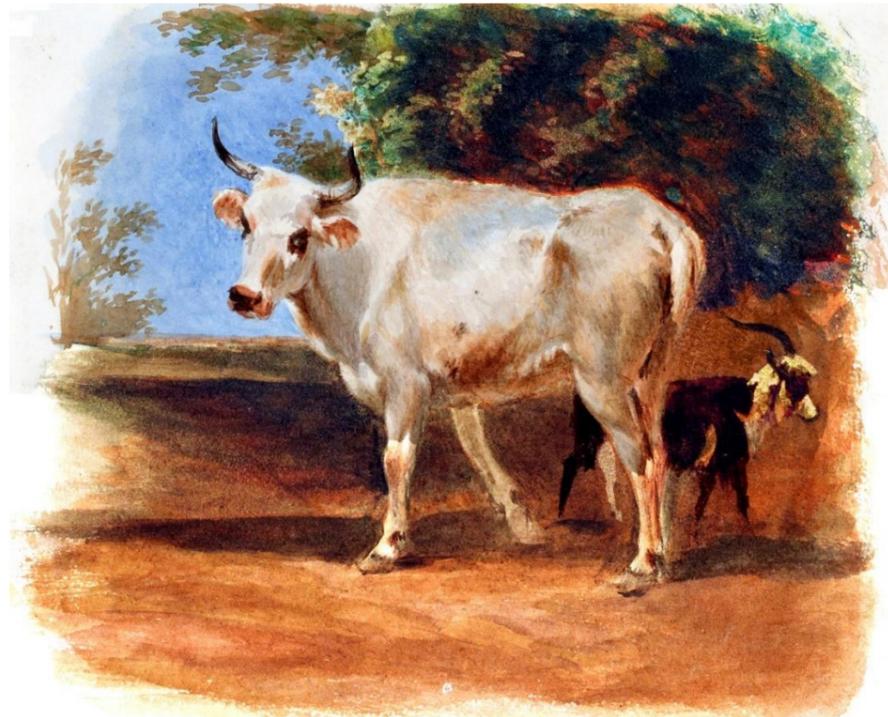
# Irish Rare Breeds Conference 2019

Thursday 16 May 19:00 to 21:00

Friday 17 May 09:00 to 15:30 and 19:00 to 20:30

Saturday 18 May 11:00 to 12:30

Mulranny Park Hotel, Mulranny, Co Mayo, F28 N2H9



Thursday: Free Event

Friday: Cover Fee €30

Friday: Evening Meal €30

Saturday: Free Event

<http://irishrarebreedsconference.ie/>

<https://mulranny.ie>

<https://www.mulrannyparkhotel.ie>

## Programme

Mulranny Park Hotel, Mulranny, Co. Mayo, Ireland. F28 N2H9

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### Thursday 19:00 to 21:00pm Evening Session 1: Heritage Breeds, Culture and Conservation

19:00 Tea & Coffee Reception and Welcome

19:30 # 1 Mulranny Home of the Old Irish Goat. Seán Carolan Old Irish Goat Society Vice-Chairman

19:50 # 2 Early Irish Farming. Pádraig Browne Old Irish Goat Society Chairman

20:20 # 3 'Don't Talk About the Goat Wars' Yasmine Ellis, Wildlife Filmmaker

20:30 Questions & Answers

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### Friday 9:00 to 11:00am Early Morning Session 2: Traditional Breeds Contemporary Applications

09:00 Registration Tea and Coffee

09:30 Official Opening by Councillor MI Holmes

09:40 Introduction and Welcome by Mary McGrath the Irish Rare Breeds Society

09:50 # 4 Marketing the Irish Shorthorn. John Clarke, Irish Shorthorn Marketing Company

10:05 # 5 Atlantic Hill Lamb Brand. Michael Mc Donnell, National Secretary INHFA

10:20 # 6 Legacy Grazing - A Conservation Grazing Service in SE England. Roger Beecroft, Herd Manager

10:35 Questions and Answers

### 11:00 to 11:30 Tea and Coffee Break

### 11:30 to 13:00 Late Morning Session 3: Native Breed Conservation, European Endeavours

11:30 # 7 Preserving Native Breeds. Geert Boink, Chairman the Dutch Rare Breed Foundation

11:45 # 8 The Nordic Collaboration for Farm Animals. (NordGen) Mervi Honkatukia Section Leader

12:00 Questions and Answers

### 12:30 to 13:30 Lunch Break

### 13:30 to 15.30 Afternoon Session 4: Conserving Native Breeds, UK and Ireland Initiatives

13:30 # 9 Promoting the Primitive Goats of Britain. Jack Mifflin, Wildlife photographer

13:45 # 10 The Rare Breeds Survival Trust Gene Bank. Tom Blunt Field Officer, Rare Breeds Survival Trust

14:00 # 11 Comparative genetic characterisation of the Kerry Bog. Pony Paul Flynn, Weatherbys Scientific

14:15 Questions and Answers

15:00 Closing Remarks

15:10 Closure: Housekeeping, Evaluation

15:30 End

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### 19:00 to 21.30 Evening Dinner: Nephin Restaurant Special Menu

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Saturday 11:00 to 12:30 Old Irish Goat Quest. Start Mulranny Park Hotel Foyer F28 N2H9

Note Photography and filming will take place during the conference.

# Irish Rare Breeds Conference 2019 -Speakers Profile

## Session 1: Heritage Breeds, Culture and Conservation



**Mary McGrath** secretary of the Irish Rare Breeds Steering Committee and a member of the Kerry Bog Pony Co-operative Society. Education: Trinity College Dublin, Courtauld Institute of Art, London University and Harvard University. Worked as an Art Conservator in Ireland, USA, England, France and Italy. Mary is interested in Conservation in all its forms and lives on a small farm on the banks of the river Liffey in Co Kildare. She has written books on the Irish Draught Horse and the Kerry Bog Pony.



**Seán Carolan** Old Irish Goat Society Vice Chairman Seán has managed several Genetic Resource and Heritage Council funded projects in a voluntary capacity. Seán co-authored a DNA study on primitive goats published in the Royal Society Journal Biology Letters in 2017.

**Preface:** Seán's talk will speak to the Mulranny communities journey toward sustainability and efforts to protect and promote the Old Irish Goat.



**Pádraig Browne** Chairman of the Old Irish Goat Society, is a retired Cardiology Consultant & Head of Department (USA). He is an active supporter of the Irish Language, Heritage & Culture & has a passionate regard for saving the Old Irish Goat. A major interest has been the application of science based methods in this effort

**Preface:** During the Neolithic, 4000 BC, farming communities appeared and this change to farming was a pivotal point in Irish pre-history. Iron Age innovations enhanced farming methods and influences from Early Christian Ireland and the Medieval Period [400-1200 AD] are acknowledged. The eighth century law manuscripts represented efforts to moderate disputes which arose in those farming communities.



**Yasmine Ellis** Wildlife filmmaker Yasmine Ellis studies at film school in Bristol where she spends most of her time creating films about British wildlife. Her passion is to inspire people to appreciate the nature that exists around them and seek co-existence before it's too late. Yasmine particularly enjoys focusing on species that are often overlooked or persecuted, seeking to tell their stories and show that a fascinating world can be found right under our noses.

**Preface:** Yasmine will talk about her current short documentary 'Don't Talk About the Goat Wars'. It is based in Lynton, Devon, where the residents and goats are at odds with each other. She will talk about the obstacles she faces and what she hopes to achieve by inspiring the young and the old.



## Session 2: Traditional Breeds Contemporary Applications

**John Clarke** is part of the Irish Shorthorn Marketing Team that promotes Irish Shorthorn as a premium brand.

**Preface:** 'The Shorthorn is a traditional early maturing breed that utilises grass efficiently and lays down finely grained fat within the muscle. This marbling delivers a superior flavour when cooked. The docile temperament of Shorthorn cattle is another added benefit, as the natural enzymes in the beef are at their optimum to break down the connective tissue. Shorthorn beef is high in vitamins, minerals and heart healthy Omega 3 fatty acids. The Irish Shorthorn Premium Beef Scheme was launched in 2016. The scheme pays a bonus of 15 cents per kilo on eligible animals.



**Micheal McDonnell** is National Secretary of the Irish Natura and Hill Farmers Association. The Irish Natura and Hill Farmers Association was established in Feb 2015 to represent farmers on hill, designated and environmentally valuable land. The organisation strives to keep the family farm viable and ensure the traditional farming way of life is valued from both an agricultural & environmental point of view. From its startup in 2015 the organisation has grown to represent thousands of members located throughout the Republic of Ireland. On setting up we identified with our members that we had no market for the high quality lamb product produced on the pristine quality high nature farmland and hills.

**Preface:** The presentation will outline how the Atlantic Hill Lamb Brand was born.....the formation of the organisation, the high quality product that is light lamb, the lack of market for product, identification of a market, defining the story to tell, working with Bord Bia, working with KEPAK, membership, workshops, product delivery and brand building.



**Roger Beecroft.** Roger is a wildlife consultant and farmer with a background in habitat creation, restoration and management. Roger has been managing the livestock for Legacy Grazing for the past 4 years.

**Preface:** Legacy Grazing works with Red Poll and Shetland Cattle, Cheviot Goats, sheep, ponies and pigs to provide conservation grazing in Essex, Herts and Kent. This talk will provide an outline of how and why this service is delivered, and some of the technology that is used and planned.

## Session 3: Native Breed Conservation, European Endeavours



**Geert Boink**, chairman of Stichting Zeldzame Huisdieren (the Dutch Rare Breed Foundation), breeder of Lakenvelder cattle and Dutch landrace goat.

**Preface:** How to preserve rare breeds and their genetic diversity in a neo-liberal political system. Rules and regulations are designed for the intensive commercial farming systems without respect for the cultural, historic and genetic values of the rare original Dutch breeds. The Dutch Rare Breed Foundation tries to create awareness of these values among policy officers of the ministries and provinces, politicians in parliament and provinces, the farmer's union, the nature and landscape management organisations, schools and universities and of course the general public. All these different audiences require a different way of communication. This makes it complicated for a small NGO like the Dutch Rare Breed Foundation. A story of challenges, chances, successes and disappointments.



**Dr. Mervi Honkatukia**, Section Leader, Nordic Genetic Resource Center, Farm Animals, Norway. Mervi Honkatukia started as Farm Animals section leader last year at Nordic Genetic Resource Center (NordGen). Before that she has been a senior scientist and a leader of Animal Genetic Resources and Reproduction team at Natural Resources Institute (Luke) in Finland. Apart from her research background, she has been Finland's national coordinator and coordinating the AnGR conservation program in Finland.

**Preface:** The main message of the talk is what is the point of Nordic collaboration, how and why NordGen Farm Animals functions. Separately Nordic countries are small, but together we constitute a strong region with shared cultural aspects and environmental issues. Population numbers of the rarest breeds might be as slow as a couple of hundred individuals. However, they have sister breeds in the neighbouring countries sharing the challenges.

## Session 4: Native Breed Conservation, UK and Ireland Initiatives



**Jack Mifflin** is a wildlife photographer who created a photography book 'The British Primitive Goats' for his graduation project. Jack set out to capture the personalities of the goats and show their beauty. He made himself well acquainted with the behaviour of the goats in Scotland. He is passionate about fighting for their survival.

**Preface:** Jack will be sharing stories from making his photography book and presenting his favourite photographs. He will share stories on the realities of van life, the much needed help of the local communities, joyous moments with the goats and the challenges of photographing them. After all, some things are worth falling down a small cliff for!



**Tom Blunt Field Officer** for the Rare Breeds Survival Trust, a role I have held for 4 years. Tom graduated from Harper Adams University with a degree in Agri-Business. The interest in rare and native breeds started at a young age showing the family herd of Red Poll cattle, which at the time were a rare breed and are now considered to be a success story.

**Preface:** Tom will discuss the work of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust and his role as a Field Officer. Since the charity was formed in 1973 there have been many challenges that affect RBST's mission, which is to build a secure future for all native livestock breeds. He will discuss the approach taken to ensure we can continue to be successful. A large proportion of his work revolves around the RBST Gene Bank which consists of both semen and embryos, He will discuss the importance of this and the approach taken.



**Paul Flynn: Head of Research and Development Weatherbys Scientific**

Paul has worked with Weatherbys Scientific since 2002. He is a molecular geneticist with over 15 years' experience within the Agrigenomics sector, specialising in application of latest Omic Technologies and Bioinformatic Solutions. He holds an MSc and is currently undertaking a research PhD in Conservation Genetics

Comparative genetic characterisation of the Kerry Bog Pony breed using a panel of high-density genome wide markers.

This project endeavoured to perform an in depth comparative genetic characterisation study for the Kerry Bog Pony breed. 192 breed representative samples were selected based on breeding activity status. This project utilised recent advancements in molecular technology which allowed for analysis of 660,000 genetic sites across each Kerry Bog Pony genome.

Generation of such extensive genotype profiles per pony, provided suitable data to accurately assess levels of genetic diversity and inbreeding that exists within the breed. Furthermore, breed purity/sub-structure was also screened for along with assessment of the genomic relationships that exist between all pairwise combinations within the 192 ponies. To provide further information, compatible genotype datasets from 40 other global Equine breeds were also merged with the Kerry Bog Pony dataset to allow for comparative interpretation of genetic characterisation results.

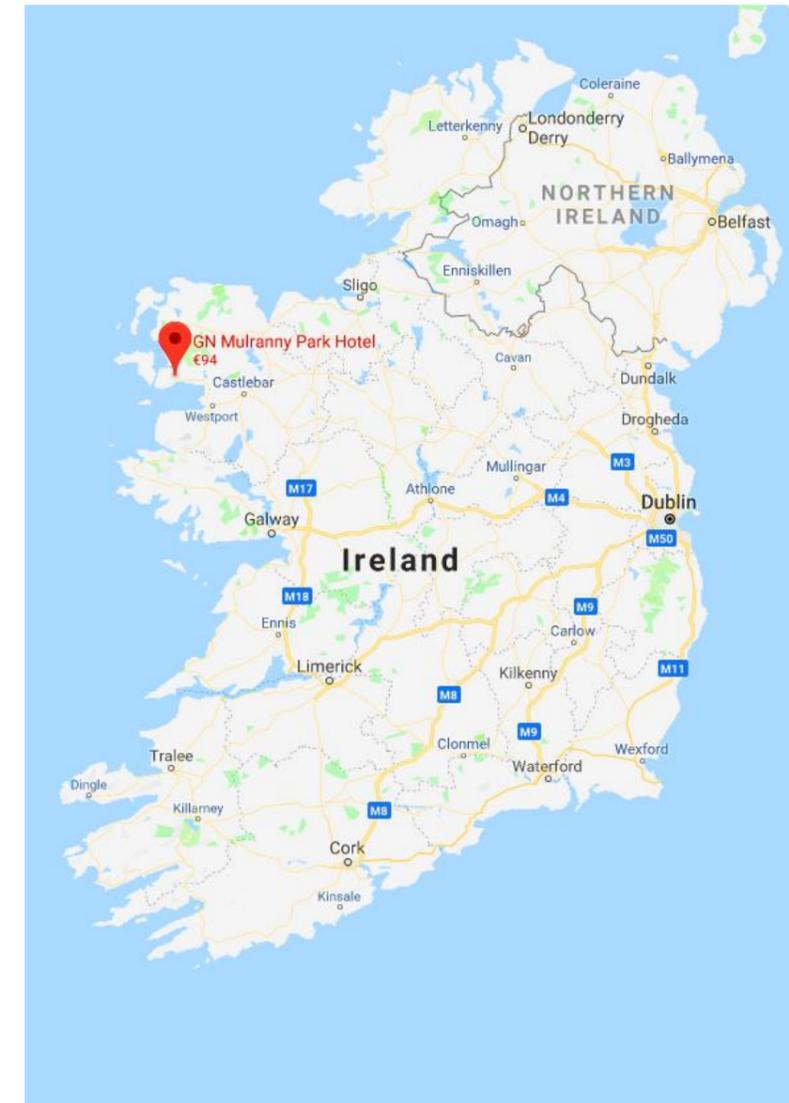
This study accurately quantifies the current population wide genetic status of the Kerry Bog Pony breed, establishes genetic metrics usable for future breed management strategies and provides insight into genetic relationships to other global Equine breeds.



## Conference Facilitator

**Alan Hill: Alan Hill Tourism Ltd**

Alan Hill has been working at the coalface of Irish tourism development for three decades. His reputation is built on strategic planning while facilitating innovative and practically sustainable solutions to challenging tourism related projects. He is no stranger to the Old Irish Goat Society having been a professional mentor to the group, for much of 2016.



**Mulranny Park Hotel,  
Mulranny, Co Mayo, F28 N2H9  
(on the N59 to Achill)**

<https://www.mulrannyparkhotel.ie>