# Transforming a derelict farm: The upcoming Fashion and Farming Festival in Kinsale



Ciara Hunt and her husband embarked on a transformative journey five years ago when they purchased a derelict farm near Kinsale, Ireland. The couple, who had spent 15 years living in cities across the globe—Toronto, Boston, Munich, and London—longed for a permanent residence immersed in nature. On encountering the farm, Ciara remembered feeling struck by the pervasive silence around the property, remarking, “There were rolling fields with fabulous views but the silence was deafening, with no birds, no insects despite all those trees. It was astonishing.”

To revitalise the land, the couple implemented a transformative plan that began with ceasing all pesticide applications and focusing on restoring life to the soil—an ambitious project that continues today. They have since planted thousands of trees, hedgerows, wildflowers, and established multi-species meadows. With these initiatives, local fauna began returning, creating a vibrant, lively environment that Ciara is enthusiastic about, stating, “I’m more excited about what goes on outside than inside.”

The farm lies in close proximity to her parents’ organic holding, led by Mareta Doyle, who is also deeply involved in the festival’s organisation. Mareta’s farm has seen the planting of 7,000 trees in recent years, and she articulated how the newfound regenerative approach to farming undertaken by Ciara has enriched their lives. "Ciara has been part of the fashion world for many years now and the idea of doing this event in May in Kinsale just landed with us one day – it was a lightbulb moment,” she explained.

The upcoming Fashion and Farming Festival, scheduled to take place in Kinsale on May 10 and 11, seeks to blend these two domains—fashion and farming—while addressing sustainability issues in both industries. Notable speakers, including the Eden Project founder Sir Tim Smit, will share their insights and experiences. Mareta stated, “The idea is to highlight how we can attain a more sustainable life... to help mend the farm-to-fabric cycles which have been damaged in recent decades.”

Mareta, who previously established the internationally acclaimed Kinsale Arts Festival, hopes to foster conversations surrounding sustainable practices in farming and fashion. She noted, “Once inextricably linked, fashion and farming are part of our domestic and social fabric, but how we farm and how we create fashion are killing us in today’s world. We believe it’s time to make it better.”

In discussing the climate challenges faced by the dairy farming sector, Mareta acknowledged that Ireland benefits from favourable conditions for grass growth, asserting, “If I was truthful, I’d say dairy is our best export product—Kerrygold butter and Irish beef, etc—and I think there must be a way of solving the methane problem with diet or possibly technology.”

Ciara, who has an extensive background in fashion journalism and has held significant roles at various prestigious publications, expressed her concern over the environmental implications of the fashion industry. She remarked, “The world’s fashion and textiles industries are now causing huge environmental damage... less than 1% of clothing is recycled into new clothing and 73% of the materials used are landfilled or burned.”

The festival promises to attract a diverse audience, hosting celebrities from various fields, including Adam Clayton of U2, actor Sinead Cusack, and renowned chef Darina Allen. Mareta emphasised that the event is tailored for anyone with an interest in the interconnection of fashion and farming: “Whether you’re a fashion enthusiast, a farmer or simply curious about the relationship between these two worlds, fashion and farming weaves together experiences, projects, and stories that might lead to a brighter future for our planet.”

For further details, information is available on the festival's official website.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.echolive.ie/wow/arid-41613952.html> - This article discusses Ciara Hunt's journey with her farm near Kinsale and her involvement in the Fashion and Farming Festival. It highlights her shift towards sustainable living and her concerns about the environmental impact of the fashion industry.
* <https://www.fashionandfarming.com> - This is the official website for the Fashion and Farming Festival, providing details about the event, its mission to connect fashion and farming sustainably, and the lineup of notable speakers.
* <https://www.instagram.com/fashion.and.farming/> - This Instagram account supports the Fashion and Farming Festival by sharing updates and insights into the event's focus on sustainability and the interconnection of fashion and farming.
* <https://westcorkpeople.ie/environment/style-meets-sustainability-at-fashion-and-farming-event-in-kinsale/> - This article details the Fashion and Farming Festival, emphasizing its goal to reunite the worlds of fashion and farming through discussions on sustainability, textile innovation, and ecological practices.
* <https://www.fashionandfarming.com/about> - This page offers an overview of the Fashion and Farming initiative, explaining how it seeks to reconnect the cycles between farming and fashion, promoting sustainable practices and understanding.