

## Can you introduce yourself and share what drives your passion for agriculture?

My name is Maura Farrell, Associate Professor of Geography at the University of Galway and Coordinator of the FLIARA (Female-Led Innovation in Agriculture and Rural Areas) Horizon Europe project. This project explores the innovative practices of women in agriculture and rural areas, the challenges they face, and the valuable contributions they bring to farms and communities across the European Union.

## What challenges have you faced in your career and how did you overcome them?

Balancing a demanding career with raising a family has been a significant challenge. However, as my children grew, they became proud of my work, making the effort incredibly rewarding. Perseverance and a strong sense of purpose have guided me through this journey, helping me overcome obstacles. Their support and recognition have strengthened my resolve and deepened my commitment to driving meaningful change in my field.

## What led you to your current role? Was there a defining moment?

Historically, women have been the backbone of family farming, yet their contributions have often gone unrecognised and overshadowed by their male counterparts. My research is deeply motivated by the desire to highlight and celebrate the invaluable, often unseen work women perform daily on farms across the EU, ensuring their efforts are acknowledged for their true worth and significance.



### **Maura Farrell**

Associate Professor of Geography at the University of Galway and Coordinator of the FLIARA project

A common misconception is that women are not as involved or capable in farming and agriculture as men. I've challenged this by highlighting and spotlighting over 200 innovative projects across the EU, led by women, which show that women are central to driving change and sustainability in the sector.

## What advice would you give to women entering your field today?

I would highlight the dynamic and fulfilling nature of agriculture and rural development, where women can make a meaningful impact on communities and the environment. Embrace lifelong learning, look for mentorship, and use your unique distinct viewpoint to drive innovation and lasting solutions.

## How does your work contribute to the future of agriculture?

As Coordinator of the FLIARA project, my main role is to explore the challenges faced by women innovating in farming and rural areas. Beyond highlighting their achievements, our findings must drive policy change, ensuring women in agriculture can reach their full potential.

Addressing agricultural challenges requires input from all of society, including women. The FLIARA project aims to support their journey and contribute to the future sustainability of agriculture.

## Can you share a moment when you felt particularly supported or uplifted by other women in your field?

Through my work in the FLIARA EU Horizon Project, I have had the privilege of interviewing numerous women engaged in farming. Their passion, innovative ideas, and unwavering commitment not only uplifted me but also reinforced the power of collaboration and shared purpose among women in this field.