

A social networking site for older farmers

IFA & Skytek trial the WeCare System

06 May 2011 – Skytek, a leading player in the creation of information and operation based tools, is pleased to announce that it is currently working in conjunction with the Irish Farmers Association (IFA) in the trial of the WeCare system. WeCare is a collaborative European project with the primary goal of encouraging older people to create, participate and engage in social networks in order to prevent isolation and loneliness.

The innovative **WeCare** system is also aimed at engaging, stimulating and entertaining older individuals in the Irish marketplace. The integration of this system will improve older people's autonomy so that they can live at home independently enhancing their quality of life.

The **WeCare** system was developed in a joint venture by a range of technology providers which include Skytek, ShareCare, Ericsson, TNO and Videra. These partners have brought together their technologies, expertise and innovative capacities in order to design a platform for social interaction and communication.

WeCare is a project within the Ambient Assisted Living Joint Programme (<http://www.aal-europe.eu>), a joint European research and development funding programme, enjoying a substantial financial support from the European Commission. The ultimate goal of this project is to encourage governments or welfare organisations to deploy internet services like **WeCare** as a tool to enable older people to participate in social networks and to prevent them from suffering from isolation.

WeCare Trials in Ireland

User involvement and trials of the **WeCare** systems are being conducted in the Netherlands, Spain, Ireland and Finland, in order to adapt to the different socio-cultural and governmental contexts. Skytek is currently running a field trial of the **WeCare** social networking application



with a group of Irish farmers who are members of the IFA located in Counties Kilkenny, Louth and Kildare. The participants are aged over 60 years old. The trials are taking place in the residential homes of the participants over a six week period. The **WeCare** system has been set up on the home PC's of the participants and Skytek has also provided some participants with Apple iPads and an Android devices. The objective of this trial is to establish if the system can be used as a suitable means to connect individuals and to combat loneliness and isolation in older Irish people. The data collected in the study will allow the system to be further developed based on the participants' feedback and recommendations.

Features of the WeCare 2.0 System

The IFA **WeCare** 2.0 system provides users more specifically Irish farmers, with six easy to use features in a web based environment. The homepage has a user friendly interface which flows in a logical manner and is easy to use. The integration of clearly identifiable headings, footers and simple and colourful icons which depict the applications make the system very easy to use.

Duration of the Project

WeCare will run for two and a half years and will finish in August 2012. More information about the **WeCare** project can be found at www.wecare-project.eu

iFarm.ie

WeCare



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WEATHER

Weather



MARKETS

Commodity Prices



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Sports



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WeCare 2.0 System - Homepage and Applications