

WP3.1 Field Day reports from Donegal, Ireland.

Dates: 27th June, 13th August, 2nd September and 4th September 2025.

Place: Killea, Co. Donegal, Ireland.

Participants: 30 people

Three field trips and one field visit were organised in Donegal in 2025. The three field trips that occurred in June and September and they overviewed the OatFrontier Project, its objectives and the varieties grown were presented by the farmer Peter Lynch, and by the UCD leads Prof. Fiona Doohan and/or her collaborator Dr. Cathal McCabe. Note that at the field trials, they demonstrated the impact of chemicals on crop performance, explained the impact of breeding on crop performance and the importance oat crop improvement for increased oat production in the Northwest of Ireland. Each field trip was followed by question-and-answer sessions. The field visit on June 27th was by our Norwegian Partner Prof. Morten Lillemo, who examined the varietal performance in the Northwest of Ireland.

FIELD TRIP 1:

We had a visit by a delegation of Australian farmers, who were visiting Ireland. The aim of the visit was to better understand Irish agriculture and tillage and to learn from projects such as OatFrontiers. Although these visitors were from outside the region, this helped foster international farmer collaboration and understanding of our farming systems.



Figure 1: Field trip 1 – Australian farmers visit the trials at Donegal.

FIELD TRIP 2:

The second field trip hosted UCD undergraduate and graduate students (plant science students, environmental science students). They studied the oat cultivars and took agronomic assessments. They learned about the importance of oat growth in Ireland and the potential of this crop in the Northwest of Ireland.



Figure 2: Field trip 2 – UCD students visit the OatFrontiers trials in Donegal.

FIELD TRIP 3:

The third day trip was held for tillage farmers, farm advisers and other operators in the agricultural sector (Figure 3). The aim of this visit was to demonstrate to the local advisors and farmers the potential of oats for the area and the differences between genotypes.



Figure 3: Field trip 3 – farmers, advisors and other operators at the oat field trial site.

FEEDBACK:

Overall, the main feedback from students, farmers and advisors was the same as last year: the need for short chain circular economics and more adapted varieties for the region and for Ireland. Australian farmers were very interested in the potential of the crop in this frontier area of Europe. The feedback from UCD students was that they learned a lot from the trials about crops and the research that is needed to diversify farming and increase oat production on the western seaboard of Ireland. The main discussion point at the farmer and advisor field trip was the difference in treated versus untreated plots and the virus susceptibility of most but not all varieties. Attendees at the third field trip highlighted the need for more adapted varieties for the region and welcomed the potential of projects such as OatFrontiers to help in this regard.