

All in a Day's Work

Fachtna Collins – Vet

PROFILE

Fachtna Collins is a Vet and works in the Schull, Aughadown and Bantry areas in West Cork. He works with both large and smaller animals.



Where do you work?

I work out of two bases, one in Bantry town, with small animals and the other in the Schull/Aughadown area, mainly with larger animals.

Have you always been interested in what you do?

I have. I grew up on a dairy farm in the mid 80s and from there I got a love of animals. If I weren't a vet I'd be a farmer.

What training did you do to get where you are today?

When I finished my secondary education I got enough points to go into veterinary in University College Dublin. That was a five-year course and I qualified in 1996.

What is a day in your life like?

It varies as veterinary is seasonal. The spring would be extremely busy and other times would not be so busy. Spring would be the busiest because of cows calving, sheep lambing and all the associated problems. Other periods through the year would be more organised, with routine work such as fertility work (getting cows back in calf) and TB testing (tuberculosis eradication scheme), which involves skin testing of animals. Every animal in the country must be TB tested once every year.

What is your main aim?

My main aim is to expand the business over the next couple of years and build it up so that it would be sustainable for 2 or 3 vets. That would make the call-out rota a bit easier.

What is the best thing about your job?

The best thing is that, to a certain degree, I am my own boss and that I am out and about in the country. I could never see myself being in an office every day.

Do you enjoy your work?

Yes, I do. Every job has good and bad days but the majority are good.

What equipment do you use?

Restraining equipment for cattle, hoof knacks for lameness in cows, injectable and tablet medicines for animals.

Where does your work take you?

It would take me anywhere from Skibbereen to Mizen, Durrus and Bantry.

Do you work alone or as part of a team?

I have a vet's assistant and part-time secretaries. There are five of us in all - we are part of a team.

What advice would you give someone wanting to do your job?

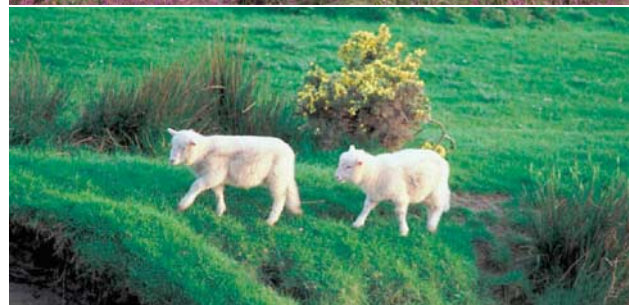
The main thing is that they would really need to like animals. It is not like most other jobs. It is a great job but it is not a 9 to 5 job or just 5 days a week. You can't walk away in the evenings and you are always on call, which takes a bit more commitment.

What would you do if you weren't doing what you do?

I would definitely be involved in some form of agriculture, be it farming or an agricultural advisor.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever had?

Be nice to people and people will be nice to you.



Courtesy of Robbie Murphy