

Sheep plan a baa-rilliant hit

BY MARY MURPHY

BLEETS of excitement were mixed by human cheers on the Kissane Sheep Farm in the Black Valley, near Killarney, as the progressive farming family celebrated a massive milestone in a novel business venture.

John and Anne Kissane's innovative Adopt a Sheep initiative reached dizzy heights when the number of sheep sanctioned for adoption reached the magical 500 mark.

The record was reached thanks to LSS Cork Ltd, an Irish IT support company which adopted the 500th sheep.

The animal at the centre of all the attention was named D-RAM and it is already a bit hit with employees in the company, according to LSS director Aidan McDonald.

"We promote environmental friendly IT products with a view to minimising energy usage and we think it is highly important to help preserving our beautiful Irish landscape," he added.

"Adopt a Sheep also tries to preserve the landscape as well as a typical Irish tradition so it fits very well into our philosophy," the compa-



Aidan McDonald (left) and Sinead Austin of LSS Cork adopt sheep number 500 from John Kissane in the Black Valley.

ny director said.

"We sincerely hope more Irish companies will follow our example," Mr McDonald added.

The adoption of sheep number 500 has also put a smile on the faces of John and Anne Kissane who have seen their innovative idea go from strength to strength.

"Adoptive parents come from all over the world. We have people from the US,

South Africa, Canada, The Netherlands, Germany, France, Switzerland, Austria, Sweden and England as well as from Ireland adopting our sheep," John Kissane said.

"It is great that Irish companies are now getting an interest in supporting our initiative," he added.

Mr Kissane was born and raised on the Black Valley farm and learned the trade from his father. At just 12

years of age he already owned a flock of a couple of hundred sheep.

Current European regulations discourage him from keeping mountain sheep in the hills while the costs of feed and medical treatments are rising and the price of sheep and wool is declining. Responding to that economical challenge was where the Adopt A Sheep idea came from and the Adopt a Sheep

initiative has allowed John Anne to keep the farm up and running.

The adoption of a sheep costs €45 per year and that covers the annual costs of winter-feed and medical care for one sheep.

Adoptive Parents receive a certificate with their name and the tag number of their sheep and they get free entrance to the visitor's farm and most of its activities.