



APPEAL: Murphy

MIRACLE DRUG IS NO-GO

By JOHN MANNING

A BALBRIGGAN man who lost the ability to walk just days after he was forced to come off an expensive drug for his MS has appealed to the Government to make the miracle drug widely available and free.

Gerard Murphy (53), was the first person in Ireland to use the drug Fampyra, which at that stage was unlicensed.

Factor

Since the drug was licensed, the HSE has not found a way to make it available for free for any longer than a month and with a cost of €500 a month, the drug is now out of reach for many, including Gerard.

He told the *Fingal Independent*: "They don't factor in the human cost to their cost-benefit analysis. I know a woman who used the drug and stood up and hugged her child for the first time in 20 years. How do you measure that?"

RURAL RAIDERS FARMERS AT

IN FEARMS

Family living in fear after three robberies as IFA President



VULNERABLE: Farm owned by Michael and Martin Owens and (right) Ger on tyres put in to stop robbers

THEY HAVE turned rural Ireland into a thieves' paradise – but gangs who target isolated farms could soon be 'buying the farm' for real.

Raiders could soon be six foot under as farmers threaten to fight back – with gunfire.

When former IFA President Pdraig Walsh warned this week "someone is going to get shot", his views were echoed by farmers all over the country, who say that they are also worried they will be murdered by criminals.

Other farmers claim they may be forced to follow the example of Mayo farmer Pdraig Nally and shoot raiders.

Brothers Michael and Martin Owens, whose dairy farm at Crutt, four miles outside Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny, told the *Sunday World* that their homes have been raided three times recently.

Blessed with fertile land, close to the venue for next October's National Ploughing Championships, this rural paradise looks like the set of cult ITV series *Midsummer Murders*.

But the action around here is straight out of the Wild West – and Michael admits he feels like Davy Crockett at the Alamo as he goes to bed every night.

"We are under siege. It's only a matter of time before someone shoots these lads," said Michael.

"You get very angry when it's your family, your home and your livelihood that they're attacking. And the really frightening thing is, a farmer defending his land could be killed."

Grabbed

He recently caught three raiders stealing diesel, and held them while he called the gardai.

"I ran at the fellas who were robbing the diesel and just grabbed them. I was in a temper and all I was thinking of was my family, but they could have been a big gang or they could have been carrying a weapon."

"They were young lads, about 19 or 20 years old. They had a woman driving the car. They robbed me at milking time. They must have been watching me for a while."

Shockingly, they were locals. "I know them to see around the town. I see them in the supermarket every day. They were signing on at the Garda station for other crimes. They have a long list of charges, but nothing has been done."

Three months ago, raiders stole a shed load of tools, including welding equipment, grinders and chainsaws – and even the children's buggies.

"The thought of them entering my yard and rummaging through my property is sickening. But the worst part is the fear. I worry about my family," Michael said.

As his four children, Ailbe (5), twins Isabelle and Eddie (2) and Rachel (18 months) played in an enclosed garden on the farm, their



FEARS: Michael with three of his kids



CLEANED OUT: Owens' shed raided



SECURITY: Ger with Michael, who has added extra protection to gates on the farm



DEFENCE: Pdraig Nally shot robbers



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