

Small Farms Association Newsletter



October 2013

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© The Kingsbridge Estuary (courtesy of the South Devon AONB)

Dear Members,

At last we have had a summer to remember!

The controversial badger culls have now been completed for this year (including time extensions); and the field trials of a cattle vaccine to protect against Bovine Tb are due to start in England and Wales next year. I am hoping it will be successful.

Three CAP Reform Consultation events were held at Defra Headquarters, Nobel House, Smith Square in London from August to November to which the SFA were invited. I went to the first meeting on 12th August at which the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Rt. Hon. Owen Patterson MP and the Minister of State for Agriculture and Food, David Heath CBE MP, were in attendance.

The Rt. Hon. Owen Patterson MP gave an overview on some of the changes he would like to see happen in the CAP (2013-2020). For example: more help for farmers in the less-favoured parts of England that is the Yorkshire Dales, the Lake District, Exmoor, Dartmoor and Bodmin moors.

Two more consultation meetings took place: one on the 24th September and the last one in October. Mary Rosevear and I attended the second meeting on 24th September.

Personally, I would like to see the threshold of the Single Farm Payment raised from €5,000 Euros to €20,000 before modulation kicks in. This change would help a lot of smaller farmers, especially members of the SFA and the farmers in the less-favoured areas.

As we go to press, the long-awaited, CAP Public Consultation has begun. It was published on 31 October; and we all have until 28 November to respond. It is important that every one of you reads and responds to this Consultation, as the outcome will determine what the farming community can expect to receive from the Government in return for farming and protecting the environment until 2020. As in life, there will be winners and some losers.

The consultation document and supporting information is available at <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/communications/cap-consultation>

Enjoy the months ahead. Let's hope the weather will not be too extreme.

Statements and opinions expressed in articles, reviews and other material herein are those of the authors and not necessarily of the SFA.

While every care has been taken in the compilation of this information and every attempt made to present up-to-date and accurate information, we cannot guarantee that inaccuracies will not occur.

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A consultation on how the Common Agricultural Policy should shape the future of farming and the rural economy in England

The future of farming, the rural economy and the natural environment in England will be shaped by responses to a consultation on the Common Agricultural Policy which opened on 31 October.

The new EU rules set the framework for how Common Agricultural Policy funding may be spent; but the UK government successfully pressed the Commission to agree that each country within the UK may make choices on how CAP is implemented from 2015.

Defra is now seeking views on how the Common Agricultural Policy should be implemented in England in order to deliver value for money for the public.

Farming Minister George Eustice said:

"The UK ensured that we have choices in how we implement the Common Agricultural Policy, rather than having to work with a one-size-fits-all approach from the European Commission.

This gives us the flexibility to target funding in ways that will deliver real benefits to the environment, boost the competitiveness of our farming industry and grow the rural economy. It's vital that the new system is designed with the input of the people whose lives it will affect. That's why it's so important that people give us their views on how we can best achieve this."

Defra is inviting input into the design of a straightforward system that is effective, easy to follow and avoids the significant fines charged to UK taxpayers under the current Common Agricultural Policy.

The consultation responses will also shape the future of the Common Agricultural Policy in England, particularly

with regard to transferring up to 15 per cent from the budget for payments made directly to farmers to payments to improve the environment and projects to improve farm competitiveness and boost economic growth. This is subject to evidence from the consultation that additional funding in these areas would prove value for money.

The consultation is wide ranging in its scope:

- Growing the rural economy. The consultation sets out the potential to grow the rural economy.
- Improving farm competitiveness and making things simpler.
- Protecting the natural environment. Defra has proposed that a new environmental land management scheme should replace existing environmental stewardship schemes; and also cover forestry.
- Protecting pollinators. The consultation explores options for the Common Agricultural Policy to do more for pollinators.

Responses to the consultation can be made:

- Online at <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/communications/cap-consultation>
- Via email to capconsultation@defra.gsi.gov.uk
- By post to CAP Consultation, Area 1D, Defra, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, SW1P 3JR

Defra will also host social media debates and regional engagement events (including workshops) which will inform the formal consultation. See page 3 to find out more information on workshops being held around the country and how to register your interest.

SFA 2013 Annual General Meeting

Thursday, 28 November 2013, 7 p.m.

The Exeter Inn, Church Street, Modbury

Members' notifications are enclosed with this newsletter
Minutes of the 2012 AGM will be distributed at this year's AGM

Please come and support

RSVP to Tel: 01548 830302

Forthcoming Events

Seminars on Successful Business Succession

Designed with both the current owner/manager and successor generations in mind, the seminars will look at some of the key issues that rural family businesses face when planning for succession, and identify practical strategies for dealing with them.

Dr Matt Lobley, Co-Director of the Centre for Rural Policy Research, is working with the Rural Business School at Duchy College to deliver two evening seminars on succession planning for family businesses.

Dr Lobley says: "Britain is a nation of family businesses who really are the backbone of the rural economy. Many have been passed down over a number of generations and are extremely important to their rural communities."

Building on the Family Business Growth Programme led by Clinton Devon Estates and funded via the government's Rural Growth Network, the evening sessions will draw on the latest research into family businesses, examining how they can ensure a smooth and sustainable transition between and within the generations.

Richard Soffe, Director of the Rural Business School says: "There are real issues about succession in family businesses - whether you are farmers, butchers, florists or anything else. Families inevitably get bigger, and you have to look at how the business can be split, or continue to support an increasing number of people through the generations."

BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL, to secure your place at this event. For more information please call the Rural Business School on: **0845 4587485** or email rbs@duchy.ac.uk

The seminars will be held on 12th November (Hannah's at Seale Hayne, Newton Abbot, Devon) and 26th November (Junction 24 Limited at Sedgemoor Auction Centre, North Petherton, Somerset TA6 6DF) from 6pm to 9pm, at a cost of £42 + VAT.

DEFRA CAP REGIONAL EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS

Location	Date	Start time	Email
West Midlands Bromsgrove	14 November	9:00am	rdpedeliverywestmidlands@defra.gsi.gov.uk
East Midlands Melton Mowbray	15 November	9:30am	rdpedeliveryeastmidlands@defra.gsi.gov.uk
North East Hexham	21 November	2:00pm	rdpedeliverynortheast@defra.gsi.gov.uk
Yorkshire and Humber Leeds	14 November	2.00 p.m.	rdpedeliveryyorkshire@defra.gsi.gov.uk
South East Ardingly	19 November	10:00am	rdpedeliverysoutheast@defra.gsi.gov.uk
East of England Cambridge	20 November	10:00am	rdpedeliveryeast@defra.gsi.gov.uk
South West Bridgwater	18 November	2:00pm	rdpedeliverysouthwest@defra.gsi.gov.uk
South West (Cornwall) Truro	22 November	2:00pm	rdpedeliverysouthwest@defra.gsi.gov.uk
North West (Cumbria) Penrith	11 November	2:00pm	rdpedeliverynorthwest@defra.gsi.gov.uk
North West (Cheshire) Nantwich	20 November	10:00am	rdpedeliverynorthwest@defra.gsi.gov.uk

The National Minimum Wage

More than 60 years of pay protection for 140,000 agricultural workers ended on 1 October 2013, as the AWB—Agricultural Wages Board for England and Wales was axed. Agricultural Workers should receive at least the national minimum wage; and at least the same terms and conditions as workers in other industries. Changes to the National Minimum Wage come into effect from 1 October 2013. The changes are: ~

- Workers aged 21 and over - £6.31 ; Workers aged at least 18 but not yet 21 - £5.03
- Workers under 18 but above compulsory school leaving age - £3.72 (increased from £3.68)

Apprentice Rate* - £2.68. * For Apprentices under 19, or 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship.

Bovine Tuberculosis update



As well as the much publicised pilot badger culls in West Somerset and Gloucestershire, there are other initiatives on the Bovine Tuberculosis front that may prove very useful in the eradication of the disease; but which have not received the same level of publicity. Here is a brief overview of some of these initiatives.

West Cornwall Vaccination Project

Lib Dem MP for St. Ives, Andrew George, assisted at the recent launch of the badger vaccination project in West Cornwall, which Professor Rosie Woodroffe of the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is overseeing, as she believes vaccination may be the most effective method of combating TB transmission from badgers to cattle.

Once the pilot is completed, the intention is to roll out the badger vaccination project across the whole of the 200 km² of the Penwith peninsula over the next five years. This year the small pilot – on four or five contiguous farms – will provide essential information to assist with the preparations for the roll out of a large-scale project from spring next year. This year's pilot will continue until sufficient badgers have been vaccinated.

Professor Rosie Woodroffe, who comes from Cornwall, said: "Bovine TB is a huge problem for farmers in Cornwall and elsewhere in Britain. As controversy rages around badger culling in other parts of the country, it's exciting to see wildlife groups working alongside farmers to try to help find a sustainable solution." Mr George said he was delighted that the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) has now appointed a Project Co-ordinator and is planning for project success. This project is one facet of the research into the disease being conducted by ZSL with a grant from Defra.

Professor Woodroffe and Andrew George MP will update Defra officials and Ministers on the progress of the pilot project; and compare their results with the Government's pilots in Gloucestershire and Somerset.

As part of the Bovine TB research, ZSL held a one-day event on 3 October this year entitled Vaccination in the Control of Bovine Tb.

Programmes for controlling Bovine TB in the UK and abroad have inevitably led to increased interest in vaccines for cattle and wildlife. The renewed interest has been accompanied by myths and misunderstanding about the efficacy and practical application of vaccination at a population level. This one-day event, with speakers who are leading experts from academic, government and charitable organisations, explored the principles behind vaccination and practical use in the field. The principal topics covered: ~

- How vaccines work at the individual and population levels.
- Recent uses of vaccination for disease control and elimination in wild and domestic animals.
- Practical low cost deployment of injected badger vaccine
- Development of oral badger vaccines.
- Current status and prospects for cattle vaccination against Bovine TB.

The proceedings can be found at: ~

www.zsl.org/science/events/vaccination-in-the-control-of-bovine-tb,773,EV.html

Killerton and Sharpham Vaccination Projects

A bovine tuberculosis (TB) vaccination trial for badgers has been launched across 550 acres of tenant farmland in south Devon. The Sharpham Trust, an environmental charity that manages the land, does not support culling and has instead chosen to roll out the scheme over the next three years. The estate, based at Sharpham House outside Totnes, is working with one of its tenants, Ambios Ltd, to run the £15,000 project.

The scheme follows similar projects at Killerton House, near Exeter, and a West Cornwall scheme, supported by MP Andrew George.

The partners hope it will contribute to a reduction in the level of TB in local cattle herds but do not expect clear results for some years.

Chris Nicholls, Sharpham Trust director said: "The Trust feels this is the best course of positive action in the light of the complexities around the issues of badgers, cattle and bovine tuberculosis. There is clear scientific evidence that shows that a cull can only reduce TB in cattle by around 16% at best and may actually spread the disease further. Culling badgers is counter-productive and does not provide a credible long-term solution to the problem of the disease."

The first injectable badger vaccine, BadgerBCG, was licensed in March 2010 and is available for use on prescription.

A Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) field study over four years in an infected population of over 800 wild badgers in Gloucestershire has found that vaccination resulted in a 74% reduction in numbers testing positive for TB.

We will publish updates on these projects in future issues.

Members' Comments and Contributions



The following is a contribution by Roger Hosking who farms near Mary's Cross just outside Modbury; and also with his brother Philip at Ley Coombe.

The Sentinel

From around 1750, cattle-rubbing-stones were placed in suitable fields for cattle or sheep to rub themselves on.



Skylark illustration

These hand-carved granite pillars were usually set within five feet of the pillar above ground level and three feet below ground. At their inception, these stones were considered an advancement in animal husbandry, giving the stock an object on which –‘if they so wished’ – they could give themselves a much needed scratch rather than ripping the farmer’s hedge!

In 2007, we placed a granite stone-roller, which in times past had been used as a horse-drawn roller on its end in one of our higher hay fields near a site where skylarks usually nest. It soon became a favourite song and lookout post for the skylarks in spring; and welcome rubbing post for sheep for the rest of the year. Unfortunately, the images of our skylarks taken by a field camera were not of a high enough quality to publish; but I ask you to imagine a skylark sitting on top of the granite roller and singing his heart out!

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suitable for horses**

Contact Phil Hosking on
Tel: 01548-830302

Skylark Fact file

Skylarks are ground-nesting birds and will breed from April to early August. Spring temperatures trigger the start of the breeding season.

Their choice of nesting site is influenced by the height and density of the crop - the ideal vegetation height is 20-50 cm.

Skylarks generally make 2-3 nesting attempts in the same area of farmland during a long breeding season. They will stop nesting if the vegetation becomes too tall or dense to allow them easy access.

Skylarks advertise their territories by a spectacular song-flight, during which the bird rises almost vertically with rapid wing-beats, hovering for several minutes and then parachuting down. Song flights of up to one hour have been recorded, and the birds can reach 1,000 feet before descending.

The nest is a hollow on the ground, lined by the female with leaves, grasses and hair. She lays 2-6 grey-white, thickly spotted eggs, and incubates them for 11 days. Both parents feed the chicks on insects for their first week, then gradually introduce small quantities of shoots and seeds for a mixed diet.

Skylarks need to 2-3 broods of young each year in order to maintain populations. Most cereals are now sown during the autumn, which means that the crops are too tall and dense to allow skylarks to raise more than one early brood.

Spring-sown cereals allow skylarks to make later nesting attempts, but have disappeared from most regions of Britain. A reduction in the number of nesting attempts is probably one of the main causes of skylark population declines in Britain.

On livestock farms, skylarks often nest in grass silage fields where frequent mowing causes many nests to be destroyed or predated



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BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

The Small Farms Association was formed in October 1997 because of the reluctance of major farming organisations to support the needs of small farmers. Since its inception, the SFA has addressed the concerns and needs of small farms by the action it takes.

- * *Lobbying MPs and other public representatives*
- * *Communicating the views of small farms to DEFRA*
- * *Working in partnership with other farm organisations*
- * *Contributing to policy, with a small farms' slant*
- * *Working to our own Constitution and Code of Practice*
- * *Advice and support available to members*
- * *Opportunities to socialise*
- * *Training opportunities*
- * *Free quarterly newsletter, including members' adverts*
- * *A website, including opportunities to advertise*

Please help us to continue the work on your behalf by providing feedback on topical farming issues and recruiting new members.

And lastly, have a laugh Courtesy of Alan Spedding of RASE



Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson go on a camping trip. After a good dinner and a bottle of wine, they retire for the night, and go to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes wakes up and nudges his faithful friend. "Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see."

"I see millions and millions of stars, Holmes" replies Watson. "And what do you deduce from that?"

Watson ponders for a minute. "Well, astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. Theologically, I can see that God is all powerful, and that we are a small and insignificant part of the universe. What does it tell you, Holmes?"

Holmes is silent for a moment. "Watson, you idiot!" he says. "Someone has stolen our tent!"

Verboosity

Pythagoras' theorem - 24 words.
Lord's Prayer - 66 words.
Archimedes' Principle - 67 words.
10 Commandments - 179 words.
Gettysburg address - 286 words.
US Declaration of Independence - 1,300 words.
US Constitution with all 27 Amendments - 7,818 words.
EU regulations on the sale of cabbage - 26,911 words

Fascinating farm facts

- Crops are grown on four and a half million hectares of land in the UK.
- Each year, two-thirds of British people make at least one visit to the countryside.
- There is growing evidence that being in the countryside makes us feel good.
- There are 20 million hectares of farmland in the UK - that's the equivalent of 30 million football pitches.
- A fifth of UK farmland grows crops, a lot of the rest of it grows grass to feed animals.
- There are nearly 280,000 farms in the UK.



shop facts

- 60% of all food eaten in the UK is grown on British farms.
- Every day, British farms supply 20 million eggs and the grain to make nine million loaves of bread.

hedge facts

- The more types of plant you find in a hedge, then the older it is.
- Put all the UK's hedges together and they would circle the Earth 20 times.