

# Small Farms Association



## Newsletter



**SPRING 2011**

**Volume 14, Issue 1**

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### Dear Members,

I hope we can all breathe a sigh of relief now that temperatures are rising and spring appears to be just around the corner. The cost of forage and bedding this winter rose considerably due to the shortage of hay and straw. One of my top tips this year to ensure I had enough to feed forage for the stock was to alternate feeding haylage one day and the following day a mix of hay and palatable straw, such as barley or oat, that guaranteed sufficient nutrients and fibre. It also helped to keep costs down. I am looking forward to the next harvest; but that will be many months away.

In a recent *BBC1 TV Country File* programme (27<sup>th</sup> February), farmer and presenter, Adam Henson, visited a research laboratory to find out what progress has been made in the development of a cattle Tb vaccine; and of a commercially available differential diagnostic test.

Back in September 2010, Defra stated the earliest projected date for

the widespread use of BCG cattle vaccine with a differential diagnostic test (DIVA) was 2015. The *Country File* report contended that considerable progress has been made in developing a Tb vaccine for cattle; and also of a DIVA, which would distinguish between natural immunity and immunity through vaccination. This is good news.

Considering the licensing and organisational difficulties that would be associated with a badger cull in hotspots, if the Minister decides in favour of this option, the SFA is advocating the speediest introduction possible for a BCG cattle vaccine and its mandatory use when this and the DIVA are available. Yes there will be legal problems with EU and domestic legislation; and the UK's Officially Tuberculosis Free (OTF) status in trade legislation (see SFA News Autumn 2010). It would be worthwhile, however, to put up with export issues for a short while if such a vaccine can offer greater protection from this disease to the UK's cattle population.

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.

### SFA News published by

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[www.small-farms-association.org](http://www.small-farms-association.org)

## New support for farmers - Resource Efficiency for Farms (R4F)

Farmers can now get free face-to-face on farm advice to reduce energy costs and improve their farm's resource efficiency through the R4F programme (Resource Efficiency for Farms), using registered independent farming and renewable energy advisors.

The advice is **fully funded** under the RDPE in south West England; so there is no cost to the farm business. Farmers can get one day of advice, which involves half a day spent looking at the farm's use of energy and resources followed by the production of a full action plan looking at how the business can save money by making more efficient use of on-farm resources.

Fiona Edwards of the regeneration company, Devon Renaissance, is a registered advisor for the R4F scheme. Fiona, who comes from a farming background, specialises in environmental technology and resource efficiency. Fiona said, "*The R4F advice is totally free and enables farmers to get help to analyse their use of energy and resources and look at how these can be improved. There is absolutely no risk to the farmer and the benefits and savings could be significant. I would hope that at the very least I would be able to save the farm some money. The only investment the farmer needs to make is a few hours of time. I then analyse the farm's energy costs and use of resources and give the farmer a full action plan for cost savings and improvements. The farmer cannot lose!*"

The resulting action plan provides a full list of recommendations to deliver the maximum gains in resource efficiency. Some of the recommendations may also be eligible for support through the SWARM small grants scheme, which offers grants of up to £10,000, or up to £20,000 for dairy farms, to purchase eligible items identified in the farm action plan.

Up to two days of further specialist technical support can also be taken up if required, at a subsidised rate.



If you are interested in the scheme and the farm business meets the following criteria: ~

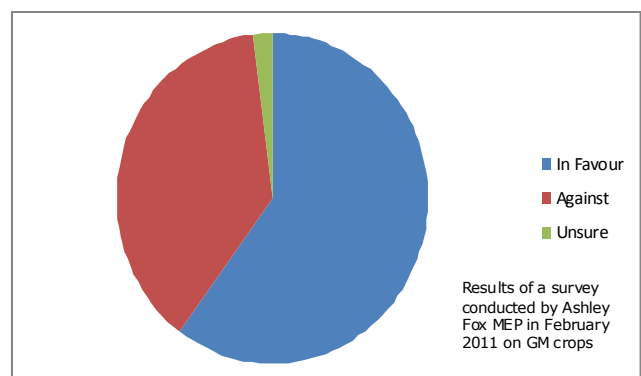
- The majority of income must be derived from agriculture
- The business must produce, process, or sell agricultural produce
- The business must be dependant on agriculture e.g. agricultural contractors
- The business must employ fewer than 250 employees and have a turnover of less than €50m
- The business should have an agricultural holding number/ Unique identifier

If you are eligible to apply please contact Fiona at Devon Renaissance on Tel: 01837 658643 or email at: [fiona@ruraldevon.org](mailto:fiona@ruraldevon.org)

## The future of GM Crops in the EU

**According to Ashley Fox MEP** responsible for Bristol, Wiltshire (including Swindon) and Dorset (including Bournemouth and Poole), any British debate on the future use of GM foods is going to be controversial. At the moment the EU Commission is looking at repatriating the decision on whether National Governments want to allow GM to be grown within their borders or not. This is why Ashley Fox MEP conducted a poll last month and asked what his constituents thought about the future use of GM.

The results of the poll/survey are shown in the pie chart: 60% in favour, 38% against and 2% unsure. Obviously this simplifies the whole issue to a yes/no question when in reality it would be hard for people to be that definite on either side of the argument. Ashley Fox says he has a feeling that if, and when, this issue comes before Westminster politicians, it will be



without any party whipping; and will be a matter of conscience for the people considering the proposals. For his part, Ashley Fox has two primary concerns; one if GM is approved, and one if it is not. His biggest concern regarding the future use of GM is the corporate

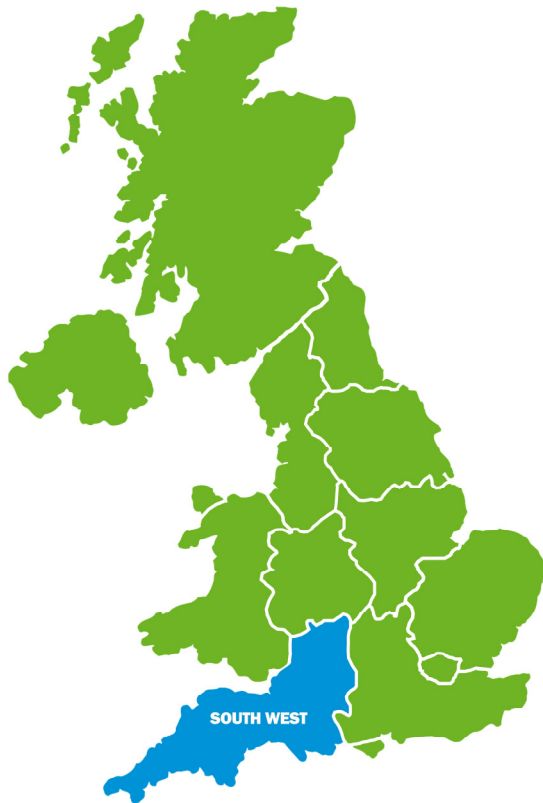


# The future of GM Crops in the EU

monopoly that could become established. This is also the concern of the SFA. In the USA the company Monsanto has a virtual monopoly on GM seeds and products. They have engineered a form of crop that does not produce new seeds on its own, which forces farmers to buy new Monsanto seeds every growing season. Can we really allow the complete corporate dominance to extend to our own food supply? However, if the global population rises as expected and hits the 10.5 billion mark by 2050, then can we as a world feed our population? Current farming methods would make this unlikely. In order to stave off massive famine and starvation do we not need to embrace Genetically Modified technologies that would allow us to produce higher yield crops? Ashley Fox contends that population projections are simply a best guess hypothesis and that they often vary widely. This is true.

UN estimates put the global population by 2050 at anywhere between 10.5 to 7.5 billion people, but can we afford to bet on the lower figure?

Like many, Ashley Fox believes we need to look at GM foods. Few of us believe we are at the stage where they should be given a complete green light for mass production and planting; but believe, as a country, we should carry out our own research into the subject to establish the environmental impacts, yield levels and costs of the future use of GM products; and this will obviously involve some limited planting.



Ashley Fox purports we may not need to implement this research, or might never want to; but until such time as we have carried out our own studies then it will be impossible for politicians to make any informed decisions in the future.

If SFA members wish to follow the progress of this debate in the European Parliament or submit their views on the subject, they should write or email their MEP. Contact details for three South West MEPs are given below.

## South West MEPs

The South West of England covers a large geographical area, stretching from Gloucestershire in the north, down to Dorset, westwards to Cornwall and then via sea to the wonderful bastion of all things British - Gibraltar.

Stretching 219 miles from tip to tip, and significantly longer if you include the distance needed to reach Gibraltar, with over 5million people living and working in the region. Due to the immense size of the area the Conservative MEPs have divided the region up into three sections in order to better respond to the issues, concerns and problems of constituents.

### Ashley Fox MEP - Conservative

Bristol, Wiltshire (including Swindon) and Dorset (including Bournemouth and Poole)  
T:0117-9737050; email: [ashley@ashleyfoxmep.co.uk](mailto:ashley@ashleyfoxmep.co.uk);  
[www.ashleyfoxmep.co.uk](http://www.ashleyfoxmep.co.uk)

### Julie Girling MEP - Conservative

Gloucestershire (including South Gloucestershire) and Somerset (including North Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset).  
Tel: 01763 289654; email: [julie@juliegirling.com](mailto:julie@juliegirling.com);  
[www.juliegirling.com](http://www.juliegirling.com)

### Giles Chichester MEP - Conservative

Devon (incl. Plymouth, Torbay) and Cornwall.  
Tel: 01404 851106; [giles@gileschichestermep.org.uk](mailto:giles@gileschichestermep.org.uk);  
[www.gileschichestermep.org.uk](http://www.gileschichestermep.org.uk)

### Trevor Colman MEP - UKIP

Tel: 01626-830041; E: [trevor.colman@btconnect.com](mailto:trevor.colman@btconnect.com)

### Graham Watson - Liberal Democrat

Tel: 01458-252265; Email: [euro\\_office@cix.co.uk](mailto:euro_office@cix.co.uk)

### William (The Earl of) Dartmouth - UKIP

Tel: 01722-744814; Email: [wdartmouthmep@aol.com](mailto:wdartmouthmep@aol.com)

All MEPs share responsibility for Gibraltar.

## Updates on Consultations - Public Forest Estate & Tb Consultation

On 17th February, Environment Secretary, Caroline Spelman MP confirmed the consultation on the future management of the Public Forest Estate had been halted, and all forestry clauses in the Public Bodies Bill will be removed.

*"I am sorry, we got this one wrong, but we have listened to people's concerns"*

Speaking in the House of Commons the Environment Secretary said: "I would first like to say that I take full responsibility for the situation that brings me before the House today. Let me make it clear that we have always placed the highest priority on preserving access and protecting our forests. But the forestry clauses in the Public Bodies Bill, published well before we launched the consultation, gave the wrong impression as to the Government's intentions".

Mrs Spelman went on to announce steps which should allow for more measured and rational debate about the future direction of forestry policy:

1. The end of the consultation on the future of the Public Forest, which she said she was doing because it became quite clear from the early responses to the consultation that the public and many MPs were not happy with the proposals.
2. The removal of the forestry clauses from the Public Bodies Bill, currently at committee stage in the House of Lords.
3. The establishment of an independent Panel to consider forestry policy in England that would report to her in the autumn.

Mrs Spelman also announced that an independent panel of experts will examine forestry policy in England and report back to her in the autumn. The independent panel, announced on 17th March, will be chaired by the Right Reverend James Jones, Bishop of Liverpool, and will bring together a wide range of interests and expertise covering the environmental, social and economic aspects of forestry. They will advise government on a new approach to forestry policy in England, including how woodland cover can be increased and at options for enhancing public benefits from all woodlands and forests. The full list of panel members can be found on the Defra website. West Country appointees include Sir Harry Studholme (Forestry Commissioner) & John Varley (Estates Director, Clinton Devon Estates).

**During the recent NFU Conference, Agriculture minister, Jim Paice, explained the reasons behind the delay in announcing the Government's evaluation of and decisions arising from the recent bovine TB Consultation.**

Mr Paice said the issues that emerged from the consultation, and the process of addressing them, had contributed to the delay in the Government making an announcement as planned in February.

He said his principle concern was to ensure the right action is taken; and that any action is legally water-tight. Mr Paice maintains that if a decision to organise culling, as part of a series of measures to reduce and eventually eradicate Bovine Tb, it will have to work, as there will be no second chance.

He is concerned not only about the organisational difficulties of a badger cull but also about its legal status. Having lost one Judicial Review (in Wales), he is anxious to win any likely legal challenges that will undoubtedly arise from animal welfare groups, such as the Badger Trust.

*"this is a one off opportunity"*

Issues thrown up by the consultation include ensuring that a cull, once begun, is done properly. For example, it needs to be considered what would happen if some farmers opted out during the process, or if terms and conditions are not adhered to – especially considering that it could take 20 years to completely eradicate TB. The question of the boundaries of the areas in question is also an important consideration, including the potential impact on the area just outside the boundary.

Finally, on the issue of law and order, Mr Paice is concerned about the use of firearms and the protection of those who would be licensed to use them to cull.

Kevin Pearce, NFU director of the regions, said the NFU is preparing for action, despite an announcement not having been made yet. He acknowledged, however, the issues the government was keen to work through, emphasising that the ideal situation would be to get a plan so legally robust that it would make a judicial review very difficult.

The SW Stakeholders Group, comprising representatives from the major farming and landowning sectors, including the SFA, will hold a meeting to develop their strategy as soon as a government announcement is imminent.

## Food Links Totnes - an invitation to the SFA

Dear Members of the Small Farms Association,

It is with great pleasure that I am writing to you. My name is Holly and I am managing a new project based in Totnes called Food-Link Totnes. The name tells half of the story: we will be working with local producers within a 30 mile radius of Totnes, helping to develop links directly with the retailers and catering establishments in Totnes town with the core aim of getting more local food in to the town.

Having read your Small Farms Association promotional leaflet I see a great amount of cross-over between our respective aims, specifically the four ones in common with both projects stated below: ~

- A sustainable future for small farms
- Fair-trade principles; farm-gate prices above the price of production
- Full traceability of produce
- Farm and retail partnerships, particularly the concept of local supply chains

It is clear that as the recession bites ever harder that more needs to be done to support our local farmers and producers. As oil and fossil fuel prices continue to rise there is a need to develop creative solutions that re-localise the economy. As supermarkets continue to wield their corporative might there is an urgent need to move towards collaborative local systems for processing, packing and delivery of the abundant produce that we have in this part of Devon, in order to get more of the profit back to the producers, whilst providing affordable, quality produce to the customer.

The Totnes Food Link project has evolved out of the recent CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England) work that mapped the local food web of producers, processors and customers around Totnes. The research highlighted many of the issues facing the small scale farms that we have in Devon and in particular the inordinate amount of time that farmers spend transporting and marketing their produce to the many small independent shops and retail outlets. It is my hope that the Food-Link project will enable you to spend more time on the land growing food and help you to create strong, loyal links between yourselves and your end-markets in Totnes.

I am currently arranging an event that will bring producers and retailers together. This event will be an opportunity for you to discuss the barriers and issues preventing you from selling more food locally and understand the issues facing retailers. This will help direct the Food-Link project to assist in the areas that will be of most benefit. Please get in contact with me to discuss in more detail. Contact details over.



Totnes famous clock tower

### Transition Town Totnes

Transition Town Totnes (TTT) is a dynamic, community-led charity that is strengthening the local economy, reducing the cost of living and preparing for a future with less oil and a changing climate.

TTT is community-led. Anyone can be involved. Everyone is needed. People involved so far are wide-ranging in backgrounds, ages, and experiences. Why not join in with any of our projects and groups? Over 30 projects have started and there are nine themed groups underway. If there's something missing you can even start up your own. We have a large local support base and have contributed over £1 million to the local economy through grants, jobs and tourism. What have we done?

We also seem to have sparked a global movement, occupying a surprising limelight as one of the most-watched community projects about. Transition Town Totnes is something anyone from Totnes & District can be really proud of.

More information available at the website: ~  
[www.transitiontowntotnes.org](http://www.transitiontowntotnes.org)

Totnes Food Links Project  
Holly Tiffen  
43 Fore Street  
Totnes  
TQ9 5HN

Mobile: 07850 407 107  
Tel: 05601 538 658 (calls cost 8p per minute with BT provider). Available Tuesdays & Wednesdays

Email: [tiffenholly@gmail.com](mailto:tiffenholly@gmail.com)  
[www.transitiontowntotnes.org/projects/food-link-project](http://www.transitiontowntotnes.org/projects/food-link-project)

## News roundup

### What you may have missed

#### British Cattle Movement Service encourages electronic reporting methods

Farmers are reminded that they can use the electronic cattle reporting systems provided by BCMS. Using CTS Online or the automated self-service phone line are easier ways to report cattle births, movements and deaths than by post.

#### Changes to RPA website

As part of the initiative to rationalise and reduce the number of Government websites, the RPA web address will be replaced in early February by [rpa.defra.gov.uk](http://rpa.defra.gov.uk)

#### New BSE Restrictions

Cattle born or reared in the UK before 1 August 1996 have had new movement restrictions placed on them as an extra precaution against meat from these older cattle entering the food chain.

The restrictions are being placed on cattle born or reared in the UK before 1 August 1996, following a Government investigation into whether any illegal trade in these cattle has occurred. Defra has written to the 18,000 keepers with animals of this age to inform them of the new measures.

Controls to prevent these animals from entering the food chain are already strong. It is illegal to slaughter pre-1996 animals for food, and specified risk material (SRM) such as brain and spinal cord is removed from all cattle after slaughter. In addition, any cattle aged over 48 months are tested for BSE after slaughter and only those that test negative are allowed into the food chain.

Relevant livestock keepers are being informed that no cattle born or reared in the UK before August 1996 will be allowed to move from their holdings without an individual movement licence, and no licences will be granted to move these cattle to markets or through dealers. This should affect a small number of owners.

#### Facts and Figures

- As of 1 January 2011 there were around 53,000 cattle that were born or reared in the UK before August 1996 – around 34,000 in England, 11,000 in Scotland and nearly 8000 in Wales – on 18,190 holdings. The total cattle population in GB is around 9 million.
- Fewer than 1 per cent of holdings have more than 20 cattle that fall into this category.
- The number of pre-August 96 cattle is declining steadily in line with expectations.

## News roundup

### Campaigning for the right to vaccinate against Tb

Sally Hall is a new Small Farms member. Some time ago, Sally set up an organisation called Bovine TB.co.uk with the intention of calling for a radical rethink about the UK's Bovine Tuberculosis policy because of evidence-based research both at home and abroad.

Currently Sally and her colleagues are in the process of producing a report called Rethink TB, which we are given to understand enquires into, amongst other things, whether a slaughter policy is actually necessary for bovine TB. Please visit the website, which is very informative: <http://www.bovinetb.co.uk>

Sally contends there are serious questions that politicians and those involved with policy making should be asking, particularly in this current era of financial crisis as public expenditure in the UK on BTb control continues to escalate (it is approaching £100 million annually).

C Glossop, the Welsh Assembly Government's Chief Vet, has admitted publicly that the existing control programme in Wales offers no short term solution and warns that it could take a further twenty years, with no guarantees that TB will ever be eradicated. We are seeing more and more extreme measures being introduced. These even include the costly and publicly controversial culling of wildlife, despite scientific studies which cast doubt on the efficacy and cost effectiveness of such measures. Surprisingly, the existing programme of BTb control/eradication would appear to be supported by the farming industry, despite the negative effects for many farmers. This is ironic as the UK was one of the last European countries to introduce TB testing for cattle and milk pasteurisation because of very firm initial resistance from the farming industry - and this was despite the overwhelming human health evidence, which supported the pasteurisation of milk at that time.

The control of BTb is now big business. Is this a classic example of commercial interests manipulating political action?

The estimated cost per herd breakdown is nearly £14,000 (overall in excess of £58 million).

Visit Sally's website to obtain more in-depth information, articles, opinion and scientific papers on the subject. There is also a forum, which you can sign up to and exchange opinion and news with other members.

<http://www.bovinetb.co.uk>



## News roundup

### Farmers Weekly Awards 2011

*The Farmers Weekly* annual awards provides farmers with a great opportunity to showcase achievements and innovation.

Now in their seventh year, the awards have recognised nearly 300 finalists and winners for their achievements, innovation and hard work.

The awards aim to showcase the best farmers in the country. By reporting their stories, *The Farmers Weekly* can spread best practice, inspire others and influence the public perception about farming and the vital role farmers play in today's society.

There is a category to represent all farming sectors - from dairy to diversification and contractor work to countryside management.

All you have to do is complete an entry form online and confirm your achievements in five key areas. The awards closing date is 30<sup>th</sup> April. Then a shortlist of three entrants per category will be selected for a farm visit in the summer by an independent judging panel.

To enter or nominate someone simply go to the website at: [www.farmersweeklyawards.co.uk](http://www.farmersweeklyawards.co.uk) or contact Linda Kimberley on Tel: 020 8652 3304 to obtain further information.

### Commonwealth Scholarships 2011

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission has written to the Small Farms asking to help to publicise this year's Commonwealth Professional Fellowship Scheme, and possibly make an application.

Commonwealth Professional Fellowships (CPF) enable organisations in the UK to host visits from mid-career professionals from developing countries whose work is contributing to development in that country.

UK organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors are all eligible to apply for CPFs, which provide an opportunity for the exchange of information, skills and good practice between the host organisation and to up six Fellows in the UK. It is widely accepted that CPFs provide opportunities for both the host organisation and the Fellows.

The CPF scheme is funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and run by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (CSC).

Further information and how to apply is available at: [www.cscuk/apply/professional\\_fellowship.asp](http://www.cscuk/apply/professional_fellowship.asp)  
The first 2011 closing date is 21 April; but there will be several additional application rounds later in the year. Any member willing to assist the SFA to participate should contact Philip Hosking at the SFA office.

## News roundup



### BBC Looking for help

The BBC is currently researching a series entitled *The Reel History of Britain*. It will be a twenty part series for BBC2; and will focus on different aspects of British life in the twentieth century, told through the rare and unseen film archive of the British Film Institute and regional film archives. It will be presented by Melvyn Bragg.

Each episode will focus on a different aspect of social history, and will be filmed at a different location, where the production team will take the BBC's original 1960s mobile cinema, a converted Bedford van, (see link <http://www.vintagemobilecinema.co.uk/>).

The BBC will be asking people who appeared in the films, or who have memories or stories from the time to come along and share them.

One of the areas that the series will look at is 1930s rural life. As part of this episode the BBC will be showing Mary Field's 'This Was England', filmed in Suffolk, and other archive footage showing daily farming life. The research team is particularly keen to make contact with anyone who might have appeared in 'This Was England'. They also wish to speak to anyone whose family farmed in the 1930s or anyone who can talk about any interesting aspect of 1930s rural life.

If you have a story or memories you wish to share, please contact Abi Mowbray on Tel: 0161 244 3680.

**Small Farms summer Barbeque**  
**Saturday, 16 July 2011**  
**At 7<sup>00</sup> p.m.**  
**Venue to be announced**  
**Put the date in your diary**



## The voice of the small farmer

Ley Coombe Farm  
Modbury  
IVYBRIDGE  
Devon PL21 0TU

Phone: 01548 830 302  
Fax: 01548 831 272  
Email: philhosking01@btinternet.com

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.small-farms-association.org](http://www.small-farms-association.org)

**Annual Family Membership £20.00**

## 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.

## Members' Adverts and notices

### **G H W Rosevear & Co**

**Accountants, Chartered Secretaries  
and Tax Advisors**

- Accountancy and Taxation
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- Company Secretarial Services
- Property Management

**Office Hours:** 9<sup>15</sup> am - 6<sup>00</sup> pm

3, Modbury Court, 32 Church St.  
Modbury, Ivybridge, PL21 0QR

Tel: 01548-831427  
Email: [office@holbrookass.com](mailto:office@holbrookass.com)  
[www.accountantsouthdevon](http://www.accountantsouthdevon)

### **FOR SALE**

TB tested and ready to go - Registered Devon (Ruby) Bull 3 years 8 months old. Horned bull, with horns. Quiet with cows and humans. Throws really nice (mainly heifer) calves.

Large reel (approx 300m) of Stihl nylon square profile strimmer line 2.7mm dia £25

6 rolls electric sheep netting mostly good condition may need a few repairs (+ 2 rolls not so good) £100 the lot.

Large number of reels of used stranded galvanised steel wire suitable for temporary electric fencing for pigs. Some very good, some not so good. £30 the lot.

All items on Carole Constable's farm in Tavistock area; but could deliver all but the bull to the South Hams.

Please contact Carole Constable: Tel 01822 840861 or Email [slymefordfarm@btconnect.com](mailto:slymefordfarm@btconnect.com) for more details.

### **YEARLING HENS FOR SALE**

Yearling hens (18 months old) Rhode Island Red crosses. Available now. £2.50 each, discount for large quantities.

Please contact Paul on: Mobile: 07973 753656  
Email: [cuckoofarm@live.co.uk](mailto:cuckoofarm@live.co.uk)

### **Small Farms summer Barbeque**

**Saturday, 16 July 2011**

**At 7<sup>00</sup> p.m.**

**Venue to be announced  
Put the date in your diary**