

Small Farms Association Newsletter



spring 2016

Volume 19, Issue 1

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Should we stay or should we go?

Dear Members,

That is the big and possibly the only question we need to answer before the month is out.

The EU Referendum takes place on Thursday 23rd June. It is everyone's democratic right and duty to vote which ever way they believe they should; and it's certainly not for us to tell you how to vote.

The SFA's Position

We in the Small Farms Association (SFA) have taken the view, however, that it would be in the best interests of UK farming to vote to remain in the Union. After much deliberation, the majority of farming organisations have come to the same conclusion.

Brexit provides no alternative vision

As I write, the Brexit Campaign has still failed to provide a credible vision and plan for UK agriculture. If the UK were to leave the EU and its single market of 500 million people, how long would it take to renegotiate new agreements with the EU and other trading blocks? In the meanwhile, we believe the UK's ability to trade effectively globally would be damaged significantly.

Other options not that attractive

Ironically, if the UK were to leave and renegotiate agreements with the EU, it would still have to accept the free movement of goods and people as part of those new agreements. Norway and Switzerland are often cited as having good trade deals with the EU. They are part of the European Free Trading Area

(EFTA). What is mentioned less frequently is the fact that both countries have to pay into the EU coffers and accept the free movement of goods and people without any influence.

In 2014 a Referendum was held in Switzerland, proposing the introduction of a quota system to limit the numbers of immigrants living and working in Switzerland. The EU Commission responded swiftly, stating this move would be in contravention of the agreement/treaty. Switzerland is waiting to find out the result of the UK EU Referendum with great interest. The devil is always in the detail.

Lip-service by successive UK Governments

What is particularly worrying is the lip-service that has been paid over many years and by all shades of government when it comes to farming. Whether it be issues such as food security, disease management, animal welfare and reaping the benefits of economic growth. UK governments wish to retain a cheap food policy whilst at the same time expect the highest standards of animal health and welfare from UK producers, which is delivered; but at a cost. Regrettably, the same standards do not apply to foreign imports, except EU imports.

Benefits of the CAP and Rural Development

The good news is, however, the CAP helps UK farmers to meet those higher costs and the additional requirements of compliance and environmental sustainability. Let's not forget the EU Rural Development Fund, which gives farmers access to an additional €5.2bn. Remember there are no votes in farming, so it is

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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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highly unlikely that any UK government would allocate that level of funding to rural development in a post EU era.

The value of farming to the UK economy

UK farming provides 62% of our food. It is the basis of the food industry, which is the largest manufacturing sector in the UK. If our farmers were not able to compete fairly with our competitors, this would have a significant impact on the UK economy as a whole.

Gold-plating EU Legislation

This leads us to the matter of UK bureaucrats: these civil servants have consistently 'gold plated' EU legislation when it has been transposed into UK Law. Instead of simply administering the fund in the terms and spirit of Directives there has been a tendency to add additional and unnecessary complexities, which does not happen in any other EU Member States!

Regrettably, we believe there is no guarantee that any UK government would commit to supporting farming to the level of EU support.

The Value of the CAP to UK Farmers

In 2015, UK farmers received €3,084bn in pillar 1, as direct support, known as the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS). In England and Wales this means an average payment of €235 and €179 per hectare respectively.

Successive UK Governments have sought to reduce the value of direct payments received by farmers, arguing that these payments should be phased out and money re-directed towards the delivery of environmental public goods. Whilst at the same time, other EU Member State governments have defended higher levels of support for their farmers.

The majority of farmers would prefer to farm without the financial support from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Where would we be without the CAP?

The majority of farmers would prefer to farm without the financial support from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The bottom line, however, is that without the CAP many small farms would struggle to survive. The CAP provides a fair level of income and helps deal with market volatility. The latest figures from Defra show that 55% of UK Total Income from Farming comes from CAP payments. That is the reality.

References:

*UK Farming's relationship with the EU - NFU and NFU Cymru Post Brexit Replacement to the CAP - TFA Cymru
Arthur Rank Centre, Anderson's AgriBrief – May 2016
Currency, the Economy, Brexit and Farming plus Trade Talks*



Open Farm Sunday 2016 a huge success

It is estimated that 250,000 people flocked to farms all over the UK that participated in LEAF's (Linking Environment and Farming) Open Farm

Sunday. Nearly 400 farms welcomed visitors of all ages. It also increased public interest in farming through social media such as Facebook (85% increase) and Twitter. Open Farm Sunday next year will take place on next year on 11th June 2017.

Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood Planning is well established across the UK and is one of the best ways to garner the opinions, wishes and the support of communities to try to ensure their wishes are incorporated into local and strategic plans.

At the January 2015 of Modbury Parish Council (MPC) it was agreed that the town would be the designated a Neighbourhood Plan area, which includes the town of Modbury and the outlying settlements of Brownston, Shilstone and Orcheton.

The aim of this is to allow the whole community to have an input in shaping Modbury's future. The Modbury Neighbourhood Planning Group have set-up a Facebook page where they will keep people up to date on progress and encourage people to post their ideas. The address is: <https://www.facebook.com/modburynpg>

Ann Turner, Chair of Modbury Neighbourhood Planning Group (NPG) contacted the SFA to issue an invitation to all of our members who live and farm in the above-mentioned designated areas to contribute to the process. The NPG is really keen to have farmer participation. With this in mind, the NPG would come to talk to the SFA members at specially convened events if needs be; or encourage individuals to come along to meetings, which are held monthly in the Exeter Inn.

The NPG have also created a website which goes into more detail of what a Neighbourhood plan is and the work they are doing. <http://www.modburynpg.co.uk/>

Neighbourhood Plan Groups exist to co-ordinate and communicate the views of their community. This is an open group which encourages participation from the whole community. The process takes up to 18 months. Once the plan is finished it is independently assessed to ensure it represents the views of the community. If it is assessed positively, it is then adopted by the Local Planning Authority as part of the Local Development Plan, which is why it is so important that as many people as possible are involved.

Dates of meetings are available on the website <http://www.modburynpg.co.uk/>; and also in the *Modbury Messenger*. Alternatively, get in touch with us via the following: Facebook <http://www.modburynpg.co.uk/>, or the Parish Council Office, Tel 01548-830222 and speak to Sacha Haggard.

Phil Hosking

Commercial milking goats and beef farm sees immediate benefit using homeopathy



Gill Ainge of Peppercorn Farm is one of the latest farmers to attend the Homeopathy at Wellie Level (HAWL) course; and she is already seeing the benefit of using homeopathy alongside conventional veterinary care. Here is Gill's account of her journey.

At Peppercorn Farm we have a mixed farm on the Somerset Levels, including arable, permanent pasture (within HLS), a small extensive suckler native breed herd of Beef Shorthorn and BSHx'd cattle, a handful of sheep for after grazing and a milking herd of cross bred dairy goats. The goats are the main enterprise on the farm. We milk twice a day, and our milk is sold under contract for cheese making. We kid down our goats from about January through until May, rearing all nannies for replacements and the billies are sold for meat. I also have my own business separate from the farm as a freelance marketer working with rural businesses and organisations.

The Beginnings:

We are always looking to improve how we take care of our livestock. Historically we have taken the conventional route for our livestock veterinary needs. However, I am open minded to different health treatment approaches, not least in supporting my own well-being and that of my family.

A few years ago I heard about a farmer focussed course in homeopathy - the HAWL course. At the time I had just married into a family livestock farm, with a commercial goat herd and small suckler beef unit. As our children grew up I started spending more time with the farm business accounts and outdoors in the livestock sheds. I soon made the obvious connection that healthy stock equates to productive stock. Our girls have always been pretty healthy and productive but I realised there was an opportunity to do more, so I began to look at different ways of supporting their health and well-being, alongside conventional medicine.

So having been on the HAWL course mailing list for some time I finally managed to synchronise the dates, childcare and relief staff so that I could attend the three days of the course, held near Tetbury at Broadfield Farm, the farm of His Royal Highness The Prince Of Wales.

The HAWL Course & Homeopathy :

The course gave me much more than I could have expected, not least in the quality and practicality of the teaching but for those of us attending some immediate wins for our livestock. We were a mixed group of shepherds, dairy farmers, young stock managers and mixed enterprise farmers mainly. Some

were organic farmers and were seeking alternatives to antibiotics due to market pressure and milk export control, others were already using homeopathy but wanted to gain more confidence and knowledge.

I feel that to understand homeopathy you need to open your mind and think outside of the box. This was pretty easy for me having been successfully treated non-conventionally by reflexologists, AK practitioners and so on, but for some this mindset is a challenge to achieve at first. You do need to understand the main principles, which I reckon most livestock farmers can relate to though.

To give an example of one of these principles, think about what you notice when you observe your stock in the shed, field or barn. Something deep in your experience of years will tell you if an animal is not quite right. It will give off a number of messages to you without you probably realising it initially, until further on it becomes very unwell. These signals form part of one of the principles of homeopathy: Totality.

As farmers of livestock, we tend to be great observers. Is the animal looking a bit low, it is charging about wildly when normally it is placid, it is lying down when it normally stands to eat? You may be feeling the cold due to the sudden change in wind direction so you turn up the collar and head indoors without giving it much further thought. When using homeopathy on the farm you need to engage the 'gut instinct' and listen to what it is saying. On the HAWL course we began to learn and see these signals, putting them into what homeopaths refer to as a Totality of Symptoms which could then be used to help identify a remedy.

The principles of the Single Remedy and Single Dose are harder to come round to, given our modern approach to repeated treatments and the fact that homeopathic remedies are diluted to infinitesimally small doses. Given that many of the remedies find their origination in poisonous plants this is perhaps a good thing though (think Belladonna – Deadly Nightshade and Aconite – Monkshood).



Without going into all of the principles here, the principle that Like Cures Like is one I find really helpful. For example, Belladonna was used historically by ladies to make them appear much more strikingly beautiful by increasing pupil dilation by

dilating the blood vessels, it having an affinity with the circulatory system. When given as a homeopathic remedy to an animal with dilated pupils, showing symptoms a fever with a red hot udder (perhaps mastitis) and wanting to kick you away, it may have a healing affect without the risk of poisoning. Helping the body to respond and begin to heal itself before the animal becomes acutely unwell.



These remedies can be very powerful as I and those of us on the HAWL course began to discover. Even after the first day of the course we were able to use some of the knowledge given and make a positive contribution to our farm animals.

Simple Treatments Positive Results

One of the useful and beneficial things to know about homeopathy is that you do not need to have an in-depth knowledge of the species you are trying to treat. You treat the symptoms not the species. So whether it is a cow, goat, pig, sheep or human you are looking at, the principles followed and remedies chosen are not species specific.

Here are a few scenarios where I have used homeopathy in our day to day livestock management since attending the HAWL course:

Our suckler cows calved in early spring indoors. Before we turned them out we wanted to carry out some calf castrations. We have experienced mixed success to using ring castration on our calves and so we opted to bring the vet in to do the job for us. The calves were still in the loose houses with their mums but had to be separated in order for the vet and us to work safely. Like any mother put in this situation the cows became agitated, so I used a spray dose of Aconite administered to each of the cows and calves noses to help them relax and calm. I took a dose too as I find handling cattle extremely stressful having seen my husband get squashed during TB testing. Positive result! The cows stopped bellowing and watched on or went off to eat. The calves felt more relaxed to touch and didn't try to escape or wriggle when the vet carried out the castration. All the calves recovered well and are now turned out with their mums grazing and growing on well. We will definitely be using Aconite now for TB testing to help keep everyone, especially the cows, as relaxed as can be.

We tend to kid our goats from late winter into early Spring. Rather than instantly weaning our kids at a few days old, we move them with their mums into the milking shed from the

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An introduction to Countryside Stewardship by Richard Lambourne

Countryside Stewardship (CS) is Defra's new £925mn agri-environment scheme, providing financial incentives for farmers, land owners and land managers to help protect the environment.

CS was launched on 1st July and is being run jointly by the RPA, Natural England and the Forestry Commission. It is a single scheme which replaces Environmental Stewardship (ES), the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) and the capital grants element of the Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) initiative. **However, unlike previous agri-environment programmes, CS is a competitive scheme (which means that not all applications will be approved).**

What are the main objectives of Countryside Stewardship?

CS has a number of key environmental priorities: ~

1. **Flood management:**
 - Enhancing water quality
 - Reducing flood risk through improved farm practices
2. **Wildlife and nature:**
 - Restoring and creating habitats
 - Providing food sources and nesting places for animals, birds and insects
 - Managing hedges
3. **Woodland:**
 - Establishing new woodland
 - Aiding the management of existing woodland
4. **Pollinators:**
 - Providing nectar and pollen sources
 - Establishing nesting sites
5. **Preserving the historic environment:**
 - Protecting archaeological features
 - Managing historic buildings

How will Countryside Stewardship operate?

CS has three main elements:

1. **Mid Tier** (comprising 120 scheme options and capital grants)
2. **Higher Tier** (comprising 244 scheme options and capital grants)
3. **Capital Grants** (comprising a limited range of standalone grants)

Please note that the Mid and Higher Tiers also include 16 Organic Land options.

Mid Tier: All Mid Tier agreements will last five years. Their focus will be on addressing widespread environmental issues such as water pollution caused by agricultural activity and improving farming practices for pollinators and farmland birds.

Higher Tier: Most Higher Tier agreements will last five years although some will be offered for 10-20 years. They will focus on the most complex and significant environmental sites, commons and woodlands. **Please note that due to the complex management required for these sites, applicants will need to obtain 1:1 support and advice from a Natural England or Forestry Commission adviser before submitting their application.**

Capital Grants: A limited range of standalone grants over 1-2 years providing funding for:

- **Boundaries and Hedgerows:** Available from early 2016 providing funding of up to £5,000 for small-scale restoration of stone walls and hedgerows.
- **Water quality grants:** Only available in Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) target areas with funding of up to £10,000 for capital items associated with water and soil protection. These grants will need to be endorsed by a CSF Officer.
- **Woodland grants:** A range of grants will be available to support woodland creation/improvement and tree health issues.

Feasibility studies/Implementation plans: Available all year round from early 2016. Grants can be used to assess the likely success of a proposed project or to outline the costs, activities and timings required to achieve a project.

How to choose the best combination of options:

In order to achieve the best local environmental priorities (and therefore maximise an agreement's potential score), it is recommended that the following criteria are considered when preparing an application:

1. Check the statement of priorities:

Defra has divided England into 159 National Character Areas (NCAs). Each NCA has a statement of priorities listing the main environmental priorities for that area. Applicants should check their local statement of priorities in order to:

- Identify key local environmental features and priorities.
- Select the best combination of options to use in their application.
- The statement of priorities list can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-statements-of-priorities>

2. Select appropriate options by using the CS Grants tool:

Applicants should then use the CS Grants tool to identify suitable options. The tool provides:

- A description of each option and capital item.
- Eligibility requirements.
- The payment value of each option.
- The requirements to successfully implement each option.
- The CS Grants tool can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants>

3. Apply with the farm wildlife and wild pollinator option package:

The farm wildlife and wild pollinator package is a group of options designed to benefit farm wildlife, farmland birds and wild pollinators. Applicants choosing options in this package will gain a higher score and an improved chance of submitting a successful application.

Mid Tier: In order to gain additional points, applicants should aim to apply a combination of options from this package over a minimum of 3% of the land to be included in the agreement.

Higher Tier: In order to gain additional points, applicants should aim to apply a combination of options from this package over a minimum of 5% of the land to be included in the agreement.

How to make a Mid Tier application

When preparing a Mid Tier application, applicants will need to consider the following:

REGISTER WITH RURAL PAYMENTS (MANDATORY)

www.gov.uk/rural-payments



CONTACT NATURAL ENGLAND FOR A CS APPLICATION PACK

Tel: 0300 060 3900



CONSIDER ATTENDING A LOCAL CS INFORMATION EVENT

CS Information Events



REVIEW SCHEME GUIDANCE AND OPTIONS

CS Guidance

CS Statement of Priorities

CS Options Tool



COMPLETE AND SUBMIT APPLICATION

The Scoring Process: (Mid Tier only)

CS agreements will be scored individually and then ranked to determine which applications have been successful (given the available budget). Application scores must exceed an agreed minimum threshold and any agreements failing to reach this target will automatically be rejected. Applicants who fail to gain an agreement can re-submit another application the following year. For further information about the scoring mechanism, please see section 5.9 of the CS Manual.

CS Application Timeline:

The application window for CS Mid Tier, Higher Tier and water quality capital grants runs from 1st July - 30th September 2015. Applications will then be scored, ranked and selected before agreements are offered to applicants in October-November. All Mid Tier, Higher Tier and water quality capital grant agreements will start from 1st January 2016. However, other elements of the scheme such as woodland creation grants will have different scheme windows. Further information can be found in the CS Manual at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-stewardship-manual>.

If you would like quality independent advice about Countryside Stewardship, please contact **Richard Lambourne** at **Agri-Admin** on 07921 811786 or email: agripaperwork@outlook.com - **Agri-Admin** provides a range of services for small farms. Our Countryside Stewardship services include: · Advice on applications and submissions and · Managing paperwork and adherence to compliance requirements.

Please note the importance of maintaining accurate records and compliance under CS.

Please note the author accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of any information contained in this article.

NT Killerton Badger Vaccination Project deemed successful

A badger vaccination project on the National Trust's Killerton estate in Devon, set in one of the country's bovine TB hot-spots, is now complete. The four-year project has shown badger vaccination to be a practical and cost-effective solution for tackling the disease.

The project aimed to demonstrate that the vaccination of badgers at an estate-wide scale could be both feasible and economical, allowing the Trust to play an important role in reducing the exposure of cattle to bovine TB in wildlife, which has had a devastating impact across the farming community.

Tenant farmers help project to succeed

Eighteen of the Trust's tenant farmers were involved in the programme which was carried out across an area of 20 square kilometres on the estate. Vaccinating badgers in order to reduce their level of bovine TB infection reduces the risk of cattle being exposed to the disease.

The Trust originally estimated that the project would cost £80,000 a year to run. During the four years however, the process of capturing and vaccinating the badgers became more efficient, reducing the annual costs to £45,000 while the number of badgers vaccinated increased significantly from the first year.

The National Trust playing their part

"As a major landowner with many farming tenants, we understand how devastating an outbreak of bovine TB can be," said Patrick Begg, the Trust's rural enterprises director. 'That's why it's important for us to play our part in tackling this disease by finding a practical solution to prevent its spread, as well as calling for better biosecurity.

We want to share our knowledge and the lessons we've learnt by opening a national training school for badger vaccination at Killerton. Working alongside trainers from the Animal and Plant Health Agency, we plan to host training courses aimed at farmers and landowners in affected areas, providing them with the skills needed to obtain a license to trap and vaccinate badgers."

Next steps

"Whatever the conclusions about the effectiveness of the pilot badger culls, vaccination needs to be part of the mix of measures needed to tackle bovine TB," added Patrick. 'We'd like to see the Government working with partners to carry out further testing to show how vaccination can work as part of a multi-pronged approach to confronting the disease.'

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO LIVE A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT LIFE?

An exciting new BBC2 documentary series would like to hear from those open to having a potentially life-changing adventure.

Do you have a destination on your bucket-list that is yet to see a tick beside it?

Is there a country or culture which you have often dreamed of being part of?

Have you reached a point in your life where you're ready to have the solo adventure of your dreams?

Whatever your situation or motivation, if you are excited by the prospect of escaping your status quo and challenging your perception of the world, we would like to hear from you.

If you would like to find out more please contact lifeswapadventure@bbc.co.uk

By expressing interest there is no obligation to take part and all communication will be treated as confidential.

The series will offer those selected the opportunity to have the kind of life-adventure that money cannot buy: the opportunity to temporarily live a life they have often dreamed of somewhere far away from the UK. This travel experience will be very personal to them and based on their own individual dreams, hopes and aspirations. If you are interested please contact Nicholas Jacobs, BBC Creative Label, Tel: 07534205326 Email: nicholas.jacobs@bbc.co.uk



The voice of the small farmer

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We're on the Web!
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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

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kidding shed, and they stay there for about 5 weeks until they are large enough to be weaned onto a 100% solid ration. The plus with this method is growth rates on the kids but the downside is the bond between mother and kid is generally much stronger. So at weaning point we administer each baby with a spray of Ignatia on the nose, and the mother gets a spray on the vulva (it works on all mucus membranes) when they come up for milking. We then see a much happier separation, with little pining and bleating. The growth rates don't seem to be held back either as a result of the shock of separation.

Scours can be a problem with our nannies during the period when the starlings are clouding our skies (or filling our sheds) and during the period of change between Winter and Spring, when the days are warm but the nights are really cold, often with a bitter easterly wind. There are at least two possible causes to the scours here, and it can be difficult to immediately tell which one is affecting a particular animal. I don't milk every day myself so I wanted something that would be easy for all the staff to use including the relief help, irrespective of the cause and without the need of a deep knowledge of all the remedies. I opted for a combination homeopathic scours remedy. The first time we used it we split those that needed treatment into conventional and homeopathic administration so that we could compare the treatments. Routinely we would use Vitamin B12 to treat our milking nannies, it worked well but with some slight drop back in production taking a day or so to get the dunging back to normal. Those we treated homoeopathically were better within hours, with less loss in milk production, if any. So we now use the homeopathic treatment – it's a no brainer.

Next Steps – Chronic Treatments

These are a few of the immediate wins that I have experienced for acute and immediate situations on our farm already since attending the HAWL course. The treatment of chronic cases is a bigger challenge for me as it takes experience to identify the correct remedy, but I am learning more and slowly getting there whilst building my confidence.

Important website for you FAS. What is FAS?

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) regulations require EU Member States to run an advisory system covering cross compliance, greening, water protection and aspects of pesticide use. Under these regulations, this advice to individual farmers must be **confidential** – that is, the Farming Advice Service (FAS) **must not** disclose any personal or individual information or data it obtains in the course of its advisory activity to persons other than the beneficiary who is managing the holding concerned.

In England, this advice is provided by the FAS. FAS updates the farming sector on relevant EU and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) policies. It explains the requirements under and objectives of CAP, EU directives, national legislation and policies; and the actions that can be taken to help meet compliance. FAS provides **free, confidential** advice on cross compliance and the greening requirements, legislative requirements to meet water quality standards (such as silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil (SSAFO) and land spreading of waste) and the Sustainable Use (Pesticides) Directive.

For further information, please visit the **FAS website** at **www.gov.uk/government/groups/farming-advice-service** or email **advice@farmingadvice.service**.