



Countryside Jobs Service

Focus on Farming and the Environment

24 May 2010

In association with the Campaign for the Farmed Environment

Playing your part in the Campaign for the Farmed Environment

Last July the Secretary of State, Hilary Benn, finally announced that the Campaign for the Farmed Environment was the preferred way forward to address the loss of environmental benefits delivered by former set-aside. The industry-led voluntary approach has been developed as an alternative to a compulsory cross-compliance approach and has been given three years to demonstrate it can work.

The NFU and CLA have been joined by a wide range of other key industry partners including FWAG, LEAF, GWCT, AIC, AICC and CAAV to develop the Campaign, who are working in partnership with Defra and its agencies, Natural England and the Environment Agency, as well as the RSPB and other wildlife representatives. This partnership is truly a joint effort to find a way forward that allows farmers to continue to produce more, but impact less on their environment.

The Campaign for the Farmed Environment aims to encourage farmers and growers to adopt land management practices voluntarily that will benefit three key themes – resource protection, farmland birds and farm wildlife.

Basically, farmers and landowners are being asked to choose some key in-field options when renewing or entering ELS agreements for the first time. All farmers, whether or not they are in a formal stewardship agreement, are also asked to review any existing voluntary management and aim to deliver one thing from the list of voluntary measures, whilst also retaining existing uncropped land. A range of measures have been identified to keep participation in the Campaign as flexible as possible and at the end of January 2010 a farmer guide to these voluntary measures was sent out to over 45 000 farmers with more than 10ha arable land.

So how will the Campaign work on a local level? Local Liaison Groups (LLG) across the key target counties were set up at the end of last year and they will coordinate the delivery of tailored advice on the ground depending on the local challenges and opportunities. Each group has a Local Campaign Coordinator who will manage the Campaign on behalf of the LLGs. One of the main ways that farmers can find out more about the Campaign is to attend an event on a beacon farm, an example of best practice that will demonstrate ways to take part in the Campaign.

Guidance and advice about the voluntary management promoted by Campaign can be found at www.cfeonline.org.uk. The website also provides the contact details for the Local Campaign Coordinators and highlights events that will be taking place across the country.

In the meantime please contact the National Coordinator, Corrina Gibbs, if you have any questions on 024 76858 536 or email corrina.gibbs@nfu.org.uk.



photo online

Organisations:

The Institute of Organic Training and Advice (IOTA) is a professional body for advisers and trainers providing services in organic food and farming. IOTA offers training, accreditation and information to adviser members. A directory of Accredited Members is provided for farmers looking for a specialist organic adviser. www.organicadvice.org.uk

Wholesome Food Association

Ball Cottage, East Ball Hill, Hartland, Devon EX39 6BU
Email: [sky\(at\)wholesome-food.org.uk](mailto:sky(at)wholesome-food.org.uk) Web: www.wholesome-food.org.uk
The association promotes a "local symbol" scheme to encourage natural and authentic food and farming, educate about the health and social benefits of eating wholesome food, and help renew local economies and communities.

Dry Stone Walling Association

We have a number of beginners' courses and opportunities to work towards one of the accredited qualifications in dry stone walling. Courses available throughout the country. For full details visit our website, www.dswa.org.uk or contact us either by email, information@dswa.org.uk, or phone 015395 67953.

VINE is a forum for nature conservationists, land managers and all who care about nature. We believe a wider discussion of ethics and values in nature conservation will help conservationists to be more creative and effective. We also celebrate the natural environment for its own intrinsic value.
www.vineproject.org.uk

ADAS UK Ltd

The largest independent environmental and agricultural consultancy in UK & Ireland serving both Government & Corporate clients covering water; soils; chemicals; waste; agriculture & rural advice; policy & evaluation; land & ecology; vegetation; carbon management & energy. For further details & vacancies please visit www.adas.co.uk or our microsite <http://aplus.adas.co.uk>

Gofarmer

Trade livestock, farm machinery, farmland for sale and rent, smallholder courses and more. Find your local farm shop, local produce, rural crafts all at <http://www.gofarmer.com>

The National Hedgelaying Society aims to promote the craft of hedgelaying and promote good management of hedgerows and their associated features. It offers advice, a list of contractors around the country, it holds an annual national hedging championship and sits on the Hedgerow HAP steering group, Hedgelink. For more information visit www.hedgelaying.org.uk

Considera

Democratic research into zero-residue preparations from biodynamics and the homeopathic repertory. Database of efficacy structured as a materia medica and a repertory to assist anyone to match issues with potential solutions. Start at <http://considera.org/hrxmatmed.html> and then explore

The Countryside Restoration Trust, farming for profit and for wildlife

Robin Page, the author, broadcaster and farmer grew up in the 1940's and 50's on his father's farm at Barton, a few miles west of Cambridge. His fond memories of those days have been described in many of his books; of stickleback fishing in the Bourn Brook and watching barn owls hunt over the riverside meadows, and the song of the lark over spring sown corn.



He, among others, watched with great unease in the following decades as the countryside and its wildlife became demoted in the quest for a cheaper tonne of grain. Robin wrote about his concerns, mainly in the Daily Telegraph and he began to think through ways of combining farming with wildlife management. He became keen to demonstrate that the two can work together and with the generous donations from Telegraph readers, he began to buy and improve land at Barton and set up the Countryside Restoration Trust in 1993.

Today the Trust owns over 400ha of land in six counties and the land management is aimed at more sustainability with special emphasis on demonstrating a combination of profitable farming alongside wildlife welfare.

The 120ha of arable land at Barton and Comberton is farmed for the Trust by Tim Scott and he too is passionate about managing farmland for wildlife. Alongside volunteers he has helped in the replanting of new hedges where they existed over 50 years ago as well as planning a farming system that is fundamentally different to many in Cambridgeshire. Even though the soil is quite heavy, Tim is willing to grow spring crops, to leave over-wintered stubble ahead of those crops, to include conservation headlands and to plant grass margins, beetle banks and crops for birds and bees.

He also avoids block cropping which is planting similar crops in adjacent fields. Block cropping saves time and fuel but reduces the feeding opportunities for wildlife and increases soil erosion risks. He also aims to reduce pesticide and fertiliser impacts. Many of these options have been managed under Defra stewardship schemes which provide guidance and financial incentives. His cropping this year includes winter wheat and barley, spring wheat and barley, and winter oil seed rape, Next year he will also return to linseed.

Has the management delivered improvements?

You only have to walk along one of the many footpaths on the farm to see dramatic signs of improvements to wildlife. The landscape is also more interesting because of the new hedges, new woodland and willows alongside the Bourn Brook. The arable land next to the river has been reverted to grass, buffering the river and re-establishing water meadows that can help alleviate flooding downstream. Ponds have been dug or improved.

The professional monitoring of wildlife by volunteers over fifteen years has confirmed that the land management options chosen have encouraged birds such as skylark, yellowhammer and barn owls. The monitoring volunteers have also confirmed that butterfly and bumblebee numbers have multiplied alongside a significant increase in brown hares, bats and other mammals.

These figures are recorded by regular monitoring by teams who cover the same ground from early spring. The figures not only find their way into our record books but contribute to those of the local biological records centre and other monitoring databases.

We therefore have a good idea of the correlation between wildlife and land management as well as how the options affect farm profit. This allows us to demonstrate effectively with farmers and advisers and to explain

Countryside Jobs Service Focus on Farming and the Environment www.countryside-jobs.com
the benefits, and the financial implications of conservation on commercial arable farms. In this way we will contribute to the Campaign for the Farmed Environment

For more information, please contact The Countryside Restoration Trust, telephone: 01223 262999, email: info@livingcountryside.org.uk; www.livingcountryside.org.uk

John Terry (May 2010)



photo online

Demonstration sites:

Upton Estate near Banbury has become a training ground and demonstration farm used by a range of organisations all looking at environmental issues of one kind or another. A dedicated meeting and training room is now available for hire and is used by various groups. For more information visit www.uptonestate.co.uk

Moelyci is a 350 acre Welsh hill farm which is used for food production, nature conservation, environmental training, education and employment. We run ecology, wildlife and craft courses, have a green waste composting enterprise, allotments and a market garden, and lots more! www.moelyci.org office@moelyci.org 01248 602793

Heeley City Farm, Sheffield

Visitors can see our farm animals: calves, goats, sheep, pigs, poultry etc. and their young and our small animal house with rabbits, guinea pigs, snakes, degus and much more. See our website: www.heeleyfarm.org.uk for more information and how to reach us.



Farming, a Foundation for our Future.

While we may wake up each day with many problems on our minds, a hungry person has just one, finding food. Only when you have fed yourself can you attend to other things. When our ancestors learned to farm their food, instead of gathering it or hunting, communities began to settle and civilisations grew.

Not that farming was ever easy. For centuries growing crops or rearing livestock meant backbreaking labour with only oxen or horses to help. It was a battle against the weather and little understood pests or diseases. When harvests failed people could starve.

In Britain advances really began during the 18th century agricultural revolution. Pioneering “improvers” bred more productive livestock and developed better ways to grow crops, with new machines to plant and harvest them. Increased food production helped feed the masses migrating to towns and cities for work in the new factories and mills of the industrial revolution.

For the next 200 years farming’s progress was stop-start depending on weather, wars and competition with food imported from the growing British Empire. In 1914 those imports were threatened and farming became key to Britain’s survival during WW1. Agriculture still relied on manpower and horses but these were also needed at the front so farmers began to introduce “new fangled” tractors.

Mechanisation continued after the war, driven by the labour shortage. It accelerated between 1939 and 45 when again, the U boat threat made farming vital. Following the conflict there was more need for farming innovation with millions starving in a devastated Europe and Asia.

By the time Britain joined the European Common Market in 1973 farm production was booming. A green revolution had produced outstanding new crop varieties that raised world yields, protected from pests or disease by an armoury of chemicals. Hedges disappeared and fields grew larger to fit powerful machinery. Subsidised by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) starvation in Europe had ended but food surpluses were growing.

As the 80’s ended taxpayers protested about grain mountains and wine lakes. Others complained about disappearing wildlife and pollution. In the 90’s fears over BSE raised further questions about modern production, adding to concerns about farm animal welfare. Amid arguments over genetically modified foods versus organic production farming faced a crises of confidence.

Today much has changed. The industry addressed its issues. New regulations protect the environment and govern welfare or food production systems. Many chemicals are banned. Meanwhile there are the challenges of greenhouse gasses and food supply. In 40 years we may need to feed 9 billion people from less available land, water and energy while Climate Change alters the weather and encourages pests and disease.

Farming is valued again and faces an exciting future. It needs scientists and land managers. There are new crops to breed, new environmentally friendly ways to grow food or control pests. There are jobs in organic

production or conventional farming, work indoors or out with livestock, nature or the public. No longer is farming backbreaking drudgery it is mechanised, computerised, vibrant and vital.

Ken Rundle SAC (Scottish Agricultural College) (please see the College's advert below)

Training:

The Royal Agricultural College has a long-standing, global reputation and offers career-focussed undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Business and Management, Agribusiness, Equine, Land and Property Management, Food Production, International Rural Development and Wine Business. Professional training courses are also available. Tel: 01285 652531 Email: admissions@rac.ac.uk Web: www.rac.ac.uk

West Moss-side Organic Farm & Centre (www.westmosside.com) provides professional training in traditional and contemporary arts and crafts using local professional tutors. Kate Sankey (01786 850428) can travel to schools and groups in central Scotland to build and advise on growing willow structures and run weaving workshops. Willow grown on the farm available November - March. Contact kate@westmosside.com

Flora locale offers workshops on farming with an environmental focus. Events led by farmers with practical experience of agri-environment schemes will demonstrate species-rich grassland management under HLS, options for habitat management for arable wild flowers and the use of wild seeds to enhance biodiversity under the Countryside Stewardship scheme. Two workshops, run in association with the Grazing Animal Partnership, will look at grazing on land with high environmental value. A facilitated discussion and tour of a community farm will demonstrate the key challenges and some solutions. For more information see our website at www.floralocale.org or email info@floralocale.org

Rachel Carson Centre for Biodynamics and Sustainable Food Production
Be the change you want to see in the world! The centre offers full time accredited courses in Biodynamics. Biodynamics is a unique and advanced method of organic farming and gardening. We have a selection of short courses as well. For more information go to: www.rachelcarson.org.uk

Thinking about starting something new this September? Kingston Maurward College offers 300 full & part-time courses & apprenticeships in a variety of land-based subjects, so there's bound to be something to suit your needs. Call 01305 215100 or visit www.kmc.ac.uk for an application now.



Grazing Advice Partnership: Grazing for Environmental Benefits

The Grazing Advice Partnership (GAP) was initially set up as the Grazing Animals Project in 1997 and was re-formed in 2008 with an investing partnership comprised of Natural England, the National Trust, Defence Estates and the Rare Breeds Survival Trust. GAP exists to promote grazing with the natural environment and our cultural heritage in mind. This is more commonly known as conservation grazing and refers to grazing that achieves nature conservation objectives. While there is no golden rule, conservation grazing generally involves less intensive land management techniques on areas that are less commercially productive. The type of livestock is a primary consideration for conservation grazing and differences in feeding preferences, physiology and animal behaviour will affect suitability for different sites. Due to their hardiness rare and native breeds of livestock are frequently used in conservation and extensive grazing systems and represent an important part of our cultural heritage.

In the UK almost all areas we value for their conservation interest form part of cultural landscapes created by humans, often as a side product of subsistence agriculture. Grazing livestock and associated activities



Masters and Degree courses in Countryside Management

MSc/PGDip/PGCert Countryside Management
Course delivered part-time by distance learning. Modules can also be taken individually for CPD. We also offer BSc degrees, HNDs and HNCs in:

- **Countryside Management**
- **Environmental Management**
- **Rural Resource Management**

Courses are available full-time, part-time or by distance learning. Modules can also be taken individually for CPD or can be studied over time to build up a qualification of your choice.

SAC holds Open Days and events regularly. Courses are offered at our campuses in Aberdeen, Ayr or Edinburgh.

0800 269 453
www.sac.ac.uk/learning

SAC is a charity registered in Scotland, No. SC003712



played a key role in the formation and maintenance of many semi-natural habitats including grassland, heathland and pasture-woodland. In Gloucestershire the National Trust and Natural England work in partnership to manage unimproved limestone grassland through the Cotswolds Grazing Animal's Project. Belted Galloways and Welsh Black cattle graze at more than 20 separate sites covering 150 hectares. The sites are often small and fragmented, in exposed locations with steep slopes and involve at least 10 different landowners. The grazed areas are also located on nature reserves and sites of special scientific interest which have public access. The cattle have proven ideal for grazing these sites, tackling the coarsest of grasses and the steep slopes whilst withstanding the winters spent out on the exposed Cotswold escarpment. Under the careful management of a stockman the cattle help maintain the wildflower rich grassland which supports a wide variety of insects and other invertebrates. The project also produces high quality meat which is sold locally to butchers and direct to the public through a box scheme. This is just one example from the wide variety of grazing schemes undertaken by individual graziers, organisations and farmers across the UK, for further information please visit our website www.grazingadvicepartnership.org.uk/conservation_grazing_map.html.

The GAP website also has wide range of free resources providing information and advice to anyone looking to set up or be involved with a grazing scheme. GAP runs introductory training courses on stock checking and stock husbandry for extensive grazing as well as one day workshops on more specific subjects. We also announced this month the start of a photographic competition focusing on the role native breeds of livestock play in conserving our natural environment. For details visit www.grazingadvicepartnership.org.uk or contact us at enquiries@grazingadvicepartnership.org.uk.

Eleanor Newson, GAP



Grazing Advice Partnership

Room 202, Carlton Business Centre, Maundrell Road, SN11 0EY
www.grazingadvicepartnership.org.uk
enquiries@grazingadvicepartnership.org.uk

Conservation Grazing:

Dartmoor Ponies For Sale or Loan

All handled but retaining wariness, making them perfect for public conservation grazing sites. All eligible for HLS NBAR Supplement - £275+vat each. For further information on ponies, warden training and transport - phone Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust 01626-355314 or visit www.dpht.co.uk Charity No. 1109196

The **StockKeep** and **SheepKeep** websites have all the information you need for stockkeeping. They use the UK's largest free database of graziers and landowners to help you make a match for your available stock or grassland. Free to use and free to register! Visit now: www.sheepkeep.co.uk and www.stockkeep.co.uk

Cut&Chew website launched by BCNP Wildlife Trust. Cut&Chew acts as a local match making service between available land and livestock; and hay for sale and animal owners in need of hay in Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. Website: www.cutandchew.org.uk or Contact Laura Downton Tel: 01234 362776 Email: laura.downton@wildlifebcnp.org

On-farm renewable energy – are you striking the right balance in your business?

Frustrated by the variable and slim profit margins from producing food, some UK farmers are looking at energy generation as a means of diversifying their business. At Farming Futures we've seen increased interest from farmers in renewable energy, with 98 per cent of those attending a recent event saying that on-farm renewable energy generation was "a very good or excellent business opportunity". The launch of the Government's Feed-In Tariff (FIT) in April 2010 has made generating renewable electricity more attractive by offering higher and more secure tariffs and has certainly made some waves in rural Britain.



PROFITABLE BUSINESS IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

"If there are two things that were made for each other, it's farmers and renewable energy. Whether it's biofuels or anaerobic digestion, wind turbines or biomass boilers, farmers have the land, the buildings, the entrepreneurial skills and often the raw materials to set up a renewable energy project." (David Cousins, Farmers Weekly, 27/02/09)

So what does UK agriculture look like if energy generation becomes its most valuable commodity?

Well, there are a few issues that need be considered, which create a bit of an 'agri-environmental' conundrum. Firstly striking the balance between delivering food and energy security; secondly striking the balance between protection of our local environment and protection of our global environment (e.g. tackling climate change) and thirdly the need to encourage rural enterprise and profitable farming.

Richard Harvey is one farmer who seems to have got the balance right. He is a LEAF farmer, who farms 125 hectares of combinable crops and woodland in Leicestershire and has successfully diversified his business to focus on biomass heating. Over a ten year period Richard has converted all space heating systems on the farm to biomass and now doesn't have to pay any heating bills and is saving over £5000/year. Richard is now building his business to sell biomass heating systems on a commercial basis, creating local jobs which benefit the rural community.

John Taylor, who farms high up on Caton Moor in Lancashire, is trying to address all the issues too. He has eight 2MW wind turbines, which have added significant value to his business and his sheep are still able to graze right up to the turbines. Similarly, Robert Wiseman in Essex was able to access an emerging biofuels market by growing lower quality wheat on marginal land, whilst maintaining his food and feed crops. This guaranteed him a higher price and with a crop that was less susceptible to bad harvests.

There are many examples of farmers on the journey to business and environmental sustainability. However it is on-farm renewable energy generation that is the path that excites many, primarily because it now works with one of farming's most necessary values – profit. Profiting from on-farm renewables could and should enable farmers to address the many other challenges they face and will bring them closer to getting that balance right - tackling climate change, allowing food and energy security, conserving the natural environment and providing jobs in profitable farming businesses. On-farm renewables are, hopefully, simply a means to profitable and sustainable farming, rather than an end to farming, as we once knew it...

William Frazer is the Research and Information Officer at Farming Futures. Farming Futures is a communications collaboration between the Agricultural Industries Confederation, the Agricultural and Horticultural Research Forum (representing the agricultural and horticultural levy boards), the Country Land and Business Association, Defra, Forum for the Future, the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Linking Farm and the Environment and the National Farmers' Union.

For more information visit www.farmingfutures.org.uk



photo online

Agricultural Industries Federation www.agindustries.org.uk

Agricultural and Horticultural Research Forum www.appliedresearchforum.org.uk

Country Land & Business Association www.cla.org.uk

Forum for the Future www.forumforthefuture.org

Linking Farm and the Environment www.leafuk.org/leafuk

Defra ww2.defra.gov.uk

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group www.fwag.org.uk

National Farmers' Union www.nfunionline.com

Services:

Sue Everett

Farm environment and habitat restoration plans for estates of all types, large and small. I can also design and run training days for you on grassland management and restoration, enhancement of greenspace, and many aspects of land management for biodiversity. E: valuingbiodiversity@googlemail.com; M: 07779 204015; W: www.meadowmaker.me.uk

The Farm Diversification Toolkit offers a 'source book' on taking an integrated whole farm approach to diversification. A step by step method assessing farm assets and opportunities and guidance through the planning process. Recommended for farmers, consultants, planners and decision makers. www.kentdowns.org.uk under 'Publications' Kent Downs AONB 01303 815170 admin@kentdowns.org.uk

EnviroSystems UK Ltd

We provide eco-friendly agricultural products. EnviroBed - paper based comfortable animal bedding prevents mastitis, reduces cell counts. Optimize silage inoculant - improves ME & CP availability, increase milk from forage and silage stability. SlurryBugs slurry treatment - helps reduce crust and odour whilst retaining nitrogen in slurry. For more information: 01772 860085 www.envirosystems.co.uk

Traditional 'No Mole - No Fee' mole catcher, offering a professional service throughout Devon and Cornwall. Whatever the scale of your mole problem, I can help, so whether you own a small garden or a large country estate contact me to see how I can help solve your problem. www.cornwallmolecatcher.co.uk

Freshwater Solutions

Trout Fishery Designers- Aquatic niche market production systems. Ecological aquaculture with selective freshwater fish species. Water quality and habitat analysis. Improve your fisheries profile to provide customer satisfaction and fishing qualities to enhance revenues. Ecologicalfish@btinternet.com www.ecological-aquaculture.co.uk

Pest Control UK leads the way when it comes to the pest control sector. If you are looking for a job, are an expert in the field, or are looking for pest control options, then Pest Control UK is the place to go. Visit us at: <http://www.pestcontrol-uk.org>.

Kings Game Cover and Conservation Crops

Kings provide an extensive range of high quality game cover and conservation crop seeds and related services throughout the UK and Europe together with practical, professional advice. kingscrops@frontierag.co.uk Freephone 0800 587 9797

Lancashire Mole Control, Traditional Mole Catcher

Fast, efficient, humane control of moles for farmers, landowners and homeowners in Lancashire by a Master Mole Catcher. No Gases, Chemicals or Poisons. "No Mole No Fee" Fully Insured. References available. Pricing and discounts to suit all budgets. Call John on 01772 679832 or 07923 305977 lancashire-molecontrol@blueyonder.co.uk www.lancashire-molecontrol.co.uk

Rowan Working Horses

Specializing in ecologically sensitive and challenging sites and available for timber extraction, land management, training and demonstrations. Call Kate on 07986 337205 or e-mail enquires@rowanworkinghorses.co.uk for further information or visit www.rowanworkinghorses.co.uk

Green Grants Machine

– a free website that lets businesses search for funding to improve their efficiency and reduce their environmental impact. Includes full details on hundreds of grants, loans, awards and other funds offered by the government, EU, local councils and other agencies. Find out more at www.greengrantsmachine.co.uk

The Access To Farms partnership

helps farmers to work with schools and other young people to get them visiting farms safely and to maximise the educational benefits. Information, support, training and where appropriate accreditation is available. www.face-online.org.uk/cevas

Edible Landscape

As our name suggests we work to create diverse local food growing systems. Our sustainable landscape designs include permaculture, silvo-pastoral agroforestry, forest gardens, aquaculture and constructed wetlands. For productive, resilient, low carbon land use that works with nature not against it call 01761 434349 or visit www.ediblelandscape.co.uk

Chesterton Horse Loggers

Timber extraction using horses in woodlands where the use of machinery is not always appropriate, soil compression is minimal and flora and fauna is not impacted upon. A traditional craft that is environmentally friendly and competitively priced. horse.loggers136@btinternet.com 07850193798 www.chestertonhorseloggers.co.uk

Businesslink.gov.uk/farming provides farmers with plain English guidance to all the regulations that govern agriculture.

Guides cover areas government schemes, grants and rules and more under these headings:

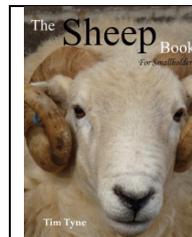
- Running your Farm Business
- Funding Grants and Schemes
- Protecting Farm Environments
- Livestock
- Crops, Horticulture and Plant Health
- Organic Farming



Do Smallholders have a positive environmental impact?

Is the smallholding way of life more helpful to wildlife than large scale agriculture, or is this a popular misconception perpetrated by those currently involved in smallholding?

Unfortunately the latter is all too often the reality nowadays, although the belief has its roots in historical fact. If we take a look back to the late 1970s and early 80s, to the era of industrialised farming and cheap food, we see smallholdings as diverse oases of vital habitat in the midst of acre upon acre of monoculture. At a time when farmers were being paid to remove hedges, smallholders were planting new ones. Likewise, as ditches were piped and ponds filled in on the larger farms, valuable conservation projects were being carried out at the smaller end of the scale, and so on. Smallholders, justifiably, earned for themselves the reputation of being more wildlife conscious, more environmentally aware and more welfare friendly than their larger farming neighbours. However, a reputation, once made, must be maintained if it is to be upheld. It now appears that the small-scale sector has been resting on its laurels for far too long over this, and is in grave danger of being left behind.



The Sheep Book for Smallholders. ISBN 9781904871644. Available from The Good Life Press Ltd.

Photo / design: Dot Tyne

The whole emphasis within the agricultural industry has shifted. Production subsidies no longer exist. Instead, support payments are targeted towards environmental management and habitat creation, with the result that many commercial farms are involved in large scale, grant assisted conservation projects. Even those farmers who are not actively involved in specific schemes are now required to manage their land in accordance with a catalogue of stringent procedures (called "cross compliance"), which are designed to minimise environmental impact, enhance the wildlife value of farmed land, and preserve important habitat features such as ponds, wetlands and traditional meadows. In addition, there are strict guidelines as to what, when and where artificial fertilisers and other agrichemicals may (or may not) be used. Our agricultural industry is probably more eco-conscious now than ever before.

At the other extreme, many of today's smallholdings are mis-managed, and are woefully overstocked as inexperienced livestock keepers retain too many animals for "sentimental" reasons. Overgrazing (often with inappropriate classes of stock) can lead to a whole host of welfare problems, and delivers no environmental benefit whatsoever. These smallholders need to take a good long look at the current image they portray, and

consider their position within the wider rural community. A bit of self-evaluation is not a bad thing, from time to time.

There are, of course, many small-scale producers who are very aware of environmental issues, but, as individuals, they can only make a limited contribution to wildlife and habitat management, due to the limited acreages involved. However, there are, in fact, more small holdings than large ones, so, taken altogether, the total contribution of a number of smallholders working together and in conjunction with their larger farming neighbours, could be great. A seemingly simple small-scale project, such as double fencing a short length of hedgerow, would assume far greater significance if it also provided a link between habitat creation projects on adjacent holdings, which might otherwise have remained isolated.

In this respect, there must surely be openings for people working in conservation to engage more closely with small-scale land managers, to help ensure that this sector of the agricultural industry delivers practical environmental benefits.

Tim Tyne is a second generation smallholder, who believes passionately that smallholding should be a viable career option for young people, not just the preserve of affluent downshifters and retired professionals. He was brought up on a productive holding in north east Essex, studied at the Welsh Agricultural College, and spent several years living on a small offshore island. He is now farming full time on the Llyn Peninsular, together with his wife and three children, and runs occasional practical short courses for smallholders.

Tim is a regular contributor to Country Smallholding magazine, and is the author of The Sheep Book for Smallholders - probably the most comprehensive guide to small scale sheep keeping ever written. Visit Tim and his family at www.viableselfsufficiency.co.uk



photo online

Volunteering opportunities:

Lower Smite Farm work parties offer opportunities to gain experience in practical conservation and learn about agricultural practices that encourage and enhance wildlife. We are looking for enthusiastic individuals to join our team of volunteers based at the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust's Headquarters between Worcester and Droitwich Spa. No experience needed. Caroline Corsie on 01905 754919

World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) is all about giving volunteering your time to work on organic farms in return for food, accommodation & knowledge exchange. It's a great way to meet likeminded souls, reconnect with the earth & learn about farming, animal husbandry & more sustainable ways of living. www.wwof.org.uk

Farming and Wildlife

The pressure on the countryside today has never been greater and the farmers who are managing the landscape are now being expected to produce food of a high quality whilst also showing concern for the environment and our natural resources. However, it is not difficult to farm commercially whilst also caring for the environment and there is plenty of advice available on how to achieve this. There are also several schemes available for the farmer that will provide funding to undertake conservation projects.



One source of environmental management advice is the independent charity Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) who employ Farm Conservation Advisers that cover the whole of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. A FWAG Adviser will pinpoint the areas of the farm most valuable for wildlife, propose management options, suggest specialist advice and also recommend the best source of funding and grant aid.

In England there are two main funding schemes available under Natural England's Environmental Stewardship programme. Entry Level Stewardship (including Uplands ELS) is a voluntary scheme that encourages farmers to undertake simple environmental projects such as hedgerow management, buffer strips or arable and grassland options, ie field margins and skylark plots. Before applying to ELS farmers must complete a Farm Environment Record, which is a simple map recording all of the features on the farm. Participants receive a payment for all of the land entered into the scheme in return for the management being undertaken. Practically all farmers should be able to qualify for ELS without making too many changes to their current management regime. There is also an organic scheme available.

The higher and more complex scheme is Higher Level Stewardship (HLS), an agreement which lasts for 10 years. This aims to deliver significant environmental benefits in high priority situations and areas. It requires more complex environmental management so advice and support is vital. As part of the process of entering HLS a farm will need to undergo a Farm Environment Plan to identify the appropriate options for management. The FEP involves a detailed survey of the habitats and historic features that are present on the farm.

As well as the Environmental Stewardship schemes there are also a wide range of grants and funding available for management of individual wildlife features. These are often accessed on a regional or local level.

The above initiatives only apply in England. In Wales there are two similar schemes; Tir Cynnal is the entry level scheme which is whole farm scheme that runs for a minimum of 5 years with the option to continue to ten years. Tir Gofal is the higher level scheme which aims to support the rich cultural heritage of Wales via permissive access options. Again it is a whole farm scheme that runs for 10 years. However, applications to both schemes have now closed and a new two tier agri-environment scheme, Glastir, will start agreements in 2012. The Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme seeks to improve biodiversity, soil and water quality and mitigate against climate change. It is open to all farmers who have a minimum of 3 hectares of eligible land.

Further advice on how to create and maintain farmland habitats is also available in the FWAG Farm Conservation Guide, priced £7.99, which is available to order through the FWAG website www.fwag.org.uk or on the telephone number above.

2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity and along with 300 partner organisations FWAG is urging everyone to "Do one thing for Biodiversity". There are a series of suggested "pledges" on the FWAG website but you can also tell us about your own activity. The website also provides details on how to contact your local adviser to request a visit and gives advice on a career with the organisation.

Jane Hampson, FWAG



photo online

Products:

eco-logic books

For a large and unusual selection of mail order books on conservation forestry, permaculture and small scale and organic farming visit www.eco-logicbooks.com

The Outdoors Company is a clothing & workwear supplier to many countryside ranger services, national park authorities and borough councils across the UK. We sell many top brands including North Face, Berghaus, Paramo, Craghoppers, Regatta to name a few. We also offer a full embroidery & print service if needed.
01270 877117 sales@theoutdoorscompany.co.uk
www.theoutdoorscompany.co.uk

Three new Krygyk yurts (sleep 5) at West Moss-side Organic Farm, Thornhill, nr Stirling for summer 2010! Set in the stunning landscape of the Trossachs, it's a perfect place for a 'slow' holiday rich in natural and cultural heritage and fabulous for walking, cycling as well as creative options at the West Moss-side Centre. contact kate@westmoss-side.com

Practical Farm Ideas

Help yourself to successful farming tips, methods, modifications, DIY projects contributed by farmers throughout UK. Quarterly magazine with 40+ innovations to help make your farming, contracting, farm work better. Subscribe £14.85/yr on-line www.farmideas.co.uk or to MIDO Publications (CJS), 11 St Marys St, Whitland, SA34 0PY 01994 240978

Who is the UK's most wildlife-friendly farmer? You decide! The Nature of Farming Award is run by the RSPB with support from Plantlife, Butterfly Conservation and Countryfile Magazine. For a chance to win a luxury break at Luton Hoo hotel, golf and spa, vote at www.rspb.org.uk/farmvote before 27th August 2010.

A video diary of UK Agriculture as a resource for Education The Agriculture-4-U vision is for all the school children in the UK to have a basic knowledge of where their food comes from and how it is produced from an early age. www.agriculture-4-u.co.uk

The Woolly Shepherd

Sheeps wool insulation grown and made in Devon to keep your home cosy. Recycled wool for stuffing, upholstery and horticulture. Wool processing for small producers, felt, yurt liners and lots more! Wool packaging to keep meat and other produce cool! Keeping fibre miles low and supporting British sheep farmers! www.woollyshepherd.co.uk 01404 892862

ALBI –traps for pest control & conservation. View our comprehensive product range on: www.albionmanufacturing.com manufactured in the UK. Our traps are high quality, reliable & robust and are used by many government & conservation organisations, agricultural concerns and pest control companies.
Contact us on: sales@albionmanufacturing.com

Food and Environmental Security is the Cornerstone to the Future CAP says the CLA



Country Land & Business Association
RURAL ECONOMY IS OUR BUSINESS

When the dust finally settles on the 2010 election there will be key issues for the new government to address and, although it may seem remote to many UK voters, not least among them is the Government's approach to the Common Agricultural Policy.

Few farmers make money from their business yet most farmers provide goods the public demands such as landscape, environment, habitat biodiversity and so on.

Food production is – and must remain – the principle role of farming but farming is strongly dependent on public payments, and those payments are under threat. If we want farmers to continue to deliver food for which the market pays, and public environmental goods for which the market will not pay, then payment for the public goods has to come from the public purse – in this case via the Common Agricultural Policy. Farming must be efficient, competitive and viable in the long term – because without a viable farming industry we'll get neither the food nor the environment we want.

The CLA argues that the UK Government needs to make the case for food security, but not for income support, as this invites payment capping. We need to continue to promote the need for a stronger CAP to European opinion formers by making the case that food and environmental security are inextricably linked. The twin challenges of food and environmental security, say the rural champions, can only be met by European policy with commensurate budget resources - and that this is the task for a reformed CAP. The benefit for the public will be a more sustainable farm system that provides environmental benefits including cleaner water, reduced global warming and more biodiversity.

In a recent paper, the CLA and Bird Life International, the European equivalent of the RSPB, set out seven key points for the CAP reforms due to take place in 2012 which are:

- Appropriate land management is crucial for the conservation of a range of ecosystem services, a critical one of which is food production for the human population and underpinning this, the long-term capacity of land for food production.
- Sustainable management of Europe's land requires continued active intervention by farmers and landowners.
- There is a particular need to ensure the maintenance of extensive livestock, and other High Nature Value, systems.
- Europe plays an important role in global food security and in driving higher global environmental standards of production.
- Policies and budgets at the European level are necessary to enable us to rise to these food and environmental challenges.
- Future policy therefore requires the evolution of the CAP to ensure alignment between CAP support and public benefits.
- The mechanisms and measures to achieve this are likely to show more characteristics of current CAP rural development and agri-environment measures than current farm support measures.

What we are suggesting is that the farmer's role is steadily growing – producing both food and environmental services, but we have to emphasise that farmers are not charities so services not rewarded by the market must be paid for some other way.

For further information about the CLA go to www.cla.org.uk where you will be able to find your local CLA office.

Paul Millard, CLA South West

Short Training courses in 2010, all one day unless otherwise specified.

10 June How to Complete an (Entry Level) Environmental Stewardship Scheme Application (Workshop 1 of 2) in Pewsey, Wiltshire organised by IEEM. Details 01962 86862 <http://www.ieem.net/workshops.asp>

Followed on 1 July by the second workshop How to Complete an (Higher Level) Environmental Stewardship Scheme Application.

Grassland Restoration for new owners & managers on 11 June in Mold, Flintshire with Flora Locale. Find out more on 01672 515723, info@floralocale.org or www.floralocale.org

15 June Best Use of Environmental Stewardship on an Arable Farm in Cambridgeshire, run by RSPB. Find out more on 01767 693308, conservation-advice@rspb.org.uk, www.rspb.org.uk

10 July Introduction to Permaculture over 2 days in Brighton with Brighton Permaculture Trust. More details via their website. www.brightonpermaculture.org.uk

22 September Grazing with carbon & wildlife in mind in Ingleborough, Cumbria / North Yorkshire, organised by Flora Locale. Contact above

Also on 22 September Integrating the needs of farmland wildlife in lowland livestock/mixed farming systems in Shropshire with RSPB. Contact 01767 693308 www.rspb.org.uk for details.

And don't forget to have a look at the Training Section of countryside-jobs.com which has further details for many of these courses and providers plus lots more...

The CJS team would like to thank everyone who has contributed adverts, articles and information for this CJS Focus publication. Next edition will feature Countryside Management, published 23/8/10.