

Shropshire Rural Hub Newsletter

July & August 2016

Shropshire Rural Hub
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Is there a future for the small family farm in the UK?

A major new independent study commissioned by The Prince's Countryside Fund into the future of small family farms across the UK has been launched.

Over the last two or three decades, small family farms have experienced profound change. The report set out to explore the future for these farms by identifying the pace of change, investigating ways in which they might improve performance and viability as well as putting forward proposals for improvements to farm management, adjusting policies and bringing in new blood.

Overseen by Professor Michael Winter, a rural policy specialist and rural social scientist at the University of Exeter, the report revealed a complex pattern of change with the number of farms declining by half and showed many smaller farms had been consolidated into expanding larger farms.

One of the largest risks was identified as farm succession. Without the correct retirement planning and restructuring in place, it is claimed it will make it more difficult for the 'older generation to step back', yet it confirms that the 'most profitable farms are those most likely to have a successor, regardless of size'.

The full report produced by The University of Exeter and its recommendations is available to download from The Prince's Countryside Fund website:

www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk/

Later this month, The Prince's Countryside Fund will be announcing a new programme of support in response to the findings of the report.

Action for Farmland Pollinators How you can help

You are invited to a Farm Walk on:

Wednesday 13th July 2016

7.15pm until 9.15pm

at

Rowton Grange

Aston on Clun, Craven Arms

SY7 0PA

by kind permission of Frank Morgan

An opportunity to hear how all farmers can manage their farmland to benefit the environment and enhance their industry's green credentials.

Topics will include:

- The practicalities of establishing and managing nectar and wildflower mixtures.
- Habitat management for pollinators including hedgerow management.
- How farmers can enhance habitats for pollinators by carefully choosing the right Ecological Focus Areas (EFA) options.
- The new Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

The 120 ha holding is a mixed family farm that grows combinable crops with cattle and sheep grazing the permanent pasture. The business entered into HLS in 2009 following 10 years in the old Countryside Stewardship Scheme. Under the schemes, a range of habitats important for pollinators are managed, including hedgerows, floristically enhanced arable margins and nectar mixtures.

**To book onto the CFE event, please visit:
www.nfuonline.com/CFEevents or
call the booking line on 02476 858897.**

To speak to your regional CFE adviser specifically about the event, please call 01785 710564.

Do you farm by the Llangollen Canal?

Through their Sustainable Catchment Management Programme (SCaMP), United Utilities along with Reaseheath College are working in partnership with farmers, land owners and stakeholders across the region to protect drinking water quality.

By helping you manage your land in a sustainable way, the quality of water that drains from it can be improved and the need for costly and energy intensive treatment reduced.

We currently have a number of offers available to land users within the Llangollen Canal Safeguard Zone catchment:

- Pesticide Amnesty – FREE collection of unwanted chemicals - Unknown and unlabelled products can also be taken
- FREE Weed Wiper Hire
- Subsidised Slug Pellet Switch – 50% off the purchase price of Ferric Phosphate pellets.

If you are interested in any of the offers above and to find out whether your land falls within the Llangollen Canal Safeguard Zone catchment, please contact Helen Rowley on 01270 613195 (option 3) or 07850 908905; email: helen.rowley@reaseheath.ac.uk

The Rural Business Awards 2016

The CLA is encouraging rural entrepreneurs from across the region to enter the 2016 Rural Business Awards.

The Rural Business Awards will showcase and reward the very best businesses that the countryside has to offer, giving finalists clear opportunities for differentiating and growing their business.

Awards will be made across 13 categories including: Best Rural Start-up; Outstanding Rural Diversification Project; Social enterprise/community project of the year; Best Rural Tourism Business; Rural Employer of the Year and Rural Entrepreneur of the Year.

Entries can be made up to 31st July 2016.

Full details of the Awards can be found at: www.ruralbusinessawards.co.uk

Sheep Research Day

**Tuesday 19th July 2016,
10.30am – 3.30pm
at**

**Food Academy Lecture Theatre,
Harper Adams University,
Newport, TF10 8NB**

AHDB Beef & Lamb have funded a significant amount of research work on sheep nutrition in the last few years. This event provides an opportunity for levy payers to hear about this work and to take home the key messages.

To register your FREE place, ring the AHDB Beef & Lamb events office on 01904 771211 or email brp.events@ahdb.org.uk

Plantwild Seed Harvesting Week beginning 18th July 2016

Suzanne Noble and Keith Arrowsmith are kindly offering this invitation to see their seed harvester in action

“Anyone interested is very welcome to call by and see us during our harvesting in the week of the 18th July, and if they **contact us on 07880 730880 or 07585 150845**, we will let them know where and how to find us on each day. We will be harvesting at Kimbolton Herefordshire, Bearwood Herefordshire, Clee Hill Shropshire and Taynton Gloucestershire”.

This is a great opportunity to see Plantwild in action somewhere near you but please note that you will be visiting the sites at your own risk.

Pension Wise

Pension Wise is a Government initiative which came about in April 2015. Guidance Specialists at Citizens Advice Delivery Centres across Shropshire, currently offer appointments in Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Ludlow and Whitchurch. The purpose of the appointment is to explain the new pension freedoms that were introduced at that time and the Chancellor promised everyone of qualifying age, that they would be entitled to free guidance.

If you're over 50 call 0800 138 8292 to book a phone or face-to-face appointment with a guidance specialist.

Shropshire Rural Hub can help to promote your Business or Event

For a small fee, your advert will appear in our Newsletter and on our website – www.ruralhubpartnership.co.uk

For more information, please email Alison:
alisonrhp@ruralhubpartnership.co.uk

Planned Changes to Farm Animal Movement Rules

Under the new rules you will be able to apply to register all the land you use within a 10 mile radius, whether on a permanent or temporary basis, under the same CPH number. You will be able to move animals around that registered land, within a 10-mile radius, without the need to report movements and without triggering a six-day standstill. Reporting and standstill requirements for livestock movements to other farms or businesses will continue to apply.

- All CTS links will be withdrawn by summer 2017 under the new system. If you have a CTS link you do not need to do anything now. BCMS will contact you before your link is due to expire to explain your options.
- All SOAs will be withdrawn. If you have a SOA you do not need to do anything now. Defra will write to you with further information on the options that will be available to you.
- The Sheep and Goats batch reporting exemption between different holdings within the same business (provided keepership does not change) will be removed.
- The Sheep and Goats adjacent moves reporting exemption (allowing keepers not to report frequent sheep or goat movements to contiguous (adjacent) land on a different holding) will be removed.
- Batch-tagged slaughter sheep and goats will continue to be identified with just their flock number.

The new rules will be introduced from July 2016 and will be phased in over the next year, to be completed by summer/autumn 2017. The sheep and goat movement reporting exemptions will then end on 1 January 2018.

For full details of the new rules and what they will mean for you, please visit the website:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/livestock-movements-simpler-rules-from-2016-to-2017/livestock-movements-simpler-rules-from-2016-to-2017

Contemplating Farm Diversification?

Harper Adams University are looking for several farmers to act as "hosts" for a final year module called Rural Business Opportunities, which investigates the potential for diversification enterprise.

The aim is to look at what other new business opportunities might be feasible for the host farmers, such as adding value to crops or livestock, leisure and tourism, retail, developing buildings, renewable energy.... etc. The format in the past has been that the students visit the farm, look at what resources they have to work with: buildings, land, finance, proximity to markets, roads, other attractions, local planning strategy etc. They then go away and produce a report which looks at the new business opportunities, produce market research and then produce business plans for their chosen idea. The reports often have different emphasis so the host farmer gets lots of ideas for what could happen on the farm which have been researched for "free" by the students.

This year, 2 of the students reports were selected to go forward for a national prize called the Pinnacle Awards, which is open for students in agricultural universities and colleges to enter with a piece of work on a farm business management theme. The following web address gives more detail:

www.thefarmersclub.com/charities-and-awards/pinnacle-awards

This year one of the students from Harper, Katie Woolliscroft, won the top prize at this prestigious event.

Traditionally the students get a lot from these "live case studies" and your co-operation to continue using current, local and applicable case studies, will help ensure the mutual benefit of everyone involved.

If you would like more information about becoming a 'Host Farm' and would like to discuss in greater detail, please email Tony Asson at Harper Adams University:
tasson@harper-adams.ac.uk

South Shropshire - Burglaries of Outbuilding

West Mercia Police is appealing to the communities of South Shropshire to remain vigilant following a spate of rural burglaries in the area, which have targeted outbuildings, insecure barns and sheds during the hours of darkness.

Tools, farm machinery, and diesel are just some of the items which have been stolen by the criminals, and Crime Prevention Officers are urging residents to follow these simple security measures in order to reduce the risk towards their property.

- Ensure that all outbuildings are locked when not in use. Try using weatherproof padlocks and reversing the hinges on shed doors so that they cannot be unscrewed.
- Ensure tools and machinery are locked away and out of sight when not in use. As well as being at risk of theft, tools can be used to gain access to surrounding buildings.
- Do not leave keys or valuables in farm vehicles/machinery.
- Keep gates padlocked shut.
- Install solar-powered dusk-to-dawn lighting on outbuildings to deter intruders.
- Ensure any tools or valuables are security marked and display signs around your property to inform potential thieves.

Sgt Murdoch of the Shropshire Harm Reduction Team stated, "The police are conducting extra patrols in these areas to provide reassurance to the victims and the communities as a whole. To assist us in our efforts to apprehend these criminals I would appeal to the residents of these rural areas to be extra vigilant and to report any suspicious activity or vehicles they see to the police".

**In an emergency call 999,
for non-emergencies call 101**

**Please let us have your submissions for
our September Newsletter by the
5th September 2016.**

**Email:
alisonrhp@ruralhubpartnership.co.uk**

Scam Awareness Month Spotlight on Identity Crime

West Mercia Police is marking scam awareness month during July by raising awareness of identity crime, with the message 'there's only one you; keep it that way'.

Obtaining a person's identity, in the form of their personal details, gives criminals the opportunity to commit identity crime, such as fraud. Fraudsters may be able to take over someone's existing bank accounts, open new ones, obtain credit cards, loans and mobile phone contracts, order goods and get genuine documents in that person's name.

West Mercia Police is urging people to be aware of the risk of this type of crime and to make sure they follow some simple steps to reduce the chances of falling victim.

**To find out more please visit:
www.westmercia.police.uk/becybersmart**

Police Warn of New Scam Telephone Calls

Police in West Mercia are warning members of the public to be alert to potential hoax calls pretending to be from telephone or computer companies.

There have been reports involving hoax phone calls claiming to be employees from either BT or TalkTalk to inform potential victims that they have a virus on their computers, or they are due a refund.

Police warn that the scammers will make repeated attempts to gain access to computers by asking potential victims to input codes to target 'infected' files, or may request account details.

How to Protect Yourself

- Do not allow remote access to your computer.
- Hang up the phone when you identify that the call is uninvited.
- Never divulge passwords or pin numbers.
- BT, Microsoft, other computer companies or someone on their behalf will never call you.
- Contact the company who the fraudulent caller claims to be from, especially if this is a bank.

**Police urge anyone who receives similar calls to
dial 101 and report them.**

Trailer Watch Launched

Horse Watch now has a Trailer Watch Scheme available for a £1.50 donation.

Upon receipt of registration and donation you will be issued with at West Mercia Horse Watch Security Skin that measures 80 x 35 mm.

This is a simple product made of a high polymer material that protects UV markings, yet shows an element of tamper as the skins fragment into tiny pieces when removal is attempted. This helps Police identify possible stolen items.

FREE Microchip Database Registration

Have you registered your details on the FREE microchip/freeze mark database? Details you provide will be retained by West Mercia Horse Watch and shared with West Mercia Police for the purpose of identifying ownership in incidents such as loose, stray and stolen horses.

For further details and to register with the Trailer Watch Scheme or the Microchip Database, please visit: www.westmerciahorsewatch.co.uk

Telecoms Watchdog Seeks Rural Volunteers

TELECOMS watchdog Ofcom wants rural people to tell it about the broadband challenges they face.

Ofcom wants to find out more about the "rural broadband experience" by encouraging rural people to join its research panel. Ofcom said it existed to make communications markets work for everyone. One of the ways it did so was by conducting research to find out about the customer experience across the UK. Each year, Ofcom reports its findings in its flagship Connected Nations report – which provides a snapshot of the state of the UK communication network.

To inform this and wider work, Ofcom is calling for volunteers to sign up to join its expanded research panel of broadband customers. They are particularly looking to sign up more people who live in rural areas in order find out more about the challenges they face.

For further details and how you can sign-up, visit: <https://signups.samknows.com/ofcom/>

New Network for Village Halls

The National Village and Community Halls Network will take over the role from the now closed National Village Halls Forum.

It will enable village and community hall trustees, volunteers and councillors to feed into meetings with MPs, government departments and Consultation responses.

The new network is being hosted by Action with Communities in Rural England. Hall management committees and other organisations and individuals with an interest in village halls are invited to sign up to the network. They will be able to share good practice and experiences with other like-minded members as well as contributing to the development of appropriate legislation and regulation.

For further information, please visit: www.acre.org.uk/our-work/village-halls-network

Free Natural England Advice Sessions for Countryside Stewardship

If you are considering applying for the new Mid-Tier Countryside Stewardship this year FREE advice and support is available through events and one to one advice sessions (funded by Natural England).

Mid-Tier Countryside Stewardship is different from ELS, it is competitive, targeted, has a single application window and start date. **The Mid-Tier application window is now open and closes on 30th September 2016.**

Advice sessions will cover how the scheme works, who is eligible and what the environmental priorities are in your local area to help you develop an application with a good chance of success. The adviser will not be able to complete the application for you but you will get 1.5 hour session with an experienced adviser to discuss the details of your farm.

Advice sessions are available at pre booked clinics, and a limited number can be provided on farm. A clinic can be arranged at suitable location in your area. Please contact the number below if this would be of interest.

To book your FREE place, please contact: Events Team: 08453 713399 or email: bookings@adas.co.uk

Walford to Welcome Old Students

The Walford Campus of North Shropshire College (NSC) is asking for any former Agriculture students to get in touch. Whether they studied five years ago or 25 years ago, NSC would like to hear from them.

In the near future the College is hoping to host a reunion for the Walford Old Students Association (WOSA) and other past Agriculture students. NSC would like to show alumni the facilities that the Walford Farm now has, such as the Robotic Milking Parlour and how students' learning has changed at the College over the years.

Rob Cooke, the former Chairman of WOSA, is on the reunion committee alongside well known lecturer David Nightingale and is looking forward to the possibility of meeting old friends and peers once again.

To get in contact, call Pippa Evans on 01691 688087 or email pippa.evans@nsc.ac.uk

Nuffield Farming Scholarships

Nuffield Farming Scholarships award around 20 individuals each year with the opportunity to research topics of interest in farming, food, horticulture or rural sectors. Scholars are able to travel anywhere in the world, visiting one or more countries in order to further knowledge and understanding, with a view to advancing their respective industries.

Nuffield Scholarships provide an opportunity to:

- Unlock individual potential and broaden horizons through study and overseas travel
- Stand back from the day-to-day routine and study a subject of personal interest
- Have access to the world's leaders in food and farming
- Deliver benefits to agricultural and related industries through knowledge transfer.

Anyone between 25 and 45 years old who is engaged in farming, farm management and land management or involved with forestry and the food industry, can apply for a Nuffield Farming Scholarship. An academic qualification is not a necessity.

Are you interested in becoming a Nuffield Farming Scholar? For further information please visit the Nuffield Farming Scholarship Trust website www.nuffieldscholar.org

Closing date for applications is the 31st July 2016

Grant Fund for Farmers in the Clun Catchment

If you are a landowner or farmer in the Clun Catchment, grants are available to reduce diffuse pollution which will help with cross-compliance obligations. The fund is open all year, is easy to access, has minimal red tape and has a Project Officer to help every step of the way.

Grants can be provided up to 100% to undertake:

- Coppicing and pollarding of riverbank trees
- Fencing alongside watercourses to allow natural regeneration and help stabilise vulnerable riverbanks
- Improved/alternative watering for livestock
- Resurfacing of tracks and gateways to limit runoff to watercourses or roads
- Grants are also available for tree planting to help reconnect fragmented river habitats or to create shelterbelts in the catchment.

**For more information visit:
www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/aonb-partnership/rivers/
or email Project Officer, Alison Jones:
alison.m.jones@shropshire.gov.uk**

Marches Growth Hub - Business Support in Shropshire

The Marches Growth Hub offers a single point of access to information and guidance on business support available to enterprises across the region, regardless of sector or size of development.

The virtual hub is a business-friendly website, where start-ups, SMEs and large employers can search for products and services and be signposted to advice and support.

Face to face support services for businesses are also available.

For further information, please visit www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk

Useful Websites

Workplace Pensions / Auto Enrolment

Businesses employing less than 30 staff will be required to offer a work place pension under the auto enrolment scheme. Starting dates will be advised by the Government. Details about your start date can be found by visiting www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/employers/staging-date.aspx.

**Further information is available from the Government Website:
www.gov.uk/workplace-pensions-employers**

National Minimum Wage Rates

www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates

Countryside Stewardship Mid & Higher Tier

Manuals, Application Forms and Supporting Guidance

www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-get-paid-for-environmental-land-management

Countryside Stewardship for Woodlands

www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/bee9-9t6ff5

Registering Your Waste Exemptions Online

www.gov.uk/register-your-waste-exemption-online

NVZ Guidance

www.gov.uk/government/publications/nitrate-vulnerable-zones-in-england-guidance-on-complying-with-the-rules-for-2013-to-2016

Cross Compliance 2016

www.gov.uk/guidance/guide-to-cross-compliance-in-england-2016

Farmers and landowners must follow these cross compliance rules if they claim for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), a Stewardship Scheme or the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) in 2016.

Greening Guidance for 2016

www.gov.uk/guidance/the-basic-payment-scheme-bps-rules-for-2016

EIA (Agriculture) regulations: apply to make changes to rural land

How to request an Environmental Impact Assessment screening decision and if necessary, apply for consent to cultivate previously uncultivated land or semi-natural areas, or restructure land features.

www.gov.uk/guidance/eia-agriculture-regulations-apply-to-make-changes-to-rural-land

Farming Inspections

Information about who will inspect your farm, what they're looking for and any penalties you may get.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/farming-inspections

Magic Maps

magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx

Advice and Help

If you are unsure about details of any rules or regulations or want help with understanding record keeping, please remember that advice and help is available from the **Green Futures Team: Farming Advice Service, Natural England, CLA, NFU & the Environment Agency.**

Getting advice and assistance from those that know the details of the rules will help ensure your business stays compliant. You may be cautious about asking for help from a regulatory body such as the Environment Agency, but they are always willing to advise and help you.

Useful Contacts for Advice, Help & Support

- Farming Advice Service - 0845 345 1302 / advice@farmingadvice.service.org.uk
- Natural England - 0300 060 1115 / enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk
- Environment Agency - 02030 251692 / sharon.chisholm@environment-agency.gov.uk
- NFU 01952 400500 / jonathan.evans@nfu.org.uk
- CLA - 01785 337010 / richard.goodwin@CLA.org.uk
- Animal Health & Trading Standards (Shropshire) - tim.brooker@shropshire.gov.uk

Do you need support or do you know someone who may benefit from support?

Shropshire Rural Support

Shropshire Rural Support (SRS) is a registered charity offering support to people experiencing problems arising from a rural way of life.

SRS help people with various issues including isolation, family breakdown and spiraling debt.

For further information, help and advice please call 0300 123 2825

Also on Facebook and Twitter @ShropshireRS

The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution

RABI is a grant-making charity which helps farming people of all ages if they are in financial difficulty.

Support is confidential & includes one-off or regular payments, funding for things like essential household items, disability equipment, relief farm staff, home-help and care costs.

Helpline 0808 281 9490

Visit the website

www.rabi.org.uk



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