August 2020

**EHFN Projects Update**

*The Prince’s Countryside Fund’s Covid-19 Grant – IT support on Exmoor (We need your help to assess IT needs of members and this is your opportunity to inform us of your requirements) and a big thank you to those who have already taken part in the survey to date.*

Exmoor Hill Farming Network has recently been awarded by The Prince’s Countryside Fund, supported by the NFU Mutual Charitable Trust, to provide IT training and support to Exmoor farming families. This grant has been provided to help farming families make better use of the internet and their computers (‘IT’) to reduce the isolation experienced by businesses and families during the Covid-19 pandemic. So that we can offer the best support, we need to know how we can help you and your family make better use of IT. By answering the questions in this survey, you can help us provide the support that is most needed. The survey should not take more than 5 minutes to complete. Click link to access survey [https://forms.gle/YU3YWac2CzxDSKZJ7](https://forms.gle/YU3YWac2CzxDSKZJ7) The deadline for survey responses is **Friday 21st August 2020**. All replies remain anonymous. This project will run until January 2021 and we will be in touch shortly with our plans going forward, once survey responses have been collated.

**Prince’s Farm Resilience Programme is coming back to Exmoor**

Do you have a family farm business? If yes, have you heard about The Prince’s Farm Resilience Programme? It offers family farm business FREE business skills training from top agricultural consultants! Find our more here [www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk/farmresilience](http://www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk/farmresilience). We are delighted to report Exmoor has been chosen to host another programme. For further details please contact Charmain Dascombe (Local co-ordinator for Exmoor Area) [charmainfrp@gmail.com](mailto:charmainfrp@gmail.com) or 07881 406306. Open to all members in the Exmoor and Greater Exmoor area.

**Options for Rejuvenating Grasslands**

Grass reseeds are often viewed as a quick and cost-effective way to increase productivity. However, plough-, power harrow- or rotavator-based cultivations often used for reseeding can pose many environmental risks (see Fig. 1) and rejuvenating the existing sward to maintain permanent grassland should always be considered first.
There are a range of options for improving the productivity of permanent grassland. The following list outlines some of options to consider, and multiple measures can be adopted to address swards where more than one issue is present.

- If soils are well structured below the surface, these should be preserved rather than cultivated as they will be more resilient to damage than freshly cultivated soils. This will also maintain/promote soil carbon and soil biology.
- Compacted soils can be addressed with the sward in situ using: sward slitting/aerating; sward lifting; grassland subsoiling. AHDB have an excellent resource for assessing grassland soils with information on suitable methods to address issues, available online: Healthy Grassland Soils
- Changes to existing practices, including grazing and cutting regimes can be used to promote desirable plant species/inhibit undesirable species including weeds. This might involve:
  - Building longer rest periods into your grazing rotation to allow plant roots to penetrate deeper into the soil.
  - Grazing swards for shorter periods with larger groups of animals to better utilise the sward but also prevent re-grazing of grass as it starts to regrow after initial grazing. Set stocking or grazing for periods longer than a week when grass is growing will favour less palatable grasses.
- Weeds can be targeted with weed wiping or spot spraying.
- Sparse swards or patchy areas can be over-seeded across the whole parcel or targeted to problem areas. There are chemical and organic options to ‘knock back’ the existing sward to let the new seed establish successfully.
- pH and nutrient deficiencies can be addressed with the sward in situ.

If you’ve exhausted all options above then a reseed may be appropriate. However, be aware of the environmental risks, and consider ways to first reduce the likelihood and second mitigate impacts. Immediate risks may include soil damage, run-off and soil erosion, diffuse pollution and carbon loss (as in Fig. 1). Also, note that an Environmental Impact Assessment may be required (see GOV.uk for more information).

Earlier this year the Headwaters of the Exe project carried out a grass reseeding trial to test a technique which could reduce some of the risks associated with grass reseeds. A relatively simple direct drill was used to establish a new sward. We will be monitoring the field over the next year, looking at sward establishment and soil conditions. We plan to organise a group meeting next year, but in the meantime keep an eye out for updates we share.

If you are interested in a free visit to discuss your grassland management, please get in touch with Joanna Uglow by email joanna.uglow@fwagsw.org.uk or phone 01823 660 684.
Important information Rescheduled FWAG Farm Plastic Recycling Scheme 2020 - details attached
The dates for the Spring 2020 farm plastic recycling scheme is rescheduled for October 2020. Collections will be at Cutcombe Market on Monday 12\textsuperscript{th} October and Blackmoor Gate Market on Wednesday 14\textsuperscript{th} October. The types of plastic collected include:

- Silage wrap
- Clamp sheet
- Fertiliser outer bags and dumpy bags
- Fertiliser inner bags and 25kg feed bags
- String
- Netting
- Chemical containers and mineral buckets
- Tree guards

Bookings can be made online at [https://www.fwagsw.org.uk/Event/farm-plastic-recycling-scheme-2020](https://www.fwagsw.org.uk/Event/farm-plastic-recycling-scheme-2020) or by calling FWAG on 01823 660684.

Training Needs
We are receiving enquires for training including chainsaw, trailer tests, spraying and telehandler. Although our trailer trainer is not resuming training until September. Please get in touch if you have any training requirements. We expect a back log as all courses were cancelled in March and beyond and those waiting will be given priority.

Exmoor Lamb Register
A list of farms supplying lamb direct and accompanying film has been released and is available on-line from Exmoor Hill Farming Network (EHFN), Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA), Visit Exmoor and Edible Exmoor. We welcome feedback from Producers and please keep spreading the word to friends, family and contacts further afield if you would like to buy lamb from Exmoor. The register can be found at [http://www.ehfn.org.uk/exmoor-lamb](http://www.ehfn.org.uk/exmoor-lamb)

Peer Support Groups
Exmoor Women in Farming Group Meeting – Monday 24\textsuperscript{th} August 2020
It has been a long time since February and our last in person meeting. I am sure many of you are feeling the effects of lockdown and working hard on your farm or entertaining the children. It must seem a very long summer holiday. After careful consideration and with strict Covid-19 measures in place. I am delighted to inform you we will be bringing the group together as follows: **Summer walk followed by bring your own picnic in a field**
Charmain Dascombe (local coordinator) will talk about the new Prince’s Farm Resilience Programme running this Autumn of which some may be interested to hear more.

**Date:** Monday 24\textsuperscript{th} August 2020 (weather permitting) **Time:** 6pm (prompt) - 9pm **Venue:** Ashmoor, land adjacent to Comers Cross, Withypool located between Exford and Winsford Hill on the B3223 just before the turning to Withypool. By kind permission of Mr and Mrs Charlie Williams. **Peer Support Contribution:** £5pp. Please bring your own drink or hot thermos with a picnic. No sharing allowed. Please contact Katherine for a more in depth email detailing the meeting and site map. Booking is essential due to the uncertain weather.
by Mon 24th. If you are displaying signs of Covid-19 or feel unwell please do not attend https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/ and let the Network officer know.

**Forward Farming Group and Next Generation Group Update**
It is our intention to bring these groups together safely within the next few weeks. Further details to follow.

**Covid -19 Support**

**Dairy Response Fund 2020**
The Dairy Response Fund 2020 provides support to eligible dairy farmers in England who produce cows’ milk. They can apply for a one-off payment.

Guidance updated to reflect the new deadline for applications of 11 September 2020. Guidance also updated at section 4 to clarify how to apply for businesses which have more than one milk contract, and for businesses where the purchaser has applied a deduction to the milk price.

You can apply for this scheme if the following apply: • you supply cows’ milk to a wholesale purchaser • you have had a reduction in the average price paid for your milk of 25% or more in April 2020 compared to that paid in February 2020 • the reduction in the price paid for your milk was on account of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Payments will not be made for May losses alone. To apply, complete a Dairy Response Fund 2020 application form and email it to dairyresponse@rpa.gov.uk For further information https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908295/Dairy_Response_Fund_2020_guidance_v3.0.pdf

**Check if you can claim a grant through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme**
Applications for the second and final grant are now open from (today). If you’re eligible and your business has been adversely affected on or after 14 July 2020, you must make your claim for the second grant on or before 19 October 2020. The second and final taxable grant is worth 70% of your average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering 3 months’ worth of profits, and capped at £6,570 in total. For further information https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme

**Other Interest**

**Electrical installation Certification – All let Properties**
Do you let a farm cottage or property? All Let properties require a Electrical Installation Certification (EIC) and will need to be completed by a qualified electrician by April 2021. The regulations came into force on 1 June 2020, they apply to new tenancies from 1 July 2020 and existing tenancies from 1 April 2021. The electrician will inspect your property electrics and carry out any necessary works required to obtain certification. For further information https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/electrical-safety-standards-in-the-private-rented-sector-guidance-for-landlords-tenants-and-local-authorities/guide-for-landlords-electrical-safety-standards-in-the-private-rented-sector
Launch of Somerset Catalyst: a new scheme to give start-ups and early stage businesses across our region the best chance of success

Funded by the County Council and four Somerset District Councils, Somerset Catalyst is part of a wider business support programme that is rolling out across the county, recognising that the creation of a vibrant business community is key to achieving economic growth. The goal of Somerset Catalyst is to create the necessary positive culture, support system and infrastructure to create economic growth that will ripple across all our communities and put Somerset on the innovation map of the UK. The programme will run annually, commencing in September for a six-month duration. Participants will benefit from one-to-one expert coaching, workshops on key aspects of running a business, a peer support group, business review panels with industry experts, help to access business finance and profile-raising marketing support. Applications open on Monday 3rd August 2020 and close on Monday 31st August 2020, and can be made online at www.somersetcatalyst.co.uk

Latest News from NFU

Any interest from our Exmoor farming community? The NFU’s Uplands Forum is currently looking to recruit forward-thinking uplands farmers to help champion the cause of the uplands sector and complement the existing range of skills and expertise of regional representatives. Successful candidates are appointed for two years and will be expected to attend four meetings a year, typically in our London office. Attendance at other supply chain, government or NFU meetings as a representative of the forum could be required from time to time. To apply https://www.nfuonline.com/sectors/hill-farming/hill-farming-news/uplands-forum-appointees-applications/

Farming Help

The Farming Help partnership is a collaboration between The Addington Fund, The Farming Community Network, R.A.B.I, RSABI and Forage Aid and is supported by The Prince’s Countryside Fund.  https://www.farminghelp.co.uk/

Commercial Advert

An enthusiastic person required to work on a Beef Farm and /or Drainage Business. Requirements are: a full clean driving licence. Experience with tractor driving and or diggers. Must be self - motivated and able to work alone or as a team. Previous experience with beef cattle would be an advantage. Hours to be part or full time depending on ability to be flexible in work types. Rate of pay £9-£12 /hr depending on experience and ability. For further information please contact Mike Willes on 07974567011 or email mike@hi-tecdrains.com
For further information on any of the above. Please contact Katherine Williams on 07970 795808 or email katherine@ehfn.org.uk

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