September 2020

**EHFN Projects Update**

**The Prince’s Countryside Fund’s Covid-19 Grant – IT support on Exmoor**

Thank you to those who completed our Exmoor IT computer use and support survey in August. We were delighted with response and hope to share with you shortly our next plans. We are looking forward to tackling some of the issues our members are facing in relation to IT support. In the meantime we are selecting a suitable IT consultant to assist with this project going forward.

**Gentle Reminder – 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 out 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 or 07881 406306. Open to all members in the Exmoor and Greater Exmoor area.

**Your spade is your most valuable tool**

As Autumn draws in, now is a good time to start thinking about the condition of our soils. When soils start to ‘wet up’ it is much easier to assess soil structure and identify any issues. Also this month, soils are likely to be the right moisture for addressing any grassland compaction with cultivations.

Good soil structure promotes good soil health. A well-structured soil supports better productivity and resilience of crops, is better aerated and supports beneficial soil biology, is able to absorb water more readily and is at lower risk of soil, nutrient and pesticide loss.

On Exmoor, although the soils are typically well drained because of the shallow depth and high stone content, they are inherently prone to damage due to soil texture. When we find compaction in grassland here, it is common to be either or both of the following:

- Shallow compaction (4cm / 1.5”) which is most noticeable above ground during the winter, where there is a slippery wet layer on the surface. When digging a hole, you may notice this wet layer then drier soil below. This compaction may be seen in pasture where sheep are outwintered in wet conditions.

- Deeper compaction (10-30cm / 4-12”) often with no distinct layers can be harder to identify; the soil is generally denser with few pores (gaps for air and water). This compaction can be a result of years of trafficking with machinery, especially when ground is wet.

**If compaction is present, cultivating to address the issue may be a good option provided the soil is moist and not wet. The depth at which compaction is found should guide you to suitable measures to address the issue. Options include:**

- Slit aerating to address shallow compaction, up to about 10cm / 4”

- Flat lifting or subsoiling to address deeper compaction, between about 10cm and 30cm (soil depth and stones permitting)
These cultivations should only be carried out when compaction is present because they can be costly operations and grazing/trafficking in the weeks soon after can damage newly cultivated soil. Therefore, it is important to assess soil conditions before deciding to slit aerate or subsoil. Your spade is the most valuable tool for assessing soil structure.

If you would like some help with soil assessments this autumn-winter, please get in touch with the Headwaters of the Exe project to request a free visit (subject to project area): email joanna.uglow@fwagsw.org.uk / anne.may@fwagsw.org.uk or call 07717 837 603.

Peer Support Groups

Next Generation Group(Under 30’s)

Just to confirm this meeting is going ahead tonight based on educational/training purposes with strict Covid measures in place. Still time to book your place 07970 795808

Details as follows: Topic: RAM MOT Evening Date: Wednesday 16th September 2020 Time: 7pm-9pm Venue: Ashwick Manor Farm, Dulverton (top shed buildings) – see map.

By kind permission of Mr and Mrs David Wallace. Refreshments will be provided and strict covid measures in place as follows:

Martin and Vicky Fieldhouse from Dulverton Vets will be in attendance to give an overview of preparing rams for tupping, a quick presentation followed by a practical session. Ben Blackmore (Farm Manager) has kindly arranged Exmoor Horn, Suffolk and Texel cross Rams to be viewed and handled on the evening for a practical session, disposable gloves will be provided.

Important Notice

- Strict Covid-19 measures will be in place with a hand sanitizer point and signing in sheet as usual with telephone numbers required for track and trace purposes.
- Masks are not mandatory but if you would feel more comfortable please bring one to wear.
- Social distancing measures will be in place.

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.

Exmoor Women in Farming Group Zoom meeting – Wednesday 23rd September 2020

Topic for discussion: General catch up with members Date: Wednesday 23rd September 2020 (note change of day) Time: 8pm – 9pm Venue: From your own home Peer Support

Contribution: £5pp (optional). Zoom details to follow.

Exmoor Women in Farming Group ‘Introduction to Menopause’ Zoom meeting

We are pleased announce Dr Jenny Capps will be hosting an ‘Introduction to Menopause’ evening. It was our intention to host this evening in person however with the current government guidelines it will be held over Zoom on Monday 5th October at 8pm. We welcome any general medical related questions to be forwarded prior to the evening if people would feel more comfortable and they will be answered anonymously on the evening. Further details to follow. Save the date for now.
Latest News from The Soil Association

Book now for Taking Stock farm walks

After months of lockdown, the Soil Association is inviting livestock farmers to join them in the fresh air for a socially-distanced farm walk. This autumn, they are offering the opportunity to visit inspiring farmers across the South West who are ahead of the game in key areas that are likely to be rewarded under the new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELM) scheme. As well as getting your boots dirty and sharing some lunch, you'll also have an opportunity to talk to the Soil Association’s farm advisors about your own farm and how you're planning to adapt your business and take advantage of the coming changes to farm business support and payments.

Taking Stock is a free pilot programme of webinars and live events, funded by Defra, designed for beef and sheep farmers in the South West of England. It has been developed by the Soil Association to help farm businesses understand the changes in the coming years such as the new ELM scheme as farming undergoes a period of radical reform in the UK. The programme offers a practical way for farmers to explore the challenges, impacts and opportunities of the upcoming changes and boost their business’ resilience and respond to the climate emergency through the delivery of environmental benefits. The farm walk and Q&A session will help you to explore what the proposed changes mean for your livestock business, and help you to think about the future plans and opportunities for your farm through using a free resource book and toolkit. The Soil Association is able to offer one on one support alongside the opportunity to connect with other farmers to consider potential opportunities for collaboration, businesses and the local economy.

Sign up now to Taking Stock on the Farm on one of the following dates:

**Thursday 1 October: Higher Hacknell Farm, Burrington, North Devon (Jo and Tim Budden)**

The Soil Association will be ensuring all social distancing guidelines are adhered to, but if you feel it’s too early to meet in this way, or you’d prefer to watch from the comfort of your own home, they will also be filming some of the walks and making them available digitally.

You can sign up for the programme [here](#)

Other Interest

Applications are now open to join the AHDB Beef & Lamb Monitor Farm Programme

We are looking for five new farmers across England to join our existing 15 Strategic Farms as part of our Farm Excellence network [https://ahdb.org.uk/farm-excellence-strategy](https://ahdb.org.uk/farm-excellence-strategy). The programme will be every similar to the Strategic farm programme with the aim being to improve the performance and profitability of the host farmers business whilst providing a platform for like-minded farmers to share best practice.

The four year programme is designed to equip the Monitor Farmer with the tools and techniques to evaluate their businesses strengths and weaknesses. Plus, they will receive advice and guidance from AHDB specialists, industry consultants and an audience of farmers who can support the growth and development of their businesses. This short video highlights some of the benefits of being involved [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVeQ0Z-nnOs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVeQ0Z-nnOs) We are particularly looking for beef and/or sheep finishers and dairy calf rearers. I would be very grateful if you could forward this email to anyone who you think would be interested in applying or attach to your newsletter? Further details can be found on our website [www.ahdb.org.uk/farm-excellence/beef-lamb](http://www.ahdb.org.uk/farm-excellence/beef-lamb) The deadline for applications is 30 September 2020.

Agrifest South West is back for 2020
A showcase of Dairy, Sheep and Beef showing classes along with a range of agricultural related trade stands. **Save the Date:** Wednesday 11th November 2020 at Westpoint, Exeter. EHFN, Dartmoor Hill Farm Project and Farm Cornwall will be attending. All subject to government guidelines. For further information [https://www.agrifestsouthwest.co.uk/](https://www.agrifestsouthwest.co.uk/)

**Farm Plastic Recycling Scheme 2020**

The dates for the Spring 2020 farm plastic recycling scheme is rescheduled for October 2020. Collections will be at Cutcombe Market on Monday 12th October and Blackmoor Gate Market on Wednesday 14th 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.

**Latest News from NFU**

If you farm in the Taw catchment (specifically around Caen), you are invited to a virtual meeting on 22 September at 12.30pm to discuss Environment Agency priorities and ways of working in order to help reduce the impact of nutrients on water quality. In particular it will cover what you can expect from the Environment Agency in the event they need to visit your farm. To register, please contact the regional office on south.west@nfu.org.uk or call 01392 440700.

**Stepping Up Employment Support**

A co-ordinated network of employment and skills support for individuals, employers and businesses seeking support and information in relation to employment, skills, careers and apprenticeships is being rolled out across Somerset under the Step Up Somerset brand to boost existing provision in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. This includes a new one-stop-shop website [www.stepupsomerset.org.uk](http://www.stepupsomerset.org.uk) which will provide support for individuals who are job hunting, seeking training in new industries or working to strengthen their skills by providing details of employment and skills services and resources. Those who find themselves at risk of or being made redundant can find a full range of support including help with reskilling, financial assistance and wellbeing information.

Employers will be able to gather information on redundancy support for their workforce, staff development and offering apprenticeships or industry placements to young people. The website will also provide a platform for promoting any recruitment or development events available to attend. For anyone without internet access further one-to-one help can also be provided via a single phone helpline: 0300 790 6275.
Latest News from Exmoor National Park - Dark Skies Festival 2020

Exmoor at Night Photography Competition
A great opportunity for you and your family to share your images of Exmoor at night. Four categories (A-C have classes for under 16s and 16+) as below:

- **A. Exmoor Icons at Night**
- **B. Enjoying Exmoor’s dark skies**
- **C. Night Sky over Exmoor Landscapes**
- **D. Deep Sky photos taken from Exmoor (one class, any age)**

Full details of the competition here.

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 Adverts

**Full time Farm Work required on Exmoor or Greater Exmoor Area**

16 years young and hardworking, looking for a job where I can continue working outdoors with livestock. I enjoy all aspects of animal care and farm work. I'm happy working in all weather conditions and any early mornings/late evenings. I am always mindful of animal welfare. I am looking for work as a farm labourer or apprentice where I can continue to develop my skills. Own transport provided. I would be delighted to hear from you if you have any suitable vacancies. Please call Cecilia Beagley Email: ivybeagley@gmail.com Phone number: 07758885673