



Happy New Year!

farms

Newsletter for tenants of Cambridgeshire County Farms Estate

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Approved for circulation

Free business advice

Free business advice for farmer groups through the new Farm Business Advice Service in the East of England

Groups of farmers with similar business advice needs as a result of CAP reform and the Single Payment Scheme, can pool their entitlement under the new Farm Business Advice Scheme. This means that where there are common needs and opportunities for the farmers, the advice can go much further and be of more benefit than if support is delivered to the individual.

EFFP is working in the East of England through 'Farm Business First', an ADAS led partnership delivering DEFRA's new 'Farm Business Advice Service – know your options'. The service was launched on the 21 October 2005 and runs until the end of March 2007 and aims to provide support to over 1,500 farmers in the region. To be eligible, farmers need to be a claimant under the Single Payment Scheme.

Farmers eligible for the half-day of free

business advice can form a group with other farmers in a similar business position to themselves and pool their advice entitlements, i.e. if six farmers want to work together on their advice, they could have up to three days of advice from more than one advisor.

Richard Self, EFFP's regional project manager said, "using the advice allocation as a group means that we can really get to grips with a subject area and make a significant impact. With the half-day of advice received as an individual, the advisor can only flag up the key issues and signpost for further help". ●

If you are part of a group of farmers in the East of England and would like to explore how the new farm business advice service can be used to help your business, please contact in the first instance: Richard Self Tel: (01379) 586622 or email rself@effp.com

Soil Protection Review – a reminder

Under the Single Payment Scheme Cross Compliance a Soil Protection Review will have been completed by the 1 September 2006. If you have not completed the Review please do so as a matter of importance and urgency. Actions recorded in the Review should have been implemented by the 1

January 2007. DEFRA can supply template for the Soil Protection Review and a hard copy or on line.

If you have completed a Soil Management Plan as part of your ELS or HLS application, you still need to complete the Soil Protection Review.

Investment on your farm after April 2007

We are planning our modest investment programme for the financial year beginning April 2007. This includes major maintenance such as painting and electrical repairs. Please contact Sarah Mathews on (01223) 717034 to discuss any items which you think we should consider.

Terms such as the tenant's contribution or additional rent can be discussed at that stage.

Previously we have considered:

- Land drainage.
- Insulation of houses and buildings.
- New PVCu windows and doors.
- Farm road repairs.
- Sugar beet pads.

Making a request at this stage does not commit either party to a scheme but will ensure it is considered.

Requests must be submitted no later than the 28 February 2007.

Staff changes at County Farms



2006 ended with changes in the County Farms Team. Last November Jennifer Fairhall left to join the Ely office of Cheffins. December saw Victoria Mitchell begin maternity leave. We look forward to the safe arrival of an addition to the Mitchell family in February.

At the beginning of January 2007 Sarah Mathews joined the Farms Team. She has

previously worked for the Early Years and Childcare Service in the Council for over 3 years. Sarah will be mostly based in the office dealing with rents and relettings and should also be your first point of contact if you want repairs carried out. Her telephone number is (01223) 717034.

How the new Team will work

John MacMillan will continue to cover the area of the Estate which was formerly Jennifer Fairhall's responsibility. Christopher Burton will continue as before. Sarah Mathews, the new Estates Management Officer, will be your first point of contact for all general enquiries about lettings, rent and repairs. She will be largely office based and will liaise between tenants and contractors.

diary dates

Tenants' meetings 2007

- **20 March 2007** at 10am at Denny Abbey Museum, Waterbeach
- **21 March 2007** at 7.30pm at Oliver Cromwell Hotel, March (centre of March with good car parking)

Richard Self from the English Farming and Food Partnerships will be attending to give a presentation on "Collaborating for Profit".

Time running out to register for an agricultural waste disposal exemption

With five months to go until the 15 May deadline, the Environment Agency (EA) has sent out around 60,000 packs to farmers but has so far received only 13,000 returns from farmers in England and Wales. Regional data shows that the highest proportion of farms registered is in Cumbria (16%) whereas the other areas are lagging behind (eg Cornwall: 4%). The EA estimates that at this rate only 17% of farms will have registered by May 2007. As the EA states: "farms that have not registered exemptions will be considered higher risk than those that have registered," – do it now and you're less likely to get inspected."

There are 24 existing licences and exemptions which cover some of the lower "risk" activities. For example, to carry out any of the following you will need to register:

- Burning naturally occurring plant matter in the open including logs and branches from fallen or chopped down trees.
- Clearing mud dredgings and associated plant matter from watercourses such as ditches and streams and putting along the banks.
- Deposit of plant tissue wastes on land at the farm where they are produced and allow to rot down. eg rotten potatoes.

To obtain a registration pack, call the EA on 0845 6033113 where you can download a registration form from www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/waste. You can download a registration form from www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/waste

Alternatively, for other information you can call DEFRA on 08459 335577 or email wholefarmhelp@defra.gsi.gov.uk.

> Single payment entitlements to transfer

If you have either too few or too many entitlements let us know. It may be that some deals can be made between tenants. We will put tenants who may be in this situation in contact with each other. Please note that we will not act as brokers or valuers.

> Farms to Let 2007

Three farms are currently being advertised nationally. They are:

- 26 ha grassland holding at Earith
- 113 ha arable holding at Parson Drove
- 103 ha arable holding at Farcet.

Full details are available at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/countyfarms or contact Sarah Mathews.

> ...and finally

- Do you have a bridge or culvert which requires repairs. If so, please contact Christopher Burton.
- Have you got a roller shutter door? If so, please contact Sarah Mathews to update our records and arrange servicing.