



Rural Business News

Plumpton College

Issue 11

With many exciting developments in store for Plumpton College we hope you will find the Spring 2008 edition of the Rural Business News informative.

A few of the developments are:

- State of the art training facilities for veterinary staff (page 5)
- Biofuels Centre, for demonstration of farm-scale production of pure plant oil and biodiesel fuels (page 2)
- Green Oak, Robertsbridge, with bespoke horticultural training courses for business (page 9)
- New sources of funding for farmers and foresters, make our short courses even better value.
- Forging working partnerships with outside organisations means an even broader ranges of expertise for Plumpton (page 3)
- Mary Wanless demonstration “**Ride With Your Mind**” on 31st March. Please see the Main College course calendar for details www.plumpton.ac.uk

Plumpton College has centres of learning and rural business management at the Main College, Plumpton, & outcentres at Netherfield, Flimwell, Bexhill & Robertsbridge.

Business Training

See pages 2 & 3

Equine

See page 4

Animal Care

See page 5

Farming

See pages 6, 7 & 12

Butchery & Adding Value

See page 7

Wine Studies

See page 8

Horticulture

See page 9

Work Based Learning

See pages 10 & 11

Sport

Main College

Forestry

Main College & Flimwell

Countryside & Conservation

Main College & Netherfield



**BATCHELLER
THACKER**

NICK IDE OF BATCHELLER THACKER

WILL HOLD A FREE PLANNING SURGERY AT PLUMPTON COLLEGE MAIN CAMPUS ON 27TH MARCH. HE WILL GIVE GUIDANCE ON RURAL PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND RELATED ISSUES. TO BOOK AN APPOINTMENT, PLEASE CONTACT DON CRANFIELD ON 01273 892031.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT TRAINING BASED AT PLUMPTON COLLEGE

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Sustainability in Practice

Plumpton College in association with
Sustainable Technology Ltd
19th February 2008
10am - 4pm
Sussex Rural Business Centre
Plumpton College, Ditchling Road, Plumpton,
East Sussex, BN7 3AE

Are you interested in renewable energy?

If so, this is the *local* event for you:-

- All aspects of renewables in new and existing buildings covered in one event
- Seminars
- Tours of the Biofuels Centre

**The event is FREE but entry is by
prior registration only**

Public Transport Information Line:
0870 608 2608



Plumpton College

To Register Please Contact:
Gayle Barnard: 01273 892 035
Email: gayle.barnard@plumpton.ac.uk



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT TRAINING BASED AT PLUMPTON COLLEGE

PAGE 3

Wheat or Wildlife

can commercial farming and conservation be profitably combined?

Increased wheat prices are causing farmers to pause for thought about whether agri-environment schemes are for them, especially with the current difficulties in getting into HLS.

Complete Land Management (CLM), in association with Plumpton College, are pleased to offer a seminar for arable farmers whose ESA agreement is about to expire.

■ **Matthew Berryman** from CLM will set the background from a global policy and market prices perspective. For those farmers that have spent 10 years in ESA arable reversion, Matthew will consider future prices and reinvestment that may be required.

■ **Alex Macdonald** from Natural England will explain current HLS targeting and priorities, exploring ESA break clauses and appropriate options.

■ **Anthony Weston** from CLM will draw these areas together to look at how some of the HLS options compare to gross margins. He will run through a worked example to see if you can have your cake and eat it!

The seminar will take place at Plumpton on 6th February. Please contact Gayle Barnard at Plumpton College on 01273 892035 or email: gayle.barnard@plumpton.ac.uk



Interested in Climate Change Diversification and Planning?

Land based businesses across the South East are being given the opportunity to attend a series of intensive and interactive workshops with the aim of highlighting new opportunities for growth and profitability.

The workshops are **free** and will be single-topic, half-day events led by professional speakers. The following three seminars will be held at Plumpton College:

Climate Change

- the likely extent and impacts of changes; mitigation solutions; business opportunities

5th February

Business Diversification

- guidance on suitable opportunities and grant possibilities

27th February

Planning Issues

- understanding and complying with current policy guidelines such as the rules governing alternative uses for redundant buildings

7th March

To reserve your place please contact:

Business Link on 0845 600 9 006



EQUINE BASED AT MAIN COLLEGE & BEXHILL

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Develop your Equine Skills CV

Many employers are already looking directly to the British Grooms Association (BGA) before hiring a groom. The BGA has been set up to provide a professional membership association for grooms. Membership of the association provides a source of support, advice and guidance. In addition the association will provide a social networking facility for new grooms. This will allow grooms that have recently started a job in a new area of the country to meet up with other grooms nearby.

BGA membership benefits the employer as well as the employee through the development of the 'Equine Skills CV'. This has been developed by Lantra, the Sector Skills Council and the BGA. It is intended to provide a record of achievement for the skills of a groom and provide:

- a recognised job title to distinguish the level of experience and ability
- show a new employer the level of experience including particular skills
- make hiring groom a more straightforward process
- give recognition to a groom with many years experience in the industry.

BGA membership is £17.50 p.a.
Visit www.britishgrooms.org.uk for more information.



Plumpton College Equine Department offers a range of full-time and part-time courses at the main college and the outcentre in Bexhill. Facilities include: two indoor schools with galleries, stabling for over 40 horses, grazing, a horse walker, show-jump fields and a cross-country course. The stabling consists of a traditional yard plus American barn stabling. Student DIY livery and full livery are available. The college is approved to hold BHS exams up to Stage IV level.

In 2007 we invested in a **simulator horse** which is able to walk, trot and carry out three different speeds of canter.

The facilities and equipment are available for hire at weekends, evenings and over holiday periods. For more information please contact Vicky Driscoll on 01273 892065 or email vicky.driscoll@plumpton.ac.uk

ANIMAL CARE BASED AT PLUMPTON COLLEGE

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ONE DAY TRAINING SPECIFICALLY FOR VETERINARY RECEPTIONISTS

The Veterinary Practice receptionist has a stressful and intense workload. Dealing calmly and efficiently with emergencies and day to day tasks for animal owners and carers is paramount.

COULD YOUR MULTI-TASKING RECEPTION BE STRONGER OR MORE EFFICIENT?

The course will cover:

- strengthen basic reception skills
- the important 'first impression'
- communication: with the customer and the vet
- being assertive
- dealing with difficult situations.

Specific training will cover

- parasite control
- vaccinating
- neutering and spaying
- helpful advice on dispensing regulations.

SEE THE EXTENSIVELY EQUIPPED LABORATORY AT NEW TRAINING FACILITY



There will also be a short tour of the brand new Animal Care Unit, which incorporates the Veterinary Training Centre. This state of the art facility has been designed to demonstrate a fully functioning veterinary practice and includes an extensively equipped teaching laboratory.

**THIS ONE DAY COURSE
IS AT THE SPECIAL PRICE OF
£130.**

**The course on Friday 29th
February will start at 9.00am
and include a working
lunch. To book, please contact
Gayle Barnard on
01273 892035, or
e: gayle.barnard@plumpton.ac.uk
Applications are welcomed
from employers or employees.**



PHOTO COURTESY OF SENLAC VETERINARY CENTRE

THE CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND FARMING BASED AT PLUMPTON COLLEGE AT NETHERFIELD

PAGE 6

ANALYSE YOUR FORAGE FOR BETTER BEEF AND LAMB

Livestock rearing using extensive methods is becoming increasingly favoured by farmers of the south east.

Extensive farming relies on low stocking densities and relatively low levels of inputs, especially fertilizers, sprays, veterinary medicines and feed concentrates. Lower yields per hectare may be compensated for by higher returns for a quality, 'naturally reared' product.

This is encouraging consumers to have confidence not only in the safety and traceability of the meat produced, but also the quality, flavour and the health benefits of eating red meat from cattle and sheep fed almost exclusively on grass and conserved forages.

FEED QUALITY FORAGE FOR BETTER FLAVOUR AND HEALTH

The benefits of producing and feeding quality grass and forage to livestock linked to the increasing costs and concerns about purchased concentrates is occupying my thoughts as I study the analysis of the silage and hay we made last year. It was a difficult year to make quality hay with the wet summer preventing the grass being cut until mid August. The analysis results, kindly done for me by Peter Youngson of Countrywide Feeds, show that the hay is low in energy and protein but high in fibre, which is to be expected, leading to low digestibility, not much better than a good 'belly filler'.

We like to make good quality hay for the ewes and average quality silage for the suckler cows. So this year it is the wrong way round! However, knowing the quality of our hay coupled with the scanning results for the ewes means we can balance the ration accordingly using high energy licks and some cereal based concentrates. This should ensure the ewes lamb in good condition with plenty of colostrum producing healthy, vigorous lambs. *Simon Bishop, Head of Plumpton College at Netherfield.*



One Day Courses in extensive livestock production at the Netherfield Centre

- 7th FEB STARTING A SHEEP FLOCK
- 14th FEB LAMBING
- 28th FEB MANAGING A SHEEP FLOCK
- 3rd APRIL SOIL ANALYSIS & CARE
- 22nd MAY GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT
& WEED CONTROL
- 5th JUNE SELECTION OF FINISHED LAMBS
- 19th JUNE STARTING A BEEF HERD
- 26th JUNE MANAGING A BEEF HERD

Please telephone 01424 775615 or e-mail: info@thenetherfieldcentre.co.uk for more details. Advisory farm visits can also be arranged.

THE CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND FARMING

BASED AT PLUMPTON COLLEGE AT NETHERFIELD

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LEARN TO MAKE SALAMI

Salamis and cured sausages are essentially a raw product, fermented and air dried. Therefore producers rely on a number of methods other than cooking to make cured sausages safe for consumption. As part of the "Get Skilled in Butchery" programme The Centre for Sustainable Food and Farming based at Plumpton College at Netherfield has introduced Salami making to its range of courses.

Experienced salami maker, Justin Davis, delivered a detailed classroom lecture covering essential information on the use of cures, pH levels, and drying conditions to meet health and safety requirements for commercial sales.

"The pace, structure and content of the course were spot on – brilliant. Adds a new product to our existing range" said one participant on the course. Other comments included "Well run course, just the right amount of time and good fun" and "Great class, teacher and information".



The course moved onto production techniques and Justin provided a detailed design for how to convert a fridge into a curing chamber to air dry the sausages. The one day course finished with a practical session making up a salami mix, stuffing casings and tying off the ends with a butterfly knot (a useful tip to preventing the meat from falling out when drying).

BUTCHERY TRAINING FOR 2008



- ◆ **Bacon and Gammon Curing**
- ◆ **Venison Butchery**
- ◆ **Poultry Processing**
- ◆ **Sausage Making**
- ◆ **Food Smoking**
- ◆ **Bacon & Gammon Curing**
- ◆ **Sausage Making**

For more information about butchery, meat processing and a full range of courses for the complete beginner in farming to those wanting to improve or add new skills visit

www.thenetherfieldcentre.co.uk
or telephone: 01424 775615 or email
info@thenetherfieldcentre.co.uk

WINE STUDIES

BASED AT MAIN COLLEGE

PAGE 8

LATE SUMMER AND EARLY AUTUMN SUNSHINE SAVES THE DAY FOR GRAPE HARVEST.

The early spring and a particularly warm and sunny April, allowed us to imagine the 2007 English grape harvest was set for a record early start, 3-4 weeks ahead of a normal vintage.

But the cool early summer combined with the extensive rain in late June and July hit many vines at a critical stage, just as they were flowering and trying to set the tiny young berries. As a result many UK vineyards reported a reduction of over 50% on 2006 levels. Despite the previous appalling weather the Plumpton grape harvest began with the Regner and Ortega varieties in September 24th - two weeks earlier than in 2006! - finishing on October 18th with the final loads of Seyval Blanc. Yields were down on the previous years but the final arrival of sunshine improved grape quality. The Plumpton College Estate vineyards, (4 ha in production) yielded 13.5 tonnes, (compared to 17 tonnes in 2005) additionally some 3.5 tonnes of grapes has been bought in, and in total should make up to 12,000 bottles of wine.



New plantings are planned for 2008 at the Rock Lodge vineyard. Including the noble varieties Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay, along with further acreage for Dornfelder, which makes a fine red wine.

Wine and Viticulture Courses



Three new full-time wine courses are now running at Plumpton College:

- Foundation Degree (FdA) in **Wine Business**
- Foundation Degree (FdSc) in **Wine Production**
- BSc (Hons) **Viticulture & Oenology**

Some part time courses in 2008 include:

- Sparkling wine production
- Planting and trellising vines
- Weed control/sustainable viticulture
- Vineyard pest management
- Summer in the vineyard

For more information please contact Chris Foss, on 01273 890 454



HORTICULTURE

BASED AT MAIN COLLEGE & NETHERFIELD & ROBERTSBRIDGE

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DO YOU RUN A GARDEN CENTRE OR NURSERY?

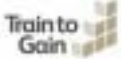


If you run a garden centre or nursery our information day on Friday 29th of February is a must for your diary. During the day we will look at the needs of Garden Centres and Nurseries where staff have a direct impact on business performance in the way they approach and interact with their customers.

The day will encompass:

Positive approach Developing customer relations Resolving complaints Adding value through product knowledge and processing Evaluating customer feedback Workshop sessions to evaluate staff learning How Plumpton can work provide you with specific training.

Course cost is minimal just £10 to include a locally sourced lunch. Employers and their staff are welcome. Please call Mark Syrett – Work Based Learning Manager on 01273 892050 or E-mail wbl@plumpton.ac.uk



**EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT
A PRIORITY**

The Horticultural department at Plumpton College has an excellent track record in engaging with business and delivers an interesting mix of full-time and part-time courses.

The **Train2Gain** Government initiative is supported by Plumpton College, and particularly by the Horticultural department - several students are now part of this training package.

Employer/employee interaction within our short course activity is very popular, training takes place on site or at College. 'Off the peg' and bespoke courses can lead to NPTC and or College certification.



NEW HORTICULTURE FACILITY IN 2008

Green Oak Farm, consisting of about 12 acres of south facing land which includes some woodland and frontage to a stream was previously a successful farm shop growing and selling its own organic produce. Situated near Robertsbridge, it will provide a valuable training aid in the east of the county.

Now the site is being developed to provide practical horticultural and countryside conservation training. There are 6 polytunnels, and raised beds for growing vegetables and flowers will be constructed. A traditional fruit orchard, a hazel wood for coppicing with some standard indigenous trees mixed in, together with a small hop garden and a bee apiary are planned. New ecobuildings will include a lecture room, a teaching kitchen and a warehouse for sorting and packing fruit and vegetables.



WORK BASED LEARNING

BASED AT MAIN COLLEGE & NETHERFIELD

Train to Gain (T2G)

Age 25+



Train to Gain (T2G)

Free training available for **employees** aged over 25 working towards a first **Level 2** qualification this equates to 5 GCSE's/O Levels at grades A - C).

- **free farm visit** to help identify the training needs of their staff.
- **a wage subsidy can be claimed by the employer** once the employees complete and achieve the training.

Training is available through Plumpton College for those working in:

- agriculture
- customer service
- Horticulture - Sports Turf or Hard Landscape
- other **land based** sectors including food and drink manufacturing /processing.

Contact details:

the Work Based Learning office on **01273 892050** for more information:
○ to arrange a farm visit for an employer
○ or an interview for an apprentice.

This programme can commence at anytime.



Apprenticeship Programme

Age 16-24



Structured training over 12 – 24 months. Working towards a nationally recognised qualification. Help with vital skills such as:

- literacy
- numeracy
- take any additional qualifications relevant to the job placement.

Normally one day a week at college, but can be flexible.

Contact details:

Work Based Learning office at the main college on **01273 892050** for more information:

- to arrange a farm visit for an employer
- or an interview for an apprentice.



Plumpton College is continuing to extend and expand its successful **apprenticeship programme**. This is based on the day release system of '**earn as you learn**'.

Work areas covered:

- **Agriculture**
- **Customer Service**
- **Floristry**
- **Horse Care**
- **Horticulture -Sports Turf or Hard Landscape**
- **Retail**
- **Veterinary Nursing**

Available to: School leavers from the age of 16 up to 24 year olds.

Start Time: Anytime through the year.

Wages: Apprentices are paid a minimum of £80 per week.

Please contact us if you wish to know more about taking on an apprentice or to find out more about the extensive range of courses.

AGRICULTURE AT PLUMPTON COLLEGE

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Q: How is Plumpton on top with support and up to the minute information for the whole farming industry?

A: By developing strong links with our industry and providing a facility to involve farmers and students in the process of farm based trials and subsequent results.

PIG FEED TRIAL KEEPS PLUMPTON AHEAD OF THE GAME

The pig feed trial being carried out in conjunction with “Kiotechagil”.

This particular trial uses a brand new (yet to be launched) natural feed additive which is designed to improve overall productivity and welfare of the pig. This includes monitoring factors such as food conversion ratio, growth rates as well as improving general pig health. This idea fits well with the ethos of the college as the 130 sow breeding herd is producing finished pigs (65-75kg) for the local butchery trade.



Dan Leggett, the college Pig unit manager explained “we are always looking for ways to improve performance of the unit without using medication. We have over 10,000 visitors each year and we want to show them what farmers are doing to support the health and welfare of the pigs whilst at the same time improving their performance. It’s a really positive message and a good one for our industry”.

The students develop their husbandry skills in monitoring, observing and weighing the pigs, and the data collected can be used to help with report writing skills. As the project is for ‘industry’ provides a “real life” level of importance and credibility that helps to motivate students to do the job well.

How to Contact Plumpton College

Main College

Plumpton College, Ditching Road, Plumpton, BN7 3AE
Telephone 01273 892035. Email. gayle.barnard@plumpton.ac.uk

Sussex Rural Business Centre, Plumpton College

Head of Business Training - Don Cranfield. Telephone 01273 892031.
Email. don.cranfield@plumpton.ac.uk - www.plumpton.ac.uk

The Centre for Sustainable Food and Farming, Netherfield

Netherfield Place Farm, Netherfield, Battle, TN33 9PY
Head of Centre - Simon Bishop. Telephone 01424 775615.

Emails. simon@thenetherfieldcentre.co.uk. www.thenetherfieldcentre.co.uk
General enquiries – info@thenetherfieldcentre.co.uk