



Plumpton College at Netherfield Centre for Sustainable Food & Farming



Spring 2006

Issue 8

MORE COMPUTER COURSES FOR RURAL BUSINESSES

- April 25th The Basics
- May 2nd An introduction to the Internet including on-line form filling
- May 16th Spreadsheets for Accounting
- May 30th Outlook & Email
- June 13th Working with digital pictures



For times, cost, more information and to book in please either visit www.thenetherfieldcentre.co.uk or telephone 01424 775615

WHOLE FARM APPROACH CLINICS

Save time and paperwork with Whole Farm Approach clinics.

The Netherfield Centre is planning to hold a series of clinics to assist farmers to learn about the on-line Whole Farm Approach. This is a DEFRA initiative that encourages farmers to complete their SFP claims etc on-line. Computers and expert assistance provided. Contact The Netherfield Centre for details.

BREAKFAST ON THE HOOF?

Tourism South East together with Plumpton College, are offering land owners, farmers, accommodation and equestrian businesses the opportunity to attend an **Equestrian Network Breakfast** on the 20th of April at Plumpton College in East Sussex.

This free breakfast event from 8.00am - 10.30am will provide a forum where the businesses can learn how they might benefit from joint working and allow related and neighbouring businesses to get together.

Tourism South East will launch guidance notes '*Benefiting from equestrian tourism opportunities*'. Toll Rides Offroad Trust (TROT) will be on hand to explain to land managers how toll rides on their land can be an economic benefit with few management issues.

To book, please email rsimpson@tourismse.com or telephone Rachel Simpson on 01892 506860.

REDUCE ENERGY & WATER COSTS

Free Workshop - Efficiency to Self Sufficiency. Practical ways of saving money from reducing energy, water and waste through to renewable energy generation and rainwater collection. Includes working lunch, farm walk and relevant case studies. Ivyland Farm, Netherfield. Thursday 11th May. 11.00am - 3.00 pm. Booking essential, please telephone 01273 245654 or email help@ecoys.org.uk

ORGANIC POTATO GROWING

Learn Organic Potato Production, at Luddesdown Organic Farms, Luddesdown, Cobham, Kent Thursday 1st June. Demand for potatoes has increased by 11% over the past year. Anyone wishing to learn more about growing potatoes organically and maximising quality and sales will be interested in this course. Contact The Organic Pathfinder Programme at the Soil Association on 0117 314 5186.

Are you a small landowner in the High Weald?



Would you like to receive free-landscape and conservation advice for your holding?

High Weald FWAG has funding to carry out free-farm visits to farmers and landowners below 50 acres in the Leader+ catchment area. For more information contact Becci Harvey telephone 01580 879399 or email highweald@fwag.org.uk

WOOLCRAFT OPEN DAY



Saturday 22nd April 10am - 4pm at Beech Hill Farm, Rushlake Green. Hand clipping, experience peg-loom, spinning, dyeing with natural dyes and weaving.

Contact Julia Desch on 01435 830203 or email julia@desch.go-plus.net

For a spinning and processing service visit www.naturalfibrecompany.co.uk.

Do you need the use of a Landrover and trailer to transport your livestock?

The Netherfield Centre and High Weald AONB Unit are putting together a bid to provide this service in the local community. Please express your interest by telephone or email.

Making Contact: The Netherfield Centre Netherfield Place Farm, Battle. TN33 9PY Telephone: 01424 775615
Topsy Jewell topsy@thenetherfieldcentre.co.uk or Simon Bishop simon@thenetherfieldcentre.co.uk



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DEMANDS AT FARMGATE LEAD TO VIABLE DIVERSIFICATION

Redlays Farm is situated between the villages of Westfield and Sedlescombe in East Sussex. It is a partnership dairy enterprise owned by Robert Douglas and Alistair and Lesley Byford-Bates. The 82 acre holding, which has been a dairy farm for over 20 years, currently has 120 head of cattle, including beef crosses.



DIRECT MARKETING MILK

The pedigree milking herd is made up of 40 Ayrshires; a beautiful native white and red/brown breed that originated in Scotland in the late 18th century and 10 Guernsey cows; a Channel Island breed that gives a rich golden coloured milk high in butter fat. Over the past five years the business has been building up its direct sales. Two thirds of the milk is now sold through local market outlets and a third goes to Milk Link. Cost of production is currently about 22p/litre and while Milk Link pay 7p below this cost, wholesaling remains a necessary

safety net as Alistair and Lesley build the direct marketing side of the business. Yoghurt, cream, crème fraîche, soft cheese, fudge, and cream-based puddings are amongst the successful value added products the farm has developed.



Direct marketing outlets include farm gate sales, four weekly farmers markets (including a Sunday London market) and other occasional markets. Products are also sold to farm shops if the shop can collect. The farm is well known to school children, who sometimes pop in to buy yoghurts for a snack on their way home from school.

SAVE THE BULL CALVES

The cows are out at grass all summer, and fed silage, crimped maize, and brewer's grains in the winter. About 18 months ago, the business decided to keep all their bull calves to rear for beef. The beef animals are fed entirely on forage: grass and silage made on the farm. The meat is processed locally and sold direct.

"Our longer term aim" says Alistair "is to build up the dairy herd to 55 or 60 cows and to build a cold store

and cutting room to process a greater range of meat products as well as the beef from the cross-bred cattle".

Free-range pigs would suit the farming system well and Alistair is planning to network with neighbouring farms to buy in finished lamb. Alistair has attended the Lamb and Pork Butchery, Food Smoking, Sausage Making and Bacon Curing courses run by the Netherfield Centre, as well as obtaining Basic and Intermediate

NETHERFIELD CENTRE GIVES CONFIDENCE & SKILLS



"The experience we have had with the beef and the Netherfield Centre courses have given me the confidence and skills to go ahead with our plans to diversify our product range", says Alistair. For more information about

Go to
www.thenetherfieldcentre.co.uk
for training dates course
information & topical
issues.

FOR SALE AND WANTED

Please visit www.thenetherfieldcentre.co.uk for up to date information.

This is a free service for local farmers, growers and related rural businesses.

Entries are free and can be illustrated.

Please email info@thenetherfieldcentre.co.uk or telephone 01424 775 615

