



Autumn Training Courses 2006

Please remember to book in early for these autumn courses. Places are always limited. Telephone 01424 775615 or visit our web site www.thenetherfieldcentre.co.uk for further details.

WHOLE FARM APPROACH ONE TO ONE CLINIC
REARING TABLE BIRDS ½ DAY COURSE
GAME MEAT HANDLING
STARTING A SHEEP FLOCK
BASIC FOOD HYGIENE
FWAG - ELS 1½ HOUR ONE TO ONE CLINIC
ORGANIC VEGETABLE GROWERS
NETWORK MEETING
MANAGING A SHEEP FLOCK
FARMLAND BIRDS-FREE EVENT
ON FARM SELECTION OF FINISHED LIVESTOCK
DIRECT MEAT MARKETING
FORAGE ANALYSIS

Phone to arrange a date
5th October
11th October
12th October
31st October
10th and 29th October

6th November
9th November
14th November
16th November
23rd November
30th November

Newsletter sponsored in part by
Pipers Meats, see page 3.

Are you missing out on £££?

The Entry Level Agri-Environment Scheme (ELS) aims to secure widespread environmental benefits. It can also be an important source of income for farm businesses. The Netherfield Centre is joining up with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) to offer one-to-one clinics to help farmers to fill in their application forms, write their Farm Environmental Record, and colour in their maps for ELS, OELS (Organic Entry Level Scheme) and HLS (Higher Level Scheme).

“With the help of FWAG we identified that Netherfield Place Farm could benefit from several thousand pounds more in grant aid, than I had anticipated” said Simon Bishop, farm manager and training co-ordinator at the Netherfield Centre. See back page article for more details.

A 1½ hour, one-to-one clinic at the Netherfield Centre costs £50.
Telephone: 01424 775615 to book.

Autumn Butchery Courses*

ON FARM POULTRY PROCESSING
BEEF BUTCHERY DEMONSTRATION
PORK BUTCHERY
SAUSAGE MAKING
LAMB BUTCHERY
BACON AND GAMMON CURING

3rd October
13th November
20th/21st November
22nd November
27th/28th November
6th December

*Further courses available according to demand.

FREE Farmland Bird Event.



The Weald is a stronghold for many important farmland birds including skylark, yellow hammer, linnet and song thrush. Join RSPB regional Farm Adviser, Bruce Fowkes, for a walk and talk on the 14th November at the Netherfield Centre, 10am to 3pm.

Find out how to make the most of your farming system to provide safe nesting habitats and an abundant supply of summer and winter food and how these management features can be part of an Entry Level Scheme.



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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FARM DIVERSIFICATION - A CASE STUDY

Andrew Hoad is the fifth generation to farm at Parsonage Farm, Salehurst, near Robertsbridge. This beautiful 400 acre farm on the edge of the East Sussex High Weald was traditionally a hop farm. Andrew's family also reared dairy bred beef, purchasing the calves from a neighbour's farm.



BSE followed by Foot and Mouth severely effected the business in the 1990s. As one neighbouring dairy farm after another was hit by the milk prices and went out of business, local sources of calves disappeared. On top of this, the decline in the market for British hops has reduced hop production at Parsonage Farm to around 15 acres.

These factors were a major turning point for Andrew and his wife Lynn. "The farm always kept a few Sussex cattle, a sheep and pig or two to supply the family with meat" said Andrew. "When friends asked for some beef, we started producing a few freezer packs". Andrew experimented with small numbers of different beef breeds and found, with the exception of the Sussex, that they were either too flighty or that they lost condition during the winter. "The Sussex are not only docile but good converters of food, very hardy and seem to live off fresh air" he said. With direct meat sales in mind, Andrew established a single suckler herd of 80 Sussex cattle, a flock of 200 ewes and a herd of 4 breeding sows including Berkshires and native cross breeds.

arranged for Andrew, Lynn and their two sons to workshadow the butcher cutting and packaging their beef animals. Andrew and Lynn also obtained their Basic Food Hygiene Certificates through the Netherfield Centre.



The success of the new suckler beef, the sheep and pig enterprises, the value added products and direct sales has led Andrew and Lynn to convert a second barn into the larger farm shop that will open in September. This new venture has secured a job for their daughter who has returned to run the shop and part time work for the butcher, while their two sons remain working on the farm. The local rural community is also benefiting. Residents and visitors can buy fresh, quality, farm produced food, that has not traveled outside Sussex.

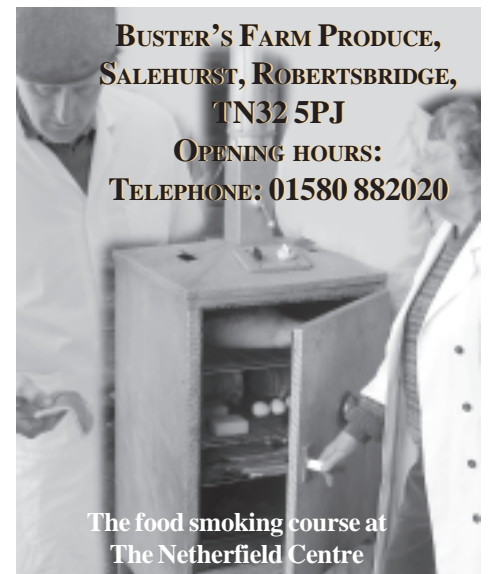


In 2005, Andrew converted the dairy to accommodate a cutting room, cold store and a small shop. The farm opened for sales of "Buster's Farm Produce" two days a week. Buster is the name that Andrew's father was known by. His tall figure walking across the fields was a familiar sight to many local residents and is silhouetted on the farm shop logo. "Once we started selling freezer packs our customers kept asking us when we were opening the shop. We hadn't really planned to have a shop. We were bounced into it by our customers" says Andrew.

Most of the beef, lamb and pork now reared on the farm goes through the shop and a butcher is employed to cut and prepare the meat. Andrew has also linked up with the owner of the village pub – the Salehurst Halt – who uses Buster's Farm Produce in his restaurant. Andrew is enthusiastic for real food: Traditional pork pies, sausage rolls, steak and ale pies, and lamb and apricot sausages are some of the new farm products he has developed. And curious to learn more, Andrew has attended the Netherfield Centre Food Smoking Course.

The total area of land farmed is 600 acres, 200 acres of which are arable. "We grow lupins for protein and mix our own rations" says Andrew "making the farm virtually self sufficient in fodder".

In October 2003, Andrew visited the Netherfield Centre to discuss his idea of building a butchery room at Parsonage Farm and to find out where he could hire local cutting facilities. The Netherfield Centre facilitated the use of Homestead Farm cutting room (see box) and



The food smoking course at The Netherfield Centre

Homestead Farm at Nethfield is part of the Wealden Farmers Network, a group of four farms that share a cutting room and market all their meat direct. The Netherfield Centre is linked to the Wealden Farmers Network, using the cutting facilities for butchery skills training and to demonstrate how farm businesses can set up on-farm cutting rooms. Homestead Farm cutting room is available for hire and is Soil Association registered. Call Jo Hughes 01424 838252. For Butchery Skills training or information on Direct Meat Marketing call The Netherfield Centre on 01424 775615

PIPERS MEATS CUTTING SERVICE

Pipers Meat of Owley - M.A. Piper & Son Farms is a family run business which has been farming in the Tenterden area in Kent for some 50 years. Four years ago we became increasingly concerned that we were too reliant on EU subsidies and that the power of the supermarket was creating a 'fast-food' type commodity with little flavour and goodness compared to the traditionally hung meat (21 days in the case of beef) enjoyed in yesteryears. We therefore decided to set up our own butchery business.

EU LICENSED

We soon found due to increasing demand that we were outgrowing our existing premises. We therefore decided to invest in a new 'state of the art' premises capable of satisfying the strictest regulations audited by the Food Standards Agency and Meat Hygiene Service. Our new facilities enable us to offer a fully EU licensed hanging, cutting, packaging and labelling service to local farmers.



Arrange a Visit

We are very proud of our new premises and would be happy to organise a visit to the farm and cutting plant. Please contact our dedicated Sales/Plant Manager Dave Masters on 01797 270399 ext. 207 or Mobile 07775793226.

Our industry standard UCC EAN 128 barcoding system ensures full traceability.

We supply meat to manufacturers, schools, farm shops, butchers, local restaurants/pubs/hotels. We also have a retail shop on the premises supplying local customers. At times we source animals from other like-minded local farmers (producing to similar standards as ourselves) to ensure that our customers can rely on quality and continuity of supply.

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

Pipers Meats is fully licensed with the Soil Association to cut and label organic meat (beef, lamb, pork, burgers, and sausages).

After the Harvest

The 2006 Organic Crops Demonstration Project Post Harvest Reviews will be taking place at a number of locations including **The Netherfield Centre on 25th October**. Harvested crops are tested for 'end market' quality and potential and farmers can participate in post harvest review meetings.

For further information or to book please call Lynn or Stephen Briggs on 07800 904203 or 07855 341 309



Organic/In Conversion Straw in Demand

Abacus Organic Services Ltd. are contracting farmers to supply organic and in-conversion wheat & triticale straw for organic mushroom compost, with payments of £65.00 / tonne for organic straw and £55.00 / tonne for in conversion straw, delivered to Peterborough under an agreed delivery programme with Abacus, throughout 06/07. Spent mushroom compost is available for return to farm if required. For more details on straw / delivery specifications, payment terms etc. please contact Stephen or Lynn Briggs on Tel/fax 01780 721019 or mob 07855 341309 / 07800 534768, email: stephen.briggs@abacusorganic.co.uk

Wool Producers Update By Julia Desch

Dyeing with Indigo Day using fleeces and woolfibre. Register your interest with Julia Desch on 01435 8230203 or email julia@desch.go-plus.net

Curlew Weavers for scouring, carding, spinning and weaving. Contact Roger Poulson, Troedyraur Old Rectory, Rhydlewish, Llandysul, Ceredigion, SA44 5RL Tel/Fax 01239 851 357.

Woolcount/The Goat Company will be offering small scale fleece to finished article production shortly. Contact Robert Southall and Robi Mandley, telephone 01873 860590

Payments for Rare Breeds

The 'native breeds at risk grazing supplement' is a new option for the Higher Level Scheme (HLS) with payments up to £70/ha. It can be used on sites where the use of native breeds will lead to enhanced management of particular habitats. Native breeds must be from a proven pedigree line and make up the majority of the grazing unit being used to graze a site. Farmers will also need to show how they are contributing to protecting native breeds at risk. Contact: Defra Rural Development Service, telephone 0118 9581222 enquiries.southeast@defra.gov.uk

WEALDEN FARMERS NETWORK UPDATE

By Simon Bishop

I was surprised to learn that by registering non CSS land, including woodland and ponds for the OELS Scheme, the farm would benefit from several thousands of pounds of grant aid in 2006/2007. The farm is currently a mix of land in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS), land not in CSS, and all land registered as organic.

The original plan was to enter the entire farm, including the woodland into the Organic Entry Level Scheme (OELS) once the CSS ended in October 2007.

Knowing that the OELS is worth £60 per hectare for all eligible land, including woodlands and ponds, I decided to ask the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) about this decision. Their view was that I should apply for the OELS now, otherwise I was not maximising the grant opportunities.

Becci Harvey and Steve Podd from my local FWAG office at Flimwell advised me what information I should be gathering and agreed to come and help me with filling in the application forms and colouring the maps.

The first stage was simple; contact my Rural Development Service office in Reading (08456 024092) and ask for an application pack.

On FWAG's first visit we determined that neither the woodland or the ponds were included on the maps as being registered as organic. I contacted the Soil Association who advised me to send in a list of land parcel numbers with areas and a map showing their location within the farm. This I did and am waiting their reply.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL WILL REAP REWARDS

FWAG explained how to complete the Farm Environmental Record (FER) which is a record of features on the farm – ponds, streams, infield trees, mature boundary trees, woodland, etc. The FER has to be completed before we could complete the remainder of the forms. Steve then helped me complete the Options Map. The various options help gather points per hectare (having started with 3 points/ha for doing the FER).

The target is to gain 60 points/ha over the whole farm – I already had 30 points/ha for being registered as organic.

Steve pointed out the obvious options to go for on a grass Wealden farm: Either OK2 (permanent grassland with low inputs) worth 115 points per ha or OK3 (permanent grassland with very low inputs) worth 180 points per ha.

We decided that I would put some of the fields into OK2 which would mean very little change to our management system. I then had to colour all the maps in according to the key provided, complete the points column in the application forms and send it all off in the envelope provided. My application took about 4 hours to complete with the help from FWAG being invaluable. In order not to miss any income FWAG has advised I start my application well in advance to put into OELS the land that is coming out of CSS in October 2007.



Book Your One to One Clinic With FWAG

Following our experience we are hosting a small number of one to one (O)ELS and HLS clinics with Becci Harvey and/or Steve Podd. Please contact the Netherfield Centre and ask for details

For Sale & Wanted

For Sale:

Rare breed Berkshire weaners: 16 from two litters July 2006, wormed and electric fence trained. £35 each available now. M Puckett: 01892 861023

Organic pedigree Sussex in calf heifers: Ready now. Christopher Strangeways 01797 280282

32 Organic Sussex steers: 14 - 15 months. Outwintered on the Downs. Jill Mangell 01903 871 334

Rams: 5 Lleyn Shearling Rams not registered. £100.00 each. Dave Funnell 07734 057947

Apple Trees: Organically registered, old & new disease free varieties. Maidens & two year old bush trees. (SA T14S) £10- £15.00. Patrick Treherne. 01435 873 608 Collect Mayfield area.

5 Shearling Ewes: Pure Romneys (By Registered Romney Ram). M Holgate 01424 893002

Wanted:

Sussex Store Cattle to finish: Jane Howard 01580 200386

20 – 30 Wiltshire Horn: or similar non-shearing, organic or non-organic tegs Spring 2007. To buy or run on up to tugging. Malcolm Illes 01233 756 300

Organic Straw, Hay, Silage: any type of bale considered. Jill Mangell 01903 871 334.

50 Acres to rent for growing organic apple trees. Patrick Treherne. 01435 873 608

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS FREE SERVICE EMAIL OR TELEPHONE YOUR FOR SALE, WANTED, SITUATIONS VACANT OR WORK WANTED

