

It was nice to see so many of you at the Royal Cornwall Show recently, the weather was excellent this year and it looked to be well attended. Congratulations to all of you who entered the show with cattle, sheep and pigs. We had a visit by George Eustice MP to our stand so I took the opportunity to discuss the milk price and TB, although I suspect he's heard it all before. We also had an ex dairy farmer from New Zealand visit our stand, he explained that the price for their farmers had dropped from 8.5 NZ dollars to 4.5 NZ dollars. Also a French dairy chemicals salesman who said similar issues were affecting French farmers. I appreciate it is of little comfort but it does demonstrate that the milk price slump is worldwide.

Government grants are bit like buses - we have just about seen the back of the Basic Payment Scheme for 2015 and the Countryside Productivity Grant will close at the end of June. Then along comes the **Countryside Stewardship Scheme** followed in September by the start of LEADER or LAG funding with more bespoke business support, administered locally. Last time LAG funding was restricted to three areas of Cornwall this time it will cover the whole of the county in four regions (except the Isles of Scilly).

The **Countryside Stewardship Scheme** is open for applications from 01 July to 30th of September 2015.

It will be split into 3 tiers:

1. The upper level is similar to the previous HLS scheme and will be applied for by invitation only.
2. A new mid-tier scheme has been added and will be available to farmers who's ELS/OELS and UELS schemes have expired. Farmers with schemes that expire in 2015 should be receiving a letter explaining the new scheme is open for business. Farmers with ELS type schemes that expire after 2015 will continue with those schemes until they all expire in 2018/19.
3. Tier three consists of a lower 'capital grant fencing scheme' but won't be available until February 2016.

On all levels the scheme is targeted at the protection of water, biodiversity and historic environment, have a look at the character statements for advice on what areas they are looking to support. However it must be remembered that last time under HLS/ELS/OELS/UELS schemes 70% of England's agricultural land area was under one or other of those schemes, this time only 35% of England's agricultural land area is likely to be eligible and there is no guarantee of acceptance; numbers being discussed at present are a 50/50 chance of getting onto the scheme. The application will be by paper and successful applicants will start their schemes in January 2016. Instead of a flat rate per hectare under the old scheme, payments will be by the metre for boundaries or by the hectare. To look at the various options see

[www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants](http://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants).

## Hedge Cutting Rules

No hedge cutting can take place between 1<sup>st</sup> of March and the 31<sup>st</sup> of August in any year, however there are some exceptions to this, for example, planting of grass seeds or Oilseed rape does allow for hedgerows adjacent to those fields to be cut. A written derogation will need to be applied for to the RPA, the hedge can then only be cut on receipt of written confirmation from the RPA. For other exemptions see *Natural England Website Cross Compliance GAEC 7a*.

## RPA Extends PIF Deadline

**Permanent** **Ineligible Features** (PIFs) - the deadline for informing RPA of PIFs has been extended to September as part of your BPS application. A PIF is a pond, telephone mast, ground based solar panel, shed, scrub etc. These should be identified with maps and accompany an RLE1 form to the RPA - sorry for all the acronyms!

# Spreader



Our new computer software for recording your **NVZ applications** is now ready for sale. It is easy to use and can help you keep a record of your applications. You will receive a USB stick and a user guide that will help you load and use the software. The price is only £45. If you would like to try before you buy then please give us a call and we can arrange a time for you to come into the office and have a look at the programme. Some of you may have seen the article in the Farmer's Weekly of the 05 June with details of Welsh farmer who was docked 5% of the single farm payment for failing to comply with NVZ rules.

## EU've got to be Joking!

Pythagorean theorem: 24 words  
The Lord's Prayer: 66 words  
Archimedes' Principle: 67 words  
The Ten Commandments: 179 words  
The Gettysburg Address: 286 words  
The Declaration of Independence: 1,300 words  
The EU regulations on the sale of cabbage: 26,911 words

## Don't get caught out by Tractor Driving

After concern by other drivers about the length of queues behind tractors and the safety and size of others, Devon and Cornwall Traffic Police are taking a keen and renewed interest in tractors on the highway. As such they have done some revision on the traffic law relating to agricultural vehicles on the road. Their approach so far is part of the three "E" s: **Education, Enforcement, Engineering**. We are currently at Phase 1 – Education.

Just to clarify a few of the issues for you:

1. **Queues:** Drivers of Tractors on the roads must give way to a queue that is forming behind them **at the earliest opportunity**, that being a safe pulling in place. A 'queue' constitutes **one car** or more. If the driver is seen to drive past an appropriate pull in place with car(s) behind them then potentially police will **add points to the driver's license and fine the driver, not the owner of the vehicle** if that's different. The farmer might pay the fine for the driver but the points apply to the driver alone. Not pulling in under the Road Traffic Act 1988 is an offence 3ZA(4) and can earn from 3-9 points on your license and a £5,000 fine. Should the driver of the tractor be from another country they should have a valid EU driving licence.
2. **Speed limit:** a tractor with an agricultural trailer on the back has a top speed **25mph** irrespective of the gearbox rating. As does a tractor with a mounted or trailed implement of 2.55m -3m, further speed limits are applied for wider vehicles. Trailers designed for commercial use may have higher speeds than agricultural trailers.
3. **Weight limits:** the maximum combined gross weight of trailer and tractor is 24,390kg.
4. **Number Plates:** a farmer driving an insured farm tractor will have a registered number plate for that business, that plate or the insured plate for the farm business must be on the trailer. However if a contractor or another farmer's tractor is pulling an unrelated trailer with a different registration plate then a traffic offence has been made. If the business registered plate has been sold because it related to a tractor which has now gone then the registration plate is now out of date – same applies as the above contractor example.

September Deadline for all farmers who still spray under **Grandfather Rights** (born before 1964) Contact Nicky Carlyon on 07774951739 for advice on getting trained.

We are currently updating our mailing list and would like to know if you would rather receive our newsletter via email to save on printing and postage costs. Or alternatively if you would rather not receive it at all anymore perhaps you could let us know either by calling 01736 367589 or emailing [helena@farmcornwall.co.uk](mailto:helena@farmcornwall.co.uk). Thank you.



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