

In the year 2000 there were 1000 dairy farmers in Cornwall. Today there are about 500, yet the number of dairy cows is similar at about 76000 cows. The average herd size is 135 cows. In 2015 UK farmers borrowed an extra £17.8billion. This may well be secure within the owner occupier sector but not so good within the tenanted sector. Recently I have been looking into some dairy farms that are doing well to find out what makes them different from those who are not succeeding (which is the majority). The main differences seem to be;

- Knowing the cost of everything and looking to make small savings which cumulatively can add up
- A shift away from the Holstein to a cow that is more traditional or hybrid. Leading to a cow that can make best use of grass, higher value calf and cull cow, reduced vet bills, reduced replacement rate.
- Best use of the milk contract - butter fat and protein values, low mastitis and bactoscan levels.
- Low levels of machinery costs - particularly fuel, HP, repairs, no mixer wagons, even considering self-feed silage as was done in the 1970s.
- Good animal welfare, perhaps surprisingly staffing levels are above what I see elsewhere.
- Attention to rearing calves where they are encouraged to grow off grass, so that when it's an adult it will do the same. Feeding calves to 8-10 weeks on milk to achieve a weight of 100kg before weaning. Home grown or purchased cereals to form the ration for cows using out of parlour feeders or to youngstock.
- Importance of cow welfare important - trough space or water drinkers are not limited or restricted by access, number or bullying.

If you would like to discuss how your farm profitability might be improved please give us a call.

RPA – BPS Update

There are still a significant number of farmers that have not received their full basic payments for 2015. Where top-up payments have been made then revised claim statements should be issued within 10 working days of the payment being made.

If you are one of those affected, if you have submitted a 2015 Claim Statement query but not received an acknowledgement or if you would like them to look at your claim again you need to contact the RPA;

By post – Rural Payment Agency
P O Box 352, Worksop, S80 9GF

Email – ruralpayments@defra.gsi.gov.uk

NB: Use 'BPS 2015 payment' as the heading in the email subject line and include your SBI and business name. You need to explain why you don't agree with the RPA findings and any adjustments that have been made.

EU Milk reduction Scheme

The EU has proposed a reduction scheme to pay farmers 12p/litre to reduce production from the previous year. The scheme will be clarified from 25th of August 2016 and will be delivered in four tranches over the next twelve months. A sum of £125million is available across the EU.

Applications will need to be submitted by the 19th of September. In the first tranche, as I understand it, the farmer proposes to reduce production over a set period and will receive 12p/litre for every litre removed. Evidence of previous production will need to be given as copies of current and previous milk statements and also proposals for reductions. If you are interested we will endeavour to keep up with the Scheme as it develops and look out for information in the farming media.

MOVING AGAIN! Our new Address as from 1/9/16 will be;

FarmCornwall CIC
Admiralty Boat House
Newlyn
Cornwall
TR18 5HW

Tel: 01736 367589 / 07775 667825

Web: www.farmcornwall.co.uk

Email: edward@farmcornwall.co.uk

debbie@farmcornwall.co.uk

For those of you don't know Newlyn, it's the upstairs of the old Post Office opposite the Co-op or the granite building just after the war memorial and the green shed on the left hand side as you drive in.



THE PRINCE'S
COUNTRYSIDE
FUND



Farm Cornwall - Registered in England

Charity No. 1162845

Community Interest Company No:

7716692

Prices

Product	Type	Cost
Fertiliser	AN 34%	£167 -172
Fertiliser	25:5:5	£195-203
Fuel	Red Diesel	47.32ppl
Feed	Hipro Soya	£371-373
Feed	Rapemeal	£192-194
Feed	Maize Gluten	£167-169
Straw	Big Square bale - barley	£40
Straw	Big Square bale – wheat	£49

Countryside Stewardship Update

The closing date for applying for an application pack was the end of August and the closing date for applications to be handed in is September 30th. We have been advised that payments to existing scheme holders will continue to be honoured. There has been no definitive confirmation of whether new CSS agreements will be offered from 1st January 2017.

Penwith Landscape Partnership Project

This is a partnership including Cornwall Wildlife Trust, CASPN, PAROW, National Trust, Farm Cornwall, Cornwall Council, Bolitho and St Aubyn Estates. Two farmers are also on the Board - Mr Jeff Thomas from Bollowal farm, St Just and Mr Hugh Eddy of Bone farm, Heamoor.

There are a number of project themes in the £2.7million Heritage Lottery funded Project. If successful the funding will start in 2018 and run for 5 years. All projects need to be written up and submitted by September 2017. The Co-ordinator is Pattie Richmond tel: 07814139223 or 01736 811247

The three main farmer based projects are:-
1. **Use of redundant buildings** - Assistance with design, planning procedures, wild life surveys, business plans – building use could be diversification or dwellings for family members.

2. **Monitor farms** - these are farms where funded research could take place locally. For example research into cover crops to stabilise soils prior to cropping with daffodils; growing of protein crops such as sainfoin (legume); grazing systems and grass utilisation; red water fever strategies. Partners in these projects will Duchy College and ADHB.

3. **Moorland management** - including controlled burning assistance, scrub cutting and clearing by hand. Recording memories of historical management of rough ground and surveying of rough ground

If you wish to be involved with one or more of the above projects please contact Pattie or myself. In terms of the monitor farms I would like to see an arable/horticulture group and a livestock beef/dairy group to initially formulate the potential research projects.

The Prince's Farm Resilience Programme

A project has been launched by the Prince's Countryside Fund to assist beef and dairy farmers by providing support through access to a consultant, bench marking, group discussion and meetings and speakers. The model is being trialled across the country in 15 centres and the Cornish centre will be based around Launceston. The Project was launched at Highgrove in Gloucestershire by HRH. Two dairy farmers and their wives, whom we have worked with went along with myself and about 70 others to the launch and met with HRH. We all had the opportunity to speak although he was more interested to know about how the current milk price was affecting those farmers from them personally, plus issues surrounding the RPA's failure to pay the BPS on time and the effect of the new Dairy Crest milk supply contract. He knows a lot more than you might think – a good ally.

www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk

Farm Theft Report

I have been contacted by a local farmer who had a visitor asking for red diesel. Obviously the farmer didn't hand over any diesel but once the gentleman had left he found some items were missing. He was concerned enough to mention it to me and wished the message to be passed on to others. While farmers are out harvesting or making silage & hay the farm is often left empty and potentially easy for people to help themselves. Please be aware and pass on the warning to others. If you have experienced a similar situation please let us know.

Meeting for those involved beyond the farm gate

3rd October at Royal Cornwall Showground 2.00pm

A meeting with the Farming Help Charities - RABI, FCN, Addington Fund and Farm Cornwall where all those who visit farmers, such as sales reps, mechanics, banks, vets, land agents, advisers, farm assurance reps and health professionals can discuss issues affecting farmers and their families such as stress, debt, depression and suicide. With advice on where farmers can get help if they need it. For details and to book a place please contact Debbie on 07525 411774 or email debbie@farmcornwall.co.uk