



# NCFI

National Care Farming Initiative

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2010

## HRH The Prince of Wales acknowledges work of UK's care farmers

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales recently welcomed more than 100 care farmers and their supporters to Highgrove for a lunch reception marking the National Care Farming Initiative's five-year anniversary.

The Prince's reception was attended by representatives from the NCFI and its partners: The Arthur Rank Centre, The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, The University of Essex and Harper Adams University College; care farmers from across the UK and others representing the statutory, commercial and charitable sectors.

The reception was a wonderful opportunity for all the hard work that care farmers do around the country to be recognised and appreciated. Acknowledgement by HRH the Prince of Wales of the inspiring work that is undertaken on care farms and his heartfelt speech to those present was a great boost for the care farmers, as was the opportunity to meet others from around the UK involved in similar work.

Looking around at so many care farmers on the day, it hardly seems possible that it's been only five years since we held the first national care farming conference when NCFI was born. So much has happened since then!

**W**ELCOME to the summer 2010 edition of the National Care Farming Initiative newsletter. A lot has happened so far this year, not least a new Government and many new MPs for us to start lobbying to raise awareness of care farming.

The NCFI was welcomed by HRH The Prince of Wales to a reception for care farmers at Highgrove (read more below) and we also organised a study tour for a delegation of Norwegian care farmers around East Anglia which was very well received.

This edition of our newsletter highlights some of our upcoming events but also some information on how care farming is developing in different areas of the UK and gives some background to the Rural Development Programme for England which may provide a source of funding for some care farmers. We hope you enjoy reading it!



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[www.ncfi.org.uk](http://www.ncfi.org.uk)

# Norwegian Care Farmers enjoy study tour of East of England Care Farms

In early May a delegation of 22 Norwegians enjoyed a three day study tour around care farms in Hertfordshire, Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk to get a taste of how care farming works in the UK.

Organised by the National Care Farming Initiative and Care Farming East Anglia, the Norwegians visited a range of care farms, including Church Farm, Ardeley, Butterfly Lodge in Essex, Clinks Care Farm and the Sotterley Care Farm Project on the Norfolk/Suffolk border and Lambourne End in Essex.

Care farming is well established in Norway with over 600 farms engaged in activities which support vulnerable groups of people and the sector receives significant Government support and recognition.

The study tour was arranged in Norway by the care farming support organisation in Rogaland, known as "Inn på tunet Rogaland" in cooperation with the Agriculture Department of the County Governor in Rogaland and was funded in part by the Norwegian Rural Development Programme.

The delegation also had the opportunity to attend a seminar organised by Doeke Dobma of Clinks Care Farm, a ground breaking project taking place on a Norfolk County Council tenant farm. The group heard speakers connected with care farming from a range of backgrounds including the Waveney Community Mental Health Team, the Rural Development Programme for England and commissioners from the NHS and Suffolk County Council.

Bjørn Berg Steiner and Kari Christensen the Norwegian organisers were delighted with the study tour and feedback from the delegates was very positive. Kari said,



Tony Sharps explaining how care farming works at Lambourne End

"We really enjoyed seeing the farms and were so impressed with the level of commitment and hard work undertaken by everyone involved. While the farms and countryside are obviously very different from Norway, the passion that the care farmers have for their work and for the groups attending the farms is similar to that demonstrated by our own care farmers.

We really hope that a reciprocal visit can be arranged to enable East of England care farmers to find out more about how we are supported to deliver care farming services in Norway".

**For details** of Care Farming East Anglia and information on upcoming meetings and events please contact the secretary, Martin Stearman [eacfgroupsecretary@googlemail.com](mailto:eacfgroupsecretary@googlemail.com) or go to the website at [www.ncfi.org.uk/eastengland/](http://www.ncfi.org.uk/eastengland/).

You can also find out more about them on page 3.

## CEVAS TRAINING COURSES

The Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation Scheme (CEVAS) is a training and accreditation opportunity, mainly for farmers, but also for people using farming to work with schools or groups of children and young people. It comprises two parts: Part 1 is a two-day training course which leads to an Open College Network (OCN) award, worth 9 credits. The course covers the elements below following which a portfolio of evidence is assessed.

The second part – if appropriate – is accreditation for the farm, applied for after achieving Part 1. The application is through a simple checklist and supplying evidence to the independent assessors, CMS UK, followed by a portion of farms visited for inspection each year. The award automatically gives the farm a Learning Outside the Classroom Council quality badge certificate, and both CEVAS and Lotc logos to use in any promotional materials, plus publicity through the Lotc and Growing Schools websites [www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk](http://www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk) and [www.growingschools.org.uk](http://www.growingschools.org.uk)

### Care Farming Unit

This one day course, worth 3 OCN credits, is available to those who have attended the CEVAS Part 1 course; in effect the care farming course is three days of which the first two are CEVAS Part 1.

The next course date for the care farming element of CEVAS is on Thursday 21st October at Butterfly Lodge, Colchester.

**Details of courses are available at**  
[www.face-online.org.uk/cevas](http://www.face-online.org.uk/cevas)  
or direct from [ian@fcfcg.co.uk](mailto:ian@fcfcg.co.uk)  
(01373 302204).



# Care farming in the regions

## The activities and challenges of 3 regional networks

### Scotland

“More and more people are getting involved with care farming – even if they do not call themselves care farms,” says Martin Robb, chair of Care Farming Scotland – a regional group that has focussed on logging existing care farms and encouraging new ones to come forward.

Among the care farms recorded in Scotland to date, and slightly different from the norm, are two gardens providing therapy – one for ex-servicemen at the Scottish Agricultural College and another at a mental health institution, in Perth. Meanwhile, national charity Barnardos, which looks after 18,000 youngsters north of the border, plans to set up three care farms to provide young people with farming experience.

Part-time administrative support, currently provided free by the Scottish Agricultural College, has been essential to getting the group off the ground, says Mr Robb. But to expand, he is looking to get funding for a full-time post. Other objectives for CFS's next 12 months are holding a promotional event later in 2010 and setting up a Board of Trustees – “Movers and shakers that will open doors to elsewhere,” says Mr Robb.

### East Anglia

Also looking to consolidate and attract newcomers is the East Anglia Care Farming Group, which now has a constitution, regular meetings and raised its profile following a visit by 22 care farmers/commissioners from Norway.

“We are a social and support network for one another – an extended family,” says Ellie Goff, who says around 15 people attend the group's meetings every few months, with a further 25 on the region's database.

Next on EACF Group's agenda is setting up an online forum, to encourage networking and sharing of ideas, and a ‘buddy system’, under which existing care farmers will provide support and advice to those considering, or in the early stages of, setting up.

Like in Scotland, the EACF Group hopes that in the future, with a bit of funding, it will be able to organise more events, training and other activities. “We are all in this together,” says Ms Goff. “Care farming is not easy, and it's hard to finance in the early years. A lot of care farms will fall by the wayside without a bit of hand-holding.”

### West Midlands

There are different kinds of problems facing Care Farming West Midlands, which is in its second year of a £414,000 grant from the Regional Development Agency and has a target of setting up 20 social enterprise care farms in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire within three years.

“There is no shortage of farmers interested in care farming – we actually hold off encouraging more to come forward,” says CFWM's policy manager, Jon Dover. Instead, the challenges are trying to understand and respond to commissioners' needs. For example, the standards for providing supported care are greater than those of CEVAS, which care farmers are used to; their interpretation varies between social services; and the standards vary for different client groups. Commissioners also want ‘care pathways’ for each client, ie evidence that they are moving nearer to regular employment.

It's a reflection of the complexity of the situation, even within any one county, that Mr Dover regards his team of five as “massively light on resources.” He says: “It's a very very complex situation. One size doesn't fit all – it's far more stringent than we first imagined.”

Despite this, CFWM has had notable success. Seven pilot care farms, each operating 1-2 days per week, have been set up, and it is hoped they will graduate to full-time care farms. They could also serve as a model for elsewhere. Says Mr Dover: “Going through the pilot stage takes the risk out for the commissioner – and for us. It enables the farmer to get used to it.”

The feedback on the pilots has been good, and another 25 care farms are now in the pipeline. But Mr Dover is conscious of another major challenge ahead: how can he secure funding for care farming in the region, and what role will be played by CFWM, once the RDA money runs out.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Care Farming Scotland**  
Martin Robb. Tel: 01764 670377  
[www.carefarmingscotland.org.uk](http://www.carefarmingscotland.org.uk)

**East Anglia Care Farming Group**  
Ellie Goff. Tel: 01206 736121

**Care Farming West Midlands**  
Jon Dover. Tel: 01905 622218



Care Farming  
SCOTLAND

**EACF**  
east anglia care farming



'Funding' is a common challenge facing care farms - finding applicable and supportive funders, evidencing benefits, and getting long-term support. So we thought it worth outlining the opportunities and barriers under the increasingly talked-about Rural Development Programme for England - and how NCFI is trying to help its delivery.

# Removing the confusion from funding options

On the surface, the RDPE's budget of £3.9bn (which is jointly funded by the EU and UK Government) may sound like a fortune. But the majority is for supporting agri-environment and land management schemes in mainstream farming. 'Only' £600m is for enhancing opportunities in rural areas - for which care farms might qualify - and that is spread over six years (2007-13).

In addition to mirages of inapplicable money, another funding challenge is getting to grips with all the different names, terminology and criteria. Indeed, you may not realise it with so many government initiatives out there, but you could already be a beneficiary - for both the more familiar Entry Level Stewardship and Higher Level Stewardship are RDPE funded.

Some of you may also have heard of, or investigated, 'Leader', which is also RDPE funded. It has around £150m to support 'community-orientated' projects in precise geographic areas, and its priorities and funding applications are decided by Local Action Groups - representatives from public and private sectors, and local interest groups.

**Sounds too good to be true?** For those in qualifying areas, funding is available, for example, for the provision of 'basic services' for the rural economy and to help farmers diversify into non-agricultural activities. As always, the devil is in the detail - to qualify you may need to be a farmer already, although how applications are treated can vary between areas.

**Confused?** We don't blame you - the criteria and terminology can be difficult to understand. What's more, the situation varies across England. Each LAG has its own priorities, that are set out in a Local Development Strategy. As do Regional Development Agencies, which oversee RDPE funding aside from the Stewardship Schemes, in their Regional Implementation Plan.

To try and make it easier for care farms to access RDPE funding, NCFI has been conducting a review of the barriers and support available (thanks to those of you who took part). There are several clear lessons emerging from the study, the full results of which we will publish later this year. Overall, few people know of the RDPE and its opportunities, even though they might be getting ELS or HLS, and those that do find it has a few problems. Compared to those administered by charitable trusts and Natural England for example, it is relatively complex and less favourable - grants are usually restricted to 40% of costs, they require private match-funding, are relatively short-term, and decision-making can be slow.

But don't give up - not all doors may be closed. Some care farms have accessed capital grants from RDPE to improve their educational and other facilities. We will also be working with the scheme's administrators to try and improve the support and guidance for those interested in submitting applications. Back to you shortly on this. In the meantime, 'Good Luck.'

## Suggestions for action

- Find out how RDPE works. [www.rdpnetwork.org.uk/funding-sources](http://www.rdpnetwork.org.uk/funding-sources)
- Get in touch with the RDA or other contact person in your area
- See if you are in a Leader area, and what are its priorities
- For those outside England, visit [www.uknationalruralnetwork.org.uk](http://www.uknationalruralnetwork.org.uk)

## National Conference 16th September 2010 Harper Adams University College, Newport, Shropshire

On 16th September 2010 the 3rd national care farming conference will take place in Shropshire.

This event will examine some of the practical issues facing care farmers and look at the next steps forward in the evolution of national UK-wide support organisation for the movement.

Key issues to be discussed include:

- UK developments in care farming and the NCFI
- Regional experiences
- The experiences of new and existing care farmers
- Presentations from a commissioning perspective

You will also have the opportunity to network and meet care farmers and others involved in care farming from all around the UK.

*You can find more details at our website [www.ncfi.org.uk](http://www.ncfi.org.uk) or contact the office for a booking form on 01952 815335 or [enquiries@ncfi.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ncfi.org.uk)*

## South West Care Farming Event – 11th November 2010, Exeter

This event is supported by South West Regional Health and will look at developing care farming services in the South West region.

It is aimed at policy makers, commissioners and referral agencies and will enable them to learn more about care farming and its potential impact in the South West.

*For conference queries and bookings phone 0117 923 1800 or email [admin@farmgarden.org.uk](mailto:admin@farmgarden.org.uk)*